

Geneforge 5 OVERTHROW

Welcome to the exotic and exciting world of Geneforge 5: Overthrow!

Geneforge 5: Overthrow is a fantasy role-playing game with a science fiction twist. It is similar to other fantasy adventures, and, at the same time, very different.

The Shapers have the ability to create life. They guard the secrets of this mighty power jealously, and they use it to control the world. Or they did, until the rebellion came.

Now the world has been ravaged by war. The cities are in ruins. The Shapers are terrified. The Rebels are torn by conflict. Now a hero is needed, someone who can finally find a pathway to peace. Or who can help one side to finally gain total victory over the other.

Geneforge 5: Overthrow's plot is completely open-ended. You can be a good or bad guy. You can make the big choices and change the world, or run in fear. You can help the little people, or you can crush them ruthlessly. The choices are all yours.

This guide will help you create your character, develop your skills, and go out into the world. Before you start, it's a good idea to check the Helpful Hints section. The advice there is very useful for playing the game.

The demo of Geneforge 5: Overthrow contains the first 10 out of 82 sections. To play the rest, you need to get a password from Spiderweb Software. To learn more, read the section titled How To Order.

Finally, have fun, and keep an open mind. Nobody in Geneforge 5: Overthrow is as evil as they seem. Or as good. Explore. Adventure. And do what you want. Good luck!

If you would like information, to order, or to download one of Spiderweb Software's big, free demos, you can contact us at



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Chapter 1: How to Order

The full version of Geneforge 5: Overthrow is \$28 US. Geneforge 5: Overthrow with the hint book (delivered electronically) is \$35. The hint book by itself is \$10. Be SURE to include the registration code when you order. It's in the lower right-hand corner of the title screen.

A complete order form is available in the file "Geneforge 5 Order Form."

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Chapter 2: The World of the Shapers

The Shapers are the oldest, most respected, most secretive, and most powerful of the magical sects. The Shapers have the power to magically create life.

The Shapers can make new life forms from nothing but raw materials and magic. They can mold this life to serve their purpose, be it light housework or major warfare. The Shapers are a research-minded people. Many of them spend the bulk of their lives in musty laboratories, trying to unravel the secrets of living things. What makes something alive? What defines how a creature grows? How can they make an animal stronger? Or smarter? Or more obedient?

The Shapers guard the secrets of their powers very closely. To learn their techniques without permission is to court a speedy death, at the hands of a Guardian in the day or an Agent in the night. The Shapers were feared by normal humans. And, quietly, resented.

And then the rebellion came. The uprising had two halves. There were the humans, who were jealous of the Shapers and wanted to share in the power of their masters. And there were the creations, who were tired of lives of unending slavery.

Together they rose up, taking the Shapers completely by surprise. Before their masters could react, they had seized all of eastern Terrestia. But then the Shapers regained their balance and struck back. The rebellion found itself unable to resist the full might of the empire. Slowly, they were pushed back.

But then the drakons of the Rebellion, the most powerful of creations, created the Unbound. Mindless beasts infused with pure magical power, the Unbound caught the Shapers completely by surprise. The Unbound blasted holes in the Shaper lines, enabling the Rebels to seize half of Terrestia. The Shapers stopped them at an easily defended line of mountains and fens, and the war settled into a long, bloody stalemate.

And that is where things have been for years. Death and destruction without resolution. Both sides are exhausted. Both sides still dream of total victory. Both sides wait for a hero, who has the strength and wisdom to find a way to end this endless war.

Chapter 3: Getting Started

When you run Geneforge 5: Overthrow, you will be looking at the title screen. From here, you can decide what to do...

New Game - Create a new character and begin a new journey.

Load Game - Pick up one of your old stories where you left off.

How To Order - Find out how to get the full version of Geneforge 5: Overthrow. The demo only contains the first eighth of the full game.

Register Copy - Put in the key you get from Spiderweb Software when you register the game. This will unlock the whole story.

Instructions - You can access the full instructions to Geneforge 5: Overthrow inside the game.

Game Settings - Change the settings for the game, including the difficulty.

Credits - See all of the hard-working people who brought you this fine electronic entertainment.

Quit - Leave Geneforge 5: Overthrow and rejoin the real world.

If you are just starting out, select New Game. If you already have a game in progress, select Load Game.

If you have not yet registered, at the lower right corner of the screen, you will see a registration code (a 4 or 5 digit number). Be sure to have that number handy when you register.

Chapter 4: Creating Your Character

When you are ready to begin your journey, select New Game on the title screen. You will bring up the character creation screen.

Here, you can build your character. Geneforge 5: Overthrow has a very open skill-based system, which provides a wide variety of choices for the sort of adventurer you want to play. You have several options:

Character Type - There are nine sorts of basic characters in Geneforge 5: Overthrow:

The Rebel Classes - Warrior, Infiltrator, Servile, Lifecrafter, Shock Trooper, and Sorceress.

The Shaper Classes – Shaper, Guardian, Agent.

Though each has different skills and abilities, those who have gained their powers by using a Geneforge are generally all called by the same title: Lifecrafter. The members of the three sects of Shapers are all usually referred to as Shapers.

Click on one of the portraits at the left side of the window to pick a character type. Select “See Rebel Classes” or “See Shaper Classes” to see the other classes available.

Rebel Classes –

Warrior – Warriors are soldiers, trained to serve in battle and skilled with weapons of all sorts. Warriors are also able to create and command creations, the powerful, magical creatures that fight in the wars of Terrestia.

As a Warrior, you will spend a lot of time attacking your foes directly. You are also able to make a small force of creations to back you up.

Infiltrator - Infiltrators frequently work alone, as spies, assassins, and guerrilla warriors. They are powerful magicians and can also competently use a weapon when needed.

As an Infiltrator, you will usually disable and destroy your foes with spells, although blades do a lot of damage too. You can make creations too, but your selection will be much smaller.

Servile – Serviles are members of a race created by the Shapers to serve them. Now they fight for their freedom. They were made with powerful muscles and are skilled with weapons of all sorts and, to a lesser extent, magic.

As a Servile, you will usually attack your opponents directly, using magic to make yourself faster or stronger. You can make creations too, but your selection will be much smaller.

Lifecrafter – Lifecrafters are trained to make and command a powerful force of creations. Creations are the magical creatures that make such a difference in the wars of Terrestia. Lifecrafters are skilled in magic but are physically frail.

As a Lifecrafter, you will make many creations and send them to fight your foes, backing them up with magical spells. You will have to keep a safe distance from your enemies, though, as you won't be able to take a lot of damage.

Shock Trooper - Shock Troopers are trained to lead assaults against the enemies of the rebellion. They are able to make powerful creations (large, magical creatures) and fight beside them in battle.

