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ENCYCLOPEDIA  
ARCANE

# TOMES AND LIBRARIES

SECRETS OF THE WRITTEN WORD

A Bott

# Encyclopaedia Arcane Tomes & Libraries

Adrian Bott

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# INTRODUCTION

## ENCYCLOPAEDIA ARCANE

When the people of the ancient world first discovered writing, they intuitively connected it with magic. The making of a sign that both was and was not the thing it represented; that was a new thing, a thing of power, a thing for rulers and the counsellors of rulers. The earliest magic wand may have been a stylus, a simple tool for engraving words on a wax tablet.

From that point on, magic and words have always been connected. It is frequently the thunderous syllables of arcane language that empower the magician's will, enabling him to work wonders of magic. Even the word 'spell', with its connotation both of a magic formula and of arranging letters in the right and proper way, shows the intimate connection of language with magic. The old word for a book of spells, a 'grimoire' is etymologically connected with 'grammar'. So, to arrange words or letters in meaningful patterns is the same fundamental process as making magic.

Those who work with magic in a written form, such as wizards and clerics, have a great respect for books. Many wizards in particular feel a strong desire to be surrounded by them, an urge that seems unrelated to the wisdom and power the books may contain. This may be down to an intuitive reverence for written material. Books are, after all, a small miracle in themselves, preserving the emotions and imagination of people thousands of years dead, enabling scientific genius to be passed down from one generation to the next.

Libraries are thus far more than mere collections of volumes. Socially, they have served as the storehouse for the collected wisdom of the tribe, or even of a whole civilisation. When information is entrusted to a recording medium instead of to oral traditions, the library becomes the memory of the people. If that culture should die out suddenly or descend into decadence, the written records are often all that is left of them, a symbolic skeleton for the researchers of the future to pick over. Ancient, powerful secrets are stored in libraries; ancient dread and danger, too.

Tomes and Libraries – Secrets of the Written Word is another volume in the Encyclopaedia Arcane series, focusing on libraries and the tomes within them, both mundane and mystical. Designed for easy integration with any fantasy-based D20 games system, the Encyclopaedia Arcane series does far more than merely introduce new spells or items to extend existing magic-using character classes. Instead, each book covers wholly new forms of magic or details aspects of magic-using characters' lives in extensive detail, adding fresh dimensions to campaigns. Such information is not intended solely for the Games Master to use in association with non-player characters, however. Each book of the Encyclopaedia Arcane gives full details for players themselves to try the new systems presented, along with plenty of information to aid the Games Master in the introduction of each book into his campaign.

## TOMES AND LIBRARIES – SECRETS OF THE WRITTEN WORD

Although wizards and libraries are so often connected, very little time has been spent on exploring the function and powers of the library. Libraries usually turn up as scenic backdrops or repositories for purely magical resources, whereas there are more potentially useful books in a library than there are supplies in an adventuring gear shop. We will therefore be taking a long overdue stroll down the library aisles and finding out how to use its stored wisdom to our best advantage. Magic-using characters, who have more of a natural inclination towards reading than characters of other classes, will find an abundance of new ways to apply the knowledge set down in their books – and a whole lot of new books to go searching for!

Players of any class who prefer to use their brains as well as their sword arms will find new roles to play and new ways to tackle the challenges they encounter. Strength can see you through a tough battle, health can keep you standing when you are wounded and luck can sometimes get you out of trouble; but knowledge can trump any of these, because knowledge can find ways of applying strength more efficiently, avoiding wounds in the first place and substituting a blind trust in fate with advance planning. You will never look at a library in the same way again. Gently, I turned the pick through ninety degrees and the tumblers slid around in the lock with a sound like clocks make just before they boom out their chimes.

With a bit of wiggling from the other hand, the restraining pin now came free smoothly, slotting into its socket with a businesslike click. That was when I knew we were in.

She heard it too and doused the magefire she had created. We both stood there, letting our eyes grow used to the dark, knowing we still had plenty of time. As we were both professionals, you couldn't even have heard the sound our breathing made.

I eased the door gently open. Inside, the Bethlum family library – the most opulent seat of learning this side of Alvion – offered itself to me. Immense windows the colour of night, with stained-glass sections like indigo jewels filled the distant walls; the shapes of bookshelves, huge as ships or so they seemed, loomed their oaken prows out of the dark. The carpets, which I knew were red because I had studied every picture I could find of the place over the last month, looked like black moss in the moonlight. I tested one with a foot; they were deep and succulent soft, absorbing noise like a sponge.

I signed to her in the silent thieves' cant we had both learned: *I will enjoy robbing these people*. She did not bother to respond, slipping straight past me and into the grand vault of the sleeping library. According to the features we had dredged up in old copies of Castergarten's *Nobilitas*, the Bethlum family had incorporated 'state of the art' security features when the library was first built sixty years ago. State of the art back then meant a blue cloak job, so we knew exactly what to expect. There was a small chance of high magic, but we doubted it. None of the craft guilds had had records of any upgrade work having been done here, so it was all going to be shockingly out of date from a hardware point of view.

Together, we ran down the carpeted aisles, leaped the obsolete pressure pad in the centre of the floor (I ask you!) and landed noiselessly on the far side. She ducked away down a side aisle and I followed. Above, the great balconies hung out into space, the walls full of endless rows of books that nobody would have time to read, not even if they lived a dozen lifetimes. It gave me an odd feeling.

Safely behind some of the bookcases, she brought a soft light up. We were supposed to be in the ancient history section. The brass plate that shimmered like silver in the magefire light proved that the layout of the shelves had not changed. I knew this was going to be the Ancient History section, because Augustus Tannhauser had commented upon it and the especially ugly statue at the end of the row in his otherwise tedious autobiography. Yes indeed, I had done a lot of reading in the past month. The reason was simple. I was not prepared to screw this one up.

There is a certain irony in using the contents of one library to do advance research before attempting to rob another. I am sure that was part of the appeal for Cosgrove-Barnes when he engaged my partner and I on the job in the first place. *Help yourselves*, he had said, as we sat on his engulfing sofa sipping warm claret. *The books are there to be read. Use them as you wish. Just bring me the one I want.*

A sound, oddly like the slow flap of a dying bat's wing; leather against leather, a large book being extracted and opened. She had found it. A soft crackle as she ran her finger down to the paragraph, the sentence, the word. She turned to me, and her look said *Now?* I nodded.

