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of Might and Magic



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Joe Grant Bell



HEROESTM II

of Might and Magic

THE OFFICIAL STRATEGY GUIDE

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JOE GRANT BELL

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INTRODUCTION

Heroes of Might and Magic II typifies the old adage, "A minute to learn, a lifetime to master."

Well, okay, we exaggerate. It won't take you a lifetime to master the game. But the fact remains that **Heroes of Might and Magic II** possesses far more depth and subtlety than its incredible graphics and easy interface would suggest. That makes it great territory for a book such as this, which plumbs the murky depths of its strategy and game mechanics, unearthing the best techniques for the weary hero.

Of course, that very depth also poses a problem: We can't reduce the game to a simple set of winning formulas. Instead of quick-win strategies, therefore, this book offers you tons of useful information, tips and techniques, in an effort to give you a comprehensive understanding of the game. We think you'll agree that it's more satisfying to really learn about a game and beat it honestly than to defeat it with a few quick cheats. Of course, if cheats are what you want, we do have a little something that might interest you in the back of the book...

Here's a look at the book's component parts. Feel free to read the chapters in any order, but bear in mind that later chapters occasionally refer to information found in earlier ones.

Part I covers the game's true fundamentals. Chapter 1 elucidates the game's basic premises and its scoring mechanisms, Chapter 2 reviews heroes, and Chapter 3 examines the towns and castles that form the basis of your empires. Chapter 4 reviews every creature in the game, while Chapter 5 lists and compares every artifact and interactive locale you'll have the pleasure to discover. After reading these five chapters, you'll have a much better understanding of the game world and its mechanics.

Part II contains general strategies to help you improve your play in any scenario. Chapter 6 offers advice for the game's grand strategic level, while Chapter 7 delves into the gritty details of combat. You might be surprised at

how universally applicable the strategies and tactics in these two chapters prove to be. Chapter 8 examines spells and spellcasting; this will aid you on both strategic and tactical levels.

Finally, Part III looks at specific scenarios and campaigns that make up **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. Chapter 9 provides handy tips for every standard scenario, and Chapter 10 gives you an inside track to beating both sides of the central campaign.

Heroes of Might and Magic II is a fascinating game with nearly limitless replay value. The advice and information in this book will help improve your chances against its devastatingly effective computerized opponents and, ideally, help you squeeze even more entertainment out of an already outstanding product. Read on, and enjoy your stay in the realms of Might and Magic!



CHAPTER

1

Overview of Heroes of Might and Magic II

Before you plunge headlong into the deceptively pleasant waters of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**, you should know a few things about its underlying mechanics—the options available to you, how the game is won, how your final score is calculated, and the skills you need to succeed. Let's take a brief look at these issues.

PLAY MODES: STANDARD, CAMPAIGN, MULTIPLAYER

Heroes of Might and Magic II's Multiplayer mode allows you to compete against your friends or team up with them to fight the computer. Standard game mode lets you pick a scenario from a list, then duke it out with a number of computer-controlled opponents. Finally, Campaign mode has you fight your way through a series of scenarios to (hoped-for) ultimate victory. Each of the campaign's two sides is a campaign unto itself: You can choose to fight for all that is good, or to walk the winding road of evil.

WINNING THE GAME

There are several ways to win **Heroes of Might and Magic II**—and several ways to lose. Some scenarios require you to crush your enemies; some task you to capture a specific castle or defeat a certain hero. Accumulating wealth or finding a legendary artifact make for victory in still other scenarios.

Defeat, too, can occur in a variety of ways. Losing a specific castle or hero often will mean your downfall. Some scenarios force you to race the clock.

That's a lot to keep track of, but don't worry: In the last few chapters of this book we'll examine strategies for beating each scenario type.

YOUR FINAL SCORE

In Campaign mode, your score is based entirely on how long it takes you to win a scenario. In Standard and Multiplayer games, however, your score is the product of how long it took you to win and the mission's difficulty rating.

Each map has a built-in difficulty setting, and each difficulty setting comes with certain percentages. As you'll notice in Table 1-1, a map with Normal difficulty gives you a base score of 100 percent, so your final score is

the time it took you to beat the scenario (the faster, the better) multiplied by 100. If the scenario you just beat was Easy, however, you'll get only 80 percent as many points.

Table 1-1. Scenario Difficulty Ratings

Built-In Map Difficulty	Base Score
Easy	80%
Normal	100%
Hard	130%
Expert	160%
Impossible	190%

Built-in scenario difficulty isn't the only factor to consider. You can adjust each scenario's base difficulty using the Game Difficulty settings (they look like chess pieces in Figure 1-1) on the Scenario Selection screen. Table 1-2 shows the effects of these difficulty settings.



Figure 1-1. The chess pieces at the top of the screen adjust the game difficulty level.

Table 1-2. The Effects of Difficulty Adjustments

Difficulty Setting	Percentage Modifier
Easy	-30
Normal	0
Hard	+20
Expert	+40
Impossible	+60

As the table shows, the difficulty setting you choose can affect your point total greatly. Enabling the Easy difficulty setting on a Normal map gives you 70 percent of the points you'd receive playing at the Normal difficulty level. Playing a Normal map at the Impossible difficulty level, however, gives you 130 percent of the points you'd get at Normal difficulty.

We provide these tables only to appease your curiosity. Don't get too worked up over your final score. Some players love high scores, while others are content just to win the scenarios. Either way is perfectly fine, though you'll have to become a real master if you want to squeeze the best possible scores out of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. We suggest you take it easy until you really master the game—and then shoot for the highest scores.

SUCCESSING IN HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC II

What do you need to succeed in **Heroes of Might and Magic II**? That's a tough question. You can't expect to keep all the statistics and ratings in your head. However, reading and digesting the information in this book and playing the game again and again will help you develop an "instinct" for how the game works. Both elements are necessary: You won't improve if you don't practice, and you'll have a much harder time improving if you don't consider the specifics we provide here.

Here's a brief look at what you need to know, and where in the book to find each topic.

Know Your Heroes

Picking a hero is one of the first actions you'll take in **Heroes of Might and Magic II**, and it's one of the most important. Your choice of heroes affects everything from your combat ability to the resources you must gather. Chapter 2 provides an in-depth look at the hero classes, explaining the strengths and

weaknesses of each and giving you a good sense of how each hero develops over time. If that's not enough, Chapter 3 gives you the straight facts on each hero's castle type, explaining which castles are easiest to develop and which are hardest, which are most costly and which provide the best creatures.

Understand the World

Chapter 4 provides an exhaustive list of every monster in the game, along with tables comparing each creature's abilities. Chapter 5 contains a roster of every artifact and Adventure screen locale you could possibly find. Finally, Chapter 8 examines the spells you'll encounter as you travel the lands of "Might and Magic."

Develop a Grand Strategy

Chapter 6 offers basic rules and stratagems to guide you through every scenario. You can attack every challenge in **Heroes of Might and Magic II** with a standard set of adventurer's tricks—and Chapter 6 gives you some of the best.

Become a Master Combatant

While Chapter 6 helps you navigate the strategic level of the game, Chapter 7 illustrates the mechanics of individual battles and discusses a range of tactics that will get you the best results in those battles. While tactical combat in **Heroes of Might and Magic II** initially might seem simple—even simplistic—you'll be surprised at the difference subtle tactical decisions can make.

Know the Land

After digesting all the information from the early chapters of this book, you may still find some individual scenarios daunting and difficult. That's why Part III (chapters 9 and 10) gives you tips and techniques for every campaign and stand-alone scenario in the game.

ONWARD!

Heroes of Might and Magic II seems simple at first glance, but the more you play it, the more you realize how very complicated it really is. Not only is it impossible to reliably predict your opponents' actions, but every map incorporates random elements: Treasures, resources, even castles can change with every scenario! This randomness and complexity makes it impossible for us to give you foolproof strategies for winning every scenario, especially at higher difficulty levels. The most we can do is give you as much useful information as we can, and provide you with a behind-the-scenes look at how the game works. From that point on, winning is up to you.

Some players might be disappointed at the lack of a "winning formula" for every scenario. But this is the game's beauty: No one can reduce **Heroes of Might and Magic II** to a set of simple instructions. It takes every ounce of forethought, planning, strategizing, and improvisation you can muster—not to mention a little luck—to defeat your opponents at the highest difficulty levels.

That's the essence of a great game.

Even in the absence of winning formulas, however, this book will teach you a lot about **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. Keep on reading, and get ready to win!



CHAPTER

2

The Book of Heroes

When most people think of strategy, they think of epic strategy—hundreds of units charging across a tumultuous battlefield, some in small bands and some in great masses. However, the focus of **Heroes of Might and Magic II** is much narrower. Instead of hundreds of units, usually you'll find yourself commanding just a few strong armies. And at the center of those armies, you'll always find a powerful hero. The "Heroes of Might and Magic" are larger than life, and have a profound impact on the course of battle. This chapter takes a close look at the six hero types and the strengths and weaknesses, perquisites and obstacles attending each.

OBTAINING HEROES

You'll always start the game with a single hero. Unless you've opted to play a campaign or a highly restrictive scenario, you're free from the start to choose any hero type. You may purchase new heroes during the course of the game for 2,500 gold pieces, as well. These heroes can be of any class; nothing says you must stick with Knights or Barbarians just because your primary hero happens to be a Knight or Barbarian.

However, **Heroes of Might and Magic II** gives you little incentive to diversify. Selecting heroes of the same class over and over simplifies the game: By sticking with a single class, you'll always know your heroes' strengths and weaknesses—no need to shift gears switching from Knight to Necromancer. More importantly, however, having a single class of heroes lets you capitalize fully on the structures you build. If you go with a horde of Barbarians, you can skimp on Mage Guilds with no regrets. For an army of Warlocks, build your Mage Guilds as high as they'll go, and rest assured each hero will partake fully of their benefits.

That said, feel free to take as many different hero types as you like. If you're doing just fine with a wide range of heroes, then good for you! If you're losing consistently, however, you might want to consider picking similar heroes for efficiency's sake.

Always start the game with a hero you feel comfortable with. This hero determines your starting castle and sets the tone of the game. When buying additional heroes, wait awhile if you don't like the current selection; two new faces appear at the beginning of every week, and may offer a hero you like better.

GENERAL HERO CHARACTERISTICS

Each hero has several distinctive characteristics, visible from the Hero screen (see Figure 2-1). Some, like the hero's portrait and crest, have no bearing on the game. Others, like the hero's morale, luck, experience, and spell points, can vary wildly and change frequently over the course of a scenario. A hero's most important characteristics are his or her skills. There are two varieties, primary and secondary, and both skill types improve as the hero gains levels.



Figure 2-1. A Typical Hero Screen

SUMMARY OF PRIMARY SKILLS

Primary skills make up your hero's core statistics. To a large extent, these skills define what a hero is. Table 2-1 shows each hero's starting primary skills; Table 2-2 gives the probabilities of each hero class advancing primary skills when gaining levels.

Table 2-1. Primary Skills Table

Skill	Barbarian	Knight	Necromancer	Sorceress	Warlock	Wizard
Attack	3	2	1	0	0	0
Defense	1	2	0	0	0	1
Power	1	1	2	2	3	2
Knowledge	1	1	2	3	2	2

Table 2-2. Primary Skill Advancement

This table shows the likelihood of each hero improving a given skill when he or she gains a level. Every hero gains one point in one of four primary skills every time he or she attains a new level—it's just a matter of which.

As the table illustrates, heroes usually specialize in one or two skills until they reach Level 10, when they have a good chance to advance in all four primary skills.

Hero Type and Level	Attack	Defense	Power	Knowledge
Barbarian 2-9	55%	35%	5%	5%
Barbarian 10+	30%	30%	20%	20%
Knight 2-9	35%	45%	10%	10%
Knight 10+	25%	25%	25%	25%
Necromancer 2-9	15%	15%	35%	35%
Necromancer 10+	25%	25%	25%	25%
Sorceress 2-9	10%	10%	30%	50%
Sorceress 10+	20%	20%	30%	30%
Warlock 2-9	10%	10%	50%	30%
Warlock 10+	20%	20%	30%	30%
Wizard 2-9	10%	10%	40%	40%
Wizard 10+	20%	20%	30%	30%

Necromancers tend to develop the widest array of skills, while Barbarians are the most focused, concentrating so much on Attack (and, to a lesser degree, Defense) that spellcasting is almost out of the question.



Attack Skill

The Barbarian starts with the greatest Attack skill of any hero, and continues to develop a higher Attack rating than anyone else. All creatures and heroes have this skill; when creatures travel in a hero's army, the hero's Attack skill

accrues to the creatures' Attack skill. This helps explain why creatures traveling with a strong hero are so much more powerful than those left alone in a castle.

Occasionally you might forget about the effects of Attack and Defense skills, and lose a battle because you failed to take into account the Attack bonuses of an enemy hero. Don't make this mistake; when considering an army's power, whether friend or foe, be sure to include that army's hero power in your calculations.



Defense Skill

Just as each hero and creature has an Attack skill, each creature and hero also has a Defense skill. And just as the hero's Attack skill accrues to that of the creatures in his army, so does his Defense skill. Knights typically are the best defensive heroes.

While a potent offense is indeed useful, strong Defense is equally important. When defending a castle during a siege, Defense skill allows your minions to withstand missile fire while your own turrets pick apart the enemy. And while traveling across the Adventure Map, an army with strong defense doesn't need to scurry home for extra troops very often: Its existing troops are likely to endure many battles.



Spell Power

Spell Power, the principal skill of the Warlock, affects the strength and duration of spells cast by the hero. For spells that deal damage, Spell Power determines how much; for spells that last a limited time, Spell Power determines how long.

As a hero's Spell Power reaches higher and higher values, the spells become more and more devastating. This is the big payoff for a spellcasting hero, who must struggle early in the game but becomes very powerful when he consolidates his resources and gains a few levels.



Knowledge

Knowledge skill helps determine a hero's spell point total: Multiply the Knowledge skill by 10 to arrive at the hero's maximum spell points.

Spell points are just as useful as Spell Power. With high power but few spell points, a spellcaster commands great force but can only wield it a few times per battle.

SUMMARY OF SECONDARY SKILLS

In addition to his or her primary attributes, each hero has a number of secondary skills. Although undeniably less pivotal than primary attributes, don't dismiss the value of secondary skills. A high-level hero with multiple secondary skills is truly a force to reckon with; by choosing the right secondary skills for your hero, you can shore up your kingdom's most obvious weaknesses or further improve your hero's strengths.

A hero may have up to eight secondary skills. Each ranks at one of three levels—Basic, Advanced, or Expert. When your hero advances a level, you may choose a secondary skill for him or her from two possibilities. Table 2-3 gives the probabilities of a given hero type learning each secondary skill. The higher the number, the more likely it is that the character class will learn that skill.

Table 2-3. Secondary Skills

Skill	Barbarian	Knight	Necromancer	Sorceress	Warlock	Wizard
Archery	3	2	1	3	1	1
Ballistics	3	4	3	3	3	3
Diplomacy	2	3	2	2	2	2
Eagle Eye	1	1	3	2	3	3
Estates	2	3	2	2	2	2
Leadership	3	5	0	1	1	2
Logistics	3	3	2	2	2	2
Luck	2	1	1	3	1	2
Mysticism	1	1	3	3	3	4
Navigation	3	2	2	4	2	2
Necromancy	0	0	5	0	1	0
Pathfinding	4	3	3	2	2	2
Scouting	4	2	1	1	4	2
Wisdom	1	2	4	4	5	5

THE HERO ROSTER

Let's look at each hero type class by class. As you read, bear in mind that **Heroes of Might and Magic II** is extremely well-balanced, and no one hero class is supremely powerful or completely useless. The best hero for each game is partly a function of the scenario you play and partly a function of your playing style.



Barbarian

Hailing from the dusty plains, the Barbarian emphasizes speed and power over defense. Barbarians and Knights are both great warriors, but Barbarians have lower defense values and thus are slightly less suited to long-term campaigns and castle defense. However, if allowed to get in the first strike, a

Barbarian's attack-heavy units often can turn the tide of battle with a single blow. Also, Barbarians make good secondary heroes, as their great mobility allows them to scour the battlefield quickly, picking up treasures and bonuses with impunity. Even first-level Barbarians possess the Advanced Pathfinding secondary skill.

Barbarian castles are the easiest to build of any hero's castles, so despite the relative weakness of Barbarian troops, low operating costs and quick offensive punch make the Barbarian a tough competitor on small maps.

Primary Skills

The Barbarian focuses on building up his Attack skill and, to a lesser extent, his Defense skill. Like Knights, Barbarians eschew both Knowledge and Spell Power in favor of martial talents: Building Mage Guilds for your Barbarian is often a complete waste of time.

If you use a Barbarian hero, load up on fast creatures with great attack capabilities and try to get in the first strike in combat. This allows you to maximize the Barbarian's greatest assets—mobility and power.

Secondary Skills

The Barbarian's first tier of skills (the skills he's most likely to learn) includes Archery, Ballistics, Leadership, Logistics, Navigation, Pathfinding, and Scouting. All can be useful for the Barbarian, though the extent of their usefulness depends on the role you've cast him in. Archery, Ballistics, and Leadership enhance the power of the Barbarian's army, and thus are suitable skills for Barbarians filling the role of conqueror or superhero. Logistics, Navigation, and Pathfinding enhance the Barbarian's (already great) mobility, adding immensely to the value of Barbarians serving as scouts or resource collectors. Give your scouting Barbarian lots of fast archers (like Grand Elves or Archmages) and they'll really be able to move, both in combat and in the Adventure Map!

The Barbarian's second tier of skills includes Diplomacy, Estates, and Luck. All three are good choices. Luck generally leads the pack for conqueror Barbarians, and Estates is a good source of supplementary income from Barbarians who aren't likely to see much combat.

Barbarian Troops

Barbarian troops are usually lackluster. They start out strong and cheap, but their highest-level units (Ogres, Trolls, and Cyclopes) can't stack up to other heroes' best troops.

The low cost of Barbarian troops is their greatest asset, and that's a valuable asset indeed on small maps. But on large maps you'll find Barbarian castles among the most difficult to control: Their inability to generate truly overwhelming defenders renders them vulnerable to the depredations of enemy heroes.

Castle Building Costs

The Barbarian's castle is the flat-out, hands-down cheapest castle to construct, allowing the Barbarian to build creature dwellings quickly and thus build armies rapidly. This speed gives the Barbarian a real edge on small maps, where he can attack before his competitors have developed their best troops.

Barbarian creature dwellings cost the least of all dwellings (see box) in terms of not only gold, but total resources and rare resources.

Total Barbarian Dwelling Costs:

20,300 Gold, 25 Wood, 65 Ore, 20 Crystals

Summary

Barbarians make great primary heroes on small maps, but their castles are vulnerable in prolonged games. Furthermore, Barbarians' lack of Defense skill

renders Barbarian troops susceptible to enemy offensive spells and fast opponents. In prolonged games, Barbarians must load up on fast creatures that can get in the first strike in combat and capitalize on the Barbarian hero's remarkable Attack skill. Because Barbarian troops as a class are not that fast, the Barbarian should build his army from other heroes' castles whenever possible.

Barbarians are ideal as scouts and resource collectors on maps of all sizes. Give them only the fastest troops, and their superior mobility lets them repossess mines and resource producers that other players have claimed, meanwhile keeping a safe distance from the most powerful enemy heroes.



Knight

For many players, the Knight is the easiest hero to win the game with, especially on small to medium-sized maps. Knights are lords of feudal castles, where lowly Peasants are slowly trained to be Pikemen, then Swordsmen, Cavalry, and finally Paladins. These Knight units aren't particularly strong compared to other heroes', and the Knight has no unit that compares with Dragons or Titans. However, Knight units are extremely affordable and versatile, so you can usually assemble them in great hordes for effective attacks.

Of course, the Knight isn't limited to using troops from his own castle. Troops from any castle can be powerful when assembled under a strong Knight, because the Knight's extraordinary Attack and Defense ratings make everyone under his command perform at a higher level.

Primary Skills

The Knight's true strength lies in his defense, and in **Heroes of Might and Magic II** defense is extremely important. Computer players tend to throw everything they can at you, pouring all their troops and spells into each battle as if it were their last and never worrying about overextending themselves. You, on the other hand, must conserve your troops and spells. After all, at the higher levels of difficulty you won't have the resources the computer

player has. You need a hero who can fight several consecutive battles without running home for reinforcements. You need a hero who can fight to take over a castle and still have enough troops left to defend it. The Knight fits this bill perfectly.

Knights start the game with basic Ballistics and Leadership skills. Leadership's +1 Morale bonus is particularly useful in the game's early stages, when you'll need to throw together any and all troops you can possibly muster. The Morale bonus allows the Knight to easily mix and match several troop types and still end up at neutral morale or better.

The Knight's superior Attack and Defense skills come at the cost of Knowledge and Spell Power. This is unfortunate, but a good Knight can still cast a few spells. The best Knight spells are those affecting troops directly, rather than producing independent effects. By simply casting Bless or Curse before his creatures attack, a Knight can deal excellent damage or prevent his troops from receiving a pounding from enemy retaliation. Direct-damage spells like Lightning Bolt and Fireball are not the strength of the Knight, however, as their effectiveness depends directly on the Knight's limited Spell Power.

Secondary Skills

The Knight's secondary skills generally are quite good. A Knight most likely will acquire Ballistics, Diplomacy, Estates, Leadership, Logistics, and Pathfinding skills. Archery, Navigation, Scouting, and Wisdom are typical second-tier skills.

Which should a Knight develop? Of the first-tier skills, Leadership, Pathfinding, and Logistics are arguably the most valuable. Leadership has a direct effect on troop combat ability—and whenever there's an opportunity to improve your hero's combat ability, you should take it! Pathfinding and Logistics are useful for catching enemy heroes and getting from one place to another.

Estates and Ballistics are also fairly useful; gold is good, although a hero needs several levels of Estates for it to really pay off. Ballistics can be handy for those tough castle sieges, but you can avoid the matter of castle walls altogether by loading up on tough flying troops.

Diplomacy (a first-tier skill) and Scouting (a second-tier skill) typically are less useful; their value decreases markedly as the game progresses and the map clears of both black space (Scouting) and neutral troops (Diplomacy). However, on medium to large maps, Scouting can be invaluable, and in extremely tough situations you'll sometimes need the troops Diplomacy provides.

Of the second-tier skills, Archery is probably the most valuable for the simple reason that it can help the Knight's battlefield efficiency. Wisdom is also useful if you're playing on a big map, because it allows the Knight to learn useful spells, and on a large map, your Knight is likely to gain enough levels to markedly improve his spellcasting abilities.

Knight Troops

Except for Peasants, a Knight's troops are all very solid. Pikemen and Swordsmen aren't that strong, but they've got great defense ratings, and they're cheap enough that you can buy lots of 'em. Rangers and Paladins have good speed and multiple attacks, and therefore can be deadly when you maneuver them properly, and contrive to let them get in the first attack.

The only thing lacking in the Knight's bestiary is a truly top-notch creature like a Dragon, but this isn't a problem if you've got a tough Knight and a horde of creatures, or you manage to take over a Warlock's or Wizard's castle.

Knight troops require no special resources to build. It's very hard to defend one's resources at greater levels of game difficulty, so the fact that you can purchase every Knight unit with gold alone is a big plus.

Castle Building Costs

The Knight's castle is slightly more expensive to build than the Barbarian's, but not significantly. The Knight's castle is still very reasonable in terms of gold (see box), and the only rare resources it requires are crystals. It requires great volumes of wood, but that's often the game's most plentiful resource.

Like Barbarians, Knights usually needn't purchase Mage Guild levels beyond Level 1, so they can save a certain amount of gold and resources beyond the numbers in the Dwelling Cost box.

Knight Dwelling Costs:

25,200 Gold, 80 Wood, 25 Ore, 30 Crystals

Summary of Knights

Knights are arguably the easiest heroes to win the game with; they're especially good in the game's early stages and on small to medium-sized maps. Knights' toughness improves their troops without spells. This means you can cut costs on Mage Guilds; these can be quite costly and require lots of exotic resources you may or may not have access to at the start of the game.

Furthermore, although individual Knight units aren't as powerful as many other creatures, they do have great toughness, making them extremely hard to kill when they serve under a high-level Knight.



Necromancer

Necromancers are spellcasters who specialize in death magic. They start the game with rather mundane primary abilities, but are the only hero type likely to develop the Necromancy secondary skill. (Actually, they're one of only two heroes who even have a chance to get that particular skill.) They also begin the game with basic Wisdom, a vital skill for any serious spellcasting hero.

Necromancer abilities, creatures, and costs fall somewhere in the middle of the hero spectrum. Their castles are not too cheap but not too expensive; their creatures are not too weak but not excessively powerful; Necromancers themselves aren't dominant in any particular skill, yet they can be useful heroes for a variety of tasks. Necromancers typically flourish on medium-sized maps, where their biggest creatures (Vampires and Bone Dragons) dominate, and Dragons and Titans are rare.

Primary Skills

The initial Attack skill of the Necromancer is something of a fluke: Necromancers are no more likely to develop their Attack skill than any other spellcasting hero. He's a fairly standard-issue spellcaster who'll continue to develop Spell Power and Knowledge, not Attack and Defense, over the course of his career.

Because Necromancers are likely to command undead troops, they often benefit from spells that damage all non-undead creatures (such as Death Wave). When loaded up with spells of this nature, they often prove more deadly than a different-class hero with similar abilities.

Secondary Skills

The Necromancer's strongest secondary skills are Ballistics, Eagle Eye, Mysticism, Necromancy, Pathfinding, and Wisdom. The only unique skill of the bunch is Necromancy, which allows your hero to reanimate a percentage of dead troops as Skeletons after each battle. Because Skeletons are bottom-level Necromancer creatures, this may seem useless. However, Skeletons actually are quite versatile, and can be an effective force in combat. Furthermore, Necromancers can optimize this skill by picking fights they'd normally avoid. For example, they might reanimate hundreds of enemy Peasants as several dozen useful Skeletons. This means that in many cases it's actually profitable for Necromancers to chase after the wimpy Adventure Map creatures that flee before their mighty army.

Overview of Necromancer Troops

Necromancers have quality troops at the top and bottom of their roster, but a few spotty performers in the middle. Skeletons rank among the game's best low-level creatures, while Vampires and Bone Dragons are powerful and affordable. Zombies are something of a disappointment, while Mummies and Liches are competent but not overpowering.

All things considered, the typical Necromancer's army is formidable but not overpowering. Skillful Necromancers capitalize on the value of cheap-but-effective Skeletons, and load up on overachievers like Vampires and Bone Dragons.

Castle Building Costs

The Necromancer's castle building costs are right in the center of the hero spectrum. Necromancer castles require a wide variety of resources, but they don't require overwhelming amounts of any one resource. This makes the Necromancer a very easy hero to use on the lower difficulty levels, where players start with a given amount of every resource, but harder to use on the Hard, Expert, and Impossible levels, where the sheer variety of necessary resources forces players to spend lots of time capturing and recapturing a wide array of mines.

Necromancer Dwelling Costs:

29,400 Gold, 25 Wood, 40 Ore, 15 Crystals, 15 Gems,
20 Sulfur, 5 Mercury

Summary

The Necromancer combines good value and good power. For the most part, your style of play will dictate his value: Some players prefer heroes with a real slant toward one discipline or another, while others prefer a well-rounded and versatile hero, which the Necromancer definitely is. Highly specialized

heroes like the Barbarian allow you to pursue a certain strategy to the extreme; in the Barbarian's case, that strategy involves early, rapid expansion. But well-balanced heroes like the Necromancer allow you to successfully pursue a more reactive style of play: You can base strategies on the situations you face rather than on your primary hero's inherent strengths and weaknesses.



Sorceress

A denizen of the forest, the Sorceress is a "pure" spellcaster who starts the game with good Spell Power and Knowledge, but no Attack or Defense skills. Instead of focusing on raw power, the Sorceress emphasizes Knowledge, gaining enough spell points to cast a wide array of spells. This focus on Knowledge is neither better nor worse than the focus of the power-hungry Warlock. There are times when you'll go crazy wishing you had just a few more points of power, but there are also times you'll go crazy wishing you had a few spell points left.

The Sorceress's emphasis on skills over power extends to her creatures as well. They tend to deal good damage and possess good special abilities, but aren't very tough. This lack of toughness can make it difficult to use a Sorceress as your primary, world-conquering hero. However, like all spellcasters, Sorceresses gain tremendous amounts of power as they gain levels, and Sorceress castles and troops rank among the cheapest and easiest to purchase.

Primary Skills

The Sorceress's focus on spell points (Knowledge) over Spell Power makes her quite good at casting "creature augmenting" spells like Bless and Curse, rather than powerful damaging spells like Lightning Bolt and Cold Ring. Her boundless supply of spell points enables her to cast spells throughout a battle (although they're generally not too powerful and don't last terribly long).

All things considered, the Sorceress is not the most powerful spellcasting hero. However, with her easily-upgraded castles and affordable creatures, she fills the role of "budget" spellcaster admirably.

Secondary Skills

The Sorceress's most common secondary skills include Archery, Ballistics, Luck, Mysticism, Navigation, and Wisdom. Mysticism and Wisdom are essential for the campaigning Sorceress: Mysticism allows her to replenish all-important spell points between battles, while Wisdom gives access to vital and potentially game-winning upper-level spells. Luck, Archery, and Ballistics can also be of great use during battle. The Sorceress begins the game with Basic Wisdom and Advanced Navigation.

Diplomacy, Estates, Eagle Eye, Logistics, and Pathfinding are also useful skills. Eagle Eye stands out as a great skill, letting the (already budget-oriented) Sorceress further economize by skimping on Mage Guilds and relying on combat experience to add to her spellbook.

Sorceress Troops

As a class, Sorceress troops are not impressive. However, like those of the Barbarian, they're cheap and easy to purchase, and therefore can make up for their lack of power with fast early victories. Sorceress castles are almost as difficult to hang on to as Barbarian castles in long games played on huge maps: Until she recruits Phoenixes, they tend to change hands frequently over the course of a game.

Dwarves are a particular asset for the Sorceress, and Phoenixes have such excellent speed they usually give their owner the first move in combat—valuable indeed for spellcasting heroes.

Castle Building Costs

The Sorceress castle is actually cheaper than the Knight's, in terms of both gold and the resources necessary to construct every creature dwelling and upgrade. Only the Barbarian has an easier time improving his castle! This makes Sorceress castles a great choice for players who like to use spellcasting heroes on small maps.

Sorceress Dwelling Costs:

23,000 Gold, 30 Wood, 40 Ore, 25 Mercury, 10 Gems

Summary

Depending on how you look at it, the Sorceress is either a great bargain or a poor excuse for a spellcaster. It's true that the other spellcasters have better creatures than the Sorceress, but there's no denying that her minimal costs and cheap but respectable creatures can get her off to a great start.

If you play a Sorceress as your primary hero, you'll need to take advantage of her rapid castle-building and fast creature production by taking over enemy castles as soon as possible. Some people love that style of play, while others prefer a slower, more conservative approach. Those players usually are better off playing our next hero—the Warlock.

**Warlock**

Like the Sorceress, the mountain-dwelling Warlock is also a "pure" spellcaster who focuses almost exclusively on Spell Power and Knowledge. Unlike the Sorceress, the Warlock emphasizes Power. Warlocks are more likely than Sorceresses to run out of spell points in the middle of a battle, but the spells they do cast can last a very long time and produce powerful effects, indeed. Over the long haul, this makes them the better spellcasters; sure, they can't cast as many spells as a Sorceress, but the spells they cast can alter the course of battle profoundly.

Unlike the Sorceress's finesse troops, the Warlock's troops are largely big, tough brawlers. Some of these units suffer a lack of speed, but in general they make a great assault force. In fact, it isn't a stretch to say that the Warlock's creatures are the game's toughest.

Primary Skills

The Warlock's emphasis on Spell Power makes him formidable once he's gained several levels. Spells of destruction are the Warlock's favorite recourses: In his hands, these spells dish out enough damage to be genuinely worthwhile.

Warlocks typically have poor Attack and Defense skills, but their troops are individually strong enough to take on just about anyone.

Secondary Skills

The typical Warlock's list of secondary skills includes Ballistics, Eagle Eye, Mysticism, Scouting, and Wisdom. Both Wisdom and Mysticism are must-have skills for any self-respecting Warlock. Eagle Eye never hurts, and Scouting is invaluable on big maps where a Warlock is your primary conqueror. Warlocks start the game with Basic Wisdom and Advanced Scouting.

Diplomacy, Estates, Logistics, Navigation, and Pathfinding can all be useful skills for a campaigning Warlock; Logistics and Pathfinding stand out as the most generally useful. Warlock castles can have Dungeons, increasing gold production by half, so Estates usually isn't a necessary Warlock skill.

Warlock Troops

Ah, Warlock creatures...the pride and joy of the land! From the slow but deadly Hydra to the extraordinarily well-rounded Minotaur King to the unparalleled Black Dragon, Warlock troops are a match for any opponent.

Of course, that power comes at a price: These troops cost more than those of other heroes. But on a large map with lots of gold and resources, it's a small price to pay. On these large maps, Warlock castles usually are the game's most coveted.

Castle Building Costs

The Warlock castle is one of the most expensive to develop, but the ability to build a Dungeon for extra income defrays the cost somewhat. When you consider the power of the Warlock's creatures, the castle looks like a bargain.

The only potential difficulty with the Warlock castle is the great volume of sulfur you need to construct it. But this is both a drawback and a benefit: On the negative side, it usually takes longer to build up a massive supply of one resource than it does to accumulate a smattering of several; the Warlock usually must wait some time before he gets his hands on enough sulfur to fully develop his Dragons. On the plus side, because the Warlock needs only three resources to build his castle (ore, sulfur, and gems), he doesn't have to spend much time scurrying back and forth to capture and recapture mines.

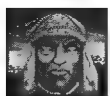
Warlock Dwelling Costs:

37,500 Gold, 50 Ore, 15 Gems, 50 Sulfur

Summary

Kings of the large battlefield, Warlocks are both powerful and fun to play. Their only real drawback is the time and resources they need to develop their castles, but most players agree it's a small price to pay for such powerful creatures and potent spellcasting ability.

Warlocks make excellent superheroes, and their creatures are ideal for campaigning heroes of any type. With their great speed and strength, Warlock troops make a great addition to any army.



Wizard

Wizards feature a good mix of Spell Power and Knowledge, with some Defense for good measure. Their troops emphasize long-range attacks, and, in fact, can grow to be the game's best corps of long-range attackers. This is both

a plus and a minus: Long-range troops have certain obvious advantages over close-combat troops, but they're also more fragile. Nevertheless, Wizard troops rank among the best in the game—especially when used correctly.

Primary Skills

The Wizard begins the game with equal measures of Knowledge and Spell Power, with a bit of Defense. This emphasis on defense might make the beginning Wizard seem slightly less proficient at spellcasting than a beginning Sorceress or Warlock, but the Wizard starts the game with Advanced Wisdom, which definitely makes up for this deviation. Furthermore, Wizards start the game with the Stoneskin spell—useful in almost any combat situation.

Secondary Skills

The Wizard's top tier of secondary skills includes Ballistics, Eagle Eye, Mysticism, and Wisdom. All four are excellent skills, although if a Wizard castle is your starting castle, Eagle Eye probably won't come into play very often: You're likely to have constructed a high-level Mage Guild and Library on your own, so your heroes probably won't learn much using Eagle Eye.