As a Shock Trooper, you will make many creations and send them to fight your foes, backing them up with your own attacks (with blades or missile weapons). You will be able to cast useful spells, but you haven't received much magical training.

Sorceress – Sorceresses are generally women who extensively trained in the magical arts, and then used the resources of the Rebellion to gain the ability to make creations.

As a Sorceress, your spells are very powerful. However, you are physically frail. You will often have to rely on creations to keep your foes away while you destroy them with spells.

Shaper Classes -

Shaper – Though outsiders call all members of your sect "Shapers," to you, "Shapers" specifically refers to those dedicated researchers and workers who focus primarily on making and altering creations.

Shapers are skilled at magic and unmatched in their ability to create powerful creatures. However, they are physically frail. A Shaper will have to rely on its creations for protection. Shapers have less health and more essence. Combat skills are expensive for them, but Shaping skills are cheaper.

Guardians - Guardians are the defenders of the Shapers. They serve as guards and escorts, and they are the first line of defense when a war breaks out, a rebellion needs to be put down, or an experiment goes wrong. Guardians are highly trained, regimented, and prefer to act in groups.

Guardians are highly skilled in melee combat and can create creatures to aid them in an assault. However, their magical skills are otherwise weak. Guardians receive more health but less spell energy. Magic skills are expensive for them, but Combat skills are cheaper.

Since Guardians rely less on magic than Agents or Shapers, they can be harder to play. Be sure to take full advantage of missile weapons and your Parry skill.

Agents – When problems appear in distant lands, Agents travel there and solve them, usually violently. They are independent people, sometimes depending on stealth and diplomacy, and sometimes barging in with overwhelming magical force.

Their magic and weapon skills are strong, but they are not good at creating creatures. Agents receive less essence but more spell energy. Shaping skills are expensive for them, but Magic skills are cheaper.

Name - Use the Name field to choose your character's name. Type Delete to get rid of what's there and type in your desired name.

Appearance - Use the up and down arrows labeled "Appearance" to change your character's color scheme.

Skills - Each character type starts with a basic set of skill values that will help it survive in the harsh world of Geneforge 5: Overthrow. During the tutorial, you will learn how to improve your skills to make yourself more powerful.

When you are through creating your character, press the OK button at the lower right corner of the window. You can then set the game difficulty. Finally, read the introduction, and you will enter the world of Geneforge!

Chapter 5: About Your Character

Like all fantasy role-playing games, you play a character wandering through a hostile world. And, like all such games, your character has a set of statistics that describe how well he or she interacts with the world. These numbers define how tough you are, how strong your magic is, etc.

During the game, to see or improve your statistics, find your character in the roster to the upper left. Press the '?' button to see the Character Info window.

At the top of the window, you will see a list of your character's most important attributes:

Level - An important overall number that defines how strong you are and how many adventures you have successfully concluded. You start at Level 1. When you accumulate enough experience (by completing quests, killing monsters, etc.) this number goes up, and you improve in numerous ways (described below).

Health - A number that determines how far you are from death. When you take damage, this number goes down. When you are healed, it goes up. If it reaches 0, you die. To increase this number, gain levels or buy more Endurance.

Essence - Essence is the raw material Shapers and Lifecrafters use to create life. It is stored within your body and flows out when you make a creation. Much of Shaper training consists of learning to hold this energy within yourself without being consumed by it.

The amount of essence you have is determined by your Level and Intelligence. When you make a creation, you spend some essence, and your maximum amount of essence goes down by the cost of the creature. If you have 100 essence and make a creation that costs 50, you can have at most 50 essence until the creation dies.

Essence is also used to cast spells. Thus, if you make a lot of creations, you will be able to use fewer spells. To restore essence, find an essence pool or return to a friendly town.

Spell Energy - Casting a spell weakens you, and it takes time to regain your strength. Each spell reduces your spell energy. If you don't have enough spell energy, you can't cast spells. Spell energy comes back to you with time.

Spell energy increases with your Level and your Intelligence. At low levels, you might not have enough spell energy to cast all the spells you want. More powerful spells are much more demanding. Also, if you use a lot of the more powerful spells in a fight, you may run out of spell energy and need to spend some time recharging.

Experience - When you defeat a foe, you gain experience. For every thousand experience you earn, you gain a level. This gives you more health, essence, spell energy, and stronger skills.

The amount of experience you gain for killing an enemy depends on how tough it is in relation to you. If it is a lot tougher, you gain more experience. If it is weaker than you, you gain less. If it is much weaker than you are, you get very little experience.

If you have creations with you, you will gain less experience for your kills, and some of this experience will go to the creations. However, most of this experience will always go to your main character.

Skill Points - When you gain a level, you earn five skill points. Skill points are like currency; you have to spend them to raise your skills. To do this, press the plus button to the right of a skill's name.

Weight - You can only wear so much heavy armor. The amount you can wear depends on your strength. If the gear you are wearing is too heavy, you will be encumbered and have fewer action points in combat. Also, if you wear too much gear, you won't be able to cast spells.

Party Order - You can use the buttons to the lower right to change the order of your characters in the party roster.

In the lower half of the statistics screen, you will see all of your character's abilities and buttons that let you increase them, if you have enough skill points. Each skill has a base cost (in skill points). Every time you buy two levels of a skill, its cost increases by one.

These abilities, divided into their main categories, with their base skill point costs, are:

Primary Statistics –

Strength (4 skill pts.) - Improves your chance of hitting and damage in hand-to-hand combat. Enables you to carry more weight and makes you resistant to stunning.

Dexterity (4 skill pts.) - Increases your chance of evading blows in combat. Makes your missile weapons more likely to hit and helps you act more quickly in battle.

Intelligence (4 skill pts.) - Increases your spell energy and essence. Helps you resist fear, charm, and other mental effects.

Endurance (4 skill pts.) - An extremely valuable skill. Training in Endurance increases your number of health points.

Combat Skills (cost is reduced by 1 for Guardians, Warriors and Serviles, increased by 2 for Shapers, Lifecrafters and Sorceresses) –

Melee Weapons (2 skill pts.) – Makes you more effective when using a melee weapon (like a sword). Each level of Melee Weapons increases your attack strength in hand-to-hand combat by 1 (attack strength is explained in the chapter on Combat).

Missile Weapons (2 skill pts.) - Makes you more effective when using a missile weapon (like a baton or javelin). Also makes magic items (like crystals and wands) more accurate and powerful. Each level of Missile Weapons increases your attack strength with missiles by 1 (attack strength is explained in the chapter on Combat).

Quick Action (2 skill pts.) - Helps you act more quickly in combat. In addition, gives you a chance of getting a free second attack when attacking with a melee weapon (not a missile). Very dangerous at high levels.