She spoke the single word 'Repossess' in her native Elvish. The word fell into the silence and vanished, a silver coin into black oil.

With that, the book in her hands melted as suddenly as a slab of wax, the pages slurring and quickening alarmingly. Narrow text was swept away by a barbaric, scything script, the letters like daggers. The neat binding was suddenly a scaly, flaking case. There was a single eye design on the cover. No further doubt; we had it.

When I turned to leave, the rather ugly statue at the end of the row had vanished.

In the silence, behind the sick sudden pounding of my heart against my ribs, I could hear an awful slow dragging sound, as if something unaccustomed to walking was taking its first steps.



# TOMES AND LIBRARIES: AN OVERVIEW

**M**emory is unreliable and the flesh is mortal. Upon these basic premises rests the reason for the written word and all that follows from it. In order that thoughts might outlive the thinker, that the discoveries of past ages might not need to be rediscovered laboriously and that fleeting ideas of genius might be preserved for eternity, sentient beings have worked to discover ways to preserve their thoughts in symbolic form, recorded on media designed to last for as long as possible.

The very first library (in human terms, irrespective of anything the Gods may have invented) was a cave wall, on which a learned tribesman carefully painted the images of beasts, heroes and deities. From that first repository of symbolic knowledge came writing, in which the symbols no longer had to resemble what they stood for. From the very first, making marks was a magical act. The daub of paint on the wall 'was' the bison; the writing down of a person's name somehow captured their essence. Literacy was considered to be a magical talent by those too ignorant to know any better.

With the growth of civilisation, the recording of knowledge becomes a matter of prime importance. Bards and skalds can store history in their memories, but what happens if the bard dies? A leader who is not remembered in legend might as well never have existed. A warrior chieftain who is busy waging war and bringing prizes home cannot be expected to keep track of all the treasures he owns, nor to write his own correspondence to other warlords. For that, he needs a scribe.

The written word is also crucial to many concepts of 'civilised' religion, as opposed to the pagan religions that are more concerned with emotions of awe and wonder. When the Gods speak, someone should write down what they say, as they may never gift mankind with their wisdom again. That holy writing can then take on a talismanic virtue. The book becomes an object of reverence in itself, not just for what it says.

The earliest forms of library are the archives of the tribe's or the kingdom's records. Often there is little contained therein apart from a year by year description of what the civilisation did, whether the year brought a good or bad harvest, who war was waged upon, who was born, who was married and who died. There will also be accounts of the tribe's legends, set down in a 'standard' form, so that history will not efface the truth through telling and retelling.

Those leaders who begin to value learning as well as raw physical prowess will want to extend their collections by including the written wisdom of other civilisations, especially when they realise that their own wise men can use this recorded knowledge to make new weapons and build stronger fortifications. When knowledge is recorded, it can be traded. In this way, one tribe or civilisation can exchange ideas with another. Libraries can be built up in which the knowledge of many civilisations is gathered together. The ultimate result is the library familiar from all fantasy campaigns, the chamber full of overstuffed shelves bulging with tome upon tome. It is with this kind of library that this book is concerned.

## THE STAPLES OF FANTASY

In a fantasy campaign, information storage can take many forms. Everyone knows the Tome, the huge thick ragged-edged book whose covers are encrusted with designs and whose pages are full of abstruse designs. The scroll is also familiar and is usually described as a roll of parchment in a tube. Beyond these two basics, neither of which has been properly explained in a fantasy context, little attention is given to the different types of book that may be found. It is time to change all that...

## ENGRAVED ON STONE

There are several types of material traditionally used to store written information. The crudest is the stone or clay tablet. Before more lightweight materials are discovered, the best way to preserve knowledge is to carve it into the same kind of stuff of which buildings are made. That way, it will last. Tablets cannot store as much information as a whole book but may easily store as much as may be written on a scroll. It is possible (and common amongst some ancient civilisations) to record spells upon tablets in exactly the same way as they are written on scrolls, with the tablet crumbling as the spell is discharged. Although it is inconvenient for a wizard to have to haul around a tablet, if the spell is one of which he has particular need it is better than not having the spell at all. Sometimes, tablets are unearthed that store extremely potent or dangerous spells long since forgotten by the younger civilisations.

## Papyrus

Easier to store than bulky tablets, papyrus is a form of rough sheet made by pressing reeds together. It is most commonly used by desert-dwelling civilisations. Its principal disadvantages are its bumpy and uneven surface, sometimes causing a mystic syllable to be mis-spelt or an illustration to be smudged, its vulnerability to damp and its edibility. Rats and other vermin will happily chew holes in papyrus if they are allowed to. On the positive side, it is cheap and plentiful.

## Metal

Less common than papyrus or clay as a writing medium, soft metals are sometimes used. The writing is carefully engraved or pressed into the surface and the metal is then rolled up and stored as a scroll. Copper is most commonly used for this purpose. While such scrolls are much more durable than papyrus and easier to store than tablets, they are harder to prepare and have a tendency to split from metal fatigue if unrolled and rolled up too many times. They are sometimes used to store records of particular importance that will not often be accessed, such as the definitive version of a holy text from which several working copies will be made before it is returned to the archives. Dwarven civilisations are fonder of metal scrolls than other races, mixing their copper in with other metals to produce a springy elastic alloy that is both long lasting and flexible.

## Fabric

Cultures that have discovered weaving (which will include all of the intelligent humanoid races in a standard fantasy milieu) will often take advantage of this to produce sheets of material, usually silk, that are then used to store information or write letters. Silk scrolls are extremely costly to produce and if there is a cheaper alternative, they will rarely be used except on ceremonial occasions or to hold magical writing. Elves are noted for their use of ornamented silk scrolls; these can sometimes be yards long and have many beautiful marginal illustrations, as they often are when an epic poem has been recorded on them.