The second tier of Wizard skills includes just about every other secondary skill (except Necromancy). Different skills are valuable in different situations: Leadership and Luck are great for Wizard superheroes, while Pathfinding and Logistics are always useful on large maps. Archery is seldom available; choose it whenever possible, though, as it helps the Wizard capitalize on his powerful long-range troops. Let the situation dictate which secondary skills you choose for your Wizard.

Wizard Troops

Wizard troops are costly and not quite as strong as those of the Warlock. They have great long-range potential, however. It's unfortunate that Wizards seldom have access to the Archery skill, because any hero with that skill and an army of Titans and Archmages can flat out devastate enemy armies. That's

why Titans are a great addition to the armies of Knights, Barbarians, and other archery-oriented heroes who can manage to conquer a Wizard castle.

Castle Building Costs

The total cost of building all Wizard dwellings is quite high (see box). In fact, they require the most gold of any hero, and they're among the costliest in terms of resources. Wizards must produce lots of gems to finish building their creature dwellings, much as Warlocks must find whole boatloads of sulfur. All things considered, the Wizard's castle is difficult to construct but easy to defend once all the creature dwellings are in place.

Wizard Dwelling Costs:

39,700 Gold, 30 Wood, 25 Ore, 10 Mercury, 45 Gems, 5 Sulfur

Summary

Wizards are much like Warlocks—spellcasters with vast potential but wobbly early careers. At normal difficulty levels, the Wizard's castle is a bit easier to develop than the Warlock's, because the Wizard's resource needs are somewhat more varied, and the beginning player starts with a variety of resources.

Many players find Warlocks easier to play than Wizards, mainly because of their superior troops. But Wizards aren't far behind in terms of power, especially when they develop their castles to the point where Titans are readily available.



CHAPTER 3

A Guide to Towns and Castles

As your heroes scour the lands of Might and Magic, they'll encounter all manner of strange and wondrous locales. No matter how useful or fascinating these places may prove, however, the mundane castle is more important.

Control of towns and castles is the game's most important aspect; you can usually measure your progress by how many of them you possess. This chapter explores the castles of each hero type—features common to all and characteristics particular to each.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CASTLES

Although towns are indeed useful, castles reign supreme in **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. Why are they so important? The answer is simple: Castles are a **self-sufficient, defensible** source of **gold** and **troops**. Each of these qualities is extremely important. Let's look at them in turn.

First, castles are self-sufficient and defensible. They generate creatures you may recruit for castle defense, and may contain structures (such as moats and turrets) that make defense easier. Add a hero or captain of the guard, and the castle becomes even tougher. No other structure on the Adventure screen possesses these qualities.

Towns produce creatures to a limited extent, but they don't produce enough high-quality creatures to prevail against a determined foe. You can defend resource producers such as mines and lumber mills, but only by keeping a hero nearby; in other words, they aren't self-sufficient. Castles, on the other hand, have the resources to hold their own indefinitely against enemy heroes.

Of course, having a self-sufficient and defensible castle would be pointless unless the castle actually did something useful for you. Well, believe us, it **does**. Castles are the game's most reliable sources of gold and creatures, producing 1000 Gold per turn (as opposed to a town's 250) and a new batch of creatures every week. You can get gold from other resources, but those resources are spotty at best. Unless a hero baby-sits a gold mine, your enemies will take it; treasure chests provide only a one-time supply of gold (more useful as experience points, anyway); gold-producing artifacts and skills (such as Estates) appear too infrequently to rely on. Similarly, although you may recruit creatures from wandering armies or special locations, you can't count on these locations for a constant flow of troops. Only castles can adequately serve these two necessary functions.

Castles are so vital, in fact, that you can't win the game consistently unless you quickly establish a number of castles equal or nearly equal to your toughest foe's. If your opponent has several more castles than you and manages to hold them for several weeks, you'll find yourself forced into a losing situation.

Defeating his armies becomes pointless, because he can replace his troops much more quickly than you with his abundant gold and creature resources. Eventually the constant fighting will wear you down, and the sheer numbers will overwhelm you.

COMMON ASPECTS OF TOWNS AND CASTLES

You may not build new structures in a town that hasn't been upgraded to a castle. Therefore, your first priority when you secure a town should be to upgrade it. This process costs 5000 Gold, 20 Wood, and 20 Ore. This can seem exorbitant, but consider that a castle produces 1000 Gold per day, and you'll see the truth of the matter: A castle pays for itself in five days, so you can't afford **not** to upgrade your towns.

While castles belonging to different hero classes have many differences, all share a few similar buildings. Here's a look at those similar structures and their functions, with notes on the most valuable. Note that you'll need some of these buildings to construct other buildings, so while you might not want to bother building a Well or a Tavern, you might end up building them anyway to get the structures you really want.

Bonus Effect Buildings

Bonus Effect Buildings are present in every hero's castle. These buildings have different costs and effects depending on the sort of castle they're in. Knights' Fortifications make the walls hard to penetrate; the Barbarian Coliseum augments defender morale by 2; Sorceress castles' Rainbow bestows 2 points of good luck on all defenders; the Wizard Library gives extra spells to the Mage Guild; the Warlock Dungeon adds 500 Gold per week to the hero's treasury, and Necromancers' Storm augments the Spell Power of defending heroes (+2).

Of these buildings, the Dungeon and Library provide the most tangible benefits, with Fortifications not far behind. The Coliseum, Storm, and Rainbow can often be skipped.

Captain's Quarters

Each castle may have a Captain of the Guard. Captains are sort of like miniature heroes who can't leave the castle they're stationed in. They're never as effective as a true hero, but then again, they don't cost as much, either. Every castle should have either a Captain of the Guard or a hero permanently stationed there. If you have the money to spare, a low-level Knight is often your best bet, but if gold is tight, or you're having trouble keeping track of all your heroes, then a Captain of the Guard usually will do.

Horde Buildings

So-called Horde Buildings cause the lowest-level creatures in your castle to grow at an increased rate. For example, instead of receiving 8 Goblins per week, you'll receive 18 when you build a Garbage Heap. The various Horde Buildings are:

Barbarian: Garbage Heap

Knight: Farm

Necromancer: Skull Pyramid

Sorceress: Crystal Garden

Warlock: Haystack

Wizard: Orchard

Horde buildings can be useful or useless depending on the sort of castle you own and how powerful your lowest-level creatures are. For Knights, Horde Buildings are hardly worth the effort; Peasants are next to worthless. For Necromancers, however, Horde buildings can be very productive, as Skeletons are very respectable low-level troops.

Mage Guild

The Mage Guild is a valuable addition to every castle, regardless of what hero type inhabits it. Every hero benefits from having a few spells. Because

heroes never forget the spells they've learned, you often can build a Mage Guild in just one castle and have all your heroes visit it. This saves the expense of constructing multiple Mage Guilds.

You can get away with neglecting the Mage Guild completely for a little while, but even if you've got a Knight or Barbarian, you can't ignore it forever. If your heroes are spellcasters, then you'll need to get a Level 2 or 3 Mage Guild as soon as humanly possible!

Marketplace

A Marketplace allows you to trade one sort of resource for another, usually at outrageous exchange rates. The more Marketplaces you buy, the better the exchange rates are.

In general you should try to acquire resources "the old-fashioned way"—by conquering mines and structures of the appropriate type. Only build Marketplaces if this strategy isn't feasible, or you really need a lot of one particular resource. Also, the exchange rate increases with each Marketplace, maxing out at nine marketplaces.

Moat

Moats slow down enemy troops. They're much like Turrets: They can be useful in castle defense, but you shouldn't purchase them instead of more important structures. Worry about building a Moat after you've built everything else, or when you lack the resources to build the stuff you **really** want to build.

Moats are most useful when your defending army has lots of long-range attackers. If you don't plan on having many of those troop types in your castle, then a Moat just delays the inevitable.

Statue

Statues provide an extra 250 Gold per turn. That's like having an extra town under your control! Gold is a key resource in **Heroes of Might and Magic II**,

so you can't afford not to build a Statue in each castle you control. Don't be daunted by the initial cost. The Statue will pay for itself in five turns; everything after that is pure profit.

If your castle is in a position not to be harassed by enemies for a while, then a Statue should be one of the first things you build. However, if your castle is vulnerable, build creature dwellings first; worry about the Statue once the castle is secure.

Shipyard

Not surprisingly, Shipyards produce ships. Shipyards are useless in many scenarios, but invaluable in others. Determine the predominant terrain before building a Shipyard. If the battleground is mostly land, you'll feel awfully silly sailing your brand-new ship in a tiny pond.

In many scenarios, travel by water is profitable but not immediately necessary. In these scenarios, it's often best to consolidate your hold on local towns and castles, and wait for an enemy hero to arrive with a boat. If you can reach the boat while the enemy hero isn't in it, you'll be able to spare yourself the expense of building a Shipyard.

Tavern

Taverns provide a +1 Morale boost for your castle's defenders. This bonus is rarely enough to turn the tide of battle, especially if there's already a morale-affecting hero (such as a Knight) present. Therefore, consider Taverns mandatory only in castles requiring them for further growth—Knight castles and Sorceress castles.

Thieves' Guild

The Thieves' Guild provides you with information on the land and your opponents. The more Guilds you build, the more information you'll get. This information can be handy, but when push comes to shove and you're low on

resources, you're better off building essential structures first and worrying about the Thieves' Guild later. This means you'll usually end up building them in the middle stages of the game, when you have a significant number of castles and a good deal of gold on your hands.

You can acquire most Thieves' Guild information from your own experience and common sense. You'll find you need the Thieves' Guild less and less as you become more familiar with common patterns in the game.

Turrets

You can build two Turrets in each castle you own. Turrets do half as much damage as the Ballista that all castles are equipped with. In other words, Turrets are not terribly effective.

However, you should still build them after you complete all your vital structures. Just bear in mind that a good hero and lots of defending creatures are vastly more important than Turrets. Turrets can sometimes have an impact on the game's earliest castle sieges, but later attacks are guaranteed to be staged by tough, experienced heroes and high-level troops who'll hardly blink at a hail of Turret fire.

The moral of the story? Build Turrets when you've bought all the creatures you can possibly buy, and you've got the spare gold. In extremely close battles, they can sometimes make the difference between success and failure.

Well

A Well causes two extra creatures to appear in each of your castle's creature dwellings every week. This means a structure that normally produces eight creatures now produces 10.

The Well is a vital part of a solid castle. Aside from the fact that it's often a prerequisite for building further structures, it's an important part of the castle's offensive and defensive capabilities. Think of it this way: Two more Peasants per week is next to useless, but two more Paladins per week is

extremely helpful. The Well's effects really pay off when it comes to recruiting powerful, but rare, creatures such as Paladins, Bone Dragons, and so forth.

Always build a Well during your first week in a new castle.

Summary of Common Buildings

Table 3-1 summarizes the cost of all the "common" buildings we've just looked at.

Table 3-1. Common Structures, Costs and Effects

Structure	Gold	Wood	Ore	Crystals	Gems	Mercury	Sulfur
Captain Quarters	500	—	—	—	—	—	—
Castle	5000	20	20	—	—	—	—
Horde Building	1000	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mage Guild	2000	5	5	—	—	—	—
Mage Guild L2	1000	5	5	4	4	4	4
Mage Guild L3	1000	5	5	6	6	6	6
Mage Guild L4	1000	5	5	8	8	8	8
Mage Guild L5	1000	5	5	10	10	10	10
Marketplace	500	5	—	—	—	—	—
Shipyards	2000	20	—	—	—	—	—
Statue	1250	—	5	—	—	—	—
Thieves Guild	750	5	—	—	—	—	—
Tavern	500	5	—	—	—	—	—
Turret	1500	—	5	—	—	—	—
Well	500	—	—	—	—	—	—
Coliseum	2000	10	10	—	—	—	—
Dungeon	3000	5	10	—	—	—	—
Fortifications	1500	5	15	—	—	—	—
Library	1500	5	5	5	5	5	5
Perpetual Storm	1000	—	—	—	—	10	10
Rainbow	1500	—	—	10	—	—	—

CREATURE DWELLINGS

Each hero's castle hosts six specific creature dwellings, some of which you can upgrade. This section summarizes the costs of each type of dwelling, and the number of creatures each dwelling produces per week (not counting Bonus Effect Buildings such as the Well). We also provide a dependencies chart showing what structures you must build before you can purchase the castle's most advanced structures.

Chapter 4 features analyses of the creatures each dwelling produces.

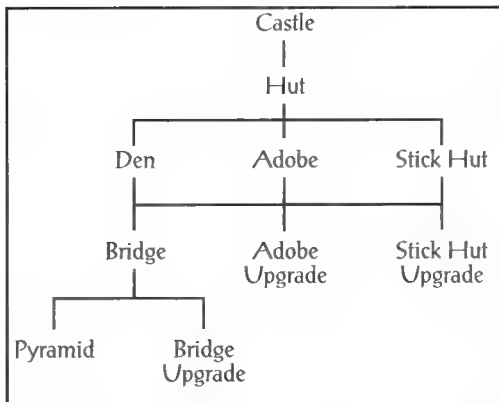


Figure 3-1. Barbarian Castle Dependency Chart

Barbarian Castles

You may purchase Barbarian creature dwellings with very few restrictions (see figure 3-1). No extraneous buildings such as Wells or Taverns are necessary to construct dwellings in the Barbarian castle. This adds to the castle's overall ease of construction.



Hut

Cost: 300 Gold

Prerequisites: —

Product: 10 Goblins per week



Stick Hut

Cost: 800 Gold, 5 Wood

Prerequisites: Hut

Product: 8 Orcs per week



Stick Hut Upgrade

Cost: 1200 Gold, 5 Wood

Prerequisites: Adobe, Den, Stick Hut

Product: Upgraded Orcs (Orc Chieftains)

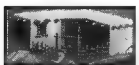


Den

Cost: 1000 Gold

Prerequisites: Hut

Product: 5 Wolves per week

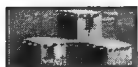


Adobe

Cost: 2000 Gold, 10 Wood, 10 Ore

Prerequisites: Hut

Product: 4 Ogres per week



Adobe Upgrade

Cost: 3000 Gold, 5 Wood, 5 Ore

Prerequisites: Adobe, Den, Stick Hut

Product: Upgraded Ogres (Ogre Lords)



Bridge

Cost: 4000 Gold, 20 Ore

Prerequisites: Adobe, Den, Stick Hut

Product: 3 Trolls per week



Bridge Upgrade

Cost: 2000 Gold, 10 Ore

Prerequisites: Bridge

Product: Upgraded Trolls (War Trolls)



Pyramid

Cost: 6000 Gold, 20 Ore, 20 Crystals

Prerequisites: Bridge

Product: 2 Cyclopes per week

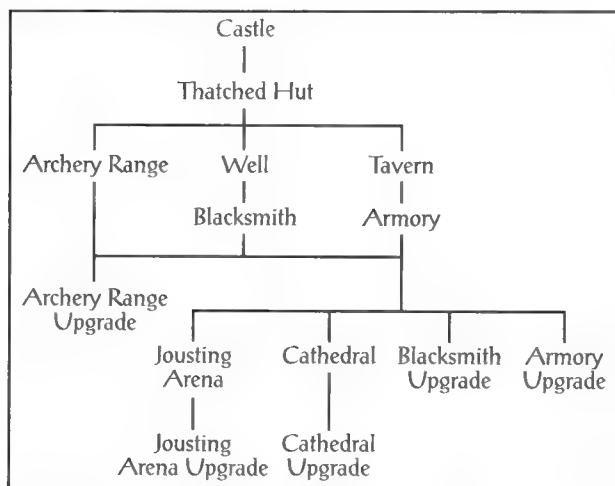


Figure 3-2. Knight Castle Dependency Chart

Knight Castles

If you plan to build every dwelling in a Knight Castle, you'll need to build a Well and a Tavern (see Figure 3-2). This is not a major difficulty, however: Every castle should have a Well, and Taverns aren't very expensive. All things considered, Knight creature dwellings are quick and easy to construct.



Thatched Hut

Cost: 200 Gold

Prerequisites: —

Effect: 12 Peasants per week



Archery Range

Cost: 1000 Gold

Prerequisites: Thatched Hut

Effect: 8 Archers per week



Archery Range Upgrade

Cost: 1500 Gold, 5 Wood

Prerequisites: Armory, Blacksmith, Archery Range

Effect: Upgraded Archers (Rangers)



Blacksmith

Cost: 1000 Gold, 5 Ore

Prerequisites: Well, Thatched Hut

Effect: 5 Pikemen per week



Blacksmith Upgrade

Cost: 1500 Gold, 5 Ore

Prerequisites: Blacksmith, Armory

Effect: Upgraded Pikemen (Veteran Pikemen)



Armory

Cost: 2000 Gold, 10 Wood, 10 Ore

Prerequisites: Tavern, Thatched Hut

Effect: 4 Swordsmen per week



Armory Upgrade

Cost: 2000 Gold, 5 Wood, 5 Ore

Prerequisites: Armory, Blacksmith

Effect: Upgraded Swordsmen (Master Swordsmen)



Jousting Arena

Cost: 3000 Gold, 20 Wood

Prerequisites: Armory, Blacksmith

Effect: 3 Cavalry per week



Jousting Arena Upgrade

Cost: 3000 Gold, 10 Wood

Prerequisites: Jousting Arena

Effect: Upgraded Cavalry (Champions)



Cathedral

Cost: 5000 Gold, 20 Wood, 20 Crystals

Prerequisites: Armory, Blacksmith

Effect: 2 Paladins per week



Cathedral Upgrade

Cost: 5000 Gold, 10 Wood, 10 Crystals

Prerequisites: Cathedral

Effect: Upgraded Paladins (Crusaders)

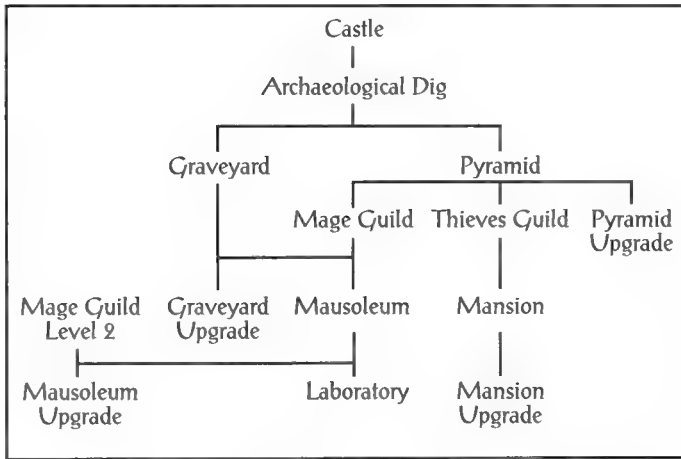


Figure 3-3. Necromancer Castle
Dependency Chart

Necromancer Castles

Necromancer castles are deceptively hard to complete. As you can see from Figure 3-3, you need a Thieves' Guild before you can construct a Mansion, and you must build a Level 2 Mage Guild prior to purchasing an upgraded Mausoleum. The Level 2 Mage Guild in particular can be a problem, as it

requires so many resources to construct. You can get around the problem by simply constructing a Level 1 Mage Guild and leaving the Mausoleum in its basic state. This means your Liches won't upgrade to Power Liches, but with a Level 1 Mage Guild, you're at least free to purchase a basic Mausoleum and the all-important Laboratory.



Archaeological Dig

Cost: 400 Gold

Prerequisites: —

Effect: 8 Skeletons per week



Graveyard

Cost: 1000 Gold

Prerequisites: Archaeological Dig

Effect: 6 Zombies per week



Graveyard Upgrade

Cost: 1000 Gold

Prerequisites: Graveyard

Effect: Upgraded Zombies (Mutant Zombies)



Pyramid

Cost: 1500 Gold, 10 Ore

Prerequisites: Archaeological Dig

Effect: 4 Mummies per week



Pyramid Upgrade

Cost: 1500 Gold, 5 Ore

Prerequisites: Pyramid

Effect: Upgraded Mummies (Royal Mummies)



Mansion

Cost: 3000 Gold, 10 Wood

Prerequisites: Pyramid, Thieves' Guild

Effect: 3 Vampires per week



Mansion Upgrade

Cost: 4000 Gold, 5 Wood, 10 Gems, 10 Crystals

Prerequisites: Mansion

Effect: Upgraded Vampires (Vampire Lords)

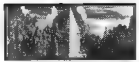


Mausoleum

Cost: 4000 Gold, 10 Ore, 10 Sulfur

Prerequisites: Graveyard, Mage Guild

Effect: 2 Lichs per week



Mausoleum Upgrade

Cost: 3000 Gold, 5 Ore, 5 Sulfur

Prerequisites: Mausoleum, Level 2 Mage Guild

Effect: Upgraded Lichs (Power Lichs)



Laboratory

Cost: 10,000 Gold, 10 Wood, 10 Ore, 5 Gems,
5 Crystals, 5 Mercury, 5 Sulfur

Prerequisites: Mausoleum

Effect: 1 Bone Dragon per week

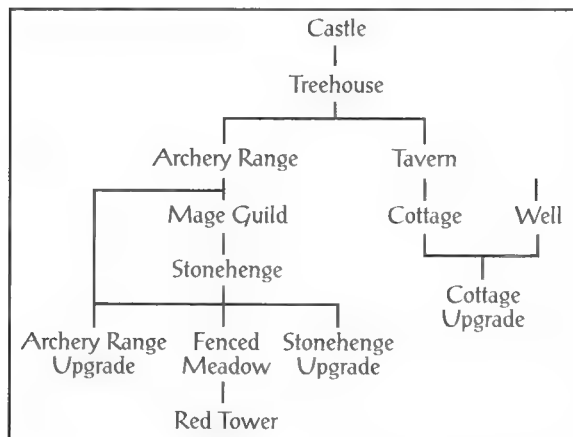


Figure 3-4. Sorceress Castle Dependency Chart

Sorceress Castles

Sorceress Castles are a bit more complicated than Knight castles, but like Knight castles, they require a Well and Tavern before you can construct every creature dwelling. As Figure 3-4 shows, they also require a Mage Guild. Fortunately for the Sorceress, however, there are no resource-intensive "stopper" buildings to interfere with building advanced creature dwellings: Only structures in the last tier require rare resources.

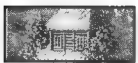


Treehouse

Cost: 500 Gold, 5 Wood

Prerequisites: —

Effect: 8 Sprites per week



Cottage

Cost: 1000 Gold, 5 Wood

Prerequisites: Treehouse, Tavern

Effect: 6 Dwarves per week

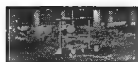


Cottage Upgrade

Cost: 1500 Gold, 5 Wood

Prerequisites: Cottage, Well

Effect: Upgraded Dwarves (Battle Dwarves)



Archery Range

Cost: 1500 Gold

Prerequisites: Treehouse

Effect: 4 Elves per week



Archery Range Upgrade

Cost: 1500 Gold, 5 Wood

Prerequisites: Archery Range, Stonehenge

Effect: Upgraded Elves (Grand Elves)



Stonehenge

Cost: 2500 Gold, 10 Ore

Prerequisites: Archery Range, Mage Guild

Effect: 3 Druids per week

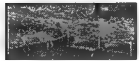


Stonehenge Upgrade

Cost: 1500 Gold, 5 Mercury

Prerequisites: Stonehenge

Effect: Upgraded Druids (Greater Druids)



Fenced Meadow

Cost: 3000 Gold, 10 Wood, 10 Gems

Prerequisites: Stonehenge

Effect: 2 Unicorns per week

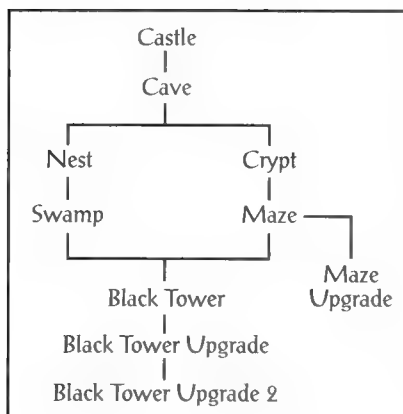


Red Tower

Cost: 10,000 Gold, 30 Ore, 20 Mercury

Prerequisites: Fenced Meadow

Effect: 1 Phoenix per week



Warlock Castles

Warlock castles may be expensive, but as Figure 3-5 shows, the process of building a Warlock's creature dwellings is short and to the point. You must build Warlock creature dwellings in a very linear fashion, but on the plus side, no nondwelling structures like Taverns or Mage Guilds are required. Just keep building those creature dwellings until you're done! Now that's simplicity.

Figure 3-5. Warlock Castle
Dependency Chart



Cave

Cost: 500 Gold

Prerequisites: —

Effect: 8 Centaurs per week



Crypt

Cost: 1000 Gold, 10 ore

Prerequisites: Cave

Effect: 6 Gargoyles per week

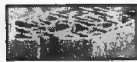


Nest

Cost: 2000 Gold

Prerequisites: Cave

Effect: 4 Griffins per week

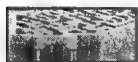


Maze

Cost: 3000 Gold, 10 Gems

Prerequisites: Crypt

Effect: 3 Minotaurs per week

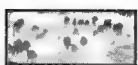


Maze Upgrade

Cost: 2000 Gold, 5 Gems

Prerequisites: Maze

Effect: Upgraded Minotaurs (Minotaur Kings)



Swamp

Cost: 4000 Gold, 10 Sulfur

Prerequisites: Nest

Effect: 2 Hydras per week



Black Tower

Cost: 15,000 Gold, 30 Ore, 20 Sulfur

Prerequisites: Maze, Swamp

Effect: 1 Green Dragon per week



Black Tower Upgrade

Cost: 5000 Gold, 5 Ore, 10 Sulfur

Prerequisites: Black Tower

Effect: Upgraded Green Dragons (Red Dragons)



Black Tower Upgrade 2

Cost: 5000 Gold, 5 Ore, 10 Sulfur

Prerequisites: Black Tower Upgrade

Effect: Upgraded Red Dragons (Black Dragons)

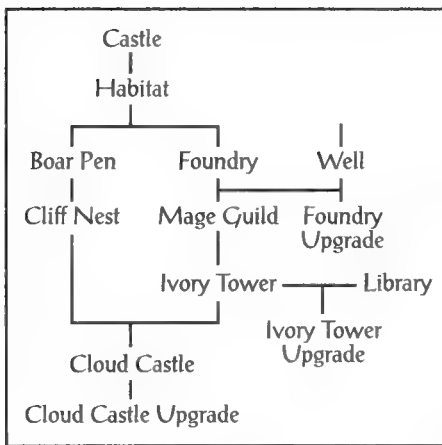


Figure 3-6. Wizard Castle Dependency Chart

Wizard Castles

Wizard castles rank among the most difficult to fully construct. Why? For one thing, completing the full roster of creature dwellings requires a Well, a Library, and a Mage Guild. More importantly, the Ivory Tower and Library are both resource intensive—and as Figure 3-6 illustrates, if you don't build those structures, you can never get the Upgraded Ivory Tower or Cloud Castle. This makes it tough for Wizards to get their highest-level creatures, and presents you with a real challenge if your primary castle is a Wizard castle.



Habitat

Cost: 400 Gold

Prerequisites: —

Effect: 8 Halflings per week

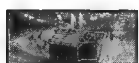


Boar Pen

Cost: 800 Gold

Prerequisites: Habitat

Effect: 6 Boars per week



Foundry

Cost: 1500 Gold, 5 Wood, 5 Ore

Prerequisites: Habitat

Effect: 4 Iron Golems per week

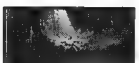


Foundry Upgrade

Cost: 1500 Gold, 5 Mercury

Prerequisites: Foundry, Well

Effect: Upgraded Iron Golems (Steel Golems)



Cliff Nest

Cost: 3000 Gold, 5 Wood

Prerequisites: Boar Pen

Effect: 3 Rocs per week



Ivory Tower

Cost: 3500 Gold, 5 Wood, 5 Ore, 5 Crystals, 5 Gems,
5 Mercury, 5 Sulfur

Prerequisites: Foundry, Mage Guild

Effect: 2 Mages per week



Ivory Tower Upgrade

Cost: 4000 Gold, 5 Wood, 5 Ore

Prerequisites: Ivory Tower, Library

Effect: Upgraded Mages (Archmages)



Cloud Castle

Cost: 12,500 Gold, 5 Wood, 5 Ore, 20 Gems

Prerequisites: Cliff Nest, Ivory Tower

Effect: 1 Giant per week



Cloud Castle Upgrade

Cost: 12,500 Gold, 5 Wood, 5 Ore, 20 Gems

Prerequisites: Cloud Castle

Effect: Upgraded Giants (Titans)

SUMMARY OF CREATURE DWELLING COSTS

Now we'll summarize building costs for each creature dwelling in the six castle types. These charts, and especially the Bottom Line tallying the total cost of building every creature dwelling and upgrade, should give you a good sense of the relative costs of each hero's castle. Use these charts as guides to which heroes have the easiest and most difficult castles to develop, and to the resources you must conquer to develop your castles fully.

Bear in mind that these charts don't include the costs of peripheral structures such as Mage Guilds.

Table 3-2: Barbarian Dwelling Costs

Building Type	Gold Cost	Resource Cost
Hut	300	—
Stick Hut	800	5 Wood
Stick Hut Upgrade	1200	5 Wood
Den	1000	—
Adobe	2000	10 Wood, 10 Ore
Adobe Upgrade	3000	5 Wood, 5 Ore
Bridge	4000	20 Ore
Bridge Upgrade	2000	10 Ore
Pyramid	6000	20 Ore, 20 Crystals

Barbarian's Bottom Line: 20,300 Gold, 25 Wood, 65 Ore, 20 Crystals

Table 3-3: Knight Dwelling Costs

Building Type	Gold Cost	Resource Cost
Thatched Hut	200	—
Archery Range	1000	—
Archery Range Upgrade	1500	5 Wood
Blacksmith	1000	5 Ore
Blacksmith Upgrade	1500	5 Ore
Armory	2000	10 Wood, 10 Ore
Armory Upgrade	2000	5 Wood, 5 Ore
Jousting Arena	3000	20 Wood
Jousting Arena Upgrade	3000	10 Wood
Cathedral	5000	20 Wood, 20 Crystals
Cathedral Upgrade	5000	10 Wood, 10 Crystals

Knight's Bottom Line: 25,200 Gold, 80 Wood, 25 Ore, 30 Crystals

Table 3-4: Necromancer Dwelling Costs

Building Type	Gold Cost	Resource Cost
Archaeological Dig	400	—
Graveyard	1000	—
Graveyard Upgrade	1000	—
Pyramid	1500	10 Ore
Pyramid Upgrade	1500	5 Ore
Mansion	3000	10 Wood
Mansion Upgrade	4000	5 Wood, 10 Gems, 10 Crystals
Mausoleum	4000	10 Ore, 10 Sulfur
Mausoleum Upgrade	3000	5 Ore, 5 Sulfur
Laboratory	10,000	10 Wood, 10 Ore, 5 Gems, 5 Crystals, 5 Mercury, 5 Sulfur

Necromancer's Bottom Line: 29,400 Gold, 25 Wood, 40 Ore, 15 Crystals, 15 Gems, 20 Sulfur, 5 Mercury

Table 3-5: Sorceress Dwelling Costs

<u>Building Type</u>	<u>Gold Cost</u>	<u>Resource Cost</u>
Treehouse	500	5 Wood
Cottage	1000	5 Wood
Cottage Upgrade	1500	5 Wood
Archery Range	1500	—
Archery Range Upgrade	1500	5 Wood
Stonehenge	2500	10 Ore
Stonehenge Upgrade	1500	5 Mercury
Fenced Meadow	3000	10 Wood, 10 Gems
Red Tower	10,000	30 Ore, 20 Mercury

Sorceress' Bottom Line: 23,000 Gold, 30 Wood, 40 Ore, 25 Mercury, 10 Gems

Table 3-6: Warlock Dwelling Costs

<u>Building Type</u>	<u>Gold Cost</u>	<u>Resource Cost</u>
Cave	500	—
Crypt	1000	10 ore
Nest	2000	—
Maze	3000	10 Gems
Maze Upgrade	2000	5 Gems
Swamp	4000	10 Sulfur
Black Tower	15000	30 Ore, 20 Sulfur
Black Tower Upgrade	5000	5 Ore, 10 Sulfur
Black Tower Upgrade 2	5000	5 Ore, 10 Sulfur

Warlock's Bottom Line: 37,500 Gold, 50 Ore, 15 Gems, 50 Sulfur

Table 3-7: Wizard Dwelling Costs

<u>Building Type</u>	<u>Gold Cost</u>	<u>Resource Cost</u>
Habitat	400	—
Boar Pen	800	—
Foundry	1500	5 Wood, 5 Ore
Foundry Upgrade	1500	5 Mercury
Cliff Nest	3000	5 Wood
Ivory Tower	3500	5 Wood, 5 Ore, 5 Crystals, 5 Gems, 5 Mercury, 5 Sulfur
Ivory Tower Upgrade	4000	5 Wood, 5 Ore
Cloud Castle	12,500	5 Wood, 5 Ore, 20 Gems
Cloud Castle Upgrade	12500	5 Wood, 5 Ore, 20 Gems

Wizard's Bottom Line: 39,700 Gold, 30 Wood, 25 Ore, 10 Mercury, 45 Gems, 5 Sulfur

FINAL COST EVALUATIONS

Tables 3-8 and 3-9 give you a final look at the relative costs of building creature dwellings. Table 3-8 compares the Bottom Line of each hero's creature dwelling costs, so you can tell easily which heroes have the cheapest dwelling costs, and which the most exorbitant construction fees. Table 3-9 focuses on resource costs instead of gold, and shows the total amount of resources building each castle requires, as well as the total amount of common resources, rare resources, and the number of **different** resources you need to build every dwelling in the castle (listed under "Diversity").

Every player has different theories about which hero class has the best castle. Instead of giving you our opinion on the matter, we'll just leave you with these tables, and let you decide for yourself.

Table 3-8. Comparison of Total Dwelling Costs

Hero Type	Gold	Wood	Ore	Crystals	Gems	Mercury	Sulfur
Barbarian	20,300	25	65	20	0	0	0
Knight	25,200	80	25	30	0	0	0
Necromancer	29,400	25	40	15	15	5	20
Sorceress	23,000	30	40	0	10	25	0
Warlock	37,500	0	50	0	15	0	50
Wizard	39,700	30	25	0	45	10	5

Table 3-9. Breakdown of Dwelling Resource Costs

Resource Costs	Common	Rare	Total	Diversity
Barbarian	90	20	110	3
Knight	105	30	135	3
Necromancer	65	55	120	6
Sorceress	70	35	105	4
Warlock	50	65	115	3
Wizard	55	60	115	5

ON TO CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4 is a detailed look at every creature in the game. The dwelling costs we covered in this chapter only tell half the story: Read the next chapter to find out what sort of creatures come out of those dwellings, and how they all stack up!



CHAPTER 4

The Bestiary

This chapter will help you evaluate and compare the various creatures of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. Of course, simply knowing the value of each monster won't necessarily help you win. In many games you'll find yourself scrambling to assemble **any** troops at all, regardless of their relative merits or weaknesses. However, every good general knows precisely what each of his armies are capable of, and by studying the full creature roster that makes up the first part of this chapter, you'll become better acquainted with each creature type.

The second part of this chapter takes a different approach. It compares each hero's troops on a one-to-one basis, crossing the boundaries of hero class and revealing the game's most efficient creatures. This section will help you understand where each hero's troop strength lies, and what creatures to load up on when playing that hero type.

THE CREATURE ROSTER

Here you'll find all the relevant statistics for each game creature, with a few pertinent comments on each one. Pay close attention to each creature's attributes **and** its costs, so you can get a good sense of its overall value.