Parry (2 skill pts.) – Reduces the damage you take from melee and missile attacks and gives you a chance of deflecting any such attack entirely. The higher this skill is, the more damage is prevented.

Magic Skills (cost is reduced by 1 for Agents, Infiltrators and Sorceresses, increased by 2 for Guardians, Warriors and Shock Troopers) –

Battle Magic (2 skill pts.) - Increases the effectiveness of your Battle Magic spells (like Firebolt or Searer). Each level of Battle Magic increases your attack strength with these spells by 1 (attack strength is explained in the chapter on Combat).

Mental Magic (2 skill pts.) - Each level of Mental Magic increases your spell strength with these spells by 1 (spell strength is explained in the chapter on Magic).

Blessing Magic (2 skill pts.) - Each level of Blessing Magic increases your spell strength with these spells by 1 (spell strength is explained in the chapter on Magic).

Spellcraft (4 skill pts.) - Each level of Spellcraft increases your spell strength with any spell by 1 (spell strength is explained in the chapter on Magic).

Shaping Skills (cost is reduced by 1 for Shapers, Lifecrafters and Shock Troopers, increased by 2 for Agents, Infiltrators and Serviles) –

Fire Shaping (4 skill pts.) - Increases the level of the fire-based creations (like Fyoras and Roamers) you create. Must be at least level 1 to make any fiery creations.

Battle Shaping (3 skill pts.) - Increases the level of the melee-based creations (like Thahds and Clawbugs) you create. Must be at least level 1 to make any melee creations.

Magic Shaping (3 skill pts.) - Increases the level of the magic-based creations (like Artila and Vlish) you create. Must be at least level 1 to make magical creations.

Healing Craft (2 skill pts.) - Increases the effectiveness of your Healing Craft spells (like Heal and Cure Effects).

General Skills –

Leadership (1 skill pt.) - How convincing and charismatic you are during conversations. High levels of this skill will make better conversational options available to you.

Mechanics (1 skill pt.) - How good you are with locks, traps, and other mechanical objects. Makes Living Tools more effective for you. High levels of this skill will make more areas and treasures available to you.

Luck (1 skill pt.) - How fortunate you are. Luck helps you in many subtle ways.

Chapter 6: The Geneforge 5: Overthrow Screen



When you start playing Geneforge 5: Overthrow, you will see the game screen. It has several windows, each of which gives different information.

You can minimize/maximize a window by clicking the red/green gem at the top. Select the arrow at the top of a window to move it around.

The Terrain Area

This is where you play the game. You will see your characters, their surroundings, your enemies, and so on. To scroll your view of the terrain, move the cursor to the edge of the screen.

In the terrain area, north is to the upper right and west is to the upper left. To see a reminder of this, hold down the Tab key.

Text Area

A running description of everything that happens in Geneforge 5: Overthrow appears here.

Buttons

Buttons are used for actions. To see labels describing the buttons, hold down the Tab key. For detailed descriptions of actions, read the chapters on Playing the Game and Combat.

Party Roster

Your character and all of its creations are depicted in this window. Under each graphic, you will see bars which represent how much health, spell energy, and (for your character) essence you have remaining.

To select a character, either for movement or spell targeting, you can click on it in the roster (you can also select a character by clicking on it in the terrain area). You can also type '1'-'8' to select individual characters, or type '0' to select the whole group.

You can make a character traveling with you inactive by clicking on the arrow button. This character will no longer be selectable, and it won't attack in combat. Click on the arrow again to make the character active. Press the '=' key to make everyone but

your main character active or inactive. (This can be handy when sending your character ahead to scout or disarm mines.)

To bring up a screen with information on a character, press the button with a '?' on it. On the information screen, you can learn about a character, train it, change your party order, and (if it's not your main character) dismiss or absorb it.

To see your main character's inventory, click on the bag. This brings up the inventory screen, where you can pick up and drop items, use potions, or ready weapons and armor. The inventory screen is described in detail in Chapter 9.



When your character has a special magical effect (like haste, blessing, etc), it is indicated with a special icon. The effects are described in the chapter on Combat.

Seeing Character Statistics, Training, Changing the Party Order

To see the statistics and other useful information for a character, press the Information button next to it in the party roster area. The button has a question mark on it.

The information screen for your main character shows your name, level, experience, and all of your statistics. If you have enough skill points, you can increase a statistic by pressing the '+' button to its right.

This window will also show how high your resistance is to stunning, fire, and other hostile effects. These resistances are expressed as a percentage (for example, perhaps, 50% resistance to fire).

If you get information on a creation or person traveling with you, you will see its picture and its statistics. If the person or creation has enough skill points, you can press the '+' buttons to the right of its statistics to increase them. Click on the character's name to change it.

If you don't want a person or creature to travel with you anymore, select Absorb or Dismiss on this screen. If you absorb a creation, you will regain some of the essence you used to create it.

If you want to change the order of the characters in the party roster, you can choose Up or Down on the character information screen.

Automap

This is a map of the area you are currently exploring. The flashing dot represents your character. The red crosses are enemies, the green crosses are friendly characters, and the blue crosses are neutral creatures (like livestock).

If you click on the automap, you will instantly shift the terrain view to that spot on the map.

When you find areas of interest, they will be marked with a ‘?’ button on the automap. Press a button to get a reminder of what can be found at that location.

Chapter 7: Playing the Game

Most of your time will be spent paying attention to the terrain screen, moving around, searching chests, talking to people, and looking for trouble.

Selecting Characters and Moving

To get anywhere in Geneforge 5: Overthrow, you first need to move. Begin by selecting a character. To select a character, click on it. To select multiple characters, “draw a box” on the screen by clicking on the terrain area, holding the mouse button down, and moving the mouse. You will see a white box, which can be adjusted to enclose all the characters you want to select.

Typing ‘0’ selects your whole group, and typing ‘1’-‘8’ selects individual characters.

Once your group is selected, click on a spot on the terrain area, and they will move there. They can move to any space that has been mapped out.

The Action Buttons

Use the buttons at the bottom of the screen to do things. To see what all of the buttons do, hold down the Tab key.



Getting - When you press the Get Items button, you will bring up the inventory screen for your main character. You can read more about this in chapter 9.

Instead of the getting button, you can also type 'g'.

Make a Creation - This button brings up the creation window. You can select, edit, and build a creation here. For more information on this process, read the chapter on Creations.

Casting Spells - There are four buttons you can press to cast spells and four buttons you can set to spells you use often. You can learn about magic in the Magic Spells chapter.

Journal - Brings up a screen with all of the information in your journal. You will see lists of all the messages you have saved while talking, all of the special items you have accumulated, and all of the quests you have learned about.