## Parchment

Parchment is the standard medium for important or magical documents in a fantasy milieu. Ranging in colour from ivory to dark tan depending on the quality, it is prepared from animal hide that has been soaked and stripped. Old parchment has a crackly consistency to it, causing pages to turn noisily. If it has been made well, it can retain its flexibility for thousands of years. It is often made from the hide of goats or sheep. The technique of making parchment is a Craft skill in its own right. All the flesh must be carefully removed from the skin, then the hide is stretched to ensure maximum yield.

Calfskin or lambskin parchment is called vellum and is the finest quality of parchment available, being pale in colour, thin and very flexible. Vellum is always recommended when scribing magical scrolls or making individual talismans. Many religions will require their holy texts to be written on vellum parchment, as lesser materials are seen as 'base' and unworthy of receiving the power of divine revelation. Maps are also often recorded on parchment because of its durability. The prices given in Core Rulebook I for a sheet of parchment assume goatskin or sheepskin of moderate quality is being bought. Vellum costs 9 silver pieces per sheet.

Good parchment is so much in demand that in times of want, older books are often recycled to make new ones. Pieces of blank parchment are cut from larger volumes and joined together. It is not uncommon for a browser looking through a recently bound book to happen across a fragment of a much older text incorporated into the endpapers, particularly when the binder did not know or care what the older book was. Many fragments of ancient knowledge are rediscovered in this way.

Documents discovered on parchment will always have been written by hand. It is not a medium on which writing is printed.

## Paper

Although it is not often thought of as such, paper is just as commonly found in a fantasy world as in the everyday. If this were not the case, there would be few libraries, as the amount of parchment required would be astronomical. It is made from a variety of ingredients, usually including cotton or linen rags but almost always including hemp. Depending on how widespread its manufacture is in a given region, paper is either more scarce than parchment or relatively cheap and plentiful. In either case it varies in quality from batch to batch and manufacturer to manufacturer. The price of 4 silver pieces per sheet in Core Rulebook I assumes that paper is scarce and that the sheet bought is of the highest quality. Rough paper in a region where paper is plentiful could be got for the same amount of copper pieces.

In a campaign world where paper is plentiful and printing has been discovered, paper is the standard medium for storing the kind of writing that is produced in large quantities, such as popular books, broadsheets (one-page newspapers), handbills, posters (such as 'wanted' posters), song sheets and the like. It is also readily available for anyone to buy blank, so that they may carry out such vital tasks as writing their own letters, making maps or filling out their last will and testament before descending into a dungeon.

For the purposes of this supplement, we are assuming that printing has been discovered, though it has not become a universally accepted method of bookmaking. Books are clearly common in the d20 fantasy universe and it is impossible to believe they were all written by hand. Literacy is also widespread instead of being limited to the classes most commonly associated with it, such as nobles, priests and mages. It is thus reasonable to suppose that printing has made books accessible to a wider audience but that the literate members of society have remained rather stuck in their ways, preferring more archaic methods of information storage. This is particularly true of priests, wizards and sorcerers, as magic and religion alike seem to gravitate much more readily to the old methods of hand-copying on to parchment than to newer techniques of mass printing.



## HAND-WRITTEN AND PRINTED BOOKS

There are some types of document that will only ever be handwritten. The magical scroll is the most obvious example. The crafting of the scroll is an act of magic in itself, in which the magician invests a portion of his own energy into the writing in the form of experience points. The act of writing is as much a part of the making of the scroll as the forging of a magical sword. There is no way a spell scroll could ever be printed.

Handwritten books vary wildly in quality. At one extreme would be the small hand-bound personal journal of an obsessed sorcerer, pursuing his research into long unknown lore. This would be written in a scratchy, scribbling hand, often indecipherable and punctuated by frantic illustrations, symbols, marginal doodles and lapses into Draconic. Even when the writing could be read, it would not be guaranteed to make any sense. In contrast to this would be a kingdom's official census book, a huge gem-laid tome prepared by the monarch's priests and mages, with the initial characters of each page lovingly illustrated with scenes from holy scripture and each district's populace described in detail in precise clear handwriting, preserved for the future.



## Spellbooks

Wizards write their personal spellbooks by hand. It is important to remember that the method of writing a spell down in a spellbook is different from the method whereby it is scribed on a scroll. (See *Core Rulebook I*, page 155.) A spell recorded in a spellbook may not be cast straight from that book, but a spell recorded on a scroll may be cast from it. Similarly, a spell copied from a spellbook remains written down in the original book, whereas a spell copied from a scroll disappears.

The spellbooks of wizards who have died will form an important part of all arcane libraries worthy of the name. Spell knowledge is a limited resource and wizards will jealously guard the knowledge they have managed to accumulate. Sometimes, the spellbooks of successful wizards will be stolen and spirited off to form part of a rival's collection. Such wicked activity can cause raids and counter-raids to go on for decades. The truly ingenious will hire a qualified wizard to copy out the stolen spellbook in full before returning the original, so as to avoid arousing suspicion.

Spellbooks are never printed. They have to be written out with suitable inks on properly prepared parchment at a cost of 50 gp per page. However, some commercially minded wizards will occasionally prepare collections of spells for other wizards to use, written in glyphs that are as simple to understand as possible. Their rationale is that a wizard need not only have one spellbook at once; since he can duplicate a lost spellbook, he may as well duplicate one that has not been lost and sell it! To produce such a work is a time-consuming and expensive task but it is a rewarding one, as spellbooks of this kind are in great demand, especially among beginning wizards of good family who can afford to buy them such a book. Many older wizards look upon the practice of writing spellbooks for the mass market with utter contempt, considering it to be a prostitution of the mage's craft, a betrayal of the spirit of arcane research and excessive mollycoddling of young wizards. The usual retort is that no elder wizard would think twice about charging for a magic item or a spell cast on demand, so what is the difference?

Spellbooks written for the mass market do not usually contain spells above third level, as there is a tacit agreement among wizards who write these grimoires that it would be better to keep such knowledge to those qualified to use it.