When considering each creature's speed, refer to this translation of terms:

Very Slow	2 hexes/turn
Slow	3 hexes/turn
Average	4 hexes/turn
Fast	5 hexes/turn
Very Fast	6 hexes/turn
Ultra Fast	7 hexes/turn

Barbarian Creatures

Barbarian armies are relatively cheap and good on offense. Plan your battlefield strategy carefully to maximize their potential. For example, Wolves are fast and deliver great damage, but you must ensure that they get in the first hit, because their defense statistic is extremely poor.

The very best Barbarian units typically aren't as powerful as the best units of other classes, but they're very cheap, which makes up for their deficiencies in the early going. However, the game manual is exactly right when it says that Barbarian units tend to falter toward the end of the game: While most other heroes are busy developing super-creatures, the Barbarian's cheap but less-impressive creatures gradually get left in the dust. That's why the

Barbarian is most successful on small maps, where he can take over the world quickly—before the other heroes' castles are fully operational.



Goblin

Attack: 3

Defense: 1

Damage: 1–2

Hits: 3

Speed: Average

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 40

Resources: None

Goblins are fast and good on the attack, and therefore can be useful on the battlefield. Don't expect them to last, though.



Orc

Attack: 3

Defense: 4

Damage: 2–3

Hits: 10

Speed: Very Slow

Shots: 8

Flying: No

Gold: 140

Resources: None

Orcs are the rough equivalent of Archers. They tend to be the first units to die in combat.



Orc Chieftain (Orc upgrade)

Attack: 3

Defense: 4

Damage: 3–4

Hits: 15

Speed: Slow

Shots: 16

Flying: No

Gold: 175

Resources: None

Orc Chieftains deal more damage than regular Orcs, and are somewhat tougher. They still fall like wheat before a scythe in intense combat situations, however.



Wolf

Attack: 6

Defense: 2

Damage: 3–5

Hits: 20

Speed: Very Fast

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 200

Resources: None

Wolves get two attacks per round, which makes them a great unit despite their low defense rating. Just make sure they attack first.



Ogre

Attack: 9

Defense: 5

Damage: 4–6

Hits: 40

Speed: Very Slow

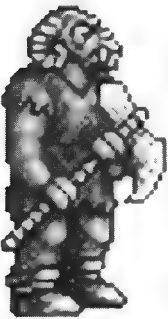
Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 300

Resources: None

Ogres are your basic heavy combat units. Their sluggishness is a liability, but they're necessary to protect your Orcs and Trolls.



Ogre Lord (Ogre upgrade)

Attack: 9

Defense: 5

Damage: 5–7

Hits: 60

Speed: Average

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 500

Resources: None

Ogre Lords are faster and deal more damage than regular Ogres, and they have more hit points, as well. In other words, always upgrade your Ogres.



Troll

Attack: 10

Defense: 5

Damage: 5–7

Hits: 40

Speed: Average

Shots: 8

Flying: No

Gold: 600

Resources: None

Trolls regenerate (heal themselves of all damage) at the end of each combat round. However, dead Trolls don't come back to life; this benefit applies only to living but wounded Trolls.



War Trolls (Troll upgrade)

Attack: 10

Defense: 5

Damage: 7–9

Hits: 40

Speed: Fast

Shots: 16

Flying: No

Gold: 700

Resources: None

War Trolls also regenerate damage between rounds. Their enhanced speed and damage makes them formidable long-range attackers.



Cyclops

Attack: 12

Defense: 9

Damage: 12–24

Hits: 80

Speed: Fast

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 750

Resources: 1 Crystal

A Cyclops attack affects two spaces on the battlefield, so it can damage two units if they happen to be close to one another. Also, the attack will Paralyze its victims (as per the spell) 20 percent of the time.

Cyclopes are not in the same league as Dragons and Titans, which helps explain why Barbarian troops tend to falter in the game's later stages. With nothing to compare to those mighty creatures, the Barbarian armies can't help but lose ground.

Knight Creatures

Knight creatures typically are smaller and weaker than those of other heroes. However, they're extremely tough on defense and fairly cheap, so a high-level Knight can really stock up on them, and make them last for a long time. In some cases, a Knight can buy two creatures to every one his opponents buy.

Like the Barbarian's, Knight's creatures are best in the game's early to middle stages. However, they're durable, and don't falter as quickly as the offense-oriented Barbarian troops. Furthermore, because Paladins and Crusaders require no resources to recruit, they are easier to acquire than the highest-level troops of several other heroes.



Peasant

Attack: 1

Defense: 1

Damage: 1-1

Hits: 1

Speed: Very Slow

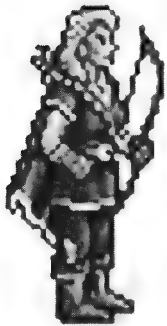
Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 20

Resources: None

Peasants are the game's weakest units. They're so weak, in fact, that they're only one step above being completely useless.



Archer

Attack: 5

Defense: 3

Damage: 2-3

Hits: 10

Speed: Very Slow

Shots: 12

Flying: No

Gold: 150

Resources: None

Archers do good long-range damage but are very fragile. They tend to be among the first units to die in combat, and are only half as effective as Rangers.



Ranger (Archer upgrade)

Attack: 5

Defense: 3

Damage: 2-3

Hits: 10

Speed: Average

Shots: 24

Flying: No

Gold: 200

Resources: None

Rangers get two shots per attack, making them great on offense, but are still quite vulnerable to enemy attack.



Pikeman

Attack: 5

Defense: 9

Damage: 3–4

Hits: 15

Speed: Average

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 200

Resources: None

Pikemen are unremarkable except for their great defense. Assemble a big horde of them, and you can really make them last.



Veteran Pikeman (Pikeman upgrade)

Attack: 5

Defense: 9

Damage: 3–4

Hits: 20

Speed: Fast

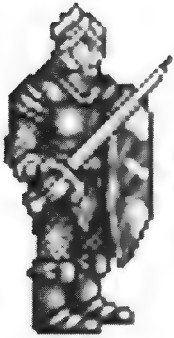
Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 250

Resources: None

Veteran Pikemen are tougher and marginally faster than their unskilled cousins.



Swordsman

Attack: 7

Defense: 9

Damage: 4–6

Hits: 25

Speed: Average

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 250

Resources: None

Swordsmen are slightly bigger and tougher than Pikemen. They deal more damage and can take more abuse, but in other respects are much the same.



Master Swordsman (Swordsman upgrade)

Attack: 7

Defense: 9

Damage: 4—6

Hits: 30

Speed: Fast

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 300

Resources: None

Master Swordsmen are faster and tougher than regular Swordsmen. They form the bulk of the Knight's midgame armies.



Cavalry

Attack: 10

Defense: 9

Damage: 5–10

Hits: 30

Speed: Very Fast

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 300

Resources: None

Cavalry are fast and strong. They usually get the first hit in combat.



Champion (Cavalry upgrade)

Attack: 10

Defense: 9

Damage: 5–10

Hits: 40

Speed: Ultra Fast

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 375

Resources: None

Champions are slightly tougher and faster than Cavalry. The Champion upgrade is extremely useful, virtually guaranteeing that unit the all-important first strike in combat.



Paladin

Attack: 11

Defense: 12

Damage: 10–20

Hits: 50

Speed: Fast

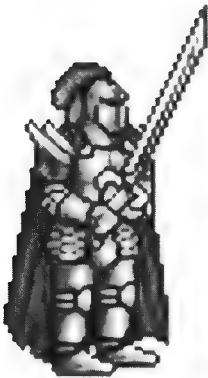
Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 600

Resources: None

Paladins get two attacks per round. They're great on both offense and defense. Make sure they attack first, so they can capitalize on their two strikes.



Crusader (Paladin upgrade)

Attack: 11

Defense: 12

Damage: 10–20

Hits: 65

Speed: Very Fast

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 1000

Resources: None

Crusaders get two attacks per round, do double damage to undead units, and are immune to curse spells. They can't compare with Dragons or Titans, but compare favorably with Cyclopes.

Crusaders can chew through undead armies at a remarkable rate.

Necromancer Units

Necromancer units are all undead. Undead units are immune to Curse, Bless, and all mind-affecting spells. They're always at normal morale, although their presence will lower the morale of other troops grouped with them.

Necromancer units are expensive but quite powerful in the game's later stages. Midlevel Necromancer units like Zombies are pretty lackluster, but Bone Dragons rank among the very best creatures in the game, especially when you consider their relatively low cost.



Skeleton

Attack: 4

Defense: 3

Damage: 2-3

Hits: 4

Speed: Average

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 75

Resources: None

Skeletons are great troops, considering their low cost and great numbers. In fact, they're the game's best basic units. Stock up!



Zombie

Attack: 5

Defense: 2

Damage: 2–3

Hits: 15

Speed: Very Slow

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 150

Resources: None

Zombies are unimpressive but serviceable combat units. They can take a lot more abuse than Skeletons, but otherwise they're not appreciably better.



Mutant Zombie (Zombie upgrade)

Attack: 5

Defense: 2

Damage: 2–3

Hits: 20

Speed: Average

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 200

Resources: None

Mutant Zombies are significantly faster than normal Zombies. Normal Zombies are so slow as to be a nonfactor in most battles, so upgrade as soon as possible.



Mummy

Attack: 6

Defense: 6

Damage: 3–4

Hits: 25

Speed: Average

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 250

Resources: None

Mummies Curse their opponents (as per the spell) 20 percent of the time. Get it, the **Mummy's Curse**? Oh, never mind.

Mummies are decent midlevel troops.



Royal Mummy (Mummy upgrade)

Attack: 6

Defense: 6

Damage: 3–4

Hits: 30

Speed: Fast

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 300

Resources: None

Royal Mummies Curse their opponents 30 percent of the time, and are both faster and tougher than standard Mummies.



Vampire

Attack: 8

Defense: 6

Damage: 5–7

Hits: 30

Speed: Average

Shots: 0

Flying: Yes

Gold: 500

Resources: None

Opponents may not retaliate against Vampire attacks. Vampires are marginally better than many other creatures of the same level, but are relatively expensive.



Vampire Lord (Vampire upgrade)

Attack: 8

Defense: 6

Damage: 5–7

Hits: 40

Speed: Fast

Shots: 0

Flying: Yes

Gold: 650

Resources: None

Vampire Lords have all the abilities of a normal Vampire, have increased statistics, and gain back some of the damages they inflict in the form of hit points.

Again, Vampire Lords are better than many other troops of the same level, but are also more costly.



Lich

Attack: 7
Defense: 12
Damage: 8–10
Hits: 25
Speed: Fast
Shots: 12
Flying: No
Gold: 750
Resources: None

Liches throw fireballs that affect not only the target space but the six spaces surrounding it. This makes them great long-range attackers. They have low hit points but great defense, making them excellent at clearing out weak to medium-strength opponents, but vulnerable to foes with high attack ratings.



Power Lich (Lich upgrade)

Attack: 7
Defense: 13
Damage: 8–10
Hits: 35
Speed: Very Fast
Shots: 24
Flying: No
Gold: 900
Resources: None

Power Liches are improved Liches, with a similar attack method. They're faster, tougher, and can take a lot more punishment than regular Liches, so you'd be wise to upgrade quickly.



Bone Dragons

Attack: 11

Defense: 9

Damage: 25–45

Hits: 150

Speed: Average

Shots: 0

Flying: Yes

Gold: 1500

Resources: None

Bone Dragons' mere presence reduces the morale of opposing troops. They aren't the game's strongest creatures, but they're affordable, cost no resources to create, and can inflict excellent damage. Just bear in mind that Bone Dragons aren't as durable as the other Dragon types, nor are they as fast, so you must move them with care, and ensure they attack first whenever possible.

Sorceress Creatures

Sorceress units typically are fast and relatively cheap, but not too strong. With both Elves and Druids in her army, long-range attacks are also a Sorceress specialty. Anyone playing a Sorceress must master hit-and-run tactics.

The preponderance of long-range attackers and speedy flying attackers in Sorceress armies makes them a good match for reasonably powerful opponents, and makes Sorceress castles easy to defend. But the vulnerable long-range troops make it hard for the Sorceress to go on the road and win several consecutive victories; the long-range troops simply die too easily.

The Sorceress flourishes on medium-sized maps, where she's unlikely to face opponents fast and strong enough to get through to her long-range troops.



Sprite

Attack: 4

Defense: 2

Damage: 1-2

Hits: 2

Speed: Average

Shots: 0

Flying: Yes

Gold: 50

Resources: None

Opponents can't retaliate against Sprite attacks. This makes Sprites quite useful as a second or third attacker; send 'em in when your other units are already engaged; they can inflict extra damage and take none in return.



Dwarf

Attack: 6

Defense: 5

Damage: 2–4

Hits: 20

Speed: Very Slow

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 200

Resources: None

Dwarves are unusually slow for a Sorceress unit, but they're quite strong, and are helpful for defense when the ranged-attack units come under fire. They have a 25 percent chance to resist all hostile spells.



Battle Dwarf (Dwarf upgrade)

Attack: 6

Defense: 6

Damage: 2–4

Hits: 20

Speed: Average

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 250

Resources: None

Battle Dwarves retain the magic resistance of normal Dwarves, and are significantly faster.

**Elf**

Attack: 4

Defense: 3

Damage: 2–3

Hits: 15

Speed: Average

Shots: 24

Flying: No

Gold: 250

Resources: None

Elves get two shots per attack, but, like Orcs and Archers, they're quite fragile.

**Grand Elf (Elf upgrade)**

Attack: 5

Defense: 5

Damage: 2–3

Hits: 15

Speed: Very Fast

Shots: 32

Flying: No

Gold: 300

Resources: None

Grand Elves also get two shots per attack, and are both faster and stronger than regular Elves.



Druid

Attack: 7

Defense: 5

Damage: 5–8

Hits: 25

Speed: Fast

Shots: 8

Flying: No

Gold: 350

Resources: None

Druids are among the game's best long-range combatants. However, as with Elves, the trick is to protect them with Dwarves and Unicorns, or their lack of durability (compared to creatures of similar levels) eventually catches up to them.



Greater Druid (Druid upgrade)

Attack: 7

Defense: 7

Damage: 5–8

Hits: 25

Speed: Very Fast

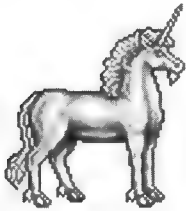
Shots: 16

Flying: No

Gold: 400

Resources: None

Greater Druids are faster and more durable than normal Druids, making them somewhat harder to kill.



Unicorn

Attack: 10
Defense: 9
Damage: 7–14
Hits: 40
Speed: Fast
Shots: 0
Flying: No
Gold: 500
Resources: None

Unicorns Blind their opponents (as per the spell) 20 percent of the time. They're solid all-around troops, although they possess no extraordinary skills or abilities.



Phoenix

Attack: 12
Defense: 10
Damage: 20–40
Hits: 100
Speed: Ultra Fast
Shots: 0
Flying: Yes
Gold: 1500
Resources: 1 Mercury

Phoenix attacks can damage creatures in two adjacent spaces. Phoenixes also are immune to elemental spells. Considering their cost, their relatively fragile constitution (only 100 hit points, compared to Bone Dragons' 150), and the fact that you need mercury as well as gold to recruit them, Phoenixes are less than ideal top-level creatures.

Warlock Creatures

Warlock units are extremely powerful, but are also quite expensive. This can be a problem in games where money is tight, but a great advantage in games where gold is plentiful.

High-level Warlock creatures are extremely powerful, but their low-level creatures aren't bad, either. This means the Warlock is a very versatile hero. His troops are strong enough to hold their own in the game's early stages, very tough in the middle stages, and simply overwhelming in the late stages, when Dragons become available.

Warlocks can flourish anywhere, but are best on large maps, where there's plenty of space and time to build Black Towers.



Centaur

Attack: 3

Defense: 1

Damage: 1–2

Hits: 5

Speed: Average

Shots: 8

Flying: No

Gold: 60

Resources: None

Centaurs are ranged-attack units, and therefore are useful despite their minuscule cost. Their most common role is that of whipping boy (that is, they absorb damage from the other side, thus saving your other, more important units).



Gargoyle

Attack: 4

Defense: 7

Damage: 2–3

Hits: 15

Speed: Very Fast

Shots: 0

Flying: Yes

Gold: 200

Resources: None

Defensively, Gargoyles are fast and tough—a great combination. Gargoyles are extremely useful in castle sieges.



Griffin

Attack: 6

Defense: 6

Damage: 3–5

Hits: 25

Speed: Average

Shots: 0

Flying: Yes

Gold: 300

Resources: None

Griffins can retaliate against an unlimited number of enemy attacks per round, instead of the usual single retaliation. They're also a good all-around unit.



Minotaur

Attack: 9

Defense: 8

Damage: 5–10

Hits: 35

Speed: Average

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 400

Resources: None

Minotaurs are extremely tough, with no real weaknesses. Upgrade them to Minotaur Kings as soon as possible.



Minotaur King (Minotaur upgrade)

Attack: 9

Defense: 8

Damage: 5–10

Hits: 45

Speed: Very Fast

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 500

Resources: None

Minotaur Kings are ideal warriors. They have no special abilities, but their sheer speed and power make up for it. Their speed allows them to close in on enemies quickly, and their power ensures they can handle anything they encounter when they get there.



Hydra

Attack: 8

Defense: 9

Damage: 6–12

Hits: 75

Speed: Very Slow

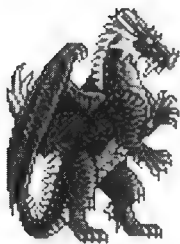
Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 800

Resources: None

Hydras attack all adjacent enemy units with each powerful attack, which is brutal if you manage to get them in the thick of your foes. Unfortunately, they're also very slow, and you'll need special tactics to use them effectively. All things considered, Hydras are great for castle defense, and against armies that don't employ lots of ranged-attack units.



Green Dragon

Attack: 12

Defense: 12

Damage: 25–50

Hits: 200

Speed: Average

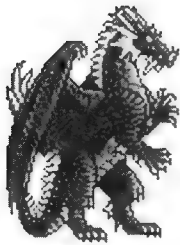
Shots: 0

Flying: Yes

Gold: 3000

Resources: 1 Sulfur

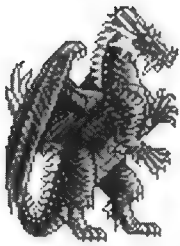
Green Dragons are among the game's most powerful units, second only to Red Dragons, Black Dragons, and Titans. Their breath attack damages two adjacent hexes, and they're immune to all spells, both friends' and foes'.



Red Dragon (Dragon upgrade)

Attack: 13
Defense: 13
Damage: 25–50
Hits: 250
Speed: Fast
Shots: 0
Flying: Yes
Gold: 3500
Resources: 1 Sulfur

Red Dragons are even meaner than regular Dragons, and retain all a regular Dragon's special abilities. They're a match for a Titan, especially when backed by a powerful spellcaster.



Black Dragon (Red Dragon upgrade)

Attack: 14
Defense: 14
Damage: 25–50
Hits: 300
Speed: Very Fast
Shots: 0
Flying: Yes
Gold: 4000
Resources: None

Black Dragons are incredibly powerful. With a breath attack that extends for two hexes and total magic immunity, it's generally considered the game's best unit—but it's also wildly expensive.

Wizard Creatures

Like Warlock creatures, Wizard creatures are very strong but very costly. Their ranged-attack troops are supreme, thanks to the formidable powers of Mages and Titans.

Wizard armies are weak in the game's early stages, but become strong as soon as they incorporate Golems. The Wizard's highest-level troops usually are not quite a match for those of the Warlock, but their brutal long-range attacks allow the Wizard to endure many battles without losing any creatures.

Like Warlocks, Wizards tend to flourish on large maps, although they can hold their own on any map once a they have a Foundry.



Halfling

Attack: 2

Defense: 1

Damage: 1-3

Hits: 3

Speed: Slow

Shots: 12

Flying: No

Gold: 50

Resources: None

Halflings are quite effective ranged-attack troops, considering their low cost.



Boar

Attack: 5

Defense: 4

Damage: 2–3

Hits: 15

Speed: Very Fast

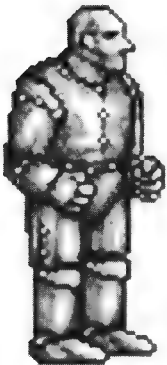
Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 150

Resources: None

Boars are fast but lack defense. Their speed helps, though, and makes them great for taking out enemy ranged-attack troops.



Iron Golem

Attack: 5

Defense: 10

Damage: 4–5

Hits: 30

Speed: Very Slow

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 300

Resources: None

Iron Golems take half damage from elemental spells. They're tough and extremely hard to kill; however, their awful speed makes them vulnerable to enemy distance attacks.



Steel Golem (Iron Golem upgrade)

Attack: 7

Defense: 10

Damage: 4–5

Hits: 35

Speed: Slow

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 350

Resources: None

Steel Golems also take half damage from elemental spells. Their added speed is vital, so construct the upgrade as soon as possible.



Roc

Attack: 7

Defense: 7

Damage: 4–8

Hits: 40

Speed: Average

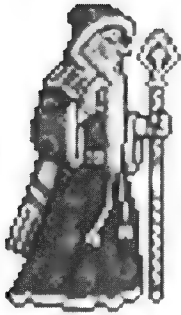
Shots: 0

Flying: Yes

Gold: 400

Resources: None

The Roc is a solid flying unit with no remarkable abilities.



Mage

Attack: 11

Defense: 7

Damage: 7–9

Hits: 30

Speed: Fast

Shots: 12

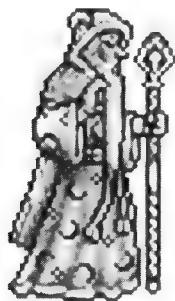
Flying: No

Gold: 600

Resources: None

Mages are among the game's best long-range combatants. They also do full damage at close range, ignoring the usual half-damage penalty.

The damage inflicted by Mages is so significant they can often demolish enemy attackers before they get close.



Archmage (Mage upgrade)

Attack: 12

Defense: 8

Damage: 7–9

Hits: 35

Speed: Very Fast

Shots: 24

Flying: No

Gold: 700

Resources: None

Archmages are superior to normal Mages in attack, defense, speed, and hit points. Like normal Mages, they do full damage at close range. Furthermore, they have a 20 percent chance of dispelling beneficial spells on their targets.

Archmages are much better than regular Mages. Cast Stoneskin or Steelskin on them, and you can partially cover for their greatest weakness—a lack of hit points.



Giant

Attack: 13

Defense: 10

Damage: 20–30

Hits: 150

Speed: Average

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 2000

Resources: 1 Gem

Giants are immune to mind spells. They have great hit points and do very good damage, putting them in roughly the same class as Bone Dragons.



Titan (Giant upgrade)

Attack: 15

Defense: 15

Damage: 20–30

Hits: 300

Speed: Very Fast

Shots: 16

Flying: No

Gold: 5000

Resources: 2 Gems

These monsters have an unparalleled long-range attack, and do full damage at close range as well. They're also immune to mind-affecting spells.

Titans can take on the highest-level Dragons. They're also more expensive than the highest-level dragons, but this isn't a problem on large maps with lots of resources.

Neutral Creatures

These creatures can be allies or enemies, depending on the situation you encounter them in. Learn them well, because you'll face them many times over the course of your adventures.



Rogue

Attack: 6

Defense: 1

Damage: 1–2

Hits: 4

Speed: Fast

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 50

Resources: None

Rogues are tough on offense, and foes can't retaliate against their attacks. However, they're weak on defense, and a well-considered first attack can slice them to bits. They're most useful in large numbers, or in the game's early stages.



Nomad

Attack: 7

Defense: 6

Damage: 2–5

Hits: 20

Speed: Very Fast

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: 200

Resources: None

Nomads are formidable troops, and make useful allies. Think of them as Cavalry with an emphasis on offense.



Ghost

Attack: 8
Defense: 7
Damage: 4–6
Hits: 20
Speed: Fast
Shots: 0
Flying: Yes
Gold: N/A
Resources: N/A

All units killed by Ghosts become Ghosts. That means you're doomed to failure if you attack them with a horde of tiny creatures: The little guys just get absorbed, and before you know it you're facing hundreds of Ghosts.

Unfortunately, you can't hire or otherwise employ Ghosts in your armies.



Genie

Attack: 10
Defense: 9
Damage: 20–30
Hits: 50
Speed: Very Fast
Shots: 0
Flying: Yes
Gold: 650
Resources: 1 Gem

Genies have a 10 percent chance of halving the number of opponents in the unit they attack. Genies are tougher than Paladins and are extremely cheap, provided you have gems: Hire them if you can!



Medusa

Attack: 8

Defense: 9

Damage: 6–10

Hits: 35

Speed: Average

Shots: 0

Flying: No

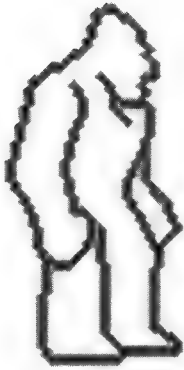
Gold: 500

Resources: None

Medusas have a 20 percent chance of turning the victim of their attack to stone. Yikes! This ability gives Medusas a measure of power that extends well beyond their conventional damage-dealing capabilities.

Elementals

Elementals are neutral creatures you can summon for the duration of combat or entrust to guard a specific location. Elementals are immune to mind-affecting spells, and they always have neutral morale.



Air Elemental

Attack: 7

Defense: 7

Damage: 2–8

Hits: 35

Speed: Very Fast

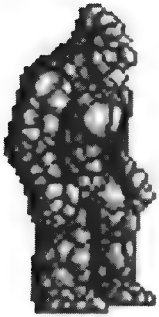
Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: N/A

Resources: N/A

Air Elementals are immune to mind spells and Meteor Swarm. Storm and Lightning Bolt deal double damage to Air Elementals.



Earth Elemental

Attack: 8

Defense: 8

Damage: 4–5

Hits: 50

Speed: Slow

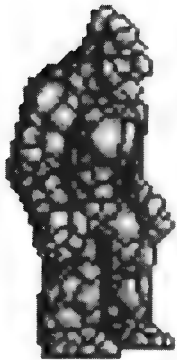
Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: N/A

Resources: N/A

Earth Elementals are immune to the Lightning Bolt and Storm spells, but are twice as vulnerable to Meteor Swarm.



Fire Elemental

Attack: 8

Defense: 6

Damage: 4–6

Hits: 40

Speed: Fast

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: N/A

Resources: N/A

Fire Elementals are immune to fire spells, but doubly vulnerable to cold spells.



Water Elemental

Attack: 6

Defense: 8

Damage: 3–7

Hits: 45

Speed: Average

Shots: 0

Flying: No

Gold: N/A

Resources: N/A

Water Elementals are immune to cold spells, but are twice as vulnerable to fire spells as normal units.

CREATURE COMPARISON

At first glance, it may appear that some hero classes have access to a more diverse selection of creatures than others. However, when you strip away all the upgraded creatures (such as Minotaur Kings and Battle Dwarves), you'll find that each hero has only six basic creature types. This section compares each hero's creatures, giving you a clear idea of which class has the best monsters at each stage of the game.

We have assigned each creature a "level" corresponding to its cost and availability. For example, every hero starts the game with Level One creatures in his or her castle—Peasants, Sprites, and so forth. These are the game's weakest creatures. The next level includes slightly more powerful creatures—Orcs, Archers, Dwarves, and the like. By comparing creatures of similar cost and availability from each hero's menagerie, you can arrive at a better understanding of each creature type's true worth.

Of course, there isn't always a clear winner when you compare monsters of similar levels: Some are too similar, while others are too radically different in cost or abilities to judge them properly. However, investigating the differences between all the game's creatures will give you a good idea of which you'd like to use in your own armies.

Level One Creatures

Level One monsters are the so-called "swarm" creatures of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. They're effective only in huge swarms, and even then, you can't count on them for much. Each hero can construct a building that increases the weekly production of these "swarm" creatures, thus providing the vast numbers required to make them marginally effective.

This is not to say that Level One creatures are entirely useless, or that you should bypass them completely. Because enemy armies often ignore them, you can sometimes march Level One monsters up to your opponent for an unchallenged attack. Furthermore, there are times when a "cannon fodder" unit is extremely useful: Your Level One monsters can attack first and then absorb the enemy's retaliation attack, while your more important troops move in later for an unchallenged cheap shot.

Table 4-1. Level One Creatures

Monster	Owner	Hit Points	Speed	Flying?	Shots	Attack/Defense	Damage	Gold	Resources	Special
Goblin	B	3	4	No	0	3/1	1-2	40	None	None
Peasant	K	1	2	No	0	1/1	1-1	20	None	None
Skeleton	N	4	4	No	0	4/3	2-3	75	None	None
Sprite	S	2	4	Yes	0	4/2	1-2	50	None	Yes
Centaur	Wa	5	4	No	8	3/1	1-2	60	None	None
Halfling	Wi	3	3	No	12	2/1	1-3	50	None	None

Table 4-1 summarizes the game's Level One creatures. Note the singular uselessness of the Peasant. Other Level One creatures can occasionally damage an enemy unit, but Peasants are so feeble you need a vast number of

them to make them into any sort of military threat. They typically are useful, therefore, only as cannon fodder—and their lack of speed makes them poor even in this capacity.

Next come Goblins. They're almost as useless as Peasants, but their superior speed, power, and damage abilities put them in a higher class.

Centaurs, Halflings and Sprites are superior Level One monsters. Centaurs and Halflings are archers, and Sprites can fly, so they're all very likely to damage (or at least get close to) the enemy, thus fulfilling their "cannon fodder" role nicely, and sometimes even getting in a meaningful attack. Because Centaurs and Halflings are archers, enemy archers will target them automatically—and that's useful for taking the heat off your other troops. Furthermore, if the enemy does ignore them for some reason, their distance attack lets them inflict significant damage. Sprites can fly in for a quick attack with no fear of retaliation. Of course, when they are attacked, their low hit points guarantee they'll die in droves.

The best Level One creature undoubtedly is the Skeleton. Its speed, damage-dealing ability, and attack and defense ratings are at the very top of its class, and its hit points are not far behind. Sure, Skeletons cost more than other Level One creatures, but who cares? Level One creatures are all so cheap it hardly matters. What matters is effectiveness, and Skeletons are effective, indeed.

In summary, the Warlock, Sorceress, Wizard, and especially the Necromancer benefit most from building "swarm" buildings in their castles. The Barbarian may benefit as well, but often to a lesser extent. The Knight, however, shouldn't even bother.

Level Two Creatures

Level Two monsters typically are affordable, but are not terribly effective. None of them are that expensive, however, and massing them into large armies under the guidance of a capable hero can make them a force to reckon with.

Table 4-2. Level Two Creatures

Creature	Owner	Hit Points	Speed	Flying?	Shots	Defense	Attack/Damage	Gold	Resources	Special
Orc	B	10	2	No	8	3/4	2-3	140	None	None
Archer	K	10	2	No	12	5/3	2-3	150	None	None
Zombie	N	15	2	No	0	5/2	2-3	150	None	None
Dwarf	S	20	2	No	0	6/5	2-4	200	None	Magic Resistance (25% chance)
Gargoyle	Wa	15	6	Yes	0	4/7	2-3	200	None	None
Boar	Wi	15	6	No	0	5/4	2-3	150	None	None

Table 4-2 compares each hero's Level Two creatures. These creatures tend to be fragile and easily destroyed, but powerful enough to inflict good damage in return.

Orcs and Archers are the only ranged-attack units in this class, so it's hard to compare them to the other units. Long-distance attackers can be a great asset in castle assault and defense, and against slow opponents, where their ability to strike from a distance often can be decisive. However, these units are something of a liability in most other situations: Enemy attackers always pick them apart first, and their damage-dealing ability decreases by half when an enemy unit is adjacent to them. Of these two creature types, Archers come out slightly ahead. Orcs are marginally tougher, but Archers deal more damage and can fire 12 times, although they rarely need their extra shots except in prolonged castle defense. The Orc Chieftain upgrades enjoy enhanced damage ability and hit points, but Rangers' two shots per attack renders them clearly superior.

Of the nonmissile troops, Zombies are the losers. If not for their enhanced hit points, they'd be no better than Skeletons! When upgraded to Mutant Zombies, they gain extra hit points and speed, but still are nothing more than durable Skeletons.

Next come Gargoyles and Boars. Both are quite fast and capable of dealing good damage. The Gargoyle has slightly less power, but substantially

greater toughness, and can fly. It's the better creature of the two. Note that you can upgrade neither Boars nor Gargoyles.

Dwarves are arguably the best all-around troops in this class, although in some situations they take a back seat to the faster Gargoyles. They're slow, but they have the most hit points and greatest damage capability of any Level Two creature. Furthermore, upgrading them to Battle Dwarves doubles their speed and gains them a slight edge in toughness.

Level Three Creatures

Level three creatures are a fairly well-balanced group. Each creature has definite advantages and disadvantages, but no one creature is vastly superior to another. Table 4-3 rounds them up.

Table 4-3. Level Three Creatures

Creature	Owner	Hit Points	Speed	Flying?	Shots	Attack/Defense	Damage	Gold	Resources	Special
Wolf	B	20	6	No	0	6/2	3-5	200	None	2 Attacks
Pikeman	K	15	4	No	0	5/9	3-4	200	None	None
Mummy	N	25	4	No	0	6/6	3-4	250	None	Curse Enemy (20% chance)
Elf	S	15	4	No	24	4/3	2-3	250	None	2 Shots per Attack
Griffin	Wa	25	4	Yes	0	6/6	3-5	300	None	Unlimited Retaliation
Iron Golem	Wi	30	2	No	0	5/10	4-5	300	None	1/2 Damage from Elements

The Elf is the only ranged-attack unit in the lot. Elves' puny toughness and hit points make them extremely vulnerable on the battlefield. If you use Elves, always upgrade them to Grand Elves, thus taking advantage of the Grand Elves' superior speed and damage capabilities. However, even with this upgrade, Elves can be a liability unless you face slow opponents or are

sieging or defending a castle. In those circumstances they can be excellent; Grand Elves are notoriously good castle defenders.

Pikemen and Wolves come next. In their basic state, Pikemen cost the same as Wolves, have slightly lower power, slightly lower damage capabilities, lower speed, and fewer hit points. However, they have an excellent defense value, which goes a long way toward keeping them alive. When you upgrade Pikemen to Veteran Pikemen, you get a more costly unit, but you also get five extra hit points and slightly better speed, resulting in a unit that's clearly superior to Wolves. Wolves, however are not far behind Pikemen in terms of abilities, and are more cost-effective. Their low defense isn't a problem if you group them into a huge pack and take advantage of their great speed, sending them in to shred weak enemy units who won't live long enough to counterattack.

Mummies and Griffins form the next tier of creatures. Both are very good: Mummies have good attack, defense, speed, and damage capabilities, plus a nice special ability. They're also cheap. When upgraded to Royal Mummies, they're as expensive as Griffins, but are slightly faster and possess more hit points. Griffins have the advantage of flying, possess a more reliable special ability, and can do slightly more damage than either type of Mummy. Neither creature is demonstrably superior to the other.

Iron Golems are probably the most powerful creatures in this class, but they have the drawback of being very slow. Lack of speed is sometimes a nonfactor, but can be a real killer when you face an army full of long-range attackers. With this weakness in mind, we must admit that Iron Golems are real bruisers: They're quite powerful and fantastically tough. They deal the most damage of any creature in this class, and have great hit points. When upgraded to Steel Golems, they're marginally faster, and possess the best power and hit points of any Level Three monster, in addition to their already remarkable defense. An army of Golems is an army to reckon with. Add them to a hero with great Defense, and you've got a unit that's extremely hard to kill.