The quest list can be extremely useful when you forget what people in towns have asked you to do. Select a quest, and you will be told what character asked you to do something and where that character can be found. When quests are completed, they are removed from the list.



Start/End Combat - Press this button to enter combat mode, described in the chapter on Combat. Press this button again to end combat. You can also begin or end combat by typing 'f'.

Formations - When you move your group to a spot, they arrange themselves in a formation. Press this button to cycle through all of the different formations.

Instructions - Brings up full instructions for Geneforge 5: Overthrow.

File Access - Brings up a list of file options:

Return To Game - Go back to playing the game.

Save Game - Brings up the save game window. Select one of the available slots and press the OK button to the lower right to save the game.

Load New Game - Brings up the load game window. Select one of the available slots and press the OK button to the lower right to load a saved game.

Preferences - Brings up the preferences screen. Here, you can set the sound volume (or turn sounds off entirely) and change the difficulty level.

Keyboard Shortcuts - Enables you to customize the keyboard shortcuts for commands in the game. Click on a command and then type the key you want to map to it. Press the 'OK' button when done.

Return To Main Screen - Return to the title screen.

Searching and Using Objects

You will find many usable objects in Geneforge 5: Overthrow. Books on pedestals. Boxes. Dressers. Traps. If you move the cursor onto an object and the cursor turns into a hand, that is an object you can use. Click on the object to use it.

If it is a box, you will probably see the Inventory screen, and the items inside the container will be listed in the upper right corner. If it is a book or sign, you will be shown what it says. If the object is a trap and your Mechanics skill is high enough, you will disarm it (if it isn't, you may have a problem). If the object is a lever, you will pull it, and so on.

Picking Locks

Not all levers and boxes are immediately usable or openable. Some are locked. If your Mechanics skill is high enough, you will be able to pick the lock. If not, you need to use living tools or an Unlock spell (described in the chapter on Spells).

Living tools are hardy, Shaper-bred creatures that can be used to manipulate locks and machinery. When you try to open a locked door, if you have enough tools, you will be asked if you want to use them. The higher your Mechanics skill, the fewer tools you will need for any given door.

Once a lock is picked, the game will remember that you have done so and you won't need to pick it again.

Skill Canisters

You will eventually find glowing canisters in Geneforge 5: Overthrow. These valuable artifacts are called Skill Canisters. They were created to magically alter the user in such a way as to create new magical powers.

The canisters can possibly have unusual, and possibly detrimental, side effects on their users. They are also a valuable source of magic spells and other skills. You don't need to use canisters to win the game, but it can help.

To see the spells you have accumulated, bring up the Character Into screen and select See Abilities (in the lower left corner).

Special Encounters

Sometimes, when you are walking around, something special will happen. You will see a text window describing the event, and you may be asked what you want to do. Then you can choose the way you wish to react from a list.

To choose your response or action, click on it (or type the number to the left).

Talking to People and Shopping

You will meet many friendly and interesting people in Geneforge 5: Overthrow. Talking to them is a great way to figure out what is happening in Terrestia and advance the story.

When you hold down the Tab key, the name of each visible character will be superimposed over its graphic on the terrain screen. Interesting characters tend to have specific names (like "Joe") as opposed to generic ones (like "Guard"). To approach a character and speak with it, click on it.

During dialogue, you can select different options. If something strikes you as interesting, press the Record button at the lower left corner to save it (the Journal button on the main screen brings up your records). To end a conversation early, press the OK button. Certain urgent conversations won't give you this option.

Humans, serviles, and other intelligent creatures in Terrestia will sometimes ask for your opinions on various issues. There is no right or wrong answer to these questions, but the cumulative effect of all of your answers will affect how people react to you in the future. If you constantly say how worthless and unimportant serviles are, don't be surprised to find that they like you less.

Sometimes a character will offer to buy and sell things. This brings up the shopping window. Press the Buy button next to an item to purchase it.

Choosing to sell items brings up your inventory screen. All items you can sell will have a coins button in the lower left corner. The number above the button is the amount of coins you can get for the item. Press the button to mark the item as for sale. Press the button again to keep the item. Press the 'OK' button to sell all marked items.

Some characters can also sell you spells and teach you how to make new creations. For example, if you want to learn about new spells and creation types, you should talk to Sage Fefer and Shaper Bruel in Isenwood's Spire. A trainer can only increase a skill or spell by two levels. If you want greater mastery of a spell or creation type, you will need to find a skill canister.

Crimes and Theft

Some items in towns are owned by people nearby. If you take items when they can see you, you are committing theft, and they don't appreciate it. If you kill their livestock, they will be annoyed. If you attack them directly, they will be even more upset.

If you commit too many crimes, the town will rise up and attack you. The amount of things you have to do wrong to be attacked varies from town to town.

Saving and Loading the Game

You will frequently want to save the game. Saving the game makes a "snapshot" of your progress. Then, when you quit Geneforge 5: Overthrow and start playing again, you can continue where you left off.

To save the game, press on the disk button (or hit the Escape key) and select Save Game. This brings up the Save Game window. You can then choose a slot to save the game into. You can also bring up this window by typing Command-S (Control-S on Windows).

Later, you can load that saved game and continue to play from that point by selecting Load Game on the title screen. While playing, to load a saved game, press on the disk button (or hit the Escape key) and select Load Saved Game. This brings up the Load Game window. You can also bring up this window by typing Command-O (Control-O on Windows).

Whenever you move from one area to another, the game is automatically saved. This saved game is called Autosave.

There is also a Quicksave slot, which you can use to very quickly save and load your game. Press the F3 key to quicksave, and press the F4 key to load that saved game.

You can't save the game in combat.

Chapter 8: Combat

When you meet someone you want to attack or when something attacks you, you enter combat mode. If you are attacked, this mode starts automatically. You can also enter combat by pressing the Start Combat button (or the 'f' key).

Combat is split up into rounds. Each character gets one turn per round. Faster characters act first. High Dexterity and Quick Action skill helps a character to act sooner in combat.

Each turn, a character has a base of 8 action points (less if stunned or encumbered by heavy armor). Moving depletes action points depending on how far the character moves.

If you have any action points left, you can attack, cast a spell, or use an item (so you can still attack even if you have only one action point left). Attacking or casting a spell deducts 9 action points. Using an item or drinking a potion takes 3. Getting, equipping, or dropping an item costs 1. The number of action points you have left is indicated on the party roster. When all of the action points are gone, the next character gets to act.

To end a character's turn early (if you don't want it to do anything else), click on it or press the space bar.