Multiple-volume spellbooks also sometimes find their way into libraries. The usual reason for this is a temporary pact or truce between a group of wizards who have agreed to set aside their differences and work together in the interests of furthering the study of magic. As part of this pact, every wizard in the group will copy out all the spells he knows of a given class into a set of communal books, so that one book will be full of all the Abjurations known to the cabal, another will be full of Divinations and so on. Each wizard would then, theoretically, be allowed access to any book

as he or she required. In practice, wizards being what they are, these cabals usually break apart and the group's collection is scattered.

Libraries will have much more than spellbooks alone in their magic sections. Not every book written *about* magic is a book *of* magic. Wizards do not research their art by studying finished spells alone, but also by poring over books written about the principles on which spells are constructed. The theory of magic is as important to a wizard as the practice and copying out finished spells counts as practice, not theory.

There are thus a great many volumes in circulation detailing the various different aspects of magic, both arcane and divine. Unlike spellbooks and scrolls, these books are written in plain language and do not require *read magic* or Spellcraft checks to decipher, though they can sometimes be blurred, indistinct, damaged, censored, written in an archaic style or otherwise hard to read. These books need not be handwritten, either. There are many books about magic in print, with titles like *The Compleat Conjurer* or *The Eighteen Habits Of Successful Diviners*, purporting to improve the reader's spellcasting ability. Unlike spellbooks, they are easy to acquire and relatively cheap. They are also not guaranteed to be accurate or useful. Scrolls and spellbooks always work, in that the magic found in them is invariably usable in practice, whereas books *about* magic are as likely to be full of speculative guff as they are to contain anything of merit. In this field, the guidance of an expert is useful, as is the knowledge of which authors are generally most trustworthy.

## Shapes and Sizes of Books, Scrolls and Documents

With the minor exception of books printed *en masse* and recent volumes crafted to a manufacturer's standard, there is absolutely no standard sizing for books or scrolls. This is especially true of older texts, as they are almost always assembled *ad hoc*, being made from whatever materials were available and bound with recycled wood and leather. Their forms, however, are limited.

*Scrolls* intended for long-term information storage are very rarely the 'rolled up piece of parchment stuffed into a tube' so familiar to adventurers. Though they usually measure no more than one foot by two feet in size, they may be anything up to a yard across. They always have one or two dowels affixed to the ends of the scroll (usually one on each end) in order to keep the scroll tidy and properly rolled away. The approved method of reading the scroll is to unroll one end as you roll the other up, keeping a 'window' of scroll in view. The dowels are often ornamented, having an acorn-like knob or protuberance at either end to prevent slippage and to make it easier to extract the scroll from its alcove. Scrolls that are intended to be studied on a flat surface (such as lengthy histories) usually read from side to side and unroll the same way,

whereas scrolls intended to be read from aloud (such as legal notices or poems) unroll from top to bottom.

Archive scrolls are usually very thick, containing the equivalent of 50 pages in a normal book. All kinds of material are used to make them, especially fabric and parchment as they roll up well. Papyrus is often used where nothing better can be found, but its thickness makes scrolls bulky, resulting in a maximum of only 25 pages of writing per standard scroll. In libraries and archives, scrolls are stored horizontally in walls covered in alcoves or deep boxes built for the purpose and labelled. This can make them hard to retrieve, as the only way to increase scroll storage space is often to work higher up the wall, requiring the use of a ladder or movable staircase.

Scrolls are composed of one long page. They are, however, in a wholly different category from loose documents, the name given to single stray pages. Most libraries will have collections of these. They are the lucky dip of the researcher, as they are composed of utterly random papers, usually dumped into a chest and passed on to a library as a job lot when their original owner died. Although many libraries benefit greatly from such behests, as when an aged wizard leaves his whole collection of rare books to a colleague's library, inheriting several mountainous piles of loose sheets along with the good stuff is a nightmare for the librarian.

Although they are supposed to be catalogued and stored properly, it is far more common for a library's loose documents to be stored in a set of huge chests or drawers, where anyone who is allowed to use that part of the library may root through them to his heart's content. It is commonly agreed that anything at all may emerge from the loose documents section, from a shopping list, a caricature of a fellow wizard or a whimsical limerick to a rough draft of a horrifically potent incantation or a recipe for scentless, tasteless venom. Often the loose pages belonged to spellbooks (which is why they were not thrown out, in the hope that the spellbook might someday be assembled) and form part of a spell written across several pages. Loose documents, being a haphazard collection, can be anything from 4 inches square to 2 feet square.

The simplest kind of book is the coverless *wad* of loose documents fastened together down the edge with some kind of a clip, a pin, a gluey substance or with stitching. These crude collections are either very early and primitive books, the results of attempts to cobble a destroyed book back together, notebooks made from whatever materials came to hand when something desperately needed to be written down or a selection of individual documents fastened together for convenience, such as a complete set of correspondence or a set of business accounts. These collections are prone to fall apart while being handled and are hard to store well. A wad will usually be no larger than A4 size.



## TOMES AND LIBRARIES: AN OVERVIEW

*Pamphlets* are more organised, being a square-cut set of pages of small size, folded in half and stitched down the middle. Pamphlets are usually thin and do not contain very much information. They are often prepared to advertise something, such as the available services of a professional mage, or to present a very brief argument, such as in the case of a political or religious tract.

The next most advanced variety of book, the *softback*, is distinguished by being bound. It has a cover and a spine (the edge where the cover is folded over.) The cover is usually made from card to which cloth has been stuck, or simply from card alone. This is the usual format for cheap books produced in quantity. They are not very robust, being soft-covered, though they have the advantage of being light and thus more easily portable. Their thin covers also make them easier to store, allowing the librarian to cram more of them into a section. They are usually small, measuring about 8 inches by 5 inches and three-quarters of an inch thick at the largest.

The most common book to be found in a fantasy setting is the *hardback*. These are composed of multiple sheets cut to size and stitched in groups so as to make the book even. The sheets are then glued into a binding made from wooden panels and a stiffened leather spine. The endpapers (the first and last pages of the book) are often decorated. The wooden panels serve to protect the book from harm and give it a durable, properly turned-out appearance. The binding is almost always covered with a final layer, both for the look of it and for additional protection. Cloth is commonly used with leather being an expensive but desirable alternative. Some hardbacks are bound in exotic materials, such as the skin of a manticores or even the scaly hide of a dragon. The title of the book is stamped on the spine and the front cover, either in coloured ink or (more commonly) in metal leaf. Hardbacks intended to be kept together in a set, such as multiple volumes of a single series, are sometimes provided with a box into which they all fit and are called *boxed sets*.