Level Four Creatures

It's hard to declare a clear winner among Level Four creatures. The weaker monsters tend to be good "value" monsters, while the more expensive units tend to be worth the extra gold. Table 4-4 compares these midlevel troops.

Table 4-4. Level Four Creatures

Creature	Owner	Hit Points	Speed	Flying?	Shots	Attack/Defense	Damage	Gold	Resources	Special
Ogre	B	40	2	No	0	9/5	4-6	300	None	None
Swordsman	K	25	4	No	0	7/9	4-6	250	None	None
Vampire	N	30	4	Yes	0	8/6	5-7	500	None	No Retaliation
Druid	S	25	5	No	8	7/5	5-8	350	None	None
Minotaur	Wa	35	4	No	0	9/8	5-10	400	None	None
Roc	Wi	40	4	Yes	0	7/7	4-8	400	None	None

The only missile-firing unit in this category is the Druid. Druids share the same weaknesses as other ranged attackers—few hit points (the lowest in Level Four), attack and defense ratings that are lower than the norm, and weakened close-range attacks. However, Druids have sufficient attack and damage ratings to inflict significant damage, and they're mobile enough to evade slow enemies. As Greater Druids they gain a bit of defense and speed.

Of the close-combat troops in this category, Swordsmen initially appear to be the weakest. As Master Swordsmen their hit points climb to 30, and they gain a point of speed, but their cost also grows to match that of a basic Ogre, and a Master Swordsman is not always a match for a bloodthirsty Ogre, not to mention a bloodthirsty Ogre Lord. Speaking of Ogres, they lack Swordsmen's high defense rating and speed, but their excellent hit points and attack rating make them a surefire favorite if you use 'em properly (that is, **strike first**). As Ogre Lords their hit points become truly excellent, and they gain both speed and damage ability. However, they're also more expensive than Master Swordsmen. From an economic standpoint, therefore, you can consider Swordsmen a bargain.

The Roc is also something of a bargain. For 400 Gold you get a flying creature with good speed, attack and defense, damage, and hit points. It isn't upgradable, but it's a solid creature, and arguably better than the more expensive Ogre Lord.

At the high end of the scale are the Vampire and Minotaur. In terms of sheer power, they're more than a match for a Roc, even in their basic forms. In their upgraded forms, they're expensive but arguably the most powerful creatures of the lot. The Vampire Lord's power comes from high statistics (great hit points and attack, good damage and speed) and great special abilities (it flies, does not permit retaliation, and drains life from its opponents to cure itself). The Minotaur King, by contrast, has no special abilities and doesn't even fly, but its raw statistics are remarkable. Excellent attack and defense ratings, the best damage rating in this class, very good hit points and excellent speed make the Minotaur King a formidable foe, even for a Vampire Lord—especially if it uses its speed to best advantage and attacks first.

Level Five Creatures

Level Five creatures are truly a mixed bag, in terms of both cost and abilities. Perhaps the biggest winner is the Knight, whose Cavalry units are relatively weak, but extremely cheap (see Table 4-5).

Table 4-5. Level Five Creatures

Creature	Owner	Hit Points	Speed	Flying?	Shots	Attack/Defense	Damage	Gold	Resources	Special
Troll	B	40	4	No	8	10/5	5–7	600	None	Regenerates
Cavalry	K	30	6	No	0	10/9	5–10	300	None	None
Lich	N	25	5	No	12	7/12	8–10	750	None	Fireball (area effect)
Unicorn	S	40	5	No	0	10/9	7–14	500	None	Blinds (20% chance)
Hydra	Wa	75	2	No	0	8/9	6–12	800	None	No Retaliation, Attacks All Adjacent Hexes
Mage	Wi	30	5	No	12	11/7	7–9	600	None	No Adjacent Penalty

There are three ranged units in this category—Mage, Lich, and Troll. The basic Mage and Troll cost the same, as do their upgrades. Trolls have slightly better hit points and can regenerate, but Mages have higher defense ratings. Mages are faster, have higher attack and defense, and do more damage per attack. Furthermore, they suffer no damage penalty in close combat. In their upgraded forms, War Trolls get a bit of extra speed and damage ability, while Archmages gain speed, attack, and defense. Overall, Archmages and Liches tend to be the superior units, though one could make a case for each creature type.

Liches cost more than the other missile units. They also have lower hit points and attack power than the others, but deal better damage and have higher defense. As upgraded Power Liches, they gain a significant number of hit points, a bit of speed, and yet more defense. This makes them somewhat harder to kill. It's the Lich's remarkable fireball attack, however, that really puts it over the top in terms of power. The Lich's ranged attack damages creatures in several hexes, instead of just damaging a single target. This makes Liches the artillery units of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**, and a real force to reckon with.

Of the remaining units, Cavalry, and their upgraded brethren, Champions, would seem to be the worst. However, their extremely low cost enables Knights to stock their armies with many of these creatures, making them extremely effective. Unicorns are slower than Champions, but deal more damage and have the special ability of temporarily blinding their opponents. However, Unicorns' higher cost makes Champions look cheap by comparison.

Hydras form this category's final unit, and they're very tough, indeed. They damage creatures in all adjacent hexes, so they can be great for clearing out big clumps of enemy troops. Furthermore, they have huge hit-point totals. Using Hydras effectively can be tricky: They're extremely slow, and it's difficult to position them where their special ability is useful. Despite this, Hydras are perhaps the toughest of all Level Five units.

Level Six Creatures

Level Six creatures have several distinct power levels. However, even though some creatures are more powerful than others, all are very potent, and the very best creatures have significant costs. See Table 4-6 for details.

Table 4-6. Level Six Creatures

Creature	Owner	Hit Points	Speed	Flying!	Shots	Attack/Defense	Damage	Gold	Resources	Special
Cyclops	B	80	5	No	0	12/9	12–24	750	Crys	20% Chance to Paralyze, 2-Space Area Attack
Paladin	K	50	5	No	0	11/12	10–20	600	None	2 Attacks
Bone Dragon	N	150	4	Yes	0	11/9	25–45	1500	None	Mass Fear (Reduces Morale)
Phoenix	S	100	7	Yes	0	12/10	20–40	1500	Merc	Area Effect Attack
Green Dragon	Wa	200	4	Yes	0	12/12	25–50	3000	Sulf	Magic Immunity, Area Attack
Giant	Wi	150	4	No	0	13/10	20–30	2000	Gems	Immune to Mind Spells

Cyclopes and Paladins represent the bottom tier of Level Six creatures, in terms of both power and cost. Cyclopes enjoy the edge in power, damage, and hit points. However, Paladins have significantly better defense and are cheaper. Paladins can be upgraded, while Cyclopes can't.

Upgraded Paladins are called Crusaders. A Crusader costs more in gold than a Cyclops, but his ability to strike twice each round makes him much more useful than a Cyclops, whose two-space attack is worthless unless enemy units line up conveniently. Furthermore, Cyclopes require crystals, whereas Knights are one of only two Level Six creatures requiring no resources other than gold to produce. That may not seem significant, but believe us, it is.

Next come Phoenixes and Bone Dragons. Phoenixes have fewer hit points and inflict less damage than Bone Dragons, but have superior attack and defense ratings, and are much faster. The Phoenix's area attack is fairly useful, as is the Bone Dragon's aura of fear. Both units cost the same amount

of gold, but the Bone Dragon requires no resources, making it a significantly better unit in the eyes of some generals.

At the top of the heap are Dragons and Giants. Both have upgrades—you can actually upgrade the Dragon twice! Both require insane amounts of gold, and both require special resources. There's really no comparison between these units and the other Level Six units; these two are far more powerful. Between fully upgraded Giants (Titans) and fully upgraded Dragons (Black Dragons), it's hard to decide which is better. Dragons attack multiple spaces and resist magic, but Titans have a crushing long-range attack, and no penalty for short-range combat. Both units have their followings.

AND THE WINNER IS...

In many cases you'll want as many troops as you can get your hands on, regardless of how good or bad they are. Furthermore, no unit (except perhaps the Peasant) is so inferior that it's completely worthless. However, on some occasions you must pick and choose, and hopefully this section has given you a good idea of which units are most worthwhile out of each class, and therefore which units to spend your gold on first. Also, this comparison should give you a good idea of where each hero's strength lies. Knights have cheap and effective "swarm" attackers at all levels except the lowest. Barbarian units are even cheaper, with Ogres standing out for efficiency and durability—but no Barbarian units are truly superior. Dwarves and Unicorns are a particular strength of the Sorceress. Gargoyles, Hydra, and Minotaurs are a great investment for the Warlock, as are the all-powerful Dragons. Golems and Titans are excellent Wizard units, while Skeletons and Bone Dragons make the Necromancer's job easier in the early and late phases of the game, respectively.

Ultimately, you must decide which units you think are best. Such judgments will come naturally as you play the game again and again. Who knows? Perhaps you'll prove these creature evaluations completely wrong and conquer the world with an army of Peasants! Until then, however, consider this chapter your definitive guide to the creatures of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**.



CHAPTER 5

The Treasury

The lands of Might and Magic contain dozens of unique artifacts and locales. This chapter documents every item and interactive site your heroes might encounter. The following easy-to-read charts will help you gauge the worth of each artifact and location. Refer to this chapter to decide beforehand whether a given location is worth visiting or a given artifact worth possessing. This is the same knowledge your computer opponents already possess, so read carefully!

ARTIFACTS

We've sorted the following artifacts into function-based categories. This breakdown allows you to compare artifacts with similar abilities and gain a better sense of each item's relative power.

A table of artifacts follows the general introduction to each category (for example, "Attack Skill Artifacts," "Gold Producers").

A Note Concerning Artifact Class

There are four classes of artifact—Treasure, Minor, Major, and Ultimate. These categories have no impact on how the artifact works. Rather, they're abstract categories that affect where your heroes will find that particular artifact. For example, one Adventure screen location might possess a random Treasure artifact, while another might hold a random Major artifact. In essence, then, each artifact's category defines where and under what circumstances your hero will find it. The list of Adventure screen locations later in this chapter reveals which artifact categories are associated with which sites.

Attack Skill Artifacts

These artifacts enhance your hero's Attack skill. Some artifacts, like the Spiked Shield and Spiked Helm, enhance both Attack and Defense.

The Dragon Sword of Dominion and the Spiked Shield are undoubtedly the best artifacts in this category.

Table 5-1. Attack Skill Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Dragon Sword of Dominion	Major	+3 Attack
Spiked Shield	Major	+2 Attack, +2 Defense
Power Axe of Dominion	Minor	+2 Attack
Spiked Helm	Minor	+1 Attack, +1 Defense
Giant Flail of Dominion	Treasure	+1 Attack
Thunder Mace of Dominion	Minor	+1 Attack

Defense Skill Artifacts

These artifacts augment a hero's Defense skill. Defense makes Knights and Barbarians even tougher, and adds a much-needed boost to the toughness of spellcasters' armies.

Table 5-2. Defense Skill Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Divine Breastplate of Protection	Major	+3 Defense
Spiked Shield	Major	+2 Defense, +2 Attack
Stealth Shield of Protection	Minor	+2 Defense
Spiked Helm	Minor	+1 Defense, +1 Attack
Defender's Helm of Protection	Treasure	+1 Defense
Armored Gauntlets of Protection	Treasure	+1 Defense

Spell Power Artifacts

Want a quick boost for your Spell Power? These artifacts are just the ticket.

Table 5-3. Spell Power Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Arcane Necklace of Magic	Major	+4 Spell Power
Witch's Broach of Magic	Major	+3 Spell Power
Castor's Bracelet of Magic	Minor	+2 Spell Power
Mage's Ring of Power	Minor	+2 Spell Power
Black Pearl	Major	+2 Spell Power, +2 Knowledge
White Pearl	Minor	+1 Spell Power, +1 Knowledge

Knowledge Artifacts

Your hero's Knowledge rating will get a huge boost from the Foremost Scroll or Superior Scroll. Learn to recognize them.

Table 5-4. Knowledge Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Foremost Scroll	Major	+5 Knowledge
Superior Scroll	Major	+4 Knowledge
Major Scroll	Minor	+3 Knowledge
Minor Scroll	Minor	+2 Knowledge
Black Pearl	Major	+2 Knowledge, +2 Spell Power
White Pearl	Minor	+1 Knowledge, +1 Spell Power

Gold Producing Artifacts

The quest for gold is eternal, and these artifacts make that quest a little bit easier. Still, don't overrate them. Castles are still your best sources for a steady and reliable gold supply.

Table 5-5. Gold Producing Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Endless Sack of Gold	Major	1000 Gold/day
Endless Bag of Gold	Major	750 Gold/day
Endless Purse of Gold	Minor	500 Gold/day

Spell Enhancement Artifacts

These seemingly innocent artifacts can turn a typical spell into a real winner. Grab an Evercold Icicle and you'll bowl over enemies with your Cold Ray and Cold Ring; discover an Ankh, and your potent resurrect spells will allow your army to fight indefinitely.

Table 5-6. Spell Enhancement Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Wizard's Hat	Major	Spell Duration +10
Ankh	Minor	Double effect for resurrect and animate spells
Book of Elements	Minor	Double effect for summoning spells
Gold Watch	Minor	Double effect for hypnotize
Evercold Icicle	Minor	Cold spells deal 150 percent damage
Everhot Lava Rock	Minor	Heat spells deal 150 percent damage
Lightning Rod	Minor	Lightning spells deal 150 percent damage
Enchanted Hourglass	Treasure	Spell Duration +2

Spell Cost Reduction Artifacts

These artifacts are nice, but definitely fall into the “handy-but-not-essential” category. Grab them if they’re available, but don’t expect miracles.

Table 5-7. Spell Cost Reduction Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Elemental Ring	Minor	Halves cost of summoning spells
Evil Eye	Minor	Halves cost of curse spells
Skullcap	Minor	Halves cost of mind-affecting spells
Snake Ring	Treasure	Halves cost of bless spells

Spell Protection Artifacts

These artifacts are nice to have, though the chances of their actually being useful are slim. After all, it doesn’t matter how many Pendants of Life you’ve got if your enemies aren’t using death magic.

The exception to this rule is the handy Wand of Negation, which allows you to cast any spells you’d like on your own creatures, and rest secure no one will dispel them.

Table 5-8. Spell Protection Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Holy Pendant	Treasure	Immune to curse
Kinetic Pendant	Treasure	Immune to paralyze
Pendant of Death	Treasure	Immune to holy word/shout
Pendant of Free Will	Treasure	Immune to hypnotize
Pendant of Life	Treasure	Immune to death wave and ripple
Seeing-eye Pendant	Treasure	Immune to blind
Serenity Pendant	Treasure	Immune to berserk
Wand of Negation	Major	No dispel on your creatures
Fire Cloak	Treasure	Half damage versus heat
Ice Cloak	Treasure	Half damage versus cold
Lightning Helm	Treasure	Half damage versus lightning

Mobility Artifacts

We cackle with glee whenever we get our hands on these artifacts. Your superhero must be very mobile if you're to succeed in **Heroes of Might and Magic II**, and these artifacts are just the way to provide that attribute.

Table 5-9. Mobility Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
True Compass of Mobility	Major	Extra Land and Sea Move
Nomad Boots of Mobility	Major	Extra Land Move
Traveler's Boots of Mobility	Major	Extra Land Move
Sailor's Astrolabe of Mobility	Minor	Extra Sea Move

Luck Artifacts

These artifacts all add 1 to your hero's Luck rating, permanently. They can be extremely valuable in combat.

Table 5-10. Luck Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Gambler's Lucky Coin	Treasure	+1 Luck
Golden Horseshoe	Treasure	+1 Luck
Four Leaf Clover	Treasure	+1 Luck
Lucky Rabbit's Foot	Treasure	+1 Luck

Morale Artifacts

Extra morale can be a lifesaver in close battles. These artifacts all bestow a permanent +1 Morale to the hero bearing them.

Table 5-11. Morale Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Medal of Courage	Treasure	+1 Morale
Medal of Distinction	Treasure	+1 Morale
Medal of Honor	Treasure	+1 Morale
Medal of Valor	Treasure	+1 Morale

Cursed Artifacts

Steer clear of cursed artifacts whenever possible! Unfortunately, these artifacts tend to pop up in treasure chests, where it's impossible to predict whether you'll find them.

Table 5-12. Cursed Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Fizbin of Misfortune	Treasure	-2 Morale, Cursed
Hideous Mask	Treasure	Prevents monsters from joining hero
Tax Lien	Treasure	-250 Gold/turn

Miscellaneous Artifacts

These artifacts don't fit into any of the foregoing categories. None is vital for success, but all can prove handy at one time or another.

Table 5-13. Miscellaneous Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Ammo Cart	Minor	Endless ammo
Ballista of Quickness	Major	Extra catapult shot per turn
Endless Cart of Ore	Minor	+1 Ore/turn
Endless Cord of Wood	Minor	+1 Wood/turn
Endless Pouch of Crystal	Major	+1 Crystal/turn
Endless Pouch of Gems	Major	+1 Gems/turn
Endless Pouch of Sulfur	Major	+1 Sulfur/turn
Endless Vial of Mercury	Major	+1 Mercury/turn
Golden Bow	Treasure	No archery penalty for obstacles
Power Ring	Minor	+2 Spell Points/turn
Statesman's Quill	Treasure	Surrendering costs 10% of normal cost
Telescope	Treasure	+1 Scouting

Ultimate Artifacts

Ultimate Artifacts don't just show up on the ground. You'll only find them by visiting enough Obelisks to learn their locations, then digging them up. That's why we didn't bother showing them all: You'll have to find them on your own!

Sometimes the whole point of a scenario is to find an Ultimate Artifact. Even if that isn't the point, these artifacts improve your hero's power so much that winning the game becomes much easier.

Table 5-14. Ultimate Artifacts

Artifact	Class	Function
Ultimate Book of Knowledge	Ultimate	+12 Knowledge
Ultimate Cloak of Protection	Ultimate	+12 Defense
Ultimate Sword of Dominion	Ultimate	+12 Attack
Ultimate Wand of Magic	Ultimate	+12 Spell Power
Ultimate Shield	Ultimate	+6 Attack and Defense
Ultimate Staff	Ultimate	+6 Power and Knowledge
Ultimate Crown	Ultimate	+4 all stats
Golden Goose	Ultimate	+10,000 Gold/turn

ADVENTURE SCREEN LOCATIONS

Now let's look at the Adventure Screen locations for **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. The value of these places ranges from vital to useless, and you'll spend much less time scurrying around the map if you know beforehand which is which.

Luck- and Morale-Enhancing Locations

Though hardly vital, most good adventurers try to visit these locations whenever it's convenient. Visit enough of them, and you'll find that the extra luck and morale really add up.

Table 5-15. Luck- and Morale-Enhancing Locations

Location	Effect
Buoy	+1 Morale
Faerie Mound	+1 Luck
Faerie Ring	+1 Luck
Fountain	+1 Luck
Idol	+1 Luck
Oasis	+1 Morale and +2× movement, temporarily
Temple	+1 Morale
Watering Hole	+1 Morale and temporary movement bonus

Creature-Generating Locations

These locations let your hero collect extra creatures for his army. Some locations offer free creatures, while others require you to pay a fee. Furthermore, tough monsters guard some locations, and you must defeat them before you may purchase creatures.

In general, any location with "generator" in the Effect column is a place where you must purchase creatures. Sites offering free creatures are so noted.

Table 5-16. Creature-Generating Locations

Location	Effect
Brick House	Archer generator
Cave	Free Centaurs
City of the Dead	Power Lich generator, after hero defeats 5 Vampire Lords, 20 Zombies, 5 Power Liches, 20 Zombies
Cottage	Dwarf generator
Dragon City	Dragon generator, after hero defeats 3 Greens, 1 Red and 1 Black Dragon
Excavation	Free Skeletons
Genie Lamp	Genie generator (2-4 Genies, once only)
Halfling Hole	Free Halflings
Rogue Wagon	Rogue generator
Ruins	Medusa generator
Straw House	Goblin generator
Tent	Nomad generator
Thatched House	Peasant generator
Tree City	Sprites generator
Tree House	Free Sprites
Troll Bridge	Troll Generator, after hero defeats random number of Trolls
Watch Tower	Free Orcs

Skill-Enhancing Locations

These sites allow your heroes to augment their primary or secondary skills. Visit them whenever possible, because gaining these permanent bonuses is almost as good as gaining a free level!

Table 5-17. Skill-Enhancing Locations

Location	Effect
Fort	+1 Defense skill, once
Mercenary Camp	+1 Attack, once
Standing Stones	+1 Power, once
Witch Doctor's Hut	+1 Knowledge, once
Witch's Hut	Random secondary skill
Xanadu	+1 to all four primary skills if hero's level + (Diplomacy skill \times 2) is greater than 9

Treasure Locations

These locations give your heroes a chance to collect gold or resources. Some locations require your heroes to fight for the treasure; others don't. Unless we've noted otherwise, these locations provide one-time bonuses.

Table 5-18. Treasure Locations

Location	Effect
Abandoned Gold Mine	Fight Ghosts for gold
Camp Fire	Find gold and a random resource
Chest	Find 1000 Gold, 1500 Gold, 2000 Gold or a Treasure artifact
Flotsam	Find 5 Wood (25%), 5 Wood & 200 Gold (25%), 10 Wood & 500 Gold (25%), or Nothing (25%)
Graveyard	Fight Mutant Zombies for gold or an artifact
Lean-to	Find 1–4 units of any resource (60%), or nothing (40%)
Magic Garden	Receive 500 Gold or 5 gems
Mill	Find 2 units of a random resource, weekly
Shipwreck Survivor	Receive a Treasure Artifact (60%), Minor Artifact (20%), or Major Artifact (20%)
Trading Post	Exchange resources at a low ratio, once per week
Wagon	Discover 2–5 units of any resource (50%), a Treasure or Minor artifact (10%), or nothing 40%
Water Wheel	Collect 500 or 1000 Gold once per week

Spell Locations

These locales benefit spellcasting heroes. Some bestow spells, while others restore a hero's magic points. Most of these sites are permanent, though some of them (such as the Shrines) offer no extra benefits for heroes who try to visit more than once.

Table 5-19. Spell Locations

Location	Effect
Artesian Spring	Temporarily doubles spell points; re-usable
Magic Well	Restores spell points to maximum; re-usable
Pyramid	Bestows Level 5 spell after hero defeats 3×10 Royal Mummies and 2×15 Vampire Lords, and receives a temporary -2 Luck
Shrine of the First Circle	Get level 1 spell
Shrine of the Second Circle	Gives level 2 spell
Shrine of the Third Circle	Gives level 3 spell

Miscellaneous Locations

This category is a catch-all for unique and atypical locales. Some, such as Obelisks and Travel Gates, are common and necessary elements of the game. Others, such as the Lighthouse, are much more specialized.

Table 5-20. Miscellaneous Location

Location	Effect
Bottle	Functions as a sign post
Demon Cave	Fight demon for Experience, Gold or Death, or fight the demon's Elemental minions
Derelict Ship	Fight with Skeletons
Freeman's Foundry	Upgrades Pikemen, Swordsmen, Golems
Gazebo	1000 Experience Points, but just once per hero
Hill Fort	Upgrades Orcs, Ogres, and Dwarves
Lighthouse	All your ships move farther each turn while you own the Lighthouse
Magellan's Maps	Buy sea map for 1000 gold
Obelisk	Grants a puzzle piece
Observatory	20 squares light up
Skeleton	Find Skeletons or find an artifact
Shipwreck	Fight Ghosts for a chance of finding something worthwhile
Shrine	Gives information, much like a Thieves' Guild
Sphinx	Answer Riddle for Treasure
Travel Gate	Teleports you to another Travel Gate of the same type
Tree of Knowledge	Once per hero: +1 level free (50%), +1 level for 2000 gold (25%), or +1 level for 10 gems (25%)
Whirlpool	Teleports you to another Whirlpool



CHAPTER

6

Grand Strategy

Warfare has two distinct levels—strategic and tactical. Novices often can't distinguish between the two. What's the difference? In simple terms, strategy is the "big picture" and tactics the "little picture." Imagine a medieval general sitting in his war room, the map of a vast battlefield spread on a table before him. Small figures on this map represent armies of pikemen and archers. With this map as a reference, the general decides, in broad terms, what each army should do. The details of individual battles and actions are not decided here; rather, the general prepares a general "game plan" for his conquests. From the map's lofty perspective, he orchestrates the movement of entire armies, bending them to his plan. This is grand strategy at its finest.

Tactics, however, take place on a smaller scale. Instead of the general and his war map, consider a knight and his troop of swordsmen trudging through a forest. Suddenly a band of archers opens fire, hailing arrows down upon the men. At this point, decisions must be made. Will the knight order some of his men to charge the archers, hoping they can reach the enemy before arrows cut them down? Perhaps he will order some of his men to take up a defensive position while others sneak through the underbrush to catch the archers by surprise. These small-scale decisions fall into the category of tactics.

Chapter 7 is devoted to the subject of battle tactics, while this chapter covers the strategic level of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. Of course, each battlefield is different. We'll explore these in detail in chapters 9 and 10. However, every scenario requires you to make a number of grand-scale strategic decisions, regardless of the terrain and your opposition. This chapter outlines a general game plan that will work to a greater or lesser extent in all your battles.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ENEMY

Most of the time when you play **Heroes of Might and Magic II**, you'll play against one or more computerized opponents. These computerized foes differ considerably from any human opponent. This section takes a hard look at your digital opponents, and notes the unique challenges they present to a human player. By understanding your enemy, you'll gain insight on which grand-level strategies are most effective, and what makes them work so well.

Computer's Starting Values

If you've ever wondered what the difference was between Easy, Normal, Hard, Expert, and Impossible difficulty levels, this section will shed some light on the matter.

The Easy Level

The Easy level severely limits computer AI (artificial intelligence); occasionally it will make very bad decisions, such as attacking when it has no chance of winning, or ignoring valuable resources. While the human player starts an Easy game with 10,000 Gold, 30 Wood and Ore, and 10 of each rare resource (like sulfur and gems), the computer starts with only 7,500 Gold, 20 Wood and Ore, and 5 of each rare resource. Crippling the AI and limiting its resources makes for a feeble opponent.

Summary:

A flat-out confused AI with a resource disadvantage makes the Easy level easy indeed.

The Normal Level

At the Normal level, the computer's AI is intact. It's more or less the same AI you'll find at harder levels of difficulty, just not **quite** as sharp. The main flaw in the computer's thinking at this level is its tendency to start fights it can't necessarily win, though it usually comes close.

The human player receives 7,500 Gold, 20 of each common resource (wood and ore) and 5 of each rare resource at this level. Meanwhile the computer starts with 10,000 Gold, 30 Wood and Ore, and 10 of each rare resource.

Summary:

Competent computer AI plus a substantial resource advantage means human players must hustle to catch up in the early stages of the game. Once they've caught up, though, human players often can breathe easily.

The Hard Level

The Hard difficulty level features an AI similar to the Normal level. The main difference is that at the Hard level, the computer only likes to attack you when it feels it has a 60–40 hit point advantage over your troops. It considers other

factors, such as hero level and artifacts, but the main influence is hit points: If the computer has more than you, it usually will attack. There's still room for miscalculation, so you have a chance of winning when the computer attacks you—especially if you've got potent spells or a well-defended castle.

At this level the human player gets only 5,000 Gold, 10 Ore and Wood, and two of each rare resource to start with. On the other hand, computer foes start with 10,000 Gold, 30 Wood and Ore, and 10 of each rare resource—a significant advantage.

Furthermore, at the Hard level the computer really starts to "cheat." It gains 10 percent more gold per turn, every turn, than you would if you controlled the same resources (castles, towns, gold mines, and gold-producing artifacts) it does. Worse, computer opponents automatically get 1 free Wood and Ore per turn, even if they don't control any lumber mills or mines!

Summary:

The human player must quickly overcome a heavy early resource disadvantage. However, even after the game reaches a state of relative equilibrium in terms of castles and heroes, the computer players will rake in more gold and resources than the human. This means human players must be pretty sharp to win. It's best to use the Hard difficulty level on easy maps, or when the opposition you face at the Normal level finally bores you.

The Expert Level

The Expert level takes the Hard level one step further. Computer heroes tend only to attack when they think they have a 75–25 advantage, so you'll almost always lose when the computer heroes initiate combat. Of course, that also means you can avoid combat by keeping a reasonably strong garrison at your castles, because the computer won't bother with you unless it's pretty sure it can win.

Human players start with next to nothing at the Expert level—2500 Gold, 5 Wood and 5 Ore. Meanwhile, the computer starts with 10,000

Gold, 30 Wood and Ore, and 10 of each rare resource. Furthermore, the computer gains 25 percent more gold per turn than a human player with comparable resources, and gets one of **each resource** every turn, absolutely free.

Summary:

Unless you're a real master, you'll find only frustration at this level. Your starting resource disadvantage is tremendous, and makes it almost impossible for any hero type—especially spellcasters—to get a foothold. Spellcasters need lots of rare resources for their high-level buildings, and often need rare resources to purchase their top-level creatures. When you start the game with no gold and no resources, it's tough enough just getting gold, wood and ore, much less rare resources such as sulfur and mercury.

The Impossible Level

At the Impossible level of difficulty, the computer usually attacks only when it has an overwhelming 90–10 advantage. Therefore, if and when computer heroes initiate combat, you have little or no hope of winning.

You might actually use this conservative approach to battle in your favor: You'd think all you must do is keep your army **somewhere close** to the stature of enemy armies to keep them safe from attack. However, computer players all start with 10,000 Gold, 30 Wood and Ore, and 10 of each rare resource, to the human player's **nothing**. More importantly, however, the computer gains **twice** as much gold as a human player per turn, and gets two of every resource every turn, free of charge. This means a computer player with as many towns and castles as you have will generate fully twice as much income, and needn't worry about securing valuable resources such as mines and lumber mills.

Summary:

The Impossible level exists for the sake of die-hard strategy gamers who can never get enough challenge. Even top-level players can't win consistently at this level. To win at the Impossible level, you must spend hundreds of hours playing the game and thinking about your strategy, much as the playtesters at New World Computing do. You'll also need a lot of luck.

Computer Advantages

Aside from the advantages they may receive due to the difficulty level, your computerized foes enjoy several extra benefits that become more and more pronounced as the level of difficulty increases. Here's a look at those perquisites.

Extra Knowledge

The first benefit your digital foes enjoy is superior battlefield intelligence. At the higher levels of difficulty, the computer always knows exactly how strong each of your heroes, towns, and castles is. This is a tremendous advantage, because unlike a human opponent, who often will overlook your weak spots, the computer tends to make a beeline for any poorly defended hero or castle. Good human players keep a close eye on their digital foes' actions, and pay attention when those foes make a straight line for any one of their heroes or castles. Watching computer opponents is a foolproof way to learn when your heroes or castles are poorly defended.

The computer's extra knowledge is also an advantage when it comes to scouting. The computer always knows where your units are, and how strong they are, so it knows when to send weak units out to collect goodies (treasure piles and mines). You, on the other hand, probably will lose a few heroes as they try to collect valuable items.



Figure 6-1. The Scenario Editor allows you to see a battlefield with perfect clarity.

This brings us to the computer's final area of superior knowledge: At higher difficulty levels, it knows the map better than you do. While you muddle around in total darkness, the computer knows the location of every town and resource, just as if it were looking at a clear, uninterrupted view of the Scenario Editor (see Figure 6-1). That's a big advantage.

Playing Spoiler

Despite the fact that every hero in **Heroes of Might and Magic II** supposedly tries to win the game, you'll find that some computer opponents seem to want to ruin your day more than to win. Sure, your computer foes often fight amongst themselves. But have you noticed how they never hold back when they fight against you? They lob spells and burn through creatures like there's no tomorrow, while you might be tempted to hold something back for later combats, just in case you can't get back to a castle or Mages' Guild quickly. This all-or-nothing mentality makes computer opponents a real pain.

Computer Weaknesses

Well, now. Your computerized foes usually start with more resources than you, know where everything is, and only attack when they've got a great shot at winning. Furthermore, they tend to defend their castles well and stock their heroes with strong armies at higher difficulty levels. Where's the weakness?

Technically speaking, the computer has no true weaknesses, at least at the higher difficulty settings. You can never hope to possess the knowledge your computer foes enjoy, even if you build a hundred Thieves' Guilds. While those Guilds do sometimes help, they provide less aid than the detailed information available to a computerized opponent, and your computer foes don't have to waste time or money building the Guild! Furthermore, they have complete understanding of the game situation at all times, while you must physically keep checking in with the Guild for new information—and you could easily miss something.

Yet, your computer foes do indeed have a weakness, though a fairly subtle one. These digital opponents are thoroughly competent on all fronts, and seldom make mistakes, if ever. This very competency and consistency comprises the computer's greatest weakness: Because it always does the more-or-less right thing, and because it makes a point of adequately protecting all its cities and units, you often can count on that very consistency to defeat the computer. The next section explains.

EXPLOITING COMPUTER WEAKNESSES

Eager to start beating on those computer opponents? The following sections show you how to exploit their only real weaknesses—the uniformity of their armies and the predictability of their actions.

Reading the Computer's Thoughts

The computer isn't subtle, and it doesn't bluff. If it sees that you've got an unprotected castle, it will send its nearest hero to take that castle. If it sees that its powerful hero is near one of your weaker heroes, it usually attacks your weak hero. A good player notes the computer's posture, and learns from it.

Never disable the game option that shows you each enemy hero's movements. It's important to keep track of those heroes, because you can learn a lot by watching them move around. If they see a weak spot, they'll head straight for it. Therefore, if you want to know whether your castle is strong enough to stand on its own (without the aid of a hero), you can move the hero away from the castle and watch nearby enemy heroes. If they immediately head for the castle, then you should think about bolstering the castle's defenses. If the enemy heroes don't rush in, however, the castle probably will be safe. Note that you should never try this tactic if there are enemy heroes within one turn's march of your castle: The enemy hero will march right in and take over, and you'll have learned your lesson the hard way.

If enemy heroes swarm around your castle, taking this mine or that resource but never attacking, you can reasonably assume their armies aren't that tough. Of course, at the highest levels of difficulty this is a less effective measure of enemy troop strength, as the enemy heroes' army must be **significantly** better than your castle's garrison before it will try to attack.

Building a Superhero

The computer is highly conscious of the power of each of its heroes and castles, and doesn't like anything to be vulnerable. Therefore, it never leaves any

hero or castle completely unprotected. At the higher levels of difficulty, the computer also tends to avoid attacking your castles and heroes unless it's quite sure it can win.

Combine these two tendencies, and you'll reach an interesting conclusion: You can skimp a little on the number of troops you post at each castle, because your opponents won't attack until they've got a really significant advantage. Take those excess troops and give them to a single hero. That hero will become your "superhero."

The concept of the superhero is based on an old piece of advice espoused by Sun Tzu, which translates roughly like this: "Match your strength to the enemy's weakness." The computer's heroes and castles are all adequately strong, but if you manage to take one single hero and make an absolute wrecking machine of him or her, that hero's army can defeat just about any other hero or storm any castle in the land. When you've reached that point, you can win by matching your strength (the superhero) against the computer's weakest castles.

When building a superhero, the key is to strike a fine balance. You must leave enough troops in your castles to adequately protect them, and it's important that your "non-superheroes" are at least adequate; pushover heroes are next to useless. But it's also important that your superhero be very powerful. It

takes a lot of time and experience to learn just how many troops to give your superhero, and just how much experience and treasure to let him or her accumulate. Figure 6-2 shows a typically powerful superhero.

Allow superheroes to fight most of your battles, carry most of your artifacts, and visit most of the experience-giving locations on the map. After assembling enough experience, troops, and artifacts, the hero becomes almost unbeatable, which is precisely the point.