To attack a foe, click on it. You will attack with your current default attack (described below). To cast a spell on a foe, choose the spell and then click on the foe. Note that most magical abilities can't be used on someone standing right next to you. Casting a spell is a delicate business, which can easily be disrupted by a foe. You may need to move away a little bit.

Creations will act on their own in combat unless you have bought enough Intelligence for them (read more about this in the chapter on Creations).

Combat Buttons –



The buttons change when you enter combat mode. As always, hold the Tab key down to see what they do. The new buttons are:

Attack Someone - Sometimes, you want to attack something which is friendly to you. To attack anyone, press this button and then select the target. This may make the locals angry with you.



The two buttons to the far left are special. They determine your default attack. If you press the button on the left, every time you attack, you will use your equipped weapon (blade or missile). If you push the button on the right, whenever you attack, you will try to use a combat spell (which will be the last lower-level combat spell you cast).

You can press the 'w' key to quickly switch between default attacks.

You can also cast spells to heal or protect your group or harm the enemy in a variety of ways. To learn about your options, read the chapter on Magic Spells.

Ending Combat

When you are through with combat, press the End Combat button or type 'f'. If there are no enemies visible, combat ends immediately. Otherwise, it will cease at the end of the current round. Note, however, that if still you have a foe nearby, combat will immediately begin again.

Attack Strength

When you attack something with a weapon or spell, Geneforge 5: Overthrow calculates your *attack strength*. This number represents how effective the attack is. The way this number is calculated depends on the type of attack:

Melee Attack – Attack strength is your Strength plus your Melee Weapons skill.

Missile Attack – Attack strength is your Dexterity plus your Missile Weapons skill.

Spell Attack - Attack strength is your skill in that spell type plus your skill with that spell plus your Spellcraft. (So, if you have improved your Searer skill twice, your Battle Magic skill is 3, and your Spellcraft is 1, your attack strength with this spell is 6.)

Your creations' Attack Strength in all attacks is their level plus the amount of Strength you have bought for them.

There are numerous other factors that can affect your attack strength. Perhaps most importantly, your chance to hit is reduced by 5% for every point of Dexterity your target has.

Your chance of hitting any foe is your attack's base chance to hit (usually 70%) plus 5 times your Attack Strength. You will do a base amount of damage multiplied by your attack strength (which means that if the Searer spell's base damage is 1-6 and your Attack strength is 10, you will do 10-60 damage).

Wearing Armor

Some equipment (like armor), when worn, reduces the damage you take from enemy attacks. The protection is expressed as a percentage. A piece of armor protects you from that percentage of physical damage and half that percentage from magical attacks, like fire and cold. For example, if a suit of chain mail gives 20% protection, once worn, the claw attacks of a fyora will do 20% less damage and its fire will do 10% less damage.

Note that these percentages are applied one at a time (instead of adding up). So if you have two pieces of armor that give 50% protection from physical attacks, you don't get 100% protection. Instead, one piece reduces damage by 50%, and then the other piece reduces the remaining damage by 50% again (for total protection of 75%).

To see how much protection you have from various attacks, look at the upper right corner of your character's information window. The higher the percentage, the better, though you will never get 100% resistance.

Magical Effects

Your characters can be exposed to a variety of magical effects, some beneficial, some harmful, most of them related to combat. Some effects (like blessing) are gained by casting spells or using magic items. Others, like poison, are inflicted by hostile spells.

Each effect has a numeric level, which indicates how strong it is. Unless it says otherwise below, for every combat round or second of game time that passes, the level of all effects you have goes down by 1. When the level reaches 0, the effect is gone.

The effects are:

Combat Effects -

Stunned – When a combat round begins and a character is stunned, it loses one action point for each level it is stunned (until it is out of action points). Then it is no longer stunned. (So, no matter how stunned you are, you can only lose at most one combat turn.)

When a creature is hit in combat, it has a chance of being stunned. Armor generally provides excellent protection against being stunned.

Cursed – Your attacks in combat are less likely to hit and do less damage. Being cursed decreases your attack strength with weapons or spells by 4.

Blessed – Your attacks in combat are more likely to hit and do more damage. Being blessed increases your attack strength with weapons or spells by 4.

Hasted – Every time you attack or cast a spell, you have a 1/3 chance that you will lose far fewer action points (usually leaving enough for a second attack or spell).

Slowed – Every round of combat, you have a 1/4 chance of losing your turn.

Shielded – All damage is reduced by one-fifth and you are slightly harder to hit.

Weakened – All damage you take is increased by 25%.

Damage Effects -

These effects can be removed by using a Cure spell, Curing Pod/Spores, or, if necessary, the Cleanse Group spell.

Poisoned – Every second (or round in combat), you take poison damage. The more poisoned you are, the more damage you take.

Acid – Like poison, but does more damage.

Lightning - You will take magical damage every round. The effect doesn't last very long but is difficult to cure.

Mental Effects -

Your main character, due to its high level of mental training, is immune to mental effects (Fear, Daze, and Charm). Mindshield Aura gives a chance of resisting these effects.

Dazed – Causes the victim to forget who it was attacking and stand still, unable to act for a time. If the character takes any damage, the dazing effect instantly fades.

Fear – A mental effect. This creature will flee any enemy for as long as it is terrified.

Charmed – A mental effect. A charmed creature will attack its allies for as long as it is charmed.

Auras –

You can only have one Aura on your group at once.

Mindshield Aura – Reduces the chance of being affected by mental effects (like Daze, Charm, and Fear). Provide some (but not full) resistance.

Protection Aura – Reduces the damage from physical blows, acid, and poison.

Elemental Aura – Reduces the effect of magical attacks, fire and cold.

Spineshield Aura - Anyone who hits you with a physical attack will take damage.

Regenerate Aura - Some of your damage is healed during each combat round.

Battle Aura – When you strike a foe with an attack, gives a chance of cursing or sickening your target.

Essence Blessings –

You can only have one essence blessing on a character at once. They last until you leave the area you are currently in.

Essence Shield – Slightly reduces the damage blows do.

Essence Armor – Reduces the damage blows do.

Essence Infusion – Increases the number of hit points.

Essence Blade – Improves the chance to hit and damage from attacks.

Chapter 9: Inventory and Items



To get and use items, you will need to bring up your character's inventory screen. To do this, press the bag button by your main character in the party roster, press the Get Items button at the bottom of the screen, or type 'i'.

There are four areas on the inventory screen:

A – The Ground. These are items on the floor or on tables near a member of your group. Some of these items will be marked with a 'NY', which means 'Not Yours'. Picking up these items when a townspeople is near you can be hazardous.

B – Your Character. When you are wearing a piece of armor or holding a weapon in your hand, it is said to be equipped. Items you have equipped are displayed here.