The largest, most impressive hardbacks are called *tomes*. A tome is a hardback book of great thickness and size: the largest can easily have a spine two feet long. Spellbooks and other overtly magical books often fall into this category, as do volumes on traditionally dangerous or taboo subjects such as demonology. Tomes are always ornamented with metal, horn or wooden fittings as well as their ordinary binding. The corners are fitted with strengthening pieces to protect them against becoming bent. Symbols cast in metal or embossed in leather may be affixed to the front cover, giving an indication of what the tome contains. The usual options are such easily recognisable shapes as skulls, pentagrams, holy symbols, swords or axes. Gemstones are sometimes included in the fittings.

In some rare cases, the binding and spine will either be reinforced by metal or completely replaced by it, encasing the contents in armour. Such tomes usually have a clasp

and a locking mechanism, though this will rarely be intact, as decades of changed ownership will often have resulted in the lock being smashed off or otherwise removed. The most precious tomes in well-maintained libraries will be kept locked, in order to prevent page theft. As might be expected from their adornment, tomes weigh much more than ordinary hardbacks.

A *folio* is any book (usually of a large format) whose sheets have been folded across only once prior to being sewn into the binding. Folios often contain a high proportion of pictures to the text. Bestiaries, navigators' guides and works involving complicated technical diagrams (such as a guide to building a siege tower) are common types of book to be found in folio format. They are almost always shorter than hardbacks, but contain just as much data in their tall broad pages.

Books that were printed in the very earliest stages of any culture's experiments with printing are called *incunabula* and are usually large and cumbersome, as printing takes many centuries to perfect. Incunabula are very rare as they were printed in small editions and only a few have survived, though they are often more valuable to collectors for curiosity value than to researchers, as the information contained in them can frequently be found elsewhere.



# LIBRARIES AND THEIR CONTENTS

Not every collection of books and manuscripts can be said to be a library. Many homes have one or two books knocking about and some of the richer ones might even have a whole case full, but only an institution or individual with substantial wealth or renown can afford to acquire books in sufficient quantity to have a library. As a rule of thumb, five thousand books (including scrolls and pamphlets) must be included in a collection before it is even worthy of the title of library.

Wizards are the most renowned of characters for book collecting but they are far from being the only people to do so. Owning a large number of books is considered by many to be a sign of nobility; one is a person of letters and education, not some muddy peasant. Some professional institutions, such as guilds, keep collections of books in order to preserve the wisdom of their craft and educate the apprentices. Many private collectors have libraries, sometimes including books of great value bought as an investment.

## WIZARDLY LIBRARIES

These are the familiar libraries from classic fantasy. Antique wooden shelves hold a variety of odd-shaped tomes, some of which seem about to burst open with repressed magical energy. The place is almost always untidy, since it is in constant use. Scrolls lie unfurled on work surfaces, books are held open by any heavy object that comes to hand and recently consulted titles are stacked on top of one another in precarious piles.

The traditional place for such a library is at the top of a wizard's tower, where the bookshelves line part or most of the walls, with a single hanging lamp in the room's centre. It is not possible to fit a library of more than small size into an unmodified tower room, so what many wizards do is add an extra level of shelves above the first, having balconies and ladders built so they can reach them. This way, the more dangerous or infrequently used books can be kept up high out of easy reach of visitors.

Larger wizardly libraries can be found in castle rooms or, if the wizard has a large house of his own, in a room set aside for the purpose. Some wizards who are nervous about security will set aside the magical sections of their libraries (including spellbooks, which are often stolen) in a small secret area. This allows them to use the library as normal, while any visitors are restricted to the sections on open display.

Although many wizards (particularly the more aged ones) prefer to be solitary and accumulate libraries of their own, there are others who work together and form communal libraries. Magical orders will always have the best library they can assemble. The library of a long-established good-aligned order is the epitome of what an arcane library should be. The order's work and reputation will have enabled it to garner the most rare and sought-after titles, the powers of the members can be counted on to prevent theft and the frequent necessity of use means that the place is kept in immaculate order, usually by unseen servants and other magical beings conjured for the purpose.

## NOBLE LIBRARIES

Aristocrats are typically proud of their academic accomplishments. They keep libraries in order to educate their children, to settle disputes and to show off to their aristocratic friends. There are no conventional universities or colleges in a fantasy setting, so most families have their own book collections and enlist private tutors. Poorer families rarely learn from books, as their trades do not usually require literacy to learn, though they may learn to read as a useful step in life.

As noble families often stay in the same house for generation after generation, large hereditary libraries are accumulated. These will not always be maintained. If the family falls on hard times, servants will be kept on for essentials like cooking and cleaning and the library will be shut up and left to gather dust. Few families bother with the trouble of hiring a full-time librarian. As a result, the family will not often know what it has in its collection, or who was the last person to consult it.

It is hard to predict what you will find in a noble library. Once in a while, a family member will develop a mania for books and add a huge amount to the collection; once he is dead and gone, another family member will run up gambling debts and sell a stack of books to raise money. Some families have crates of old books in storage that they have not bothered to unpack. It is hard for a wizard not to salivate at the thought of what lost treasures could be lurking in attics in unopened boxes.

Royal libraries are usually the most splendid, well-stocked and best maintained of all noble libraries. They are founded and kept updated by monarchs who are sufficiently wise (or have sufficiently wise advisors) to know that a ruler must learn from the past if he is to avoid repeating past mistakes. Royal libraries are exempt from the usual rules regarding illegal books. It is felt that a ruler may sometimes need to consult information best kept from the public, if only to make a more educated guess at what his enemies may be doing.



### PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Some towns and cities are sufficiently civilised to have a public library. These are usually founded by a benefactor who wished to make his hometown a better place after his death and left his collection to form the basis of a new library. Others after him follow this worthy example, either by making donations while alive or passing collections on at death and within a few years a library is established.