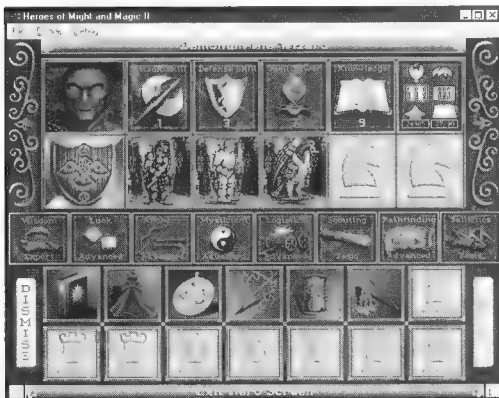


Figure 6-2. This superhero is much more powerful than his comrades.

Once you manage to create a superhero, the game falls into a relatively simple pattern: Send the superhero to conquer an enemy castle; leave him or her there until the newly obtained castle is strong enough to fend for itself; then move the superhero to the next castle, and conquer that one, as well. Along the way you'll need to pause to stock up on troops, and occasionally attack your enemies' heroes just to cut them down to size.

TYPICAL EARLY GAME STRATEGY

Even though each map is different, you'll find that similar strategies work well on all of them. Sometimes a particularly unusual map will force you to modify your strategy somewhat, but in general, this chapter's advice will hold true throughout various missions and campaigns.

Before launching into detailed explanations of typical strategies, we ask that you first consider the golden rule of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**—the golden rule of all grand-scale strategy games, for that matter. No, it isn't "Collect lots of gold," though gold is indeed useful. The rule is this: Expand as quickly as possible without exposing your old territory to attack. Your ability to take just enough troops from each castle to build a conquering army while leaving behind just enough to defend your old castles will largely determine your success. As you play the game more and more, you'll become better acquainted with this balance, and get better and better at striking it perfectly.

Unveiling the Locale

The first thing to do in most scenarios is load up your superhero with all the troops he or she can muster and send them out to explore the immediate vicinity of the castle. Understanding your surroundings is a vital part of the game; that's why you shouldn't get too frustrated if your first attempt to beat a scenario fails miserably. On subsequent tries you'll have a better understanding of the land and the position of each critical resource, which in turn allows you to plan better strategies and seek those resources successfully.

Gathering Resources

An integral part of early gameplay is to secure local resources. These may be temporary resources, such as a pot of mercury, or long-term resources, such as a lumber mill. Be careful when gathering treasure chests, however. Only let the hero who'll eventually become your superhero gather those items initially. This ensures that your superhero gets a good, quick start by gaining levels without dangerous combat.

Don't let your hero get **too** far from your castle during this early stage. You'll want to return by the start of the next week or two to collect extra creatures for your army.

Adding a Second Hero

Often, you'll want to purchase a second hero during your first turn. Assuming you've decided to make your starting hero your superhero, you should relegate this second hero to scout, errand boy, and castle protector.

The second hero's first task is to help expose the map (see Figure 6-3). One of your early disadvantages, compared with computer opponents, is that you don't start the game with a clear view of the world. One of your second

hero's primary tasks is to scour the land and remove the veil of darkness interfering with your ability to make good decisions. This second hero can concentrate on early exploration, freeing your superhero to perform more vital tasks such as collecting experience and pounding on guardian monsters.

The second hero also plays errand boy. He collects resources that have no effect on hero power, adding valuable ore, lumber, and other items to your coffers. Again, this frees your superhero to pursue activities directly related to gaining experience and power.

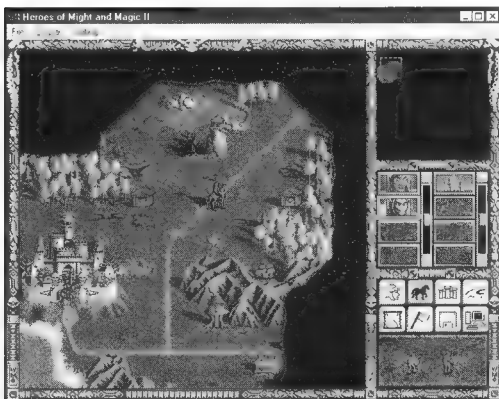


Figure 6-3. Secondary heroes are useful for scouting and revealing the map.

While your second hero should avoid treasure chests filled with experience points, he **should** pick up convenient artifacts, as he can deliver the best to your superhero at a later time.

Finally, use the second hero as a protector, to flee back into your starting castle when an enemy hero approaches, and to load up on creatures in the castle at the time. Even a low-level hero can mean the difference between losing a castle or staging a successful defense. When your first and second heroes are both busy elsewhere, you might want to buy a third hero to take over the "castle baby-sitter" role.

Knights and Barbarians make ideal second heroes. Barbarians' great mobility allows them to collect items and unveil the map quickly, while Knights make great castle protectors. Later, if you build high-level Mages' Guilds in your castle, you'll find that magic-using heroes become somewhat better for castle protection—especially if you're lucky enough to buy a hero who starts at Level 2, 3, or 4.

Early Expansion

As a rule of thumb, you should build a new structure in your starting castle every turn, emphasizing creature dwellings whenever possible. Keep it up until you've run out of resources or reached a point where the only structures left are those of minimal use (such as Farms). Don't forget to upgrade your existing buildings!

TIP Whenever feasible, don't buy castle-defending creatures until there's a direct threat to your castle. Then, when an enemy hero threatens, use your gold reserves to stock up on defenders. There's a real advantage to this when you have multiple castles: Instead of spending all your gold on defenders as soon as they become available, you can wait to see which castle comes under attack and **then** purchase defenders at that castle. If you were to buy creatures right away, you'd run the risk of leaving one castle poorly defended, and having insufficient funds to buy a proper defense force when it comes under siege.



Improving your first castle is a good start, but it's not enough. You must expand as soon as humanly possible, and that means taking over another town or castle.

Take over castles instead of towns whenever possible. It doesn't matter if the nearest town happens to be closer at hand than the nearest castle; converting towns to castles requires lots of gold and resources, and towns are vulnerable during the transition. The conquering hero must stay nearby and "baby-sit" towns for several turns after conquest, when he could be out conquering more castles!

On most maps, your superhero will be ready to conquer an enemy castle after he's taken about two weeks' worth of creatures from his starting castle and integrated them into his army. This assumes you've built and upgraded all but the very best creature dwellings, and the hero hasn't taken heavy losses from an earlier battle. It also assumes you can afford to leave your first castle undefended for a little while.

Although your strategy may vary from map to map, the key is not to get bogged down gathering nonessential resources and artifacts. Sure, that Medal of Valor those Fire Elementals guard would be helpful, but if it's a choice between getting it immediately or taking over a castle immediately, always choose the castle. Fighting too many map-based creatures and pursuing too many artifacts or treasure chests can weaken your army, slowing down your castle conquests—and if you don't get enough castles early in the game, you'll fall drastically behind in the amount of gold and creatures your empire produces. When that happens, you're history.

Breaking the Opposition

Sometimes, especially in small-map games, you'll encounter the enemy very early on, perhaps after two or three weeks. At this point, you must ask yourself whether it's worthwhile to face enemy heroes head-on or try to avoid them.

In a game with multiple players, where no particular opponent seems particularly threatening and you have sufficient room to expand, you're usually

better off avoiding those enemy heroes. Just conquer more castles and try to improve your own heroes. But in small games, in situations where one particular opponent keeps harassing you, and especially in games where you face only a single computerized opponent, you'd do well to meet your opponent's best heroes head-on and beat them. If you can do that, you'll take away all the artifacts they've been hoarding and deprive your opponent of lots of troops. This keeps the computerized foe in check, forcing him to rehire the defeated hero or hire a new one, resupply that hero with troops, and generally suck vital resources from his castles. There's also the chance that you can hire the defeated hero later, so keep a close eye on the heroes for sale in your castles! Always hire the enemy's defeated heroes; their experience can be invaluable.

You'll know when you've defeated your opponent's best hero, because you'll usually win a treasure trove of artifacts.

MIDGAME STRATEGY

Midgame strategy in **Heroes of Might and Magic II** is a mad race for castles and towns. Whereas the early game was to some degree concerned with gathering resources, artifacts, and useful items, midgame is where those resources, artifacts, and items are put to good use. You can still grab the occasional resource here and there, especially if one of your building projects requires it, or if it's convenient. But for the most part, during this stage of the game you must devote all your energy to acquiring new castles while defending the old ones. If you don't pursue this strategy, you risk reaching an unwinnable position, where your opponents have such a great gold and creature advantage you can't hope to win, no matter how valiantly you fight.

Castle Hopping

Your main midgame strategy will be "castle hopping." It's a simple technique: Your superhero attacks and takes over an enemy castle, hopefully without losing many of his own troops. You then purchase as many creatures as possible from the new castle and upgrade the castle as much as you can, as quickly as

you can. When you feel the castle is strong enough to hold its own against roving enemy heroes, you send your superhero on to the next conquest.

Of course, castle hopping isn't always that simple. Sometimes you'll have to keep your superhero at the new castle longer than you'd hoped, because he needs to reinforce his troops. Sometimes the new castle is so weak it can't produce enough quality monsters to fend for itself. This usually occurs when the castle is fairly undeveloped, and you don't have the resources to build the best "creature generators" (Laboratories, Pyramids, Cathedrals). In this case, the best you can do is leave your superhero there to hold down the fort, while your other heroes try to gather the resources necessary to build the castle's best structures. Then, when the castle can finally produce Dragons, Titans, Cyclopes, Crusaders, or whatever monster is best, your superhero will be free to leave.

Often you must hire a new hero just to baby-sit the castle. As always, previously defeated Knights and high-level heroes are excellent candidates for castle guard duty.

Guarding Old Territory

An important aspect of the game's middle phase—in fact, of every phase—is protecting your old castles. If your castles all have a full complement of creature generators and you've got the gold and resources to stock them well, then you generally won't have a problem defending them. However, if some of them are rather weak, you'll have to use your superhero to defend them. There are essentially two ways of doing this—warding and baiting.

Warding is where you keep your superhero close to the weak castles while keeping an eye on enemy heroes. If they start to get too close to your weak castles, your superhero can rush back and sit on the castle until the enemy goes away. Warding is a useful strategy when you don't want to incur serious losses: The mere presence of the superhero is usually enough to discourage a fight. It's also an easy strategy to use if your hero has good mobility, and if there's a lot for him or her to do in the vicinity of the weak castle.

However, if your superhero is slow, or if he or she has very little to accomplish in the immediate vicinity, then warding can be self-defeating: It ties up your superhero for extended periods of time when he or she could be raiding new castles, instead.

If warding doesn't work, try baiting. As with warding, baiting involves keeping your superhero close to, but not inside, your weakest castles. Keep him or her at about one full turn's movement from the castle. When a tough enemy hero comes to attack the castle, charge in and crush him with the superhero! This strategy is much better than warding if your superhero's strong enough to survive the battle with minimal casualties. You'll set back your computer opponent, destroying his troops and forcing his hero out for rehire. And because you've removed the closest threat to your weak castle, chances are good it will live to see another week—and another batch of reinforcements from the creature dwellings.

Picking on Enemy Heroes

Even when you aren't actively baiting your opponents, you should attack enemy heroes that happen to be nearby. Although there's usually no point to going out of your way to pick on weaklings, you should always fight weak enemy heroes if they're conveniently close at hand. Stronger heroes often are worth going out of your way to crush—but only if you think you can survive the battle without serious losses.

There's no one rule to cover every situation, but in general you should fight lesser enemy heroes whenever it's convenient, but you shouldn't waste time pursuing them. The computer can purchase a limitless number of weakling heroes, and trying to crush them all is like chasing your own tail: You'll never succeed. It's better to attack the source of the computer's power—its castles. But when it finally comes down to you and just one computer opponent, going after its best heroes can be an excellent idea.



Figure 6-4. You can usually get a good sense of enemy heroes' power by right-clicking on them.

Always right-click on enemy heroes to get an estimate of their power before attacking them (see Figure 6-4).

ENDGAME STRATEGIES

If your midgame strategy has been successful, you'll reach a point where you have a good percentage of the land's castles, and are therefore prepared to hold your own in the game's final stages. If your midgame was unsuccessful, and you don't have as many castles as your enemies, you already might have lost the game, but this won't become clear until the computer starts sending out huge armies you simply can't handle.

Assuming you've indeed carved a sufficient chunk out of the world, you're now prepared for the endgame. In this phase your biggest challenge is to reduce the number of remaining enemy castles to zero. This can be tougher than it was in the midgame, as enemy territory has now been compressed somewhat, and castles tend to be better defended. Furthermore, if you haven't crushed your opponents' superheroes earlier, they're probably quite powerful by now. They usually aren't powerful enough to take on your superhero (if you've been successful in building him up), but they are tough enough to threaten even a well-defended castle. This makes the early endgame a difficult period, indeed.

Huge creatures generally determine endgame outcome. Try to stock up on Dragons, Titans, and other huge monsters that will endure multiple battles. Barbarian, Sorceress, and, to some extent, Knight castles tend to have the most trouble during this period, because they don't create creatures with the same high statistics as other heroes' castles, which produce powerful Dragons and Titans.

Crushing the Biggest Heroes

If you haven't confronted your chief opponent's biggest heroes face to face, you might have to do so at this point. Otherwise those enemy heroes will conquer your castles while you conquer **their** castles, for a meaningless game of "Musical Castles." If your castles are strong enough to ward off the toughest enemy heroes, though, you needn't bother.

Using Critical Mass

If you've managed to destroy all but a few enemy castles, but you're having trouble delivering the deathblow, just be patient. Inspect all your castles in turn and decide which have creatures to spare. Then send your superhero from castle to castle, methodically picking up excess creatures (focusing on the highest-level monsters), meanwhile leaving enough at each castle to keep it safe. Optionally, a lesser hero can take on these collection duties, and deliver the creatures to your superhero.

Once your superhero has reaped the creature benefits of all your castles, he should be able to smite the remaining enemy castles with impunity. If he's still not tough enough, look for places on the map where he can augment his army: Dragon City, Ruins, and so forth.

PULLING OUT THE STOPS (EXPANSION TRICKS)

The foregoing strategies make perfect sense if you're winning, but often you'll find yourself losing anyway, especially at the highest levels of difficulty. What can you do to give yourself an edge?

Though it may seem obvious, one strategy is to play at lower difficulty levels. The Normal and Hard difficulty levels present a good challenge on most maps. If you play at higher levels, you'll find that even the best-laid

plans can go awry. Heck, even the game designers can't beat certain missions consistently at the highest difficulty levels. That should tell you something.

Before you start trimming the difficulty level, though, here are some tricks that can help you succeed. Because the basic difficulty of **Heroes of Might and Magic II** lies in balancing the need to conquer new castles while defending old ones, most of these tricks deal with simplifying that juggling act.

A Knight in Every Castle

In situations where you don't have **quite** enough troops to defend a castle, sometimes an extra hero can make the difference. While a Captain of the Guard is often as good as a Level 1 hero, a Captain of the Guard will never gain levels like a true hero. If you hire a Knight or similarly tough hero to guard your castle, he or she will be capable of advancing in level after successful battles, increasing the castle's battle readiness.

Maintaining Gold Reserves

In the game's middle to late stages, when you have lots of castles, you often can build up substantial cash reserves by not purchasing every creature you can get your hands on. Build all the creature dwellings you can possibly build, but don't buy tons of creatures at each castle: Just buy a reasonable number, and let the rest accumulate. Watch the map closely; when an enemy hero approaches within threatening distance of your castle, **then** stock up on creatures in that castle.

The advantage to keeping a substantial gold reserve is that you can spend it when and where you need to. If you were to buy as many creatures as possible at every castle, you'd soon run out of gold, and when an enemy hero approached your weakest castle, you'd have no way to bolster its defenses. By maintaining healthy gold reserves, however, you can buy creatures where they'll do the most good.

This technique requires that you carefully observe the actions of each enemy hero, and buy creatures right before that hero attacks. If you aren't committed to watching your territory carefully, then you're better off buying creatures at all castles as soon as they become available. That technique will work at the lowest difficulty levels, but we strongly recommend spending the extra effort and watching your territory every turn.

Day-Seven Invasions

You want to invade an enemy castle with your superhero, but you're worried. The castle your superhero sits in lacks a strong army, and you aren't sure what sorts of creatures will be available at the castle you plan to attack. What's a good way to maximize the likelihood of holding on to both castles? The Day-Seven Invasion.

The essence of the Day-Seven Invasion is simple: conquer the enemy castle on the last (seventh) day of the week, then move your superhero inside the new castle and buy a creature dwelling, if possible. Then end your turn. If there are any strong enemy heroes in the vicinity, they'll take this opportunity to ride toward your weakest castle. However, unless those enemy heroes were extremely close, it will take them at least a day to reach the old castle your superhero just left, or the new one he currently occupies. That gives you a turn to prepare, and that's where the advantage of attacking on the seventh day of the week comes into play. Your next turn begins on the first day of a new week, and both castles have a new crop of creatures to hire. Hire as many as possible, and your castles should be safe from invaders.

Of course, the enemy heroes may be so strong they still overwhelm your castle, regardless of the influx of new defenders. In that case you'll know you acted too early; you'll have to reconsider the whole attack, and perhaps wait another week or so. Optionally, you might try to take on enemy heroes directly, with your superhero.

Multiple Saved Games

Heroes of Might and Magic II is fun, but it's not always forgiving. It's entirely possible to get yourself into unwinnable situations. The worst part is you won't always know when the situation is unwinnable: It may take loading up your saved game several times and getting crushed every time. Carefully saving your game in various saved-game slots at various times can take a lot of the sting out of these situations.

Save the game at various times, always under different names. This way you'll always have options: If you're losing badly, you can load an early saved game in hopes of getting back on the right track. If you're doing fine overall, but you lost a recent battle, you can instead load your most recent saved game and try to win the battle again. Some players make a habit of always saving their game under the same file name, obliterating all their old saved positions with every new save. That's a bad idea; if you work your way into a losing position, you're left with no recourse but to start all over.

If you feel saving and reloading constitutes cheating, consider this scenario: You save the game repeatedly to the same saved-game slot, thereby obliterating all but the most recently saved position. Unfortunately for you, the last time you happened to save the game, an enemy hero was making a beeline for your best castle with an overwhelming number of troops. You saved the game exactly one turn before he arrived at your castle, and there's no way you can muster enough defenses in one turn to save the castle. If you could return to an **earlier** point in the game, you could do something about the situation, such as build more creature generators or move your superhero in to a defensive position. As it is, you're doomed.

The moral of the story is to save often, and under different names.

Saved Game Strength Tests

Saved games are useful for experiments. If you're unsure whether an attack will succeed, you can always save the game before attacking and restore it if

the attack fails. The same thing goes for abandoning your own castles. If you aren't sure whether they can stand on their own, just save the game and move the hero away. If the castle falls, you can always restore the game.

Again, some players view this technique as cheating. If you don't think it's right for you, then you shouldn't use it. However, bear in mind that your computerized opponents have a constant and pervasive knowledge of the relative strengths and weaknesses of each castle and hero in the game. By performing these saved-game strength tests, you're just learning some of the same information your foes already possess. It's food for thought.

Abandoning Weak Castles

While castles are of utmost importance, you should also realize that some castles aren't worth defending. If you take over a castle with very few structures already built inside it, you often face a decision: Try to hang on and build it up, or leave it and go for a better castle. If your superhero is strong and commands a strong army, you might be better off abandoning the castle and attacking a different, more valuable castle. The stronger the castle, the harder it is to conquer, but the easier it is to defend once you've taken it for your own.

If you plan to abandon the castle, make sure to give all its useful troops to a hero. There's no point in leaving creatures to die in a losing castle defense; instead, give them all to a hero, who can put them to good use.

Free Construction

Let's say you own several castles and a strong superhero, but one of your castles is really weak. It doesn't possess enough creature dwellings to generate a good host of defenders. Furthermore, you don't have the special resources you need to build those creature dwellings. What can you do? Maybe you should abandon the castle, as in the foregoing strategy. But wait! What if there were some way to let your opponents build those creature dwellings for you? Nah, they'd never be so helpful. Or would they? Believe it or not, you can some-

times get your foes to help you build up a castle. Here's the best way to do it. (Bear in mind that this technique requires a very strong superhero.)

Remove all the creatures from your weak castle, and give them either to your superhero or to a secondary hero. Let the castle sit completely undefended, and post your superhero close by. Eventually, an enemy hero will prance up and take the castle, unable to resist the allure of a completely empty castle. Ideally, your opponent will take over the castle early in the week (Day One or Two).

If you're lucky, the enemy hero will then drop off a few defenders and leave the castle. If you aren't lucky, he'll stick around. However, you can usually get him to leave by removing all the defenders from one of your **other** castles and luring the enemy hero away.

Regardless of whether the enemy hero sticks around or leaves, you should let several days pass and then repossess the castle (with your superhero) on Day Seven of the current week. If you're lucky, your opponent will have used those four or five days to build important creature dwellings, which are now yours. Congratulations: You just got the enemy to improve your castle!

The importance of attacking on Day Seven is obvious: If you let the enemy keep your castle through the end of the week, he'll be able to buy lots of new defenders on Day One of the following week. Therefore it's best to let your opponent control the castle during the middle part of the week, when he can build new creature dwellings but not benefit from them.

ON TO CHAPTER 7

Chapter 7 moves us from the grand scale to the small scale, examining the best strategies for combat success. You'll find useful tips on combat techniques and complete details of combat mechanics.



HEROES III

OF MIGHT AND MAGIC



CHAPTER

7

Combat

Combat is an important aspect of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. Combat in this game is not overly complicated, but nevertheless, a number of basic tactics can help you maximize your effectiveness. This chapter explores those tactics in detail.

Despite the importance of sound tactics, you'll find the superior army tends to win the battle in **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. Good tactics always help, but the battlefield is a small area with relatively limited options. In other words, don't get your hopes up. You won't be able to stage a glorious victory over a Dragon army by cleverly using your horde of Peasants; everything has limits! But tactics become absolutely vital when you engage in close battles, and it's for the sake of winning those battles that we present this chapter.

RULES OF THE BATTLEFIELD

Combat takes place in a single screen, 11 hexes wide by 9 hexes deep. The hexes are invisible (unless you enable them in the Combat Options screen; see Figure 7-1), but it's nice to know they're present. The size of the battlefield isn't sufficient to make ranged-attack units terribly powerful; a fast opponent can always reach your Archers or Liches in a turn or two, unless there's a prominent obstacle in the way.



Figure 7-1. Enable the grid to get a better sense of what's going on.

Obstacles such as castle walls and dead trees don't affect flying creatures, so tough flying creatures such as Dragons are invaluable during castle sieges. They can soar right over the walls and wreak havoc on enemy forces.

Troops appear from top to bottom on the Combat screen in the same order that they appear from left to right on the Hero screen. That is, the leftmost troops in the Hero screen appear at the top of the Combat screen, and the rightmost troops appear on the bottom of the Combat screen. Use this

knowledge to your advantage, placing vulnerable ranged-attack troops on the edges of your hero's roster with strong close combat attackers to either side. This places the ranged-attack units as far as possible from enemy troops, and ensures they can get instant support from strong nearby units when the bad guys try to swarm them.

The Order of Attack

Which troops get to attack first? Creatures with faster speed ratings always attack before those with slower ratings. Which **side** gets to start? If both

sides' fastest troops have the same speed, then the side that initiated combat gets to move its fastest troops first.

Speed can make all the difference in the world, or very little difference, depending on the abilities of your opponent's troops. If your opponent's army doesn't possess strong spells or ranged-attack units, then slow troops work just fine—although they usually won't get the first attack in, which can often be a vital factor. But against enemies with great distance attacks or a lethal knock-out punch, you might find yourself wishing your troops were swifter. Speed is also key for spellcasting heroes, who benefit greatly from the ability to cast the first spell in combat.

Damage Calculations

When one unit attacks another, it inflicts a certain amount of damage on its target. How much? Every creature has a Damage rating expressed as a range of damage. To take an easy example, Swordsmen inflict 4 to 6 points of damage. That means every time a Swordsman swings his sword, he'll deal the enemy from 4 to 6 points of damage. The exact number of damage points—4, 5, or 6—is completely random.

Multiply this damage by the number of creatures in the attacking unit, and you'll get a sense of how much damage it can inflict: 10 Swordsmen, each of whom can deal 4–6 Damage individually, can deal 40–60 Damage per attack as a group. This damage is subtracted from the collective hit points of the target unit, and any creatures reduced to zero hit points instantly perish.

But wait! There's more. Attack and Damage ratings also play a part in damage calculations. If the attacking creatures' Attack value is equal to the Defending creatures' Defense value, then Attack and Defense play no part in damage calculations. However, if the attacker's Attack value exceeds the defender's Defense value, then the attacker deals 10 percent more damage than it normally would for every excess point. Confused? Let's look at an example.

Sample Damage Calculations

Let's say 10 Archers shoot at 40 Peasants. The relevant stats for each side are these:

Archers

2–3 Damage

5 Attack

Peasants

1 Defense

1 Hit Point

The Archers do between 2 and 3 Damage per shot. In this case, let's say they get lucky and deal 3 Damage per shot. There are 10 of them, so they'll deal 30 points of damage to the hapless Peasants. Furthermore, when we compare the Archers' Attack rating (5) with the Peasants' Defense rating (1), we find the Archers have a 4-point advantage, for a 40 percent damage bonus. Therefore, instead of dealing just 30 damage points, the Archers' attack will deal 42 Damage (30 + an extra 40 percent of 30—that is, 12). So the Archers' attack deals 42 Damage to the Peasants. Because the Peasants have only 1 hit point apiece—40 hit points for the whole group—the entire squad of Peasants is obliterated! Ouch.

The Effects of Attack and Defense

The 10 percent damage rule does not apply both ways: An attacker with higher Attack than his victim's Defense gets a 10 percent Damage bonus per point of difference, and a defender with better Defense than the attacker's Attack rating sustains 5 percent less damage than usual per point of difference.

This rule has limits. An attack can never deal more than 300 percent, or less than 30 percent, of the attacking unit's unmodified Damage rating. In other words, there are definite limits to how much a unit's Attack or Defense values modify the total amount of damage.

If these limits weren't in effect, a horde of Peasants with an Attack rating of 1 couldn't even **scratch** a creature with a Defense rating of 11, because the 10-point Attack-Defense differential would swallow up fully 100 percent of the Peasants' puny attack. However, thanks to the **30%–300%** rule, the Peasants can always inflict **some** damage on their mighty opponent.

Varying Attack and Defense values explain why the best units in the game, such as Dragons and Titans, are so dominant. You can march an army of 500 Peasants up to a single Green Dragon and attack it, inflicting a lethal base of 500 points—but when you factor in the Dragon's 11-point Defense advantage over the Peasants' Attack rating, you'll understand why the Peasants' attack falls well short of killing the Dragon. Instead of 500 points of Damage, those Peasants will inflict only 30 percent of 500, or 150. That isn't enough to kill the Dragon.

Learn to factor in your troops' Attack and Defense ratings when considering an attack, and you'll be better prepared to predict the results of the battle.

Morale

A unit with high Morale has a chance to get extra attacks, while a unit with low Morale tends to freeze up and lose its turn. What are the odds of these things happening?

If your unit has a +1 Morale rating, the odds of it getting an extra attack are 1 in 24. With +2 Morale, the odds are 1 in 12; with +3 Morale, it's 1 in 8.

The odds of freezing up from low Morale are higher than the odds of getting free attacks for high Morale, so be sure not to let low Morale plague your troops! With –1 Morale, the odds of freezing are 1 in 12; with –2 Morale, the odds are 1 in 6, and with –3 Morale, the odds are 1 in 4. Hey, who said life was fair?

How can you keep up your Morale? If you have lots of Knight heroes, this seldom will be a problem, as their leadership skills come into play. If you own any Necromancers or have taken over a Necromancer castle, think

twice before integrating undead units into an army of normal units. The undead will always remain at normal Morale, but the living units will suffer a penalty when forced to join a group of undead.

Always keep a sharp lookout for Morale-boosting sites and artifacts. They're plentiful, and are usually scattered all over the map.

Luck

During every attack, units with good Luck get a chance to deal guaranteed double damage, while units suffering from bad Luck have a chance to deal only half their typical damage. The chances of receiving these bonuses and penalties are exactly the same as they are with morale; the penalties are significantly easier to attain than the bonuses.

Retaliation

Each unit gets one retaliation attack per turn. That just means that when a unit is attacked at close range, it gets to strike back, even though it isn't that unit's turn.

If multiple units gang up on one lonely unit, though, retaliation isn't such a big factor, because that unit will only be able to retaliate against the first aggressor.

Some units have unlimited retaliation capabilities, and others have special attacks that cannot be retaliated against. Both special abilities are more useful than you might expect, because much of the damage dealt over the course of a typical combat is actually a result of retaliation.

Regeneration

Some units Regenerate; that is, they regain their lost hit points at the end of each round of combat. However, this **doesn't** mean that dead creatures come back to life; it just means that creatures who've sustained damage are automatically healed.

Regeneration is useful in close battles and when fighting lesser opponents, but powerful enemies tend to kill your units outright, so Regeneration typically plays a very small role in combat.

COMBAT OPTIONS

Here's a look at several options available to you during combat. Different players have different opinions about their value; read on to learn our opinions—but take them with a grain of salt.

Spellcasting

If your hero possesses a spellbook, you have the option to cast spells during combat. The effect of spells on combat can be subtle, or they can be quite dramatic. For even a Level 1 hero, having just one spell in his spellbook can mean the difference between victory and defeat.

When considering your combat options, choose your spells wisely. We'll look more closely at the art of effective spellcasting later in this chapter.

Grid and Information Options

To really maximize your awareness of the battlefield, you can turn on a grid overlay that reveals the hexagons making it up. This puts each creature's move into better perspective, and resolves any questions you might have about a unit's actual position. If you're unsure whether two units are actually adjacent, or you don't know how many hexes away your opponent is, this is the best way to find out.

The Combat Options screen also contains an information window showing all relevant statistics about a selected unit. If you find yourself clicking frequently on each unit to display their attributes, this is a good option to enable.

Auto Combat

Select Auto Combat to let the computer handle both sides of the fight. Of course, the first question on everyone's mind is, **How well does the computer fight for you?** The computer fights well, but you can usually fight somewhat better, especially if your hero knows lots of spells. In ridiculously mismatched battles where you can't help but win, Auto Combat is usually a safe bet. Otherwise, we strongly recommend that you handle combat duties yourself.

Common computer mistakes include casting spells on units that don't really benefit from them; attacking a small group of enemy ranged-attack units when you should cut a huge horde of Goblins, Skeletons, or other "horde" creatures down to size instead; and charging out of the castle to attack the enemy instead of waiting inside while the castle's Ballista wears down the attackers. The bottom line about Auto Combat is that it isn't completely reliable. In Heroes of Might and Magic II, as in life, if you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself.

Retreat and Surrender

Why, you might ask, would you wish to Retreat or Surrender? Well, maybe you never will. If you're the type of player who prefers to reload the game and try again instead of accepting his losses, then these two options will never come into play. If you like to see battles through to the end, however, you'll find these options quite useful.

When you select Retreat, your hero flees and loses his army. You can then rehire him in one of your castles. This is a good option when your hero's army has been whittled down to almost nothing, or when his army isn't worth saving.

Surrender, on the other hand, allows you to keep your hero and his army if you pay ransom to the opposing hero. This option only works when fighting enemy heroes, but it's extremely useful when your hero's army is worth saving. As with Retreat, you must rehire the hero in one of your castles after surrendering in combat.

There are even some occasions when you can use Retreating and Surrendering as cheap-shot tactics. If you have an extremely high-level spell-casting hero, or a hero with lots of fast, long-range attackers such as Titans in his army, you can initiate combat with a foe who's much tougher than you and get in a nasty spell attack (or perhaps some brutal long-range creature attacks), and then immediately Retreat or Surrender, depending on whether your hero's army is worth saving. This is costly, but it allows you to whittle down an opponent's army in emergency situations. Note that this tactic won't really work if your opponent's creatures are faster than yours. In that case, he'll get the first shot in combat, and you'll only hurt yourself.

MAXIMIZING COMBAT EFFICIENCY

We've pointed out that combat in **Heroes of Might and Magic II** isn't rocket science, and there aren't so many tactical options that a vastly inferior army can ever hope to defeat a vastly superior one; most games are won by making smart moves at the strategic level, not by fighting clever battles in the Combat screen. However, there are definitely a number of right and wrong ways to approach combat. This section offers tips for making the most of your battles—or, at the very least, for not making a great mess of things.

Troop Placement

There are several schools of thought regarding troop placement. The prevailing school, however, goes a little bit like this:

Long-Range Formations

If you have a substantial unit of long-range attackers in your army, place them at the top or the bottom edge of the battlefield, which means placing them in the extreme left or right creature slots in the Hero or Castle screen. This is useful for two reasons. First, the bottom corner of the screen shields you from enemies attacking your Archers from several directions. Second, placing your Archers or Trolls in a corner of the screen increases the distance the average enemy unit must travel to reach them.

Next to the long-range attackers place slow-but-powerful units that can defend them. Golems and Ogres serve this role admirably. At the center of the screen, place somewhat faster units that can sweep up or down in a single turn to cover the long-range attackers.



Figure 7-2. Place long-range attackers in the corners, with slow but strong support units to defend them.

This formation maximizes the effectiveness of your long-range attackers (see Figure 7-2). Your close combat units will start combat in a position to shield them, and the edge of the combat screen helps defend them as well.

Of course, this strategy only pays off if your long-range attackers are better than your enemy's. If your opponent has more or better ranged-attack troops, using this configuration makes little sense. In that case, use the following "Melee Formation."

Melee Formation

If your army possesses little long-range punch, you'll probably want to charge right at the enemy in most combat situations, to nullify their long-range attackers. Here's a good way to prepare for this technique.

Place Very Fast or Ultra Fast units at the edges of the screen; after all, they're so fast they can get just about anywhere in a single turn, so you needn't bother placing them in the thick of battle.

Place slow but powerful units at dead center of the screen or, optionally, right next to your most powerful unit. Why? If you have no long-range attackers, then the enemy will tend to charge in and attack your most powerful units. Placing slow support units right next to your most powerful unit negates the slower unit's speed disadvantage, because enemies will automatically charge into the general vicinity.

Charging In vs. Staying Home

At the start of battle, should you charge in or cover up? The rules are simple. If you have lots of quality long-range attackers worth protecting, then gather your other units around to protect them, perhaps sending a single fast unit to harass your enemy's long-range attackers in the meantime. If your long-range attackers are ineffective or inferior, however, and it looks like they'll be chewed up regardless of what you do, then don't worry about them. Charge in and attack the enemy's weak spots.

Getting In the First Attack

The Auto Combat feature is generally competent, but occasionally it does some pretty silly things. For instance, let's say you have a bunch of fast units, and your enemy has lots of equally fast units; none of these units have a long-range attack. Furthermore, these units aren't quite fast enough to run all the way across the battlefield and strike the enemy in a single turn; rather, they're capable of running about halfway across the screen in a single turn.

Because you attacked, you get to move your creatures first. If you allow Auto Combat to take over at this point, there's a good chance it will march all your units halfway across the screen, expending your creatures' movement points and ending their turns. Now your enemy gets a turn; the enemy creatures march up to meet your creatures in the middle of the screen, and because your creatures are in striking range, they get the first attack. Ouch!