C – Quick Use Items. These are items (like potions) you frequently use or weapons you often want to equip. When an item is in a Quick Use slot, it will be visible on a button at the bottom of the main game screen. You can then press that button to use or wield the item without having to open the inventory screen.

D – Your Pack. All the items you are just carrying around are shown here.

To pick up an item, click on it. You can then click on a different area of the inventory screen to put the item there. So, for example, to pick up an item on the ground and put it in your pack, click on the item and then click on an open space in your pack. To put on a piece of armor, click on it and then click on the portrait of your character.

To drop an item, click on it to pick it up, move it over the ground area, and click again to drop it. It will appear at your character's feet.

To see a description of an item, hold the Command key down and click on it (on Windows, use the Control key). If an item can be used, it will have a button that looks like a little fireball in the lower left corner. Press that button to use the item. If the item is a weapon, the inventory screen will close, and you may then need to click on a target on the terrain area.

To split up a stack of items (like, say, eight living tools), hold the Shift key down and click on it.

Batons

Batons are reloadable missile weapons. Each baton fires a different sort of thorn and can only be reloaded with that sort of thorn. If you fire an empty baton in combat, it automatically reloads if you have that sort of thorn in your inventory.

Each baton can only be reloaded with the thorns grown to be used in it. For example, an acid baton can only be reloaded with acid thorns.

Pods and Spores

You will frequently find pods and spores. These items have beneficial effects (like healing, or a blessing that makes you stronger in combat).

When you use a pod, it helps your main character (only) in some way. When you use spores, they help you and all creations standing near you.

Gold

When you kill an enemy that has money, you will pick it up automatically. You use coins to buy items in towns. Shops will also buy items from you to add to your supply of coins.

Crafting Items

There are enchanted anvils hidden throughout Terrestia. When you use an anvil, your inventory screen will come up, and you can try to craft new items.

To try to combine some items, pick them up, drop them in the forge area (to the upper right), and press the Combine button. With luck, they will unite into a new item. As you travel, you might find recipes that give hints for what to combine to make a new item. Some items you can make are extremely powerful.

You will find enchanted gemstones in your travels that can be used to make your weapons and armor stronger. Blessing stones and runed rubies are two such items. If you put such a gem in the forge with a weapon or piece of armor, they will be combined, making the item more powerful. This can even be done with weapons and pieces of armor that are already magical.

Note, however, that you can only use a gem to improve any given piece of equipment once, and that the gem is consumed in the process.

Chapter 10: Creations

The greatest power of the Shapers is the ability to create and alter new life forms. It was their most important secret. Before the rebellion, any outsider who tried to use Shaper powers was likely to receive a visit from an assassin in the dead of night. However, the rebellion has developed its own ways to draw on the powers of their former masters.

Creations are also your greatest weapon against the threats you will encounter in your travels. If you never make any pets, you will have a difficult time escaping alive.

You learn how to make creations by talking to trainers in towns (like Shaper Bruel in Isenwood's Spire) or by using skill canisters.

To make a creation, you have to have learned how to make it, you have to have enough essence, and the related Shaping skill has to be high enough (for example, to make a drayk, your Fire Shaping skill has to be at least 2).

If you improve a creation skill 3 times (by, say, training in Create Thahd twice and then using a Create Thahd canister), you learn to make a new, stronger sort of creation (in this case, the corrupted thahd). To make the improved creation costs more essence, and your related Shaper skill needs to be higher.

You can only make creations when you aren't in combat. Press the Make Creation button (to the far left) to bring up the edit creation screen.

On this screen, select the sort of creation you want. Each type of creature has a base cost in essence. You will see a description of each creature when you select it. If you are able to make a stronger version of the creation, a '+' button will appear on the creation you selected. Press this to upgrade. When you have decided what creation you want, press the OK button.

Once you have selected the type of creation, you can buy higher statistics for it (up to a maximum value of 8). Raising statistics increases the cost in essence of the creation. The four statistics for creations are:

Strength: A creature's strength affects how much damage it does with its attacks. More strength gives all of the creation's attacks a damage bonus. Higher strength also helps the creature resist stunning.

Dexterity: Helps the creature act sooner in combat, evade enemy blows, and land blows of its own. Very useful for missile-based creatures like the Fyora.

Intelligence: Increases spell energy. Helps the creature resist mental attacks and keep from fleeing in combat. Also keeps the creature from going rogue and attacking you.

It is important to know that, if you buy two levels of Intelligence, you can control the creature in combat. Otherwise it will act on its own, and you may not like what it does.

Endurance: Affects how much health the creature has and how well it resists poison and similar effects. Extremely useful for any creature type.

Finally, when you're ready, press the OK button to make the creation.

The level of your new creation depends on your skills. Each creature type has a base level. It gains an additional level for each level of the appropriate Create Creature skills. For example, the base level of a fyora is 1. If your Fire Shaping skill is 2 and your Create Fyora ability is at level 3, all fyoras you make will be level 6.

Essence and Creations

Creations cost essence. The more Intelligence you have and the higher your level, the more essence you have. Spending essence on a creation decreases your maximum essence level. If you have 90 essence and you spend 60 to make a pet, your maximum essence is 30 as long as it is alive.

Fleeing and Going Rogue

Creations are under your control. However, they are not entirely without a will of their own. If a creation is damaged, there is a chance it will run away. Worse, in stressful situations, a creation will occasionally go rogue and turn against you for a few rounds.

To reduce the chance of either of these things happening, buy more Intelligence for your pet. Also, if you buy at least two levels of Intelligence, you will be able to control the creation in combat. This will make it much more effective.

Levels and Augmenting Creations

When your party gains experience, all of your creations are given the same amount. Every thousand experience, each creation gains a level. When a creation gains a level, its health, spell energy, and basic statistics improve. Creations you keep with you for a long time will become very powerful.

You can increase a creation's skill after you make it. Creations gain two skill points with each level. If a creation has skill points, bring up its information screen (by pressing the '?' button next to it in the party roster). Each skill point can be used to increase a statistic by one. Note that this also increases the creature's essence cost.

It is good to show some restraint when training a creation. Two cheap creations are usually more effective in battle than one very expensive one.

Chapter 11: Magic Spells

All characters will want to use magic spells. They are a reliable way to damage foes, heal yourself and your creations, and bless yourself in combat.

There are four Circles of magic - Battle, Mental, Blessing, and Healing Craft - each with ten spells in it. The higher your level of skill in a Circle, the more of its spells you will be able to cast and the more effective those spells will be.

To learn a spell, you need to be trained in a town (for example, in Isenwood's Spire) or find and use the correct skill canister. You can find trainers by talking to people you meet. The more times you improve your skill with a spell, the more effective it will be. Each trainer can teach you a spell twice (once to learn it, and once to improve it).