Public libraries do not often contain a great depth of material. What they do have is usually of popular interest, such as fiction (usually the largest section), craft books, biographies, folklore and religious titles. They often have a problem with theft and vandalism and as a result they do not stock expensive or delicate books, keeping mostly to paperbacks and hardbacks. They have next to no material about magic, as this is the first to be stolen by curious teenagers. Even the books that survive do not always contain what they should. Anyone consulting a text in a public library may find that the pictures have been removed because someone thought they would look nice on the wall, or a crucial page has been obliterated by a halfling child's crayon drawing of a tree.

### GUILD LIBRARIES

It is very common for a guild of craftsmen to have a small library, kept at the guild headquarters. The books found therein will mostly be technical manuals, though there will be some more general titles for the guild members to read while relaxing. The reference books of the guild are treated with as much care and reverence by the members as a wizard treats his spellbooks. A guild will sometimes own a particularly rare and prized tome that will be displayed in a locked cabinet and only brought out on ceremonial occasions. Some guilds have their own initiation rites, such as that of the Venerable Company of Brewers during which the candidate is obliged to stand in the centre of the cellar wearing nothing but a barrel while the other guild members throw ale at him. At the conclusion of this rite, the newly initiated Brewer would be given the guild's tome to kiss to seal his oath of loyalty to the guild and allowed access to it thereafter.

In a class of their own are the Rogues' Guilds. Their libraries, when they have them, are dark and secretive affairs, full of slim volumes on all manner of lawless crafts. The arts of the rogue are not all passed down by word of mouth. Some rogues who have survived to old age have been so concerned to preserve their knowledge (or so keen to boast of their exploits) that they have written whole books of guidance to those younger rogues following in their footsteps. A rogue who is a member of a guild might be given access to books that describe the secrets of disguise, the art of striking from the shadows, the best colours and dyes to use when dressing so as not to be seen in an urban environment, the care and maintenance of thieves' tools, the art of improvising a lockpick, the

techniques of glass-cutter use, one hundred useful knots and so on.

Not all of the rogue's guild library books are written with the rogue in mind; it is a poor library that will not have several books on the art of locksmithing. A rogue who has had the foresight to bring along a schematic showing the insides of a difficult lock will find he has a much better chance of picking it.

The books found in the libraries of the Guilds of Assassins are darker still, containing plenty of medical and anatomical texts. From these, the students learn the way the various races' bodies work and the most efficient ways of preventing them from doing so. Volumes of poison lore are given pride of place, with full-page diagrams showing which parts of various creatures are venomous and how to extract the poison safely. Instructions are given whereby the student may brew his own venom and handle it with impunity. Assassins do not derive their class feature of poison use from nowhere; they all have to learn it and what they do not learn from instructors they read in books.

Any rogues' or assassins' library is running a risk by existing in the first place, as a great many of the books contained therein will be considered illegal or dangerous by the authorities in most lawful regimes. Depending on the degree of corruption in the city or town, a bribe is sometimes paid to ensure the library is allowed to carry on undisturbed. Where this is impractical, the library is simply kept secret. A guild of this kind will sometimes have a dummy library as a false front, on whose shelves are found volumes of poetry and romantic paperbacks. Only the members will be told which copy of Nugent's Whimsical Odes For Young Folk actually contains The Book of Silent Slaughter inside its thick binding.

### BARDIC COLLEGES

The love bards have for knowledge draws them to libraries like ants to honey. They can happily spend days just browsing the shelves and reading whatever chances to come to hand. Their tendency to wander prevents them from settling down for long in one place, so dedicated bardic libraries formed by individuals are not common. They would much rather consult other people's collections than go to the time and trouble of building up their own.

Bardic colleges, on the other hand, are repositories for all manner of esoteric information. Bards come there not only to learn but also to contribute, recording their experiences and individual compositions on scrolls kept for the purpose and adding to the college's store of learning. Bards who are members of a college are freely permitted to copy from the texts kept there. This rule means that information is kept in a constant flow between the various colleges. A bard may write down a song of his own composition in which the adventures of his teammates are chronicled and add it to the records of one college; another bard may find it there, copy it on to a scroll and take it with him, adding

it to the archives of the colleges he encounters on his wanderings. As the kind of information recorded by bards is not often very long and needs to be portable so that it can be taken with them on a journey, bardic colleges keep a great deal of their records in scroll form and rarely include tomes.

## CLERICAL LIBRARIES

The religious orders and established churches have some of the best collections of books anywhere. Clerical libraries are often better stocked than those of wizards (perhaps because wizards so often selfishly guard their books, rather than pooling them in the interests of the faith) though they are much more rare; there is usually only one per religion and it is typically found at that religion's most holy site.

Clerics' understanding of the sacred leads them to treat their collections with reverence and care. Thanks to their ministrations, many ancient texts have been preserved that might otherwise have been lost to the ages. Unfortunately for the would-be researcher, gaining access to a clerical library is very difficult. Religious librarians often feel their collections are best kept for those sufficiently enlightened to benefit from them; or, if their content is controversial, for those sufficiently holy to withstand them. Legends abound of cathedrals in whose upper towers immense libraries are kept, to which no outsider is ever granted access. It is certainly true that many high-ranking clerics have owned volumes of very dubious material indeed, ostensibly for their value as art.

## PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

The very rich, the eccentric, the light-fingered and the just plain lucky sometimes manage to amass personal collections of books to rival those of any institution. The individual tastes of the collector will shape the collection; libraries of this kind never contain anything superfluous. They are usually small, with an excellent selection of extremely rare books. Unlike noble libraries, which they otherwise resemble, they focus on a few areas in depth rather than covering a great many. Private libraries may only be accessed at the whim of the collector him or herself. They are almost always part of a large house, with a whole room to themselves. Some especially wealthy families may even have a Noble library and a Private Collection belonging to the family members under the same roof.