In this situation, simply skip your creatures' first turn, watch your opponents rush toward you, and then run out to meet them in the middle of the screen, thereby getting in the first attack. The first attack in combat is extremely valuable in this game. If a horde of 800 Peasants attacks your group of 10 Green Dragons first, they'll **actually kill a Dragon!** But if the Dragons get in the first attack, they'll destroy so many Peasants that the Peasants' Retaliation attack is inconsequential, or nonexistent.

Always, always try to get in the first attack. If that means letting your creatures sit in place for a turn, then do so.

Who to Attack?

Your computer opponents have a very simple set of rules about beating up on your troops: If your army includes any long-range attackers, the computer tries to beat them up first. Next, it beats up on your flyers, and then your most powerful or nearest units. It only deviates from this simple pattern when the creatures it wants to attack aren't conveniently close at hand. In that case, it beats up on any creatures who happen to be conveniently nearby.

Guess what: The computer is on to something here. For the most part, you should follow this same set of rules in combat. Send in someone to disrupt enemy ranged-attack units as soon as possible, because they can't deal full damage when your troops are adjacent. Also, attack the enemy's best units first, because those units can hurt you most. If you don't cut them down to size immediately, they'll play havoc with your troops.

In a few special cases, you should break the rules. Let's say your opponent has 12 Orcs (long-range attackers) and 150 Goblins. In this case, your first priority is to make sure those Goblins don't get in the first attack on your troops. The Orcs are much less of a threat; there are only 12 of them, after all. So send in a fast, tough unit to cut the Goblins down to size, and worry about the other units later. One strong attack will pare those Goblins down to size, but until that attack occurs, the Goblins are a legitimate threat.

Here's another scenario: Your opponent has a formidable unit of 20 Hydras, plus three units with six Mutant Zombies apiece. Who should you attack first? Normally you'd attack the strongest unit (the Hydras) first, but in this case you shouldn't. Clean up the Zombies while avoiding the Hydras. Meanwhile, allow your long-range attackers to shoot at the Hydras, then run away when the Hydras get too close. In this case, its lack of speed nullifies the strongest enemy unit's threat, so you should simply eliminate the faster enemy units and pick apart the strongest unit last.

Gang Attacking

If your opponent has one huge, dangerous unit such as a bunch of Dragons, it's often valuable to let your creatures gang-attack that unit. In simple terms, this means you should have as many creatures as possible attack that unit simultaneously. The benefits of this are twofold. First, the sheer volume of attacks allow you to eliminate the enemy's best unit more swiftly. Perhaps more importantly, though, it allows you to get in several "cheap shots," because unless the unit you're ganging up on has the Unlimited Retaliation special ability, every unit (beyond the first) that attacks needn't fear a damaging Retaliation.

For this second reason, gang attacking is useful in a variety of situations. Even if your opponent's army has no clearly superior group of creatures, you can benefit from singling out one strong unit and crushing it with several of your own.

Using the Attack Arrow to Best Effect

The Attack Arrow, which looks like a sword cursor, allows you to attack your enemy from a variety of angles. Sometimes this is important, and other times it isn't.

In general, you can use the Attack Arrow to good effect in two situations: First, if you have a creature with a special attack. For example, Dragons' breath attacks extend for two hexes; by attacking enemy creatures from a specific angle, you can sometimes fry two units for the price of one. (Similarly, if you aren't careful, you can end up damaging both the enemy and a friendly unit that happens to be standing too close. So beware!) Second, when your units aren't terribly fast. Send your fastest units to attack the enemy from a strange angle—maybe from behind—so your slower units can walk right up and attack from their natural angle. Otherwise you can end up blocking your own units, and that's just silly.

Using Battlefield Terrain

The two main kinds of obstacles you'll encounter on the battlefield are terrain features and castle walls. Both make the battlefield more hospitable for flying and ranged-attack creatures. Between these two types of obstacle, only castle walls tend to have a serious effect on battle, because truly fast units can get around most terrain features with ease. Only a solid castle wall, perhaps with a Moat thrown in for good measure, can reliably give one side the advantage.



Figure 7-3. It's the first round of combat, and the walls are already breached. Walls are no substitute for a good army.

Castle walls protect the creatures inside them by halving the damage from long-range attackers (see Figure 7-3). Furthermore, castles' Ballistas and Turrets aid the defender. But don't be fooled into thinking castle walls can substitute for a strong army.

Smart Spellcasting

Smart spellcasting is a matter of situational awareness: You must have a firm grasp of what you're trying to accomplish and of your spellcaster's limitations before starting to sling spells. The next chapter explores spells

in greater depth, but the following useful tips might help you when you're spellcasting.

- Low-level spellcasters should stick with spells that alter creature abilities, and avoid spells that inflict damage on the enemy. Why? Low-level spellcasters don't have the raw Spell Power to cast effective damaging spells. Good low-level spells include Bless, Curse, Stoneskin, Steelskin, and Blood Lust.
- Low-level spellcasters shouldn't cast spells until they're needed. Casting Bless on a creature that's too slow to enter combat this round partially wastes the Bless spell. Low-level heroes' spells don't last too long, so they should usually cast them right before a creature attacks.

- Area-effect spells that deal a little damage to several units typically aren't as useful as concentrated spells that really hammer a single unit.
- Read the next chapter! We evaluate every spell in the game.

THE GAME'S BEST TROOPS

All right folks, this is what you've been waiting for. Here's where we give our opinions regarding the best and worst creatures in the game. We base these opinions both on data from Chapter 4 and on many hours of playing **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. Bear in mind that the following comments are little more than opinions, and your experiences with different creature types may differ dramatically.

Black Dragons and Titans are simply incredible, and should be your units of choice in the game's later stages. Giants aren't very impressive; upgrade them at all costs. Even non-upgraded (Green) Dragons can be effective in your army, however. The beauty of these units lies not only in their power, but also in their great durability. You can fight battle after battle after battle, and never lose a single Dragon or Titan.

Minotaur Kings are extremely solid, and you can build up a large group of them quickly. This makes them real favorites for all tasks—sieges, defense, you name it. Unicorns are almost as impressive.

We really like Champions because of their speed. Any Ultra Fast creature is useful, because it can almost always get in the first attack (unless you're sieging a castle, or an opponent with Ultra Fast creatures attacks you first). Ultra Fast creatures also help you fire the first spell in combat, which is often quite important.

Phoenixes can be very useful because of their great speed; you just have to make sure you use that speed to best effect. If you don't have a powerful spell-caster who can augment the Phoenix's combat abilities with spells before it attacks, then you'd be better off with Dragons.

Which units disappoint us? Cyclopes really don't make the grade in the later stages of the game. Zombies—even upgraded ones—are pretty feeble, as well.

Also, it's been our experience that high-level ranged-attack units (except the Titan) really don't seem to live up to their billing. There's nothing **wrong** with Power Liches, Greater Druids, Archmages, and Trolls, but if it's a choice between them or a group of melee-attacking Level 4 or 5 creatures, we usually pick the melee attackers—Champions, Unicorns, or even the sluggish Hydra. Why? Ranged-attack units are just too fragile. They're great for picking on weaker armies, but enemies with big, fast units like Dragons or Cavalry can easily pick them apart. Furthermore, when fighting against potent spell-casting heroes, your ranged-attack creatures are vulnerable to Lightning Bolts and other direct damage, while your more durable close-combat troops tend to weather these spells better.

Bear in mind that these are just our opinions. Don't simply accept them as fact; get out there and experiment with every unit you can get your hands on. After all, your fighting style might emphasize troops we don't care for. A Knight with maximum Archery skill, for example, could be a real wrecking machine when loaded with the Liches, Archmages, and Druids we just admitted we don't like. Experiment: that's the only way you'll improve your game.



CHAPTER

8

Spells and Spellcasting

This chapter lists every spell in the game, complete with notes on each spell's cost and effects, and a battery of comments on that spell's effectiveness. Take these comments with a grain of salt. Every player has his or her own opinion on which spells are best; simply consider our comments a starting point for your own evaluations.

Unlike creatures, spells are difficult to place a value on. When dealing with spells of the same level, it's impossible to say one spell is "better" than another; rather, some spells tend to be very versatile, and hence useful in most combat situations. Other, less versatile spells can be extremely potent under the right circumstances, and practically useless if those circumstances never arise.

The final variable in the spell equation is artifacts. Sometimes you'll find an artifact that enhances spells of a certain type, and all of a sudden you'll find that one of your heroes' spells is significantly better than all the others. It's impossible to predict when and where you'll find these artifacts, so keep an open mind about every spell: You never know when circumstances might change it from a useless incantation to a genuine game-winner.

LEVEL 1 SPELLS

Level 1 spells are cheap, but by no means useless. They include some of the game's most broadly applicable creature-affecting spells, as well as a smattering of direct damage and map-revealing spells. Even mid- to high-level heroes can benefit from casting these spells.



Bless

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 3

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: 1 ally

Blessed creatures inflict maximum damage.

Bless is a great example of a spell that never becomes useless. As your armies get bigger and better, Bless grows along with them. If you don't believe us, try fighting against a Blessed cadre of Titans or Crusaders.



Bloodlust

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 3

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: 1 ally

Bloodlust adds +3 to the target creature's Attack skill.

This spell is most useful when cast in conjunction with low-level creatures that normally wouldn't pack enough punch to damage larger creatures. Big monsters like Minotaurs and Titans usually don't need Bloodlust, because their Attack values are already remarkably high.



Cure

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 6

Duration: instant

Target: 1 ally

Cure removes all negative spells and heals 5× power in hit points.

Most creatures die outright when damaged by a strong enemy unit, so the healing aspect of Cure is often unneeded. It's the "removes-all-negative-spells" part that really comes in handy.



Curse

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 3

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: 1 enemy

Cursed creatures inflict minimum damage.

Curse can be even more valuable than Bless. If your opponent controls a real bruiser your own Blessed units have trouble taking down, it's often more productive to Curse that enemy and **then** gang-attack it, secure your attackers won't suffer the full brunt of its retaliation attacks.



Dispel Magic

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 5

Duration: instant

Target: 1 creature

Dispel Magic removes all spells on a creature.

Initially this spell might seem like a less-effective version of Cure, but note that it can be cast on **any** creature, not just friendly units. This makes Dispel Magic great for cutting enchanted enemies down to size.



Haste

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 3

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: 1 ally

Haste adds +2 to the target creature's speed.

Ideally you won't have to use this spell; there are so many more important spells you could be casting instead! But sometimes Haste means the difference between tying up an enemy ranged-attack unit, or sitting back and letting it pick your guys apart. In these cases, Haste is a good investment.



Magic Arrow

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 3

Duration: instant

Target: 1 enemy

Magic Arrow inflicts 10× Power in damage to a single enemy unit.

This spell is typically less useful than casting Bless on a strong ally, but hey—sometimes you just need to deal a little extra damage, and in those cases, Magic Arrow does the trick.



Shield

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 3

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: 1 ally

Shielded creatures take half damage from range strike attacks.

Unless long-range attackers are absolutely pelting your army, Stoneskin is more generally useful than Shield.



Slow

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 3

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: 1 enemy

Slowed creatures are reduced to half their normal speeds.

You'll use Slow most frequently when you've got lots of ranged-attack units, and you wish to keep the enemy from reaching them. In other circumstances it just tends to delay the inevitable.



Stoneskin

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 3

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: 1 ally

Adds +3 to the creature's Defense skill.

Stoneskin is great for protecting your ranged-attack units while they pelt the enemy, or fortifying any friendly unit you know the enemy will pick on.



View Mines

Type: Adventure

Casting Cost: 1

Duration: N/A

Target: N/A

Shows the location of all mines, and their controllers, on the World View.

Usually this spell is of marginal use, but sometimes you'll find yourself desperately needing a certain resource, and View Mines lets you know where to find the appropriate locales.



View Resources

Type: Adventure

Casting Cost: 1

Duration: N/A

Target: N/A

Shows the location of all remaining resources on the World View.

Again, this spell is typically of minimal value, but it can really help you out when you're stuck without resources. It can also give you a good sense of which parts of the map enemy heroes have already scoured.

LEVEL 2 SPELLS

Level 2 spells are a mixed lot, complete with potent damage spells, useful Adventure Map spells, and a few highly specialized incantations that can be useless or helpful, depending on the situation.



Blind

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 6

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: 1 enemy

Blind creatures take no action until attacked, and retaliate with half strength.

Never underestimate the power of this spell. Use it to render your opponent's best creatures useless, or at the very least, keep the enemy hero so busy dispelling your Blind spells he or she can't cast anything more productive.



Cold Ray

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 6

Duration: instant

Target: 1 enemy

Inflicts 20× power in cold damage to a single enemy unit.

Cold Ray does less damage than Lightning Bolt, and its slightly cheaper spell-point costs usually don't make up for the power loss. But if you happen to get your hands on an artifact that augments cold-based spells, you're truly in business.



Death Ripple

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 6

Duration: instant

Target: all living creatures

Inflicts 5× Power in death magic to all non-undead creatures.

Death Ripple is only useful if the vast majority of your creatures are undead, and the vast majority of your opponent's creature aren't. Otherwise, you hurt yourself as much as your enemy.



Disrupting Ray

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 7

Duration: instant

Target: 1 enemy

Reduces Defense of target by 3. This spell can affect a creature multiple times.

Disrupting Ray is in many ways superior to Bloodlust, especially when a particular enemy unit is being a pain. Instead of casting Bloodlust on each of your own attacking units, simply use Disrupting Ray on the tough enemy, and **all** your attackers will enjoy the equivalent of a 3-point Attack bonus.



Dragon Slayer

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 6

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: 1 ally

Creature gains +5 Attack skill against Dragons.

This is one of the game's most specialized spells, for obvious reasons.



Haunt

Type: Adventure

Casting Cost: 8

Duration: until defeated

Target: 1 mine

Haunt de-flags a mine under your control and sets 4× Power Ghosts to guard it.

Haunt is marginally useful for denying your enemy resources, but in many cases you need resources badly, and can't afford to give up control of your mines just for the purpose of Haunting them. Experiment with this spell extensively, and you'll soon find which situations to use it in.



Lightning Bolt

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 7

Duration: instant

Target: 1 enemy

Inflicts 25× Power in electricity damage to a single enemy creature.

Lightning Bolt is the classic direct-damage spell. Use it frequently!



Steelskin

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 6

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: 1 ally

Adds +5 to the creature's Defense Skill.

Steelskin is a great all-around defensive spell. Cast it on ranged-attack units, or any unit you know will take lots of abuse during combat.



Summon Boat

Type: Adventure

Casting Cost: 5

Duration: N/A

Target: N/A

Summons a boat to a nearby location.

This spell will save your gold and give you an edge on water-based maps, and prove completely worthless on land-based maps.



View Artifacts

Type: Adventure

Casting Cost: 2

Duration: N/A

Target: N/A

Shows the location of all remaining artifacts on the World View.

Too bad this spell doesn't show you which enemy heroes have collected artifacts, as well! As it is, however, this spell can be marginally useful as a time-saver, especially on big maps.



Visions

Type: Adventure

Casting Cost: 6

Duration: instant

Target: 1 army camp

Visions shows you the relative strength of any group of Adventure screen monsters, and the chances that they'll join your band.

You could always learn an army's size and intentions by saving the game and then attacking, but that's cheating! You wouldn't resort to that, would you? Of course not.

LEVEL 3 SPELLS

Level 3 spells are significant in that they introduce a variety of mass effects—Mass Bless, Mass Curse, and a wide range of damaging spells that affect several creatures at once. These spells can be extremely useful for armies of all types.



Animate Dead

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 10

Duration: permanent

Target: killed undead

Regrows 50× Spell Power in hit points of undead creatures.

This spell is much like Resurrection, a Level 4 spell, except it works only on undead units. This spell is a great asset for any army composed mainly of undead creatures.



Anti-Magic

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 7

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: 1 ally

Creature gains immunity to all magic.

This spell can be useful for warding off enemy spell effects. Cast it on your best creatures, so opponents' spells can't blunt their power.



Cold Ring

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 9

Duration: instant

Target: 6 hexes

Inflicts 10× Power in cold damage to the hexes **adjacent** to the target hex.

Cold Ring is somewhat like Fireball, only it doesn't affect the target hex, just the hexes surrounding it. This makes it useful for damaging enemies clustered around a lone friendly creature. Cast Cold Ring on your own creature's hex, and watch the bad guys fall all around him.



Death Wave

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 10

Duration: instant

Target: all living creatures

Inflicts 10× Power in death magic to all non-undead creatures.

This can be a highly efficient spell if your army is entirely composed of undead creatures, but useless if your army is composed of a mixture of live and undead.



Earthquake

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 15

Duration: instant

Target: N/A

Damages all castle walls.

Well, that's **one** way to get rid of those pesky walls! This spell can be useful if you've got a chronically slow army (for example, an army filled with Hydras or Steel Golems) or a hero with no Ballistics skill.



Fireball

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 9

Duration: instant

Target: 7 hexes

Inflicts 10× Power in fire damage to the target hex and each adjacent hex.

This is a good spell for cleaning out close formations of enemies, but it's not as good as Lightning Bolt when only one enemy unit presents a real threat.



Holy Word

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 9

Duration: instant

Target: undead

Inflicts 10× Power in holy damage to undead creatures.

Holy damage, Batman! (Sorry.) This spell is the opposite of Death Wave, and illustrates once again that an undead army can be very tough **and** very vulnerable.



Identify Hero

Type: Adventure

Casting Cost: 3

Duration: N/A

Target: N/A

Allows you to view an enemy hero's statistics and army size.

Though not necessary, this spell is handy when you want to go headhunting for the toughest enemy heroes, or need a precise sense of what the bad guys are capable of.



Mass Bless

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 12

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: all allies

Blessed creatures inflict maximum damage.

This spell is incredibly useful in most combat situations. Use it if you've got it.



Mass Curse

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 12

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: all enemies

Cursed creatures inflict minimum damage in combat.

The flip side of Mass Bless, Mass Curse is equally if not more effective! Unless your opponent has Mass Dispel, Mass Curse can give him real headaches.



Mass Dispel

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 12

Duration: instant

Target: all creatures

Removes all spells from all creatures.

This spell can be a lifesaver. Just bear in mind that it dispels **all** spells, not only those on friendly creatures.



Mass Haste

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 10

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: all allies

Adds +2 to creatures' Speed.

Mass Haste is just the ticket to jump-start slow-moving armies.



Paralyze

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 9

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: 1 enemy

Paralyzed creatures can't take action until attacked, and can't retaliate.

Paralyze is one of the game's best spells. It allows you to completely neutralize an enemy unit for a given amount of time (a **long** time if your hero has good Spell Power). Used properly against an army that lacks counterspells such as Cure, Paralyze can allow a vastly inferior force to win a battle.



Teleport

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 9

Duration: instant

Target: 1 ally

Instantly moves any friendly creature to any unoccupied hex.

The spell is seldom necessary, but can be a real blast if you've got a strong unit of Hydras.



View Heroes

Type: Adventure

Casting Cost: 2

Duration: N/A

Target: N/A

Shows the location and color of all heroes in the World View.

This spell can be useful when you haven't explored much of the map.



View Towns

Type: Adventure

Casting Cost: 2

Duration: N/A

Target: N/A

Shows the location and color of all towns in the World View.

Again, this spell is useful when you haven't done much exploring. The problem is, by the time you've got a hero advanced enough to learn this spell, you've usually explored 'most everything.

LEVEL 4 SPELLS

Excellent power and versatility typify Level 4 spells, though there are a few "specialized" spells in the lot.

Guardian spells are particularly useful in large games; they allow you to hold on to resources much longer than you normally could. These spells alone make a potent case for learning Level 4 spells.



Berserk

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 12

Duration: 1 attack

Target: 1 enemy

Berserk creatures randomly attack the nearest creature, regardless of whose side it's on.

Berserk is best used when two strong enemy units stand side by side. Just be sure to take the enemy creatures' movements into account, or the spell could backfire. If a fast enemy creature and a slow enemy creature stand side

by side, and you cast Berserk on the slow one, chances are the fast one will be long gone by the time the slow one's turn comes around, and your spell will be wasted.



Chain Lightning

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 15

Duration: instant

Target: special

Inflicts 40× Power in electricity damage, then half that damage to the nearest creature, and so on until four creatures have been hit.

It goes without saying that this spell can backfire easily. This is one of those spells best cast at the very start of combat, before the bad guys get a chance to move out of their starting cluster.



Fireblast

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 15

Duration: instant

Target: 19 hexes

Inflicts 10× Power in fire damage to the target hex, and to the 18 adjacent hexes.

Fireblast's huge radius and limited power make it a hard weapon to handle effectively. However, there are occasionally times when its massive radius is handy.



Holy Shout

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 12

Duration: instant

Target: undead

Inflicts 20× Power in holy damage to all undead creatures.

Spells like these make it hard to be a Necromancer.



Mass Cure

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 15

Duration: instant

Target: all allies

Removes all negative spells and heals 5× Power in hit points.

Mass Cure can be very helpful in certain circumstances (for example, when your opponent has just cast Mass Curse).



Mass Shield

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 7

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: all allies

Shielded creatures take half damage from range strike attacks.

Like the standard Shield spell, this spell is occasionally useful, but casting Mass Curse on the opposition is usually even more effective.



Mass Slow

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 15

Duration: 1 round/Spell Power

Target: all enemies

Slowed creatures are reduced to half their normal Speed.

Mass Slow can be very handy or quite useless, depending on the situation. Armies with lots of ranged-attack units tend to like this spell.



Meteor Shower

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 15

Duration: instant

Target: 7 hexes

Inflicts 25× Power in damage to the target hex and each adjacent hex.

This spell is usually better than Fireblast: It's more concentrated and powerful, and easier to use without injuring your own units.



Resurrection

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 12

Duration: combat

Target: 1 ally

Regrows 50× Power in hit points of killed units.

In the hands of a powerful spellcasting hero, this spell can be an absolute monster. Simply keep resurrecting units that die, and you've got an army that's nearly impossible to beat.



Set Air Guardian

Type: Adventure

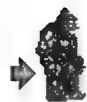
Casting Cost: 15

Duration: until defeated

Target: 1 mine

Sets 4× Power in Air Elementals to guard the mine.

Guardian spells are all functionally similar, and they're a great idea in just about any scenario. The Elementals make it difficult for enemies to reclaim mines you've taken over, and unlike Haunt, you retain the benefits of the mine while the Elementals are in place.



Set Earth Guardian

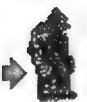
Type: Adventure

Casting Cost: 15

Duration: until defeated

Target: 1 mine

Sets 4× Power in Earth Elementals to guard the mine.



Set Fire Guardian

Type: Adventure

Casting Cost: 15

Duration: until defeated

Target: 1 mine

Sets 4× Power in Fire Elementals to guard the mine.



Set Water Guardian

Type: Adventure

Casting Cost: 15

Duration: until defeated

Target: 1 mine

Sets 4× Power in Water Elementals to guard the mine.



Storm

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 15

Duration: instant

Target: all creatures

Inflicts 25× Power in damage to all creatures.

Why bother with this spell? Well, what if you assembled an army made up of nothing but magic-resistant Dragons? Then you'd see the value of a widespread spell that damaged all enemies, regardless of their position.

More conventional armies would do better to avoid this spell, however.



Town Gate

Type: Adventure

Casting Cost: 10

Duration: instant

Target: hero

Teleports hero to nearest friendly town.

This spell is useful for teleporting weak heroes out of a jam, but unless you're facing some pretty unusual circumstances, it's hardly a must-have.



View All

Type: Adventure

Casting Cost: 3

Duration: N/A

Target: N/A

Shows entire map in the World View.

Hey, this is a pretty neat spell! It isn't necessary on most maps, but you'll love it on the biggest ones.

LEVEL 5 SPELLS

This is it, the pinnacle of spellcasting achievement. Level 5 spells can radically alter the face of combat, and allow your puny and weak forces to compete with overwhelming armies. Level 5 spells typically come into play only on large maps, where resources and time are both plentiful.



Armageddon

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 20

Duration: instant

Target: all creatures

Inflicts 50× Power in damage to all creatures.

Why use a spell that damages all creatures? As with Storm, you can use it to great effect if your own creatures are magic-resistant.

If you can muster a army composed entirely of Dragons, then Armageddon is the ultimate weapon. Add a single, Ultra Fast Champion to

the army, and you're assured of the starting move, which you can use to Armageddon the enemy. If the Armageddon cuts the enemy down to where your Dragons can comfortably handle them, polish them off. If not, surrender and then rehire your hero and his Dragons, confident you've chopped the enemy's army down significantly without sustaining any losses (except a pile of gold). Repeat if necessary.



Dimension Door

Type: Adventure

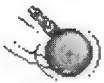
Casting Cost: 10

Duration: N/A

Target: N/A

Teleports the hero to an unoccupied, visible location.

This spell is handy in all situations. It allows you to strike anywhere on the visible map in a matter of moments, and even when it offers no tactical edge, it significantly cuts down on travel time.



Hypnotize

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 15

Duration: 1 round

Target: 1 enemy

Takes control of target unit if the stack's hit points are less than $25 \times \text{Power}$.

This spell is both fun and powerful, especially when the enemy has at least two extremely powerful units—one for you to take over, and one for that unit to attack.



Mirror Image

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 25

Duration: combat

Target: 1 ally

Duplicates one of your creature stacks. Damage dispels the image.

This spell is devastating if you've got a single, huge stack. Just make sure to cast the spell right before the duplicated unit gets to move. There's no point in casting Mirror Image on your Bone Dragons at the start of combat, only to have the enemy's Phoenixes attack and dispel it. Wait until all the faster creatures have attacked, **then** cast Mirror Image.



Resurrection True

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 15

Duration: permanent

Target: 1 ally

Regrows 50× Power in hit points of killed units.

This spell makes a great army better. If you've got it, use it as much as possible!



Summon Air Elemental

Type: Combat

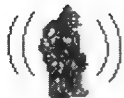
Casting Cost: 30

Duration: combat

Target: N/A

Summons 3× Power in Air Elementals.

All summoning spells are functionally similar, and they're great when you don't have a tough army. If you possess some tough units already, it's usually better to resurrect them as they die than to summon Elementals.



Summon Earth Elemental

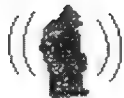
Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 30

Duration: combat

Target: N/A

Summons 3× Power in Earth Elementals.



Summon Fire Elemental

Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 30

Duration: combat

Target: N/A

Summons 3× Power in Fire Elementals.



Summon Water Elemental

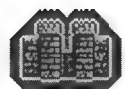
Type: Combat

Casting Cost: 30

Duration: combat

Target: N/A

Summons 3× Power in Water Elementals.



Town Portal

Type: Adventure

Casting Cost: 20

Duration: N/A

Target: hero

Teleports the hero to any friendly town.

This is another great spell for increasing hero mobility.

WHICH IS BEST?

As we said at the beginning of the chapter, all these spells can be useful, especially in conjunction with the right artifacts. However, we have our personal favorites.

Lightning Bolt and Chain Lightning rank among our favorite direct-damage spells. Lightning Bolt is easier to use safely, but Chain Lightning is incredibly potent! If you can assemble a Dragon Army, though, Armageddon is the king of damaging spells.

Any spells that resurrect dead units (such as *Animate Dead* and *Resurrection*) are extremely valuable. They allow your army to do things you'd never think possible. In the hands of a potent spellcasting hero, these spells allow you to win the toughest battles and come out with your army more or less intact.

Immobilizing spells like *Blind* and *Paralyze* are extraordinarily effective. Typical computer players' armies have only one or two truly devastating units, and if you can immobilize those units with spells such as these, you've put yourself in a winning position.

Finally, *Bless* and *Curse*, and their improved forms, *Mass Bless* and *Mass Curse*, are extremely valuable on the battlefield at any level. Cast them at the start of any fight, and you'll be amazed at how much of an effect they have.

In the next chapter, we check out the campaigns and standard missions of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**.



HEROES II

OF MIGHT AND MAGIC



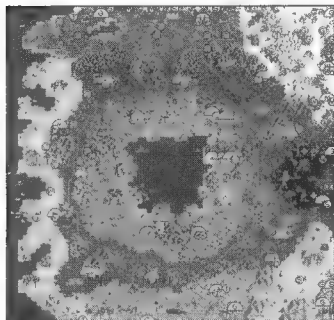
CHAPTER

9

Standard Scenarios

This chapter examines the standard (noncampaign) scenarios of **Heroes of Might and Magic II**. For the most part, beating these scenarios is simply a matter of employing—and refining—the basic techniques chapters 6 and 7 covered. Instead of explaining these basics again and again in the following mission descriptions, we briefly describe each scenario and provide a map and a few notes on winning strategies. The game's random nature prevents anything more: Different towns, castles, resources, and treasures appear each time you play a scenario. Also, it's impossible to predict the movements of enemy heroes after the first few days. Therefore, the following pages are more of an aid than a true walkthrough. Prepare yourself for an intense challenge every time you play a new scenario.

BELTWAY



Medium

3 Players

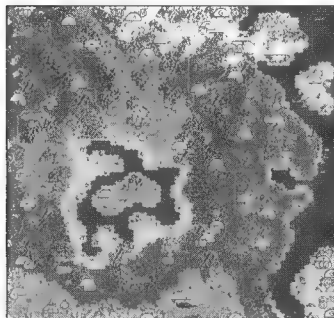
Normal Difficulty

This scenario is extremely fair and well-balanced; you can play any of the map's three factions and have about the same chance of winning.

At the start of this scenario, a trio of castles perches on the edge of a central lake. A wide ring of turf surrounding the lake contains several towns; outcroppings of land to the east contain extra towns and treasures, but feature difficult terrain, as well.

To succeed in this scenario, allow your superhero to build up a small army from his home castle, collect a range of local artifacts and resources, and then conquer the other two castles surrounding the lake. Towns are good for incidental income, but by conquering the castles first you consolidate your own power base and crush those of your enemies.

BROKEN ALLIANCE



Medium

6 Players

Normal Difficulty

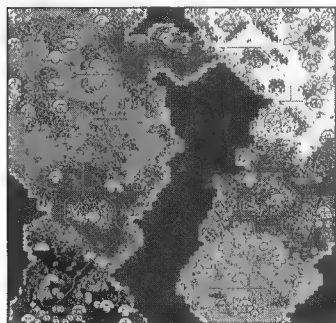
This six-player game features a huge western land mass and an ocean to the east with two large islands. A lake in the center of the land mass contains a third island.

Resources are abundant on this map—all three islands have gold mines, for example—but with five enemies to contend with, you won't have much time to collect them.

Castles are uncommon here, but towns are plentiful. A good strategy is to expand your power base by conquering enemy castles whenever possible. Then head for the island in the center of the continent. It has a town and a gold mine, and three sets of Travel Gates. If you have enough gold and your hero is strong enough to conquer the town and convert it to a castle, you can maintain an iron-fisted grip on the gold mine and control the useful Travel Gates.

Three of the six positions in this scenario are restricted from human players, but all six players can have different starting heroes. This adds a great deal of replay value to the map.

DEATHGATE



Medium

4 Players

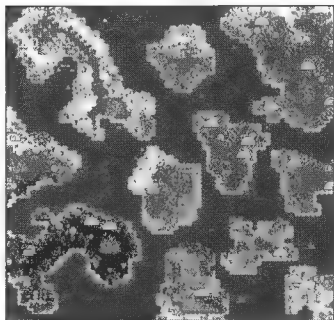
Hard Difficulty

This scenario features a land mass shaped like a horseshoe. You can play one of the two heroes with castles on the eastern half of the horseshoe. Your objective is to conquer the Necromancer's castle at the horseshoe's extreme southwestern tip.

Every player's starting hero can be changed, except for the Necromancer, who must remain a Necromancer.

With only four castles and a handful of towns, this map is tough. Resources are limited and there's nowhere to hide from high-level opponents. You must methodically conquer the horseshoe, starting from the southeast and working your way north, and then winding southwest toward the Necromancer's domain. As usual, try to take over castles first, but feel free to conquer towns as well, especially if they're poorly defended. Don't try to build them up until you're pretty sure they'll be safe; just use them as a source of extra income.

DRAGON RIDER



Medium

4 Players

Normal Difficulty

You're Kastor, a Warlock battling it out with a Knight, a Sorceress, and a Barbarian across a scattered archipelago. You've lost your kingdom, but with the help of a trusty Dragon, you can repossess the town in the northeast corner of the map (where you start); you can also quickly learn the whereabouts of an Ultimate Artifact.

The key here is to build up slowly and take over enemy castles—not towns—even though they aren't very convenient. The Navigation skill will be handy indeed!

Note the Dragon City on an island in the north-central part of the map. This locale can be very useful in the mid- to endgame.

The southeast corner of the map is where the real action is. If you've built up a strong superhero and want to test your mettle, that's the area with the most castles—and, hence, the most risks and rewards.

DRAGON WARS



Extra Large

3 Players

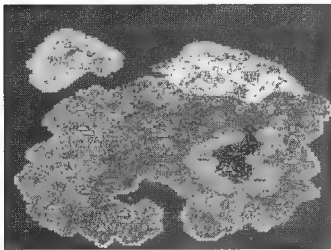
Hard Difficulty

In this scenario, three tough Warlocks slug it out for possession of the land. You can't pick which side to play, or change the starting heroes of any side. Sorry!

The map is a “trick map” that looks like a dragon’s head from above. Your castle is in the western “eye” of the dragon. Your two opponents possess castles in the dragon’s other eye and horn, respectively. The “horn” enemy has the best locale: He’s in a great position to clean out the treasure and resources located along the map’s southern edge, a sandy expanse that looks like the dragon’s fiery breath from overhead.

The three starting castles create a rough triad. Your best bet is to capture an enemy castle early, and hang on to it permanently. But beware! Lose your starting castle and the game’s over. This, combined with the difficult, “layered” terrain, makes the scenario a real challenge. Hey, it isn’t called Hard for nothing!

ENROTH



Large
6 Players
Normal Difficulty

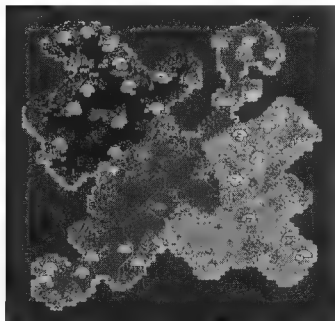
This six-player map features each of the game’s six basic hero types; you get to be the Sorceress—a liability on such a large map.

You start dead center of the map, on a large central continent. Your best path of attack may lie to the southeast, where a Nomad tent and random castle await your conquering army.

A small island to the northwest contains the ever-useful Dragon City, but don’t explore this area until you’ve developed a base of several strong castles on the mainland.

A town directly north of your starting castle is definitely worth conquering and eventually converting to a castle. Its proximity to your starting castle eases the task of defending it, and you’ll often be glad to have two friendly castles so close to one another. You can allow a single hero to amass a vast army and defend them both, crushing would-be conquerors in the process.

FORSAKEN LANDS



Medium

6 Players

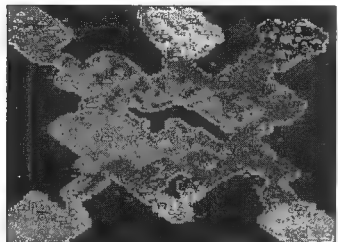
Hard Difficulty

Vast riches and treasures fill a large central continent. Depending on who you choose to play, you can start from either a northeastern or southwestern cul-de-sac separated from the mainland by only a bunch of Peasants. Cut through them quickly, and send multiple heroes as soon as possible to gather the precious loot! A Warlock and Barbarian await you, so be careful.

As usual, go for the enemy castles before messing around with the towns. Enemy heroes tend to load up on creatures, leaving their main castles somewhat exposed. If you send a single hero around to collect the vast quantities of treasure chests on this continent, you should have no trouble at all making him sufficiently "super." The real challenge is massing a formidable army and holding on to your castles.

A Dragon City lies in the east-central part of the map. As usual, use it for endgame cleanup when your army is large enough to challenge the Dragons.

GOOD VS. EVIL



Large

6 Players

Normal Difficulty

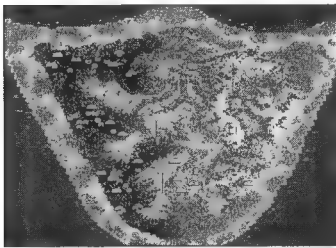
In this scenario, the team of Barbarian, Warlock, and Necromancer (the Bad Guys) battle a Knight, Sorceress, and Wizard (the Good Guys). Regardless of which position you pick, you have six months to defeat your side's three enemies.

It's not hard to figure out where your enemies are: The three "Bad Guy" castles are arrayed along the top three outcroppings of this six-pronged island, while the "Good Guy" castles lie to the south.

A Dragon City rests at the center of the map, and, as always, is useful for endgame cleanup.

The key to this scenario is **not** to attack your friends' castles, no matter how tempting they may be. Pick an enemy castle and try to conquer it; if you can take it and hold it, you should be able to muster a strong enough army to conquer Dragon City and get the powerful Dragon troops you'll need to finish the game.

HEROES



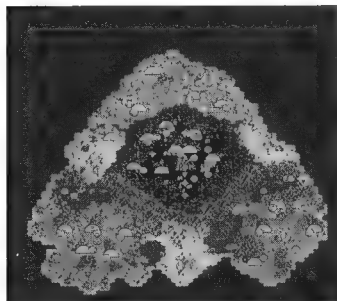
Large
5 Players
Normal Difficulty

You can play a Warlock, Necromancer, Wizard, Sorceress or Barbarian on this "trick map" that looks like the **Heroes of Might and Magic II** logo (an ornate shield) from above.

Everyone starts with a town and a single hero. The towns and resources tend to be arrayed along the outer edge of the continent. The interior affords little more than trees and a few treasures.

A good strategy is to choose one of the fast-starting heroes (such as the Barbarian or Knight), mass a large army quickly, and then conquer a neighbor—ideally after he or she already has spent the gold and resources to convert his town into a castle. Once you accomplish this, the game falls into a typical pattern.

HOT SPOT



Medium

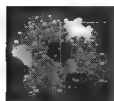
4 Players

Hard Difficulty

You start the game with two other heroes on the fringe of a roughly circular island. A tough Warlock starts the game inside a ring of volcanic crags at the center of the island, and grows powerful as you skirmish outside.

A Travel Gate at the south-central tip of the island is the only way into the Warlock's domain. Try to conquer the island exterior using conventional castle-grabbing tactics. Gradually build your superhero to a truly phenomenal level, and then punch through the tough monsters guarding the Gate and see if you've got what it takes to handle the Warlock.

THE LOST CONTINENT



Extra Large

6 Players

Hard Difficulty

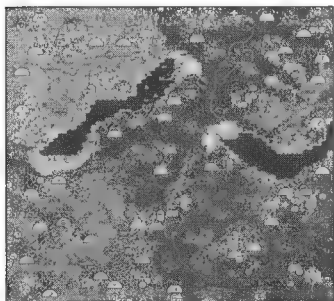
Choose between a Barbarian, Knight, Sorceress, or Necromancer in this epic struggle.

What can we say? This is just a huge, roughly circular continent jam-packed with towns and castles. You must use your finest castle-grabbing tactics to prevail here. You'll need at least two strong heroes if you want to survive.

Patience is key to victory in this scenario—the patience to build up every town and castle to its utmost level, and make sure you leave no vital castles unprotected.

The center of the map is packed with resources and—what else—a Dragon City. However, Dragons guard the mountain passes providing access to this land, so it'll take time to punch your way through. Pull up a chair and prepare to stay awhile!

LOST RELIC



Medium

5 Players

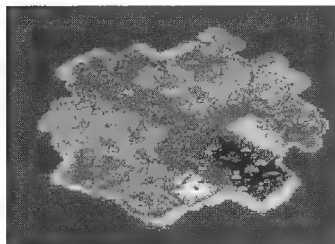
Normal Difficulty

This five-player map is quite fair; you can tell this right away, because it allows you to play the game from any of five starting positions!

The key here is to scour the land and recover the Ultimate Artifact. This means consolidating your base of castles and towns, as usual—for a while. After you've got a superhero tough enough to hold his own, and a few castles that can do the same, your hero (and one or two lesser heroes) should scour the land for Obelisks.

If superior forces threaten to swamp you, adjust your tactics. Try conquering more castles before going into full exploration mode; pretend the goal is to crush your enemies, not find the artifact. Then, when you have a sufficiently large piece of the world, return your attention to the artifact.

MIGHT VS. MAGIC



Large

3 Players

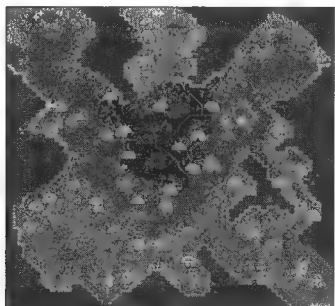
Normal Difficulty

Play either Knight or Barbarian in this epic struggle against the red player.

This isn't a terribly hard scenario to win if you restrain yourself, and keep from beating up on anyone except the red player. You start the game in the northeast segment of a large, circular continent, and must sweep west to conquer the huge expanse of red-player territory.

Typical game strategies and sound tactics will assure you victory on this map.

MINERAL WARS



Medium

6 Players

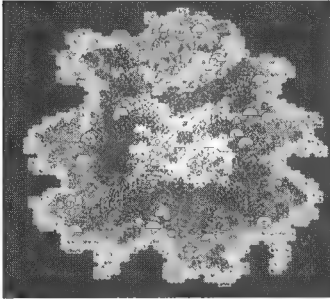
Hard Difficulty

This asymmetrical continent features an unusual grouping of resources guaranteed to make your life difficult. Mines and other resource generators are clustered—six gem mines here, six crystal mines there, and so on. This means you'll be stuck doing a lot of trading.

The easiest thing to do on this map is choose a starting hero who doesn't require tons of resources; Knights are probably best. Of course, the crystal mines are all stacked up in the northern part of the map, where they're extremely hard to reach, so even this "easy" choice won't be that easy: Your Knight won't be able to build a Cathedral as easily as you'd like.

Prepare to build lots of Marketplaces!

MOUNTAIN KING



Medium

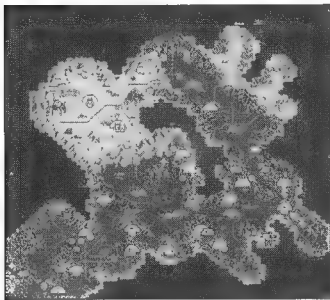
5 Players

Normal Difficulty

You start dead-center of the map. Enemy castles lie to the north, south, west, and east. Hold on as best you can, building up your army without abandoning your castle. Because your castle is in the very middle of the map—at a crossroads, no less—you'll have a tougher time than you might expect.

After building up a suitable defense at your home castle, you should eventually get the opportunity to take over an enemy castle. Once you've done that, you're well on your way to victory.

OVERLORD



Medium

3 Players

Normal Difficulty

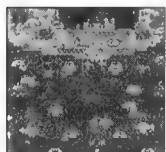
This scenario has unusual victory conditions. In a span of four months you must either conquer the asymmetrical map or gather 150,000 Gold. If you fail on both counts, you lose.

This map is quite fair: You may select any of the three starting positions and use any hero type you'd like. Due to the relatively small map and prominent roads, a Knight or Barbarian is best. Each of the three starting positions offers sufficient resources for those two hero types to get a super-fast start.

Should you try to conquer, or just get rich? We'll let you decide. This is a particularly fun map, and a lot of the fun comes from trying both strategies.

Just be aware that pure money-grabbing isn't feasible; you must be strong enough to defend yourself. And even if you didn't buy a single thing, your starting castle would only generate about 110,000 Gold in four months. Early conquest, therefore, is essential!

PANDEMONIUM



Small

4 Players

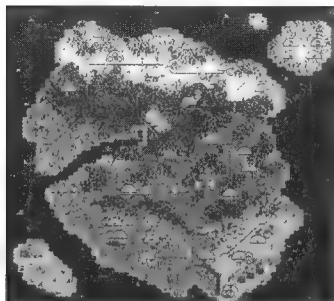
Hard Difficulty

You begin this scenario with six heroes, a single castle, and a difficult challenge: Either conquer the land or accumulate 200,000 Gold. This map is so tiny, a bit of conquering is absolutely necessary; otherwise you'll be picked to pieces by your three aggressive foes.

Keep a strong garrison in your starting castle; you lose the game if it falls. When you finally have enough firepower to give your superhero a fighting chance, send him in to attack an already-conquered castle. For example, if the yellow player takes over the blue player's castle, send your superhero in to take that castle yet again. This way you can attack when defenses are still weak.

Luck plays a big part in this scenario. The map is so small that if one of your opponents gets a significant edge, you'll have nowhere to hide. Fortunately for you, though, there's no time limit.

PYRAMID



Medium

4 Players

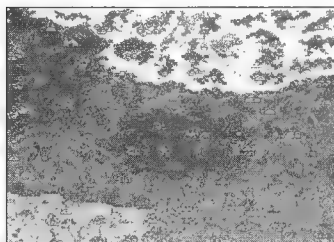
Expert Difficulty

It's blue versus the world... and you're blue.

This is one of those maps that gives even the experts fits. Your three enemies ally against you, and they possess a ridiculous number of castles. There's a Dragon City on an island to the west, and a bunch of vital gold and sulfur mines on an island to the northeast—but that doesn't help when you face such potent enemies! Green has only one castle, but purple has two, and yellow has an overpowering four!

Try a wide variety of tactics on this scenario: Methodically sweep north, conquering each enemy castle along the way. Or avoid the green castle and take over a yellow Warlock castle right away. Use the teleporter in the north-central part of the island to capture the gold and sulfur mines on the northeastern island. Heck, try anything you want! You'll have a rough time regardless, so good luck!

REVOLUTION



Large

6 Players

Hard Difficulty

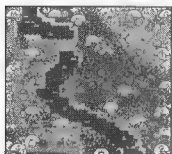
You start the game with two Necromancer castles in the center of the map, a strong hero (Sandro), and a bunch of towns. These towns will fall into enemy hands before the second turn arrives, so don't fret. There's nothing you can do about it.

The key to this scenario is maintaining barely enough troops in your two base castles to keep them afloat, while sending a hero out to methodically repossess towns. You might keep Sandro in the middle with a huge army, ready to crush those who venture too close to either castle. Another hero could then take surplus units and conquer enemy towns.

It isn't vital to hold on to the towns; just make sure that at any given time, you have enough of them to provide a decent income. When the enemy starts converting them to castles, **then** you must conquer them permanently.

This is a tough map, and it requires a little luck. Keep up the balancing act of keeping your base castles safe while attacking enemy towns with a secondary hero.

RIVER CROSSING



Small

3 Players

Hard Difficulty

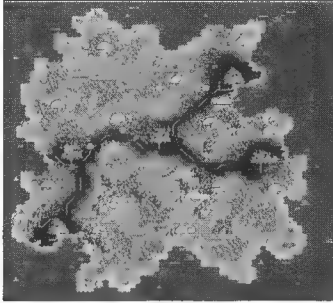
You begin the game with a castle on the west bank of the river. A major key to victory is taking the only other castle on your side of the river, and securing the resources and mines you'll find there.

This wouldn't be such a tough scenario, except you automatically lose the game if you lose your starting castle. This is a problem on such a small map; even with the river in the way, enemies can get to your castle very quickly if you deplete its defenses.

You can adjust the hero type you start the game with, as well as those of the enemy heroes. If you find yourself losing this map consistently, play around with the hero selections, giving yourself a hero you feel comfortable with (perhaps a Knight or Warlock) and your enemies unfavorable heroes.

As always, luck plays a big part on this map. In **Heroes of Might and Magic II**, small can be deadly.

SCORCHED EARTH



Medium

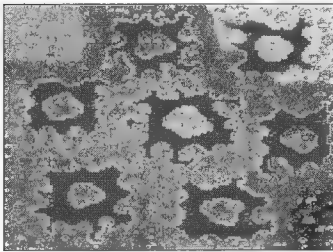
3 Players

Hard Difficulty

"Scorched Earth" is a standard-issue map of conquest that places you on an island controlled mostly by the yellow player, forcing you to make up ground quickly.

As always, the key here is to conquer enemy castles as quickly as possible. If you fail in this, the computer's great advantage of gold and creatures eventually will take its toll.

SEVEN LAKES



Large

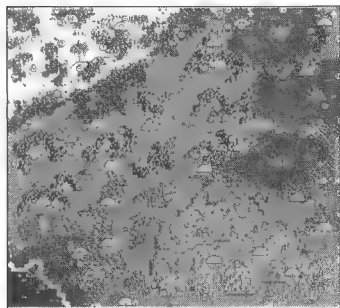
6 Players

Normal Difficulty

This large, complicated map features seven lakes with an island in the middle of each. Each island sports a castle, gold mines, or some other valuable commodity. The Navigation skill is useful indeed on this map.

However, despite the complicated map, it isn't that hard to beat. Your enemies are divided, and a series of Travel Gates crossing the map diagonally (from northeast to southwest) let you hop between several key gold-producing islands. Get a superhero into this Travel Gate loop, and he can take control of the crucial central island, with its imposing castle and three gold-producing mines.

SHIPWRECKED!



Medium

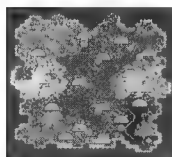
4 Players

Hard Difficulty

Starting only with a hero and a town in the southwestern corner of the map, you must gain a foothold in a hostile land.

This is a classic map, with no gimmicks to make your life easier. You must do your best to build up your starting town, perhaps taking over the two nearest towns for extra income, before heading for one of the map's remaining corners and trying to wrest control of an established castle. This done, you're in business—but that's much easier said than done. Take some chances: it's the only way to win.

SLUGFEST



Small

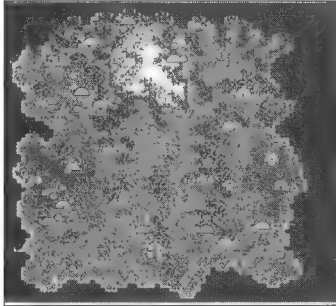
6 Players

Normal Difficulty

This is the classic "small map, lots of players" scenario. Each player starts with his own little section of the world, conveniently partitioned off by mountains. Each player's starting area contains basic resources, but rare resources are available only in the center of the map.

You can play any side in this scenario, but you can't change the hero in any starting locale. This doesn't matter; every starting place is similar. The Knight is a particularly strong choice for this scenario, because he needn't venture into the dangerous central area of the map for critical resources.

SPELL CASTERS



Medium

4 Players

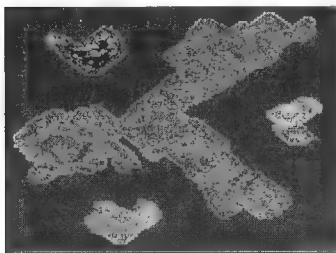
Normal Difficulty

"Spell Casters" takes place on a medium-sized map confining rare resources to boggy areas to the east and west, and a large snow-covered expanse to the north. This hostile terrain makes resources a pain to acquire, and

encourages skills like Pathfinding and Logistics.

Despite the partitioned resources, you can beat this scenario with standard exploration and expansion tactics: Just be sure to send your superhero over occasionally to collect resources and grab a few mines.

TELEPORTERS



Large

5 Players

Normal Difficulty

An angular central island contains Travel Gates leading to three circular "treasure" islands, packed to the brim with resources, mines, treasure, and, in two cases, Dragon Cities. Players start out on one of the central island's three "wings"; an early key is to collect as many resources as possible, then take over adjoining castles in the same neck of the island.

This isn't a particularly hard scenario, because of the abundant resources, gold, and extra creatures (such as Dragons). Your goal here is to accumulate wealth, but you'll find standard conquest the easiest path to victory.

TERRA FIRMA



Medium

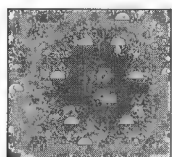
4 Players

Expert

This one is extremely tough. You've got a wizard and a castle in the northwest corner of the map. A land bridge covered with towns belonging to the orange and yellow players leads southeast. It terminates in several towns and a Necromancer castle controlled by the powerful red player. You must capture that castle.

Your only hope is to build up an army from the towns on your end of the bridge, perhaps locate the Ultimate Artifact with the help of nearby Obelisks and some guesswork, and attack the Necromancer's castle—preferably when the red player's best hero isn't there to guard it. You might need a fast hero with skills such as Logistics to lure tough enemy heroes away, then sneak in behind for a devastating attack on the castle.

THE CLEARING



Small

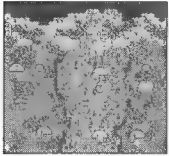
5 Players

Normal Difficulty

This is a small map, with castles in all four corners—and one in the center which you, naturally, possess at the start. You can beat the map through standard exploration and expansion, or by finding the Ultimate Artifact.

Obelisks exist in the lower half of the map, and there aren't many of them. Why not just build your superhero's army to a respectable level and make a dash for the Obelisks? It could save you a lot of needless conquest!

THE OTHER SIDE



Small

2 Players

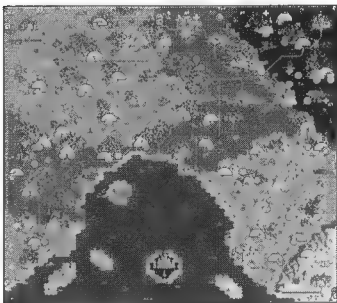
Normal Difficulty

A double mountain range separates a Wizard and a Necromancer in this classic two-sided battle. Between the mountains lie resources and treasures; the northern edge of the map, especially, is loaded with gold. Players thus have a strong incentive to break through to the central area first.

A three-month time limit makes this otherwise simple scenario challenging. You'll have to hurry if you want to win!

In this scenario, it's best to build up your superhero at the expense of your castle. Let your enemy's best hero approach your castle and attack, and then crush him with your superhero to forcibly remove the wind from his sails.

UNDEAD ARMIES



Medium

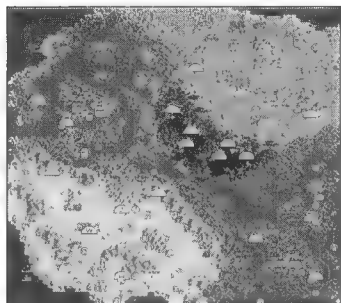
6 Players

Normal Difficulty

"Undead Armies" is a typical, large, conquest-style map, with options to play from several different positions. Use your best exploration and expansion tactics, and you should prevail.

The land is shaped like a giant horseshoe, with a lake to the south. The largest island in that lake contains—guess what?—a Dragon City. As usual, you can use this to simplify your conquest. The Dragon City, plus the four castles arrayed on the edge of the lake, make boats quite useful in this scenario.

UNHOLY ALLIANCE



Medium

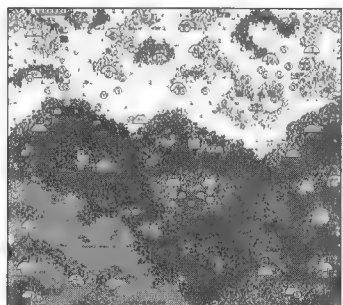
4 Players

Easy Difficulty

A Barbarian and a Sorceress ally against a Knight and Necromancer. You can play either side of this team conflict by choosing either Knight or Barbarian. The Knight–Necromancer side is perhaps the easier choice, but, hey—it's your call.

This is one of the game's last few easy missions. Whether you're having difficulty getting acquainted with the game, or you just enjoy an opportunity to pound on a feeble opponent, this scenario is fun without presenting too much of a challenge.

VIKINGS!



Medium

5 Players

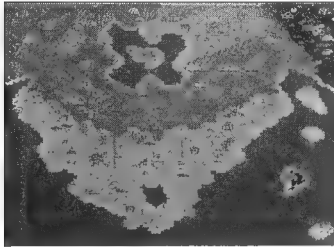
Hard Difficulty

In "Vikings," you start the game at the southwest corner of the map. Your starting castle and two adjacent towns are certainly nice, **but** those Barbarians will flood south as soon as they get the opportunity.

Your best bet is to conquer the bottom half of the map quickly, before the Barbarians punch through the monsters guarding the mountain passes. Stock up on creatures at the creature generators scattered across the map: A pocket in the west-central part of the map contains a Lamp, Ruins, and a Dragon

City—the game’s three best creature generators. In the center of the map lies another Ruins. Between these sites you should be able to build up a punishing army of Genies and Medusas, and eventually take on the Dragon City for your very own horde of Dragons. That’s not to say this will be easy, but at least you’ll have a fighting chance.

WARRIOR KNIGHT



Large

6 Players

Normal Difficulty

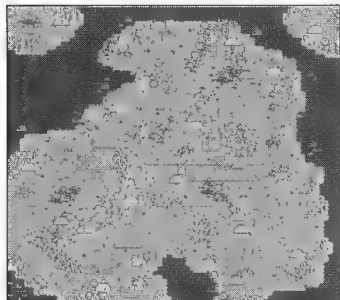
This scenario features long stretches of barren terrain, dotted here and there with resources and treasures. Heroes with speed-enhancing skills and artifacts will have a definite advantage on this map.

Four of the six heroes in this scenario are Knights, and you can choose to play any one of them. Employ classic expansion tactics, and stick to the roads for extra speed.

Use Travel Gates whenever possible. They can take you to some rather useful southeastern islands: One contains a Dragon City.

Sea travel is more useful in this scenario than it might first appear. The inland lake in the map’s north-central area connects via Whirlpool Teleporter to the southern sea. Furthermore, several towns and castles are located at the water’s edge. Combine these factors, and you’ve got a great reason to take to the high seas.

WASTELANDS



Medium

4 Players

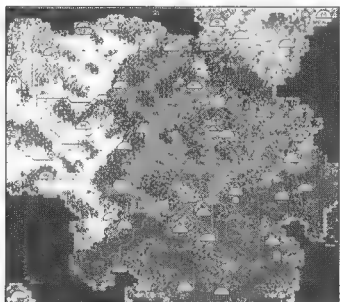
Hard Difficulty

Take a harsh and inhospitable island, add several tough opponents, and reserve only a lonely Barbarian castle in the northeast corner for yourself. Suddenly you've got "Wastelands," a pretty tough scenario. Oh, yeah—and if you lose your starting castle, you lose the game. Now you've got a **really** tough scenario.

Take over the nearby town as soon as possible, if only for extra income. Ore and wood are close, as are crystals. Grab the crystal mine quickly, so you can start churning out Cyclopes as soon as humanly possible. When your army is competent, head south to take over another town and a Necromancer castle.

Travel Gates lead to two small northern islands containing gold mines and potent artifacts. Don't enter those gates until your hero is very tough, however: A band of five Black Dragons block both on the other side. Ouch!

WHO AM I?



Medium

4 Players

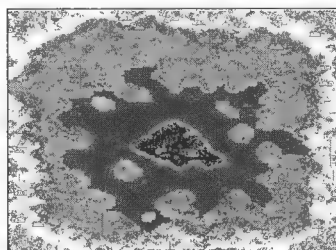
Expert Difficulty

This extremely difficult scenario gives you a single Wizard with a few Mages and Steel Golems. Ouch! You must travel north immediately, recruiting a few Sprites along the way, and capture a town.

You'll have a short period of peace after you capture the town, because weak monsters block this area off from the rest of the world. Take this opportunity to convert your first town into a castle, and then take over several other local towns. Eventually the bad guys punch through the layer of army camps separating you from the rest of the island. At that point you might think about looping south with your superhero and attacking the well-established castle located slightly southwest of your map starting position.

The key here is to make the most of your time. If you don't have a reasonably strong hero when your enemies come knocking, you're lost.

WINTERLANDS



Large

4 Players

Normal Difficulty

This scenario features a classic circular design. A large island with the obligatory gold mines and Dragon City occupies the center of the map. A circular lake surrounds this island. A circular expanse of green shoreline containing most of the map's towns and castles borders it in turn. Bordering the shoreline is a ring of wintry terrain containing few towns but lots of treasures and resources.

Use standard tactics on this map, and don't forget to use Travel Gates. One of them leads to the all-important central isle, and an inexhaustible gold supply.



HEROES IIITM

of Might and Magic



CHAPTER

10

Campaign Scenarios

This chapter examines every campaign scenario in **Heroes of Might and Magic II**, starting with the "Good" campaign scenarios, and ending with the "Evil" ones.

As with the standard scenarios we examined in Chapter 9, this chapter strives only to give details that are unique or especially pertinent to each scenario. For the most part, winning these scenarios requires mastering the strategies Chapter 6 outlined, with a few modifications here or there, depending on the terrain and your opposition.

SCENARIO CHOICES

Good and Evil campaigns both afford you several opportunities to choose your path. Here are our suggestions for dealing with those choices.

Toward the middle of both campaign types, you may choose between betraying your current master and defecting to the other side or proceeding with your current campaign. If you choose betrayal, you'll actually jump from the Good campaign into the Evil one, or vice versa. Either choice is valid, so we suggest you follow your instincts. The betrayal scenarios are significantly easier than their loyal counterparts, so if you have a particularly hard time beating the non-betrayal scenarios, you might view betrayal as an easy way out.

Betrayal, however, will cost you the rewards you earned before you betrayed. If you were playing the Evil campaign and switched, you would lose the support of the Necromancer Guild or of the Ogres. Similarly, if you had completed "Save the Dwarves" on the Good side and switched to Evil, you would lose the Dwarf joining reward.

Late in both campaigns, you may choose between acquiring the Ultimate Crown (+4 to all primary skills) to use in the final scenario, or acquiring an army that shows up in the same scenario. We like the "army" choice. If you do well in these scenarios, you can muster a large army of Black Dragons for the final battle, which in our book is a lot more useful than the Crown. The Crown makes your hero stronger, but it's no substitute for an army. A Dragon army, on the other hand, gives your hero the tools he or she needs to win several consecutive victories; with each victory he or she gains experience and grows stronger.

And now, the scenarios.

GOOD CAMPAIGN

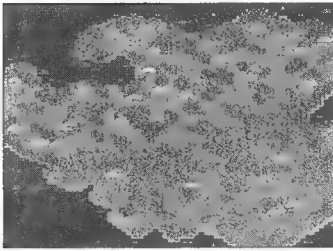
This is a tough campaign, but it's not without bright spots. Scenarios 3 and 7 are particular favorites, featuring unusual goals and computer opposition that isn't too brutal.

Scenario 5 is very tough, and many players will find themselves seriously considering betraying their lord just to get around it! It's mercifully short,

however, so you won't have to spend hours and hours only to learn you've lost. Instead, keep trying new approaches.

Scenario 9 is one of our least favorite scenarios. It's big, tough, and can be really frustrating. Luck and repeated tries seem to be the only solution to this one. If you find yourself stuck or frustrated, don't worry about it: You're in good company!

Scenario 1: Force of Arms



Bonus: 2000 Gold, Thunder Mace of Dominion, or Armored Gauntlets (recommended)

This mission is ranked Easy, and there's a good reason. A mountain range halves the medium-sized map horizontally, and your three opponents—a Barbarian, a Necromancer, and a Warlock—all start the scenario in the northern half.

You, on the other hand, start the game at a Wizard castle in the southeastern corner, so you've got the entire bottom half of the map to yourself.

This map features only four castles, three of them in the northern half. That means you'll have only one castle—and hence be short on gold—for most of the game. Take the gold mine in the bottom-center of the map as soon as possible, or gold shortages will plague you.

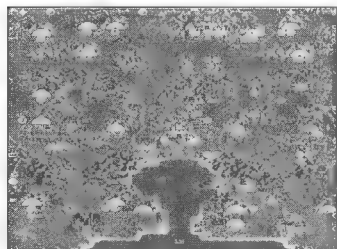
A good strategy for this scenario is to build up a single superhero as quickly as possible. Don't worry about defending your castle; your enemies are stuck in the upper half of the map, and won't attack you for a long time. Buy an extra hero to pick up loose items and scout the terrain, and you'll be able to clean out the map's bottom half much faster.

Once you've got a top-flight hero with a strong army, send him to the center of the map, where a mountain pass leads to the upper half. Defeat the Trolls guarding the area, then proceed northeast to the Warlock's castle and take it over. This is the best castle to control because it produces extra gold (remember, Warlock castles can build a Dungeon) and great creatures such as Dragons, so you can build a strong garrison here quickly.

Build up the castle's garrison and restock your superhero's army. Next, go after the Necromancer's castle to the west, and then the Barbarian castle in the north.

Be patient on this map, and take your time to build up both your castle garrisons and your superhero's army. The enemy heroes will have some pretty tough armies by the time you punch through to the northern half of the map, and they'll smash you if you aren't careful.

Scenario 2: Annexation



Options: Wizard, Sorceress, or Knight castle

We suggest you choose the Knight castle for this scenario, mainly because of the Knight's quick-starting ability.

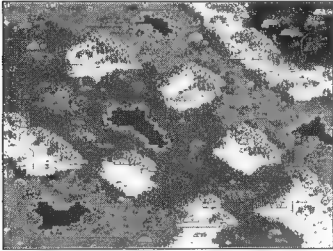
You'll start the scenario in the middle of a small map. Vital crystal and ore mines lie close by; to the west is a badly needed lumber mill. Your enemies are on all sides, but army camps in key locations will keep your castle safe for a week or two.

Your four opponents are not allied. Furthermore, each possesses precisely one castle, and their castles are spread apart quite nicely. This means you needn't worry about one enemy collecting several castles and beating on you right away.

The key to this scenario is patience. Use your superhero to collect treasure and resources, and gradually build up a stock of powerful creatures. When you've assembled a great army, go take over another castle—preferably the Knight castle in the map's southwest corner. Once you've got two castles, the game becomes much easier.

Don't neglect the Ruins slightly west of your castle; Medusas make potent troops, and will help you get off to a speedy start. Also, don't forget to hire another hero right away. Another Knight would be an excellent choice.

Scenario 3: Save the Dwarves



Options: Wizard, Sorceress, or Knight castle

Again, we suggest you choose the Knight for this scenario, especially if you're having trouble winning. The Knight's resources are all readily available near your starting castle. However, note that any hero can beat this mission.

At the start of this mission, you possess three Level 1 heroes, several Dwarven towns (that you may not upgrade to castles, no matter how much you'd like to), and a castle in the map's extreme southwest corner. Your enemy has multiple heroes and a single castle in the map's northeast corner.

As with the previous scenario, the trick to winning this scenario is patience. You can keep enemies from invading your towns by stationing heroes there and purchasing the maximum number of Dwarves at each town every week, thereby augmenting your garrison slightly as time goes by. This is usually enough to keep enemy heroes from attacking.

Build up your single castle and gather resources, treasure, and artifacts with the hero who starts nearest that castle. He or she will be your superhero. Allow your other heroes to explore the area around their towns, but keep them close to the towns in case of enemy attack.

After you've built up your castle sufficiently, it will provide high-level troops such as Unicorns or Crusaders to augment your superhero's army. Thanks to all the experience from treasure chests your superhero gains, plus the artifacts he or she uncovers, you'll soon be ready to attack the enemy.

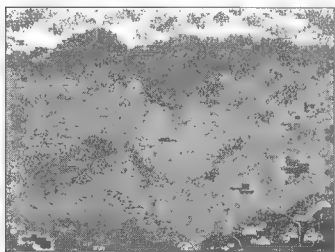
When your superhero is combat-ready, start moving him north along the road network, taking any easy experience and artifacts along the way. When you reach the northern edge of the map, work your way east along the roads, collecting useful items as you go. Be careful not to fight any debilitating battles: You'll need your strength!

Eventually your superhero will reach the lone enemy castle in the north-east corner of the map, in the middle of "lava" terrain. Ignore enemy heroes and go right for the castle, preferably attacking it on Day 7 of the current week. If you can take the castle and hold it, you've more or less won the game, because you control the only two castles in existence. Build up the new castle until it produces Dragons, and then send your superhero to conquer the remaining towns.

Note the Dragon City in the mideastern part of the map; visit it when you've got a great army, and the Dragons you purchase there will make you even tougher.

This scenario illustrates the supreme importance of castles. If you own both castles, you'll win the game; if you fail to take the enemy castle early enough, you might fail.

Scenario 4: Carator Mines



Options: Wizard, Sorceress, or Knight castle

As always, we recommend the Knight if you're having problems winning. Your starting castle is right next to a lumber mill and a crystal mine, so resource-gathering is an easy task, indeed.

This scenario pits you against four other warlords. Three of your opponents are random; the fourth is always a Warlock.

At the scenario's start, six castles are scattered around the medium-sized map, with four towns scattered between them. Your opponents gradually convert the towns to castles as time goes by.

You start the scenario in a castle on the map's western edge. If you're lucky, nobody will harass you right away; if you're unlucky, your neighbors can make the game almost unwinnable! Assuming you can spare enough creatures from your castle to build a sizable army, your best policy is to create a superhero, as usual, and then send that hero southeast to the nearest castle,

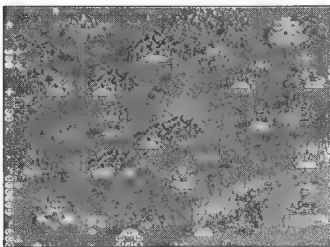
located in roughly the south-central part of the map. If you take over that castle and fortify it, you can use it as a springboard to siege the castle in the center of the map. That central castle is key; it sits in a cracked wasteland surrounded by mountains. Several valuable mines exist in there as well. If you can take over the castle, you'll find it easy to control the mines.

Securing those first three castles is truly the hardest part. If you can do that, it's a relatively easy task to methodically sweep the map with your superhero, conquering enemy castles first, and cleaning up the towns after taking all the castles.

To take those first three or four castles, you must take risks. That means loading up one hero with lots of troops and leaving some of your castles poorly defended. If you leave the castles farthest from the enemy unguarded, you'll find you can often get away with this trick for quite some time.

Don't despair if you're about to lose a castle; just make sure your superhero is strong enough to take over a different one. It's better to concentrate a huge army with one hero, and lose a few castles temporarily, than to leave just-barely-adequate forces at each castle and let them get demolished one by one. Some castles are easier to hold than others. Sorceress and Barbarian castles are weak, and you should generally leave them for later. Warlock and Wizard castles are relatively easy to defend; try to conquer those castles first. Necromancer castles fall somewhere in between.

Scenario 5: Turning Point



Options: Wizard, Sorceress, or Knight castle

You can probably guess which hero we recommend here, especially in light of the map's small size and the local cluster of wood, ore, and crystal producers. Yep, it's the Knight.

This battle takes place on a small map. You might think battles on small maps are easy, but guess what: In some ways they're harder, because your enemies are always within striking distance. You can't get away with leaving your castle completely undefended.

There are four castles on this map, one in each corner. You start with the Knight castle in the bottom left corner, and your opponent controls the other three—a Warlock castle in the northwest, a Barbarian castle in the northeast, and a Necromancer castle in the southeast.

The trick to this map is to develop a superhero as quickly as possible and attack one of the other three castles (you decide which). The Barbarian castle is attractive in this game because it requires so few resources to develop, but castle choice is entirely up to you. We tend to go for the Warlock castle in the northwest, stopping at the nearby Ruins for some powerful Medusa troops before initiating the attack.

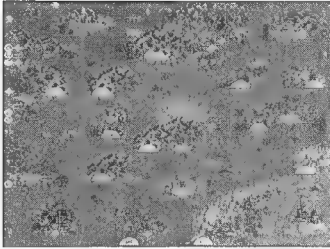
Once you get that second castle, and you solidify your hold on them both, you're in good shape. It's the early stages, when you have only one castle, that hurt you most. Therefore, your first few turns are absolutely vital. Mass your troops with a single, powerful superhero until you're ready to take a new castle, crushing enemy heroes who venture too close to your starting castle.

Don't be afraid to take over a castle and then abandon it when an enemy hero approaches. Just taking over the castle for a little while interferes with the enemy's plans.

Day 7 invasions are almost essential on this map. Pick your target castle, and attack it on Day 7 of the current week, when no hero guards it. Then buy all the creatures you can the next day. If you're lucky, you'll be able to buy enough creatures to defend the castle against counterattacks.

Good luck! If you're like us, you'll have to try this scenario several times before winning.

Alternate Scenario 5: Betrayal

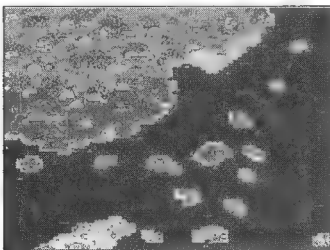


Options: Necromancer, Warlock, or Barbarian castle

This scenario is the easiest you'll ever face. The map is identical to Scenario 5's, except instead of controlling the single castle in the southwest, you control the other three castles. Choosing this scenario automatically moves you to the Evil campaign track.

The fastest path to victory is to take the hero from your northwestern castle, march him a few paces east to hire Medusas, and then send him south along the road—directly toward the lone blue castle. He should be able to take over the castle with his Medusas and hold it indefinitely. From this point you need only fortify all four of your castles and eventually send out your best hero to hunt down the lone enemy hero.

Scenario 6: Defender



Bonus: Mirror Image, Resurrect, or Summon
Earth Elemental spells

Any of the three bonus spells can be very useful. Experiment with all three if you find yourself losing the scenario repeatedly.

This scenario pits you against three opponents—a Barbarian, a Knight, and a Necromancer. It takes place on a map that's mostly water: A small continent covers the northwest corner of the map, a small finger of land sticks up from the south, and several islands lie scattered on the ocean. You start the map with a Sorceress castle and a Sorceress town, both on the main continent. A Knight and Sorceress also are under your control; the Knight starts with a pair of useful artifacts and some Genies, but the

Sorceress starts with a free (and valuable) spell of her choice. It's up to you which will be your superhero; you'll need two strong heroes in this scenario, regardless. Remember that they can trade artifacts and creatures!

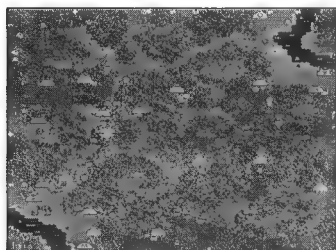
This scenario's many islands offer lots of treasures and creatures for hire, but in general it's best to consolidate your power on the continent before sending someone forth to search for treasure and creatures. Enemy heroes tend to explore the sea very quickly, and if you can defeat them when they reach the continent, you can take all their hard-earned artifacts.

The first order of business is to build up your Sorceress castle. Don't worry too much if your town falls. Buy creatures in the town for a baseline defense if you'd like, but don't upgrade it to a castle: It requires too much investment. Instead, build up a superhero with several Unicorns and other strong troops, and march him or her north to take either the Necromancer or Knight castle; the Necromancer castle is closer and somewhat more convenient. Then march your superhero over to take the other castle, fighting enemy heroes along the way, if necessary. Don't be afraid to let your castles fall back into enemy hands temporarily; just keep liberating the Knight and Necromancer castles when they fall, and eventually you'll build up a strong garrison at both locations.

You might want to allow the enemy to control your town for a while and turn it into a castle, and then take it back later. Your Sorceress castle, on the other hand, is valuable: A hero should guard it at all times.

When you've taken over all three castles on the main continent, take to the seas and conquer the Barbarian castle at the south of the map. At a small island just south of the mainland you'll find Magellan's Maps, where you can clarify your view of the sea: Do so, and your overseas expeditions will be much easier.

Scenario 7: The Gauntlet



Options: Black Pearl, Dragon Sword, or Divine Breastplate (recommended)

This scenario's a lot of fun—but that doesn't mean you can just sit back and enjoy it!

For once you won't have to worry about evil heroes terrorizing your cities and towns. This time, all you have to do is race to the other side of the map and conquer a town called Lakeside. A single enemy hero waits there for you, but he won't interfere with you until this point. Your main obstacle, therefore, is the clock.

You have only two months to complete this scenario. Scouting and Logistics, therefore, are excellent skills to select on this map.

When you start out, note the trail leading off to the west; it's **directly** west of where your hero starts the game. That's the path to take, but before you take it, quickly detour southeast, pick up the treasure chests you'll find there, and conquer the sulfur mine at the water's edge.

Now get back to that western path and follow it until you reach another sulfur mine. Pick up everything you can along the way without straying from the path more than a few spaces. Conquer the sulfur mine and then proceed directly north. At the northern edge of the map you'll find a lamp; dismiss the Sprites in your army and hire Genies to replace them.

Now proceed directly west until you hit the edge of the map. Go south along the map's edge, collecting stuff as you go, until you have an opportunity to go east. Take it, and then follow the trail southeast (still collecting treasures, mines, and resources) until you reach the town of Olympus. You must fight a tough battle along the way, but don't worry. You can handle it.

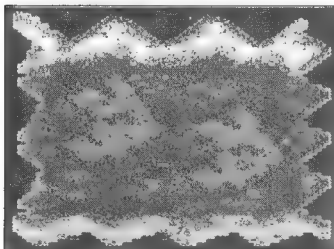
Once you've captured Olympus, try to construct an upgraded Maze, a Swamp, and a Black Tower as soon as possible. Also build a Shipyard and a Marketplace; when you've built everything but a top-level Black Tower, use the Marketplace to buy the remaining sulfur and ore you need.

Meanwhile, have your hero secure the mines in the area. There are lots of them in the immediate vicinity of Olympus, and they're all handy.

Finally, build a boat and buy all the Black Dragons, Minotaur Kings, and Hydras you can, focusing on Black Dragons **above all**. Upgrade the Mage Guild **if** you have spare resources, and make sure your hero has learned the spells.

Finally, when you have only five days to go, load your hero, with his Dragon, Minotaur, and Hydra army, onto the boat (with two extra units, as well—take all the creatures you possibly can). Proceed south, and attack the town. Conserve your resources, because your army's remaining creatures will appear in the final battle! If you do this mission properly, you'll end up with around 10 Black Dragons, plus a few other units for the final battle—a mighty army indeed!

Scenario 8: The Crown



Options: Wizard, Sorceress, or Knight castle

An early abundance of resources makes any castle feasible on this map; Wizards tend to do especially well.

You start the scenario at a castle in the north-central part of a roughly square map. Your opponent is a Warlock in the map's southeastern corner. The object is to find the Crown, an Ultimate Artifact that will carry over to the final battle. To find the Crown you must positively **scour** the map: There are many Obelisks to visit.

The key to victory is to build up your initial castle quickly, and send your superhero to explore the castle's surrounding area, gathering resources all the while. Hire an extra hero for scouting purposes. When you've got enough creatures to assemble a quality army, conquer the two nearby towns—one to the east, and one to the west. Quickly convert those towns into castles, and consolidate your power base. These three castles are all you'll need to win the scenario. Just keep fortifying them to ward off enemy attacks, and recapture them with your superhero if they fall.

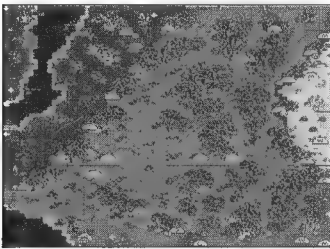
At this point your superhero, with a suitably tough army, should make a grand tour of the continent, uncovering Obelisks as he goes. If you wish to conquer the Warlock's castle in the southeast corner of the map, go ahead; just bear in mind that finding the *Ultimate Artifact* is your primary goal.

If you have trouble consolidating your power base early in the game, it's probably a matter of resources. Next time, spend more time taking over resources and mines, and you'll be able to purchase super-creatures much more quickly. Titans, Crusaders, and Bone Dragons are crucial on this map.

To improve your castles cheaply, try the trick of removing all creatures from the castle, letting an enemy hero take over the castle for four or five days, and then repossessing it with your superhero. If your superhero's good enough, he'll be able to crush the defenders with minimal losses, and if you're lucky, your opponent will have built some valuable structures while he was in charge of the castle.

Beware an attack from the map's northwest corner, where a *Travel Gate* connects to a matching gate in the map's southeast corner.

Scenario 9: Corlagon's Defense



Bonus: 20 *Gems*, 20 *Crystals* (recommended),
or 20 *Mercury*

This scenario is hard. Really, really hard. You start with a Knight castle and two towns on the western fringe of the continent; Roland waits on a small island to the west that connects to the mainland by a *Travel Gate*. You lose the game if his castle falls, but in reality he plays little part in the proceedings; he just sits there and builds his defenses while you do all the work. You need only worry about your own armies!

Did we mention that this scenario is hard? Your three allied enemies start on the eastern edge of the map, and they're extremely nasty. You can approach the map several ways. The most common is to develop the Wizard town to the south into a castle as soon as possible, and perhaps conquer an

extra nearby town. The key is to collect lots of resources and resource producers, and build or conquer gold producers such as castles, towns, and statues as soon as humanly possible. The problem is, it's incredibly difficult to consolidate your small empire before the bad guys attack.

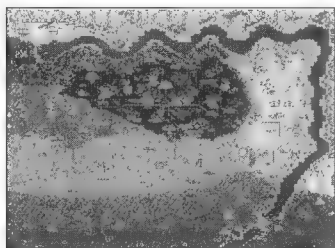
One of your biggest difficulties is choosing who to make into a superhero. It's tempting to cultivate all three of your starting heroes, but this usually results in three heroes that aren't quite good enough to handle the opposition.

Towns are important sources of revenue in this difficult scenario. Your enemies have only one castle apiece, so they won't grow **too** much faster than you do if they can't get their hands on the continent's towns.

If you do, in fact, manage to get yourself into a winning situation, try to locate and defeat the enemy hero Corlagon, and make things easier for yourself in the final battle.

There's no shame in using the map cheat (see the Appendix) to make your life easier in this scenario. In fact, there's no shame in cheating your way past it, either. This is an unusually brutal scenario that gives 'most everyone fits. If you save the game before making any moves, you can attempt this scenario again and again when things go wrong. Just remember to take a break if things get too bad, and remember that these hard campaign missions also stump the game's veteran players.

Scenario 10: Final Justice



Bonus: Tax Lien, Hideous Mask, or Fizbin of Misfortune

You start this scenario with four heroes, one of whom is Roland, bearing the spoils you acquired in Scenario 7 or Scenario 8. We think you're much better off with the creatures from Scenario 7 than with the Crown from Scenario 8.

You also control three castles—Knight, Sorceress, and Wizard—all arrayed along the bottom of the map.

If you chose to perform Scenario 7, Roland should now have an army of Black Dragons. Immediately send him north into the blackened central part of the map, where Warlock castles predominate. With his vast army, he can easily take over the Warlock castles. One is fully equipped with a Black Tower; conquer this one first.

Conquering those Warlock castles is the key to winning the scenario. Try to hold onto your Knight and Wizard castles at the bottom of the screen, but allow the Sorceress castle to fall if there's too much pressure. Your real strength lies in Roland and his Dragon army, not in your resources, so send him in to take over established castles that have all their creature dwellings. This allows you to buy creatures for defense very quickly, and then move on to a new conquest.

Eventually you should have a strong core of Warlock castles in the central part of the map. Now move on to the Necromancer castles to the west.

Archibald is located in a Warlock castle in the extreme northern part of the map. Ignore him until you've taken over all of the central castles.

This is a huge, difficult map to beat, though in some ways not as tough as Scenario 9. Don't be afraid to use the map cheat in the Appendix if you're perplexed about that's really going on, or how to find the castles that Roland must attack.

The key to winning, in our opinion, is to gun for already well-established castles, at least in the early going. During the early part of the game, you just don't have the time or the resources to build creature dwellings in weak castles. Take the best castles and hold them, crush enemy heroes that get too close to Roland, and try to hold onto your starting castles.

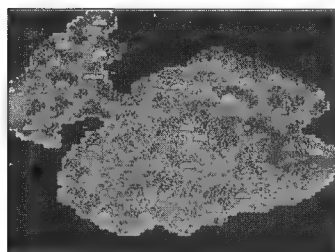
Good luck!

EVIL CAMPAIGN

The Evil campaign is not necessarily harder or easier than its Good counterpart, though a few individual missions stand out as unusually difficult. Scenario 8 in particular gave us problems, mainly because it forced us to abandon our usual style of play. Instead of ignoring towns in favor of conquering castles, we had to grab as many towns as possible just to keep the computer opponent from growing too wealthy.

Several of these scenarios duplicate scenarios in the Good campaign, often sharing the same map, but allow you to play the "other" side. Watch for commonalities: You'll have an easier time winning if you already know a map from a previous scenario.

Scenario 1: First Blood



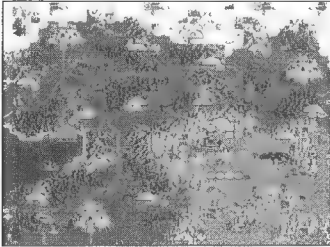
Bonus: 2000 Gold, Mage's Ring of Power (recommended), or Minor Scroll of Knowledge.

This simple scenario requires simple tactics. You receive a Necromancer castle in the northwest part of an island. Your castle's in a nice little cul-de-sac filled with useful resources; a band of Trolls cuts it off from the rest of the island.

The key to victory here is to fortify your hero, collect resources, and generally take over everything in your cul-de-sac. Once your superhero is sufficiently strong, punch through the defending Trolls and take over one of the three enemy castles. When you've fully secured the new castle, you're in a winning position. After all, the map has only four castles, and you now control two of them.

Try to take over the Wizard castle at the east edge of the island, or the Knight castle to the south. The Wizard castle's tough defenders will make the castle easier to hold once you've taken it, and the Knight castle is easy to upgrade.

Scenario 2: Barbarian Wars



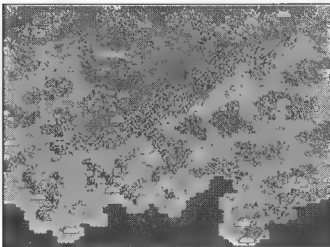
Options: Barbarian (recommended), Warlock, Necromancer

We recommend the Barbarian because of this scenario's small map, but any hero can win easily.

This scenario puts you in charge of a castle in the southeast corner of a small map. Three Barbarian castles are arrayed in the map's other three corners. What's your job? Simple. Build up as quickly as you can, playing conservatively and improving your superhero. Your enemies are not allied with one another, so you can afford to stay in your corner of the world and bide your time.

When you've got a hero capable of taking out an enemy castle, do so. As in the previous scenario, owning two out of four castles puts you in an excellent position to win.

Scenario 3: Necromancers



Bonus: 2000 Gold, Mass Curse (recommended), or Defender's Helm of Protection

This scenario puts you in charge of a single hero, and forces you to take over a nearby castle quickly—or lose.

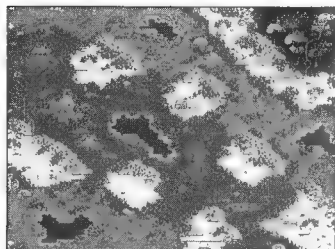
The nearby castle is, in fact, **very** near, and if you're lucky you'll find Nomad Boots of Mobility close to your starting point. The key here is to attack the castle as late as possible—on the last day of your existence, as it were—so when you take over the castle it has a sufficient supply of creature dwellings.

From that point on, it's a question of gathering local resources, and then trying to take over one of the enemy castles to the south or the east.

The main difficulty is that the bad guys have one hero with a great head start. How much of a head start? Well, don't be surprised to find Titans in his army. You'll need luck, and hope this hero gets nowhere near your own castles until later in the game. You'll also need a fast superhero—fast enough to run away when this particular hero comes knocking.

Failure in this scenario usually means you ran into the enemy superhero too soon. In these cases, it might be best to start over. If the frustration is too much to take, the map cheat (see the Appendix) is a good way to keep tabs on enemy heroes, and figure out how best to avoid them.

Scenario 4: Slay the Dwarves



Options: Barbarian, Necromancer, Warlock

We recommend the Warlock castle because of nearby sulfur and gems.

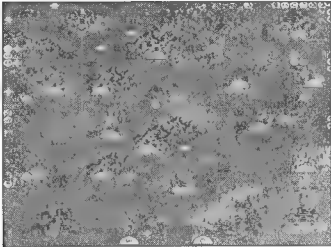
You start this scenario with three heroes, three towns, and a castle in the northeast corner of the map. The castle is tucked nicely into the corner, and hence is relatively safe for the first few weeks.

Victory on this map is a standard affair of conquest. Towns dominate the map—a lone enemy castle sits in the southwest corner—so you'll have to capture a few towns at the outset for extra income and to keep your enemy from growing too quickly. Note that this map is the same as Good Scenario 3's.

Two things will help you on your quest. First, a Dragon City lies in the north-central part of the map, in a patch of snowy ground. You can use this location as an endgame stopper. Also, due south of your starting castle is a tiny lake with a Whirlpool Teleporter. If you have the Summon Boat spell, or if an enemy happens to leave a boat there, you can enter this whirlpool, teleport over to the southwest corner of the map, and stage a speedy attack on the enemy castle.

No creatures block the passes on this map, so you can't expect a restful month or two at the start of the game. Do your best to hang onto your towns during the tumultuous early period, and remember: Just keep conquering those towns, even if some of them get conquered back. As long as you aren't taking heavy losses when you conquer the towns, you're doing yourself a real favor by preventing the enemy from consolidating too much of a lead.

Scenario 5: Turning Point

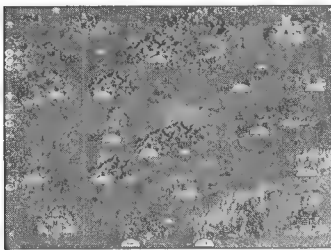


Options: Warlock, Necromancer, Barbarian

We recommend choosing the Barbarian, because of the map's tiny size.

This scenario is the same as the *Good* campaign's Scenario 5, except you start the game in a castle in the upper right corner of the map instead of the lower left corner. Refer to that scenario's descriptions for strategy notes.

Alternate Scenario 5: Betrayal

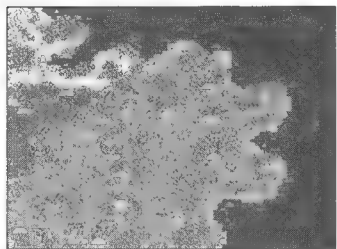


Options: Wizard, Sorceress, Knight

This scenario is identical to the *Good* campaign's Alternate Scenario 5. It takes place on the same small battlefield that every Scenario 5 in both *Good* and *Evil* campaigns uses. In this case, you control three castles to your enemy's one; the enemy is in the upper right corner of the map.

When you complete this scenario successfully, you switch permanently to the *Good* campaign track.

Scenario 6: Rebellion



Options: Necromancer, Warlock, Barbarian

Resources are difficult to acquire in this scenario, so the Barbarian may be your best choice.

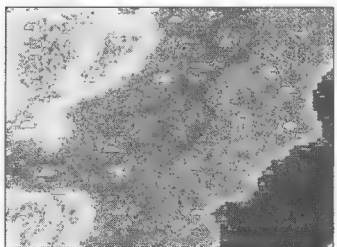
You begin with a castle on the eastern shoreline of a medium-sized continent. The sea is useless in this scenario; don't bother building ships. Your experienced hero Corlagon is a great choice for superhero; stock him up with experience and artifacts from the trove directly northeast of the castle.

For the most part, resources lie north of your castle, including crystals, ore, and lumber. After securing some resources and building a decent army, try to take over the Knight castle to the northwest. Ignore the closer town for the usual reasons; the castle is the better goal.

This map can deceive you; enemies tend to lurk close to your main castle. This forces you into a relatively defensive posture. Nevertheless, try to take a few chances and grab a Knight castle as soon as possible. The extra gold and creatures prove vital, and set the stage for later victory.

Once you consolidate the Knight castle, take the other Knight castle to the south. The Wizard castle in the northeast should be your final major conquest.

Scenario 7: Dragon Master



Options: Necromancer, Warlock, Barbarian castle

The Barbarian is a good choice for this map, mainly because of his quick-start capability.

This is an unusual map; your opening moves will largely determine your fate. Your castle is on the east coast of a large continent. Your enemies have one Warlock castle

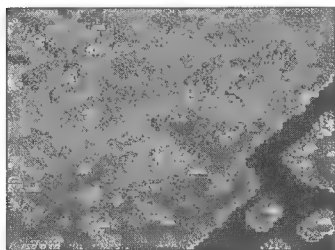
apiece, on a vertical band of earthy terrain somewhat farther inland. Two great sandy patches lie even farther in. The northernmost contains a Dragon City and the southernmost a gold mine. It's unlikely anyone will breach either location in the early game, however: Fierce Dragons guard the passes.

Resources are placed inconveniently on this map. You'd do well to hire two extra heroes, mainly to explore and gather resources. Maddening dead ends fill the verdant band of terrain you start the game in, so you'll find it hard to move around. Any movement-enhancing skills or artifacts you can get your hands on are vital.

Because there are only three castles, each with a different owner, you can pull even with your two foes by scrambling for resources early in the game and taking over local towns temporarily—especially if you don't sink too many resources into defending them. Later, when enemy heroes break through the creatures separating their domains from yours, your superhero will be strong enough to defend your territory.

A common strategy on this map is to build up your castle in typical fashion, hoping eventually to strengthen your superhero enough to acquire a second castle. However, if you aren't strong enough to do this, you might consider loading **all** your best creatures onto your superhero and making an even trade—your castle for a Warlock castle. The Warlock castle is likely to be stronger than your Barbarian castle over the long haul, so an even trade is an excellent idea, especially if the Warlock castle has most of its creature dwellings.

Scenario 8: Country Lords



Bonus: Basic Logistics, Power Axe of Dominion, or White Pearl (recommended)

This is one of those brutal scenarios where you might think you're doing just fine, and then someone comes along with a vastly superior army and teaches you otherwise.

You start the game in the southwest corner of a large map, with a single Warlock and no castles. To your west lie a huge pile of treasure chests and an enemy hero. Collect as many chests as you can before attacking the enemy hero; you'll win.

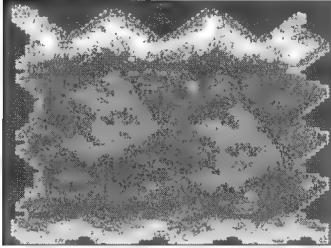
Now you must take over a Sorceress castle to the east; you must travel northeast, past a long rock outcropping, to get there. Try not to be late!

Once the Sorceress castle is yours, you can concentrate on gathering resources and building up your superhero. Mountain ranges, with tough monsters guarding the passes, divide this map into multiple pockets, so you'll have a good deal of time. Take over local towns, as well, for a source of quick income. Upgrade them only if creature-guarded passes cut them off from the enemy, or if you're willing to leave your superhero in the vicinity so he can repossess them a week or so after the enemy steals them from you.

After building up a strong force of Unicorns and Druids (and perhaps a few Phoenixes, if you have time), send your superhero through the creature-guarded passes. Aside from the Sorceress castle you initially conquered, towns (that your single, tough enemy is gradually converting to castles) cover the rest of the map.

When your superhero breaks through the northern passes and first encounters the bad guys, the enemy heroes' response will tell you immediately whether you stand a chance or not. If they crush your hero, it's back to the drawing board.

Scenario 9: The Crown



Options: Barbarian, Necromancer, Warlock

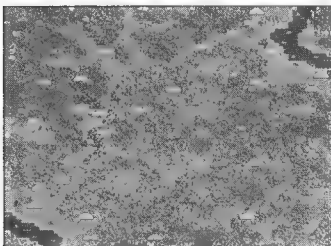
We recommend the Warlock castle, because of the abundant resources near your starting location.

This scenario takes place on the same map as Good's "Scenario 8: The Crown." Instead of starting at the top of the map, however, you start the game with a castle in the southeast corner of the screen.

This scenario is much the same as its counterpart in the Good campaign: To win, you should take over the two nearest towns, in this case far to the west and northwest, respectively, of your starting castle. Build them up quickly, meanwhile cleaning out the bottom half of the map. Note the two Nomad tents in the map's southwest quadrant: Collect as many Nomads as you can; these fast, powerful troops will help you get a good start.

Eventually an enemy will breach the layer of creatures separating you from the top half of the map, or defeat the creatures guarding the Teleporter in the map's southeast corner. When this happens, your superhero should be strong enough to challenge and defeat the enemy's best hero—a huge setback for the bad guys! Once you've broken the enemy's best hero, you should be free to explore the remainder of the island without fear of losing your castles. Eventually you'll uncover the coveted Crown.

Scenario 10: Greater Glory



Bonus: Black Pearl, Dragon Sword of Dominion, or Divine Breastplate of Protection (recommended)

This is an easy scenario if you know what to do, but confusing if you aren't sure of your goals. Its map differs from that in Good's Scenario 7, but otherwise it's much the same.

You start the scenario with Corlagon the Knight in the southwest corner of the map. Your task is to reach the northeast corner, and defeat the hero you find there. You have only two months to do this. Any surviving troops in your army will appear in the final battle, so you have a strong incentive not just to win, but to win decisively.

When you start, have Corlagon gather the three treasure chests and the sulfur mine near the water's edge. If he advances levels because of the treasure chests' experience points, try to focus on Logistics. After all, speed is of the essence.

Next, take the path leading **due east** from the spot where Corlagon started the scenario. Follow this path, collecting treasure all the while, until Corlagon must choose between veering northeast or heading south. Let him duck to the south for just a moment, to collect a pair of treasure chests, and then send him northeast. Soon he'll reach another junction, this one offering a choice between north or east; send him east.

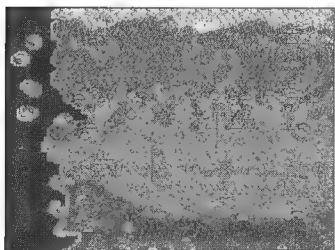
Eventually Corlagon hits the east edge of the map; at that point he can just follow the edge all the way north to Weddington, a town by the water-side. Have him conquer the town as soon as possible, upgrade it to a castle, and start building a fully upgraded Black Tower and a Shipyard inside. You also may need to build a Marketplace to convert unnecessary resources into useful ones.

Meanwhile, have Corlagon capture any local resource mines he neglected to conquer on the way north. He can acquire a lumber mill to the west after he defeats a group of guardian creatures.

Focus on creating Black Dragons as much as possible, with a secondary effort to produce Hydras and/or Minotaur Kings, and perhaps Griffins. When only four or five days remain, load up Corlagon with all your best creatures—which should include lots of Black Dragons—and have him sail east to the tiny island and the final battle.

If you succeed, you should have at least nine or 10 Black Dragons alive in your army when the battle ends. This mighty force of Dragons will serve you well in this campaign's final battle.

Scenario 11: Apocalypse



"Bonus": Tax Lien, Hideous Mask, or Fizbin of Misfortune

We don't want to sound like a broken record, but this scenario is much like the *Good* campaign's final scenario. Both take place on a huge continent; both start you at the bottom of the screen, with one hero of each "good" or "evil" type (in your case, a Necromancer, Warlock, and Barbarian).

Both give you an extra, powerful hero (Roland in the *Good* scenario, Archibald in *Evil*) who bears the fruits of your previous victories—namely, the *Ultimate Crown*, or a bunch of top-flight troops.

You also start with one of each "good" or "evil" castle type—in this case, Barbarian, Necromancer, and Warlock castles.

If you followed our advice, you gathered creatures for this battle instead of the *Ultimate Crown*. This means Archibald has a bunch of nasty Dragons, and is an absolute wrecking machine! Have your other heroes gather local resources and fortify your starting castles, while Roland visits the Warlock castle to gain spells for his spellbook.

After he gains his spells, march Archibald north. If you don't feel his army is tough enough, or you'd just prefer to fortify him a bit before proceeding, first march him into the western bog, where he can collect artifacts and treasure chests and recruit Medusas from no fewer than three Ruins.

Somewhat to the north a horizontal band of towns runs the length of the continent. Tough monsters guarding the forest passes seal off these towns. Ignore the towns and keep trekking north!

Another horizontal band of towns, this time without guardian monsters, will belong to the enemy by the time you get there; don't worry, just keep going north. Crush any heroes you encounter here to slow enemy progress.

Finally, you'll reach the last horizontal band of enemy holdings. This one contains fully developed castles—one for each good hero type (Knight, Sorceress, Wizard). Take over a castle and fortify it, meanwhile trying to hang

onto at least two of the lower castles. Crush enemy heroes when they get too close to Archibald; you can always try the trick of abandoning your newly conquered castle to lure enemy heroes close enough to crush them.

When you've consolidated your new castle, take over another castle in this horizontal band. Repeat the process until you control all three castles, and then march Archibald south to repossess any of your starting castles the enemy may have taken.

If you get this far, you're in great shape: The enemy now owns several towns but very few castles. Keep taking over castles and crushing enemy heroes. When you've finally whittled the enemy down to just a few towns, it's time to find Roland. Make sure you fortify Archibald heavily with troops and artifacts before attempting this journey; Roland has had lots of time to prepare for this fight. A big cadre of Dragons is invaluable here; save the game before proceeding.

In the north-central part of the map, slightly north of the Wizard castle you took over, a winding trail leads north. Follow it to a Teleporter that will send you into Roland's domain. Defeat Roland and take over his castle! If you can achieve this, don't just sit back on your heels; enter the other Teleporter you find here, and take over the valuable gold and resource mines it leads to. Now you've **really** won, and the rest is just cleanup.

Congratulations if you've gotten this far. It takes a lot of skill.

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...

Heroes of Might and Magic II's variable and unpredictable nature makes it impossible for us to give you explicit walkthroughs that guarantee success in any one scenario. The game simply has too many random elements, too many places to go, and too many enemy heroes running around for us to give you a specific, letter-by-letter battle plan. Inevitably, then, you'll suffer defeat at least a few times as you tackle these campaigns.

When this happens, sit back for a moment and think about what went wrong. Bad decisions on your part, or just bad luck? Try the scenario again, using an approach similar to that of your first attempt. If the problem was just bad luck, you might do better. If you continue to lose to the bad guys, however, consider changing your approach. Try to expand more quickly or more slowly; gather more towns if you had been ignoring them, or ignore them if you had been focusing on them. Try taking more risks or playing more conservatively. The options are endless.

If and when you reach the frustration point, it's usually best to take a break. If you're so frustrated you don't even want to attempt the scenario again, look to the Appendix for cheat codes. Try the map-revealing cheat code for a better sense of what your enemies are up to. Study their movements, and perhaps you'll learn a trick or two. By watching your enemies go about their business, you'll get a better sense of what you're up against.

If these techniques still don't seem to help, you can always bypass the scenario entirely with the appropriate cheat code. Hey, that's what they're there for! Just make sure that's what you really want to do. Later, after you've beaten the entire campaign, you might want to go back and try to beat those tough missions fair and square.

Best of luck in your conquests! We hope you return again and again to the lands of Might and Magic.



APPENDIX

Cheat Codes

There aren't many cheat codes for **Heroes of Might and Magic II**, but those that exist are extremely powerful. Before presenting the codes, we'll give you our standard disclaimer: Don't use 'em unless you really have to! For a while it's fun to play around with them, using them to do such things as win the game automatically—but after awhile they get pretty stale. So do yourself a favor and take it easy with the codes.

These codes should be typed in during normal play, while you're looking at the Adventure screen. Use the keys on the main part of your keyboard, **not** on the numeric keypad.

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 911 | You instantly win the scenario. Congratulations!!! |
| 1313 | You automatically lose the scenario. Hey, don't ask us why you'd use this one! |
| 8675309 | Uncovers the map. Works best if you sing the '80s tune as you type in the code. |

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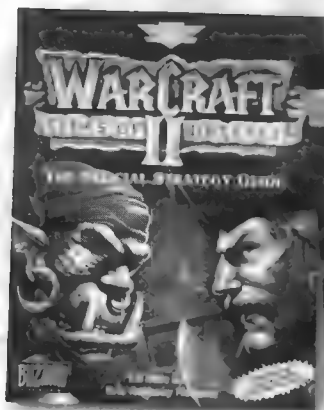
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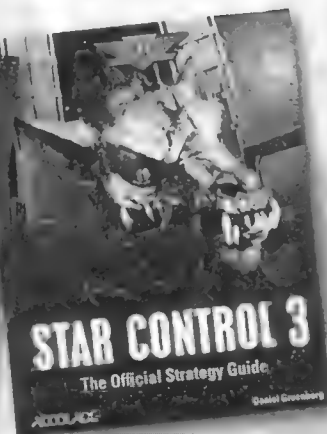
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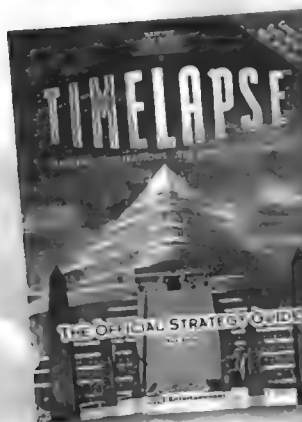
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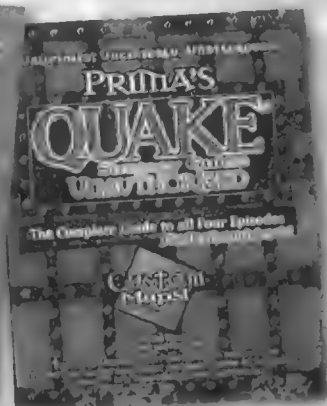
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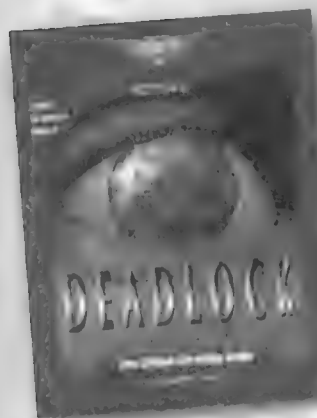
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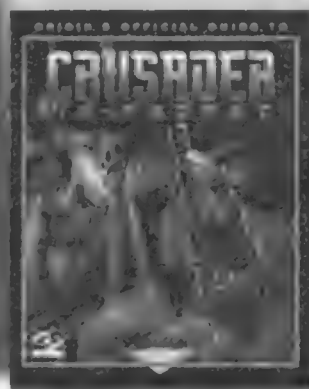
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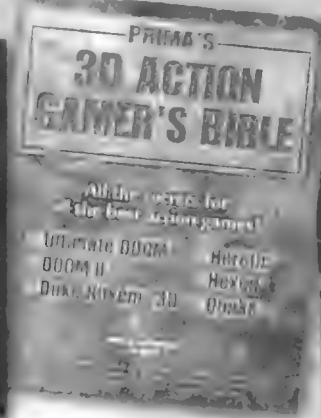
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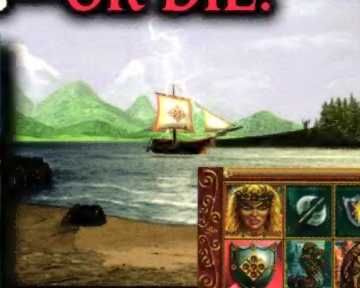
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