Spells cost spell energy and essence. The maximum amount you can have of each increases with your Intelligence and your level. Spell energy comes back with time. Essence is regained by finding an essence pool, using an essence pod, or returning to a friendly town (like Minallah or Mera). Remember, making creations reduces the maximum amount of essence you can have until the creation dies or is absorbed.

Each spell requires you to have a minimum level in the corresponding Circle skill to cast it. For example, your Healing Craft skill must be 1 to cast Minor Heal, but 5 to cast Group Heal.

Spell Strength

When you cast a spell, it has a *spell strength*, similar to attack strength (described in the chapter on Combat). A spell's strength is the level at which you know that spell plus your skill in that spell's Circle plus your Spellcraft. (So if you have been taught Cure Affliction twice, your Healing Craft skill is 3, and your Spellcraft is 1, your spell strength with this spell is 6.)

Each level of spell strength makes a spell more effective, as described below. With a combat spell, its attack strength is equal to its spell strength.



How to Cast a Spell

To cast a spell, press one of the four spell casting buttons. A small window will come up displaying the available spells in that circle. Select a spell to cast it. You may also need to select a target (if you are casting a hostile or a healing spell).

Alternate Way to Cast Spells

If you prefer, you can bring up a spell selection window, which lists all of your spells, by pressing Shift-C.

Quickspell Buttons

If there is a spell you like to use often, you can set it as a quickspell for easy access. The four buttons to the right of the spell casting buttons (with question marks on them) are quickspell buttons. If you press one of them, a window will come up with a list of all the spells you know. Select one and the button will be set to cast that spell.

You can also cast spells in your quickspell buttons by pressing the function keys, F5, F6, F7, and F8.

Later, if you want to change a spell for a quickspell button, hold the Command key down (Control key in Windows) and press it.

The spells in Geneforge 5: Overthrow are listed below. You will also find the essence and spell energy costs and the minimum skill to cast them.

Battle Magic

Battle Magic spells do damage to your enemies. Trying to cast any of these spells starts combat. All of these spells except Burning Spray, Acid Shower, and Aura Of Flames can potentially miss the target. Higher Battle Magic and Spellcraft skills increase your chance to hit.

Firebolt (Essence: 0, Spell Energy: 4, Min. Skill: 1) - Fires a bolt of fire, which does 1-4 points of fire damage plus 1-3 times spell strength to a single target.

Burning Spray (Essence: 1, Spell Energy: 10, Min. Skill: 1) - Covers a foe with acid, doing 1-10 damage plus 1-3 per spell level. The attack, if it hits, also covers the target with a small amount of acid. This spell can't be parried.

Searer (Essence: 1, Spell Energy: 40, Min. Skill: 2) - Fires a magical missile, which does 1-8 damage plus 1-4 times spell strength to a single target. The attack, if it hits, also poisons the target for a short time.

Ice Spray (Essence: 0, Spell Energy: 50, Min. Skill: 3) - Fires a bolt of ice, which does 1-15 plus 1-5 times spell strength cold damage to a single target.

Lightning Aura (Essence: 3, Spell Energy: 70, Min. Skill: 4) - Fires a bolt of energy, which does 1-10 points of magic damage plus 1-5 times spell strength to a single target. Also covers the victim with a lightning aura, which does heavy magic damage per round for a short time.

Shocking Rain (Essence: 4, Spell Energy: 75, Min. Skill: 5) - Does energy damage to the target and all foes near it. Does 1-10 plus 1-5 times spell strength energy damage.

Acid Shower (Essence: 8, Spell Energy: 110, Min. Skill: 6) - Covers all nearby enemies with acid (does 1-10 + 1-3 times spell strength damage). The acid also does damage over several rounds. This spell can't be parried.

Kill (Essence: 4, Spell Energy: 100, Min. Skill: 7) - Fires a bolt of death magic which does 1-40 plus 1-10 times spell strength magical damage to a single target.

Essence Lances (Essence: 10, Spell Energy: 100, Min. Skill: 8) - Fires a bolt of energy, which does 1-20 points of magic damage plus 1-10 times spell strength to a single target. Also covers the victim with a lightning aura, which does heavy magic damage per round for a short time.

Purifying Rain (Essence: 25, Spell Energy: 200, Min. Skill: 9) – Does fire damage to the target and all foes near it (1-20 plus 1-10 times spell strength damage). This spell can't be parried.

Mental Magic

Mental Magic spells daze your enemies and improve your own mental powers. All of these spells which affect your foes start combat. Mental Magic and Spellcraft skill make all of these spells more effective. Mental attacks cannot be parried.

Daze (Essence: 2, Spell Energy: 12, Min. Skill: 1) - Confuses all nearby enemies. They will forget their current targets and will not be able to move or attack for a while.

Attacking the enemy breaks the spell. If your target's level is too high compared to the spell strength, the spell might not take effect.

Mindshield Aura (Essence: 4, Spell Energy: 15, Min. Skill: 1) – Gives all characters in your group a higher chance to resist mental attacks. Your group can only have one aura on it at once.

Wrack (Essence: 1, Spell Energy: 10, Min. Skill: 2) – Lightly damages and curses an enemy, making your attacks hit more often and do more damage. Counteracts an enemy's Protection spell. Lasts a number of rounds equal to roughly half your spell strength.

Unlock (Essence: 5, Spell Energy: 50, Min. Skill: 3) - Unlocks nearby chests, doors, or levers. If the spell is stronger than the lock, you will be able to open it. The effect is the same as picking the lock with a Mechanics skill equal to your current Mechanics skill plus twice the spell strength. (Thus, if your current Mechanics skill is 5 and your spell strength is 4, the Unlock spell would be equivalent to trying to pick the lock with a Mechanics skill of 13.)

Terror (Essence: 2, Spell Energy: 80, Min. Skill: 4) - Overwhelms a single enemy with fear, causing it to run away for a short time. If your target's level is too high compared to the spell strength, the spell might not take effect.

Dominate (Essence: 5, Spell Energy: 90, Min. Skill: 5) - Temporarily controls the mind of a single enemy, causing it to attack its friends for a short time. This only works on creatures with brains (not undead, for example). If your target's level is too high compared to the spell strength, the spell might not take effect.

Essence Shackles (Essence: 5, Spell Energy: 40, Min. Skill: 6) – Slows down an enemy, causing it to have a chance of missing turns in combat. Counteracts an enemy's Speed spell. Lasts a number of rounds roughly equal to half your spell strength.

Strong Daze (Essence: 5, Spell Energy: 60, Min. Skill: 7) – Like Daze, but much more potent. You will be able to affect much stronger foes with this version.