## LIBRARY CONDITION MODIFIERS

The different types of library give priority to different sections; a wizardly library is likely to have a lot of arcane books, whereas a noble library will contain volumes on art and Who's Who. This is not the only variance between libraries. In a world of fantasy adventures, libraries can sometimes lie undiscovered for many years, or not be found by the players until an invading horde has ransacked

the shelves, using their precious contents as firefighters. The following modifiers give even more character to the various library types. A library may have more than one modifier, though obviously it may not have mutually contradictory ones such as Huge and Tiny.

### Ancient

Libraries designated as have been preserved more or less intact for hundreds or even thousands of years and have not had any new information added to them in that time. A typical ancient library would be one that was broken into by explorers investigating a city buried beneath the desert sands, or the library belonging to a monarch who became undead and who has not left his castle in a thousand years.

Many of the records in an ancient library are in scroll or tome form, with no paperbacks or hardbacks as the library was produced before printing was properly established. Some may contain incunabula. They always have a History section which counts as Ancient History in all respects. They have a smell of ancient aromatic resin and dry dust about them, the distinctive mummy-like aroma of secrets older than many of the oldest cities of man. It is not uncommon for them to be haunted, or for the scrolls to be infected with bookworms or desiccating dust (see Chapter 8).

In game terms, they hold a wealth of information long since lost to the outside world, granting a +2 circumstance bonus to any research checks dealing with the time period they cover. However, the languages used are archaic and do not always translate across in a straightforward manner. A character must be able to read Draconic and any two of Abyssal, Celestial, Elven or Dwarven to benefit from the bonus. If he can read none of these languages, he suffers a -2 circumstance penalty to any research checks made in the ancient library. Especially ancient libraries may even require the researcher to make a Dexterity check (DC 15) when collecting books for deep research, with failure indicating that a clumsily handled book has crumbled away to dust in the researcher's fingers, lowering the number of useful books in the pile.

One of the most famous ancient libraries is the Archive of Xol Sotos, a sandstone dome situated in the midst of a desert of red dust, said to be guarded by a race of lizard men who recognise its significance but cannot decipher any of its contents. According to them, a highly advanced dragon-like race compiled the archive when they sensed their deaths were drawing near, giving their stunted cousins the duty of preserving the dome for all time. Those few who have gained access report that the thousands of copper scrolls stored therein are written in an early, ornate style of Draconic, supporting the lizardmen's claim that the archive is the final resting place of their ancestors' wisdom.



### Chaotic

Some libraries have not been properly sorted out into proper sections in many years. Those that have been responsible for them have either neglected them altogether or have evolved a 'keep everything within arm's reach' approach to the books they want to read. Some curators have even gone insane, building themselves nests, walkways or walled dens using books as building blocks, or making castles out of them and having battles. Earthquakes or other natural disasters can bring shelves toppling down and scatter their contents everywhere. As there are tens of thousands of books involved in the average library, disorder is a major hindrance to conducting research.

A chaotic library still has almost all of its material, but there is little to no organisation to it. A Search check is used instead of the Intelligence check when consulting a section or browsing the shelves, with a DC of 25. The search for bonus books is not allowed in this case, as it is hard enough to find ordinary books. All research times are doubled. It is possible to tidy up and sort out a chaotic library, though this is a mammoth task. To do so requires five hundred hours of work that may be shared out between up to five people of 10 Intelligence or more. A huge library doubles this time and a tiny library halves it.

There is no better example of a chaotic library than the ill-fated collection of Hezarkene Crow, whose slow descent into madness as a result of inhaling dangerous alchemical fumes is a matter of popular knowledge, held up as a warning to careless young students of the alchemists' art. Crow came to the conclusion that the books could be used as magical talismans to ward off the invisible demons that came in the night and stole away little pieces of his brain, arranging them across the floor in increasingly bizarre patterns reminiscent of the sigils on a magic circle. Colleagues who visited him in the final stages of his madness (in the hope of consulting his famous collection of books) discovered him in the act of lining up all of his tomes on their ends like dominoes, so he could knock them all down at once.

### Huge

When several smaller libraries are amalgamated or one library is added to year after year for generations, a huge library can result. These are magnificent multi-level labyrinths of books, often fitted with sliding ladders for ease of access, with rare titles dripping from every shelf and scrolls and documents stuffed into every spare crevice. Huge libraries are extremely rare and are considered national treasures – if they are known about, that is, as some are well kept secrets. They will very rarely be found outside the palace of a particularly successful ruler or the fortress home of a wizardly or clerical order.

Huge libraries are still limited to the sections listed for the library type, with the following exceptions. Wherever a percentage is listed, the first subsection is always present; no roll need be made. Whenever a variable sum is listed,

the maximum is always the result. So, for example, a huge Noble library would always have all four possible Alchemy subsections and an Arcane Magic subsection on Spell Theory. When conducting deep research in a huge library, all rolls made to find useful books in a general section are made at a +1 circumstance bonus and all rolls to consult a given subsection are made at a +2 circumstance bonus. So, if the necessary Intelligence check were made, a relevant subsection would yield 2-9 useful books instead of 0-7.

There are few libraries so huge as that of the Primarch of Cisternum, His Holiness Rechartus VII. After the establishment of Marianism as the official religion of the Cisternian Empire, holy crusade after holy crusade brought treasures flooding home to the capital. These included the writings of other races and cultures, which the various emperors employed hundreds of scribes to translate and catalogue. The current Primarch's library includes not only the original texts, culled from all over the world and preserved in locked cabinets, but a second level of copies and translations which he and his advisors can consult at will.

### Organised

There are few more formidable avatars of lawfulness than a dedicated librarian. In an organised library, every single title is numbered and indexed. A large tome is kept for this purpose, giving titles and reference numbers. Sections are clearly labelled so the browser does not get lost. In game terms, conducting research in an organised library gives a +4 modifier to the associated Intelligence ability check. If the library's index tome is missing, this bonus is not available.

The library kept by the Order of the Prism, a group of lawful wizards whose particular interest is in the analysis of matter and light to find out of what elements they are ultimately composed, is definitely worthy of the 'organised' moniker. They are so stringent in the preservation of their material that special soft cotton gloves must be worn before any volume is handled. Every aspect of the library is subject to rigorous routine; a permanent silence effect ensures that the wizards' study is not disturbed by any vulgar noises.

### Purged

Sometimes, a regime will come into power that has reason to censor written material, usually through fear of competing ideologies or a wish to cover up the past. Though such regimes recognise the value of libraries, they grant themselves the power to amend them, so they only contain what they deem to be appropriate material. In this way, they try to impose their wills upon the past as well as the present. For example, a monarch who had all the members of a family slaughtered might want their entire dynasty to be erased from the records, whereas a fanatical religious orthodoxy might want to remove any reference to other religions so that the people would not be tempted into heresy. Regimes of this kind are usually militaristic or religious in nature, or both; they are characterised by a

lack of tolerance and a firm belief that their way is right. The ‘right kind’ of book is approved of, but ‘immoral’ or ‘dangerous’ books are seen as if they were plague-carriers, capable of infecting the righteous with the disease of heresy or insubordination.

During a literary purge, the representatives of the government will sort through all the libraries they can reach, burning or mutilating any books that are not compatible with the government’s views. When preparing a purged library, the Games Master must decide what kind of purge has taken place, political or religious. In a political purge, the Biography, History, Fiction, Sociology and Warfare sections of the library are downgraded, so that a General section becomes Poor and a section with subsections becomes General. A religious purge has the same effect on the Ancient History, Arcane Magic, Demonology, Divine Magic, Fiction, Folklore, History, Religion and Planes sections. At the Games Master’s discretion, some sections may be deleted altogether, such as Sports and Games by a puritan regime that considered such things frivolous, or Dragons by a dragon-fearing warrior overlord who wished his people to forget such things had ever existed.

One of the most tragic purges in the history of library-keeping was that which afflicted the Grand Library, hitherto kept in the castle-keep of the Magenham family and preserved with affectionate care until the time of the notorious Davan Magenham. This son of a noble line became obsessed with a fashionable cult that certain friends had persuaded him to join, part of the teachings of which was that the flesh was inherently evil and only in the things of the spirit was salvation to be found. Previously a noted rake, Magenham took to the new faith with all the zeal of a convert.

Magenham’s excessive regard for his new religion led him to burn the family’s priceless collection of art volumes, as he believed they offended his God (art being considered a blasphemy, as it presumed to emulate the creator by making images of creatures only he could rightfully create) and destroy all the other texts that were incompatible with his faith, leaving only a selection of solemn manuals on warfare and castle-building. He was to prove expert at both in the years to come.

## Ransacked

Libraries are ransacked under many different circumstances. Smaller libraries can be worked over by professional thieves, sometimes sent to steal to order by a rival magician or collector. The older archives are occasionally raided by tomb-robbers or treasure-seekers. As for the extensive collections found in cities and large country houses, it only takes an invading army or a rampaging barbarian horde to turn the accumulated wisdom of generations into a battleground. In the ruckus, valuable books are grabbed as booty by those who know their value or taken indiscriminately by those who do not, in which case they are may be used as firelighters – or even for sanitary purposes.

Though a library may be restored to order after being ransacked, the damage is still done. Unlike a purged library, where the destruction takes place methodically and with purpose according to the books’ content, a ransacked library will only be missing the most valuable titles. Proceed as with a purged library, with the exception that the Games Master randomly allocates the missing sections, which may range in quantity from one to ten according to how much material was stolen or destroyed.

The ‘Jolly Lads’, a mask-wearing troupe of rural thugs who terrorised Westershire for no better reason than the joy of causing havoc, were responsible for the infamous ransacking of the Canon Ruddig Memorial Library. As well as defacing the statuary, slashing hassocks and smashing what ornaments they could reach in this clerical institution, they stole anything larger in size than a hardback book, making off with several sacks full of tomes and folios. Most of these were later found to have been discarded along the road back to the barn where the Jolly Lads spent the night, though the thankful prayers at their recovery were premature, as the rain had largely ruined those books that were not thickly bound. Not found among the discarded tomes were several priceless collections of illuminated scripture whose whereabouts are still unknown to this day.

## Tiny

Tiny libraries are those that only just qualify as a library at all. They may have been reduced of all but the essentials because their owner was moving, or may have had excess material sold off. Alternatively, they may represent the beginnings of a library that will in time grow to be full-size. Libraries assembled by players will almost always be tiny at first.

When conducting research in a tiny library, the number of temporary skill ranks acquired when browsing the shelves is reduced by 1, as is the number of useful books retrieved from relevant sections when conducting deep research. However, there is no need to make an Intelligence check to find the appropriate books, as the library is small enough to find your way around.

Falling into the category of ‘small but perfectly formed’ is the charming little library of Abryl Prunepicker, first conceived of by that noted halfling as an addition to her famous tearooms. Though there are few books in her collection, the selection has been expertly made. Many persons of high renown have been known to visit incognito for a peaceful afternoon’s browsing while sipping herbal beverages.



# LIBRARY SECTIONS

Though it may look like it to the unenlightened, a library is not an undifferentiated mass of random books. Any properly arranged library groups its books into sections, so that the browser can more easily find what he is looking for. The titles of the various sections are given in the accompanying table. Some collections are so large that their sections contain enough books to count as a section in their own right; these smaller groupings are called subsections.

The title of the section is given first, followed by the subsections it may contain. There are four possible conditions for a library section. A given section may be non-existent, poor, general, or contain one or more subsections.

A non-existent section is fairly uncommon, as most libraries contain a little bit of information on just about any topic under the sun. Nonetheless, some libraries just are not going to contain information on a given subject. Guild

libraries are not going to have books on divine magic, nor will public libraries contain any books on matters so esoteric as the planes; the average city worker is not interested in such things.

A poor section is one in which there is only a token smattering of books. Wizards might keep a few hardback volumes on combat just in case they ever need them, or a book or two on stonemasonry in case they ever need to build a stone golem, but in general the selection is not very impressive.

A general section is one that is large enough to contain a decent number of books on a subject but is not so large that the books can be grouped into subsections.

The Games Master is of course free to design individual libraries at will. It might happen that a particular wizard had a mania for books about ships or armour designs. The table is only there to provide a quick and easy way of simulating library contents when players go browsing. Rather than rolling up libraries in advance, it is better to wait until the player asks what kind of a selection the library