

Fantasy Hero Grimoire II

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The Review:

Reviewed By Gordon Feiner

The Upside:

Fantasy Hero Grimoire II is a collection of even more spells for a Fantasy Hero Setting. Like the first, it assumes that Turakian Age is the default campaign, though this one goes more out of it's way to be generic.

This book is, like the first, divided into various Arcana, or schools of magic. Each section is further divided into Offensive, Defensive, Movement, and Miscellaneous Spells. A few sections have some additional sub-categories, and the Monster Magic and Professional Magic sections are divided differently.

Arcanomancy. These spells focus on changing the nature of Magic and other Magic Spells themselves, it's described as possibly a form of Wizardry (thus expanding that Arcana greatly) or it's own Arcana. All of these spells work on affecting other spells directly, rather than actual targets or other objects. A good set of spells to have for a counter-magic mage.

Areomancy. These are another grouping of spells that could be placed under the general Wizardry Arcana from the first Grimoire. They focus directly on Battle Magic, and thus could also be their own school of magic. Battle Magic isn't damage or combat spells, but spells designed to help armies, fight wars and protect castles and cities from other armies. Most of these spells are designed to augment large numbers of soldiers before they go into combat with various effects. If your campaign, or mage, wants to focus on mass combat spell casting this is the group of spells they want to have on hand.

Black Magic. In the first Grimoire Black Magic is described as a subset of Witchcraft. However in many campaigns Black Magic is a type of school all to itself. Most of these spells focus on performing some foul deed or causing grievous harm via a dreaded curse. The section also has a side-bar on the concept of a White Magic Arcana, which are the mirror of the spells listed in this section. It also provides some ideas of what spells from the Arcana presented in the first Grimoire fit into either the Black or White Magic group.

Chaos Magic. This group of spells focuses on using the forces of raw chaos to affect a target. In many ways these spells are similar to any other harmful grouping of spells. Like Black Magic, this section has a side-bar discussing creating Order Magic, using pure order to counter chaos. Also both list some spells from the first book that could fall into this category.

Monster Magic. This grouping of spells is organized by Creature, as they are spells learned not by

Mankind (or Dwarves, Elves or other similar races). The sections in this Arcana are Dragon Magic, Giant Magic, and Troll Magic. Each of the three provides spells that are unique to that race, such as a Dragon Spell that allows a Dragon to take a humanoid form, or change their breath weapons special effect (from fire to ice for example). Giant Magic has several that alter the size of objects or help them throw large boulders. Troll Magic has several that focus on the often used Trolls weakness to sunlight. These spells are all good for adding some depth and danger to the creatures PCs might encounter.

Naming Magic. This Arcana focuses on causing effects by knowing a persons or objects True Name. This section is a good example of taking spells that might look to belong with other schools and putting a more interesting twist on how they work. Instead of just conjuring wind you call forth the Winds True Name to have it do your bidding.

Professional Magic. Some campaigns have magic, sometimes in small amounts some times large, by nearly ubiquitous. This grouping of magic spells are good for such campaigns, where just about anyone knows a spell or three. This section is divided into spells by major profession. Craftsman And Merchant Spells, focusing on being able to identify, asses, trade and sell goods more effectively. Rogue Spells, which generally augment a sneaks skills in subterfuge and burglary. And Warrior Spells, which augment a fighters martial prowess. Most of these spells are built using Skill Levels that add to an already existing ability, instead of granting an ability someone doesn't possess.

Rune Magic. This Arcana uses runes writing on, carved into or spoken out loud to grant their effects. Like Naming Magic this section is another good example of how to take spells from a broad spectrum and give them a common theme to work from.

Shamanism. These spells focus on a Shaman calling forth spirits of various kinds to augment their abilities or perform tasks for them. This section had two unique sub categories. Spirit Summoning Spells are all built around the Summon Power and concentrate on bringing forth a generic spirit to do the Shaman's bidding. Totem Spells are based around augmenting a single ability based on the Totem Animal that the Shaman claims as their personal spirit guide. The rest of the spells tend to focus on calling forth a Spirit for a specific and defined function, or affecting the spirits directly.

Song Magic. Some campaigns have some kind of magic useable by Bards, where performance is part of the casting of the spells. This section provides just such kinds of ideas for Casting Bards to use. This is yet a third example of taking a broad spectrum of effects and giving them a common theme to work under.

Grimoire II provides two-hundred and thirteen more spells to add to your Fantasy Hero spell list. This book did a much better job than the first of presenting the Arcana, or spell groupings, in a more generic form and less in a Turakian Age Specific form.

The Downside:

In the end, you either want more ideas or more prebuilt spells to add to your collection, or you don't. Beyond that, a lot of space was given over to alternate versions of spells that weaken or strengthen them, remove a Limitation, or similar, very few major variations are provided. While doing some of the math for you is part of the point, it takes a lot of space up in the book that might otherwise go to more spell ideas.

The Otherside:

As with the first book, unless you're into system conversions or need lots of ideas for new and

interesting spells this book has little appeal to the Non-Hero Gamer being primarily Hero System Write-ups.

For the Hero Gamer this is a solid addition for the new player looking for more ideas or examples of how to implement the many choices of Powers, Advantages and Limitations present in the system. An experienced gamer can use this book as a quick list of spells to choose from instead of spending time creating their own. And as a GM, experienced or new, it's a good way to introduce a large number of spells directly to the campaign with minimal, if any, work needed beforehand. Because you can never have enough magic on hand.

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