Charm (Essence: 7, Spell Energy: 120, Min. Skill: 8) – Like Dominate, but much more likely to affect the target.

Mass Madness (Essence: 20, Spell Energy: 200, Min. Skill: 9) – Attacks the minds of all foes near you, either dazing, slowing, or dominating them. Which effect happens depends on how high the foe's level is compared to the spell strength.

Blessing Magic

These spells make you and creatures fighting on your side stronger. Some of them affect single targets, and some affect everyone nearby. Note that the blessing spells that affect

everyone nearby don't only help your creations. They also affect people who might be fighting on your side at the moment (like town guards).

War Blessing (Essence: 3, Spell Energy: 10, Min. Skill: 1) – Makes all friends nearby more effective in combat. Their blows will hit more often and do more damage. Has the effect of increasing all of their combat and attack spell skills by 4. Lasts a number of rounds equal to roughly half your spell strength.

Protection (Essence: 3, Spell Energy: 10, Min. Skill: 1) – Makes all friends nearby harder to hurt in combat. Enemy blows will do one-fifth less damage. Lasts a number of rounds equal to roughly half your spell strength.

Essence Shield (Essence: 20, Spell Energy: 0, Min. Skill: 2) – Improves the armor of the recipient, making it slightly harder to hit. This spell lasts until you leave your current area. A character can only have one essence blessing at any one time.

Speed (Essence: 8, Spell Energy: 80, Min. Skill: 3) – Speeds up all nearby allies, giving all attacks and spells a chance of consuming fewer action points.

Thorny Aura (Essence: 8, Spell Energy: 100, Min. Skill: 4) – Blesses your entire group. Foes hitting them will take physical damage for a short time. Lasts a number of rounds equal to roughly half your spell strength. Your group can only have one aura on it at once.

Battle Aura (Essence: 10, Spell Energy: 80, Min. Skill: 5) – Blesses your entire group. When you strike a foe with an attack, gives a chance of cursing or sickening your target. Lasts a number of rounds equal to roughly twice your spell strength. Your group can only have one aura on it at once.

Essence Blade (Essence: 50, Spell Energy: 0, Min. Skill: 6) – Makes the recipient's attacks more likely to hit and do more damage. This spell lasts until you leave your current area. A character can only have one essence blessing at any one time.

Essence Armor (Essence: 60, Spell Energy: 0, Min. Skill: 7) – Reduces the damage the recipient takes from any blow. This spell lasts until you leave your current area. A character can only have one essence blessing at any one time.

Elemental Aura (Essence: 16, Spell Energy: 130, Min. Skill: 8) – Makes everyone in your party highly resistant to magical damage (fire, cold, and magic). Lasts a number of rounds equal to roughly half your spell strength. Your group can only have one aura on it at once.

Battle Roar (Essence: 20, Spell Energy: 150, Min. Skill: 9) – This spell protects, blesses, cures, and shields every friendly creature nearby. Also cures all hostile mental effects (like charming and fear).

Healing Craft

These spells remove damage and other damaging effects. Some of them affect single targets, and some affect everyone nearby. Note that healing spells can be cast on anyone friendly nearby, not just you and your creations. They also affect people who might be fighting on your side at the moment (like town guards).

Minor Heal (Essence: 2, Spell Energy: 5, Min. Skill: 1) - Increases the health of a wounded ally. Heals 1-10 points of damage plus 1-5 for each level of spell strength.

Cure Affliction (Essence: 1, Spell Energy: 25, Min. Skill: 1) - Cures poison and acid on a wounded ally. Cures 1-4 levels of poison and acid plus 1-2 for each level of spell strength.

Essence Infusion (Essence: 30, Spell Energy: 0, Min. Skill: 2) Fills a single target with life energy, temporarily increasing its maximum number of hit points. This spell lasts until you leave your current area. A character can only have one essence blessing at any one time.

Heal (Essence: 4, Spell Energy: 30, Min. Skill: 3) - Increases the health of a wounded ally. Heals 1-20 points of damage plus 1-10 for each level of spell strength.

Regeneration Aura (Essence: 5, Spell Energy: 40, Min. Skill: 4) – Blesses everyone in your group, healing some of their damage each round. Lasts a number of turns roughly equal to twice your spell strength. Your group can only have one aura on it at once.

Group Heal (Essence: 7, Spell Energy: 50, Min. Skill: 5) - Increases the health of all nearby wounded allies. Heals 1-20 points of damage plus 1-10 for each level of spell strength.

Banish Affliction (Essence: 6, Spell Energy: 60, Min. Skill: 6) – Purges the target of all negative effects, including mental ones. The higher the spell strength, the more afflictions are removed.

Major Heal (Essence: 6, Spell Energy: 50, Min. Skill: 7) - Increases the health of a wounded ally. Heals 1-30 points of damage plus 1-18 for each level of spell strength.

Aura of Cleansing (Essence: 15, Spell Energy: 120, Min. Skill: 8) – Cures all nearby allies of all negative spell effects (including slowing, hasting, lightning aura, and mental effects).

Mass Restore (Essence: 20, Spell Energy: 150, Min. Skill: 9) - Cures damage (1-40 plus 1-20 per spell level), mental effects, curses, and lightning on all nearby allies.

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Final Words On Geneforge

And we finally come to the end.

I started this series almost a decade ago. Writing it has consumed five full years of my life. It really feels like a long time.

And yet, it is the Geneforge games that really make me satisfied with my career. If there are any games that I really feel I've innovated in and tried something new, it is these.

Other games have had such a broad range of possible strategies, but, when you combine them with the huge ethical openness of the games, with the broad range of factions and goals you could bring about, I really think that I have done something unique here. I am very proud of it.

My favorite thing about the series, the thing I brag on the most, is the passionate arguments people have had on our forums about the issues in the games. There are very few simple-minded good/evil choices. People have sometimes complained to me that I seemed like I was favoring one faction and trying to make it obvious that I should join it. But the faction I was accused of favoring was always different. This Rorschach Test quality of the game is something I take great satisfaction in.

Geneforge 5: Rebellion was a very difficult game to write. I very quickly found that it is far easier to continue a series than to end it. Before, I could always just write a cliffhanger and kick the can down the road a little more. To actually figure out how the war could plausibly end and give the player a path to bring it about was much trickier. I hope I succeeded. If there was ever a game where my reach threatened to exceed my grasp, it was this one.

Final thanks to Linda Strout (for countless hours of character rendering over the years) and Mariann Krizsan (for ceaseless emotional support).

Now I am going to start planning a whole new world and story. I'm really looking forward to it. But anything I do, from now on, will be heavily touched by what I learned from writing Geneforge.

- Jeff Vogel
Seattle
October, 2008.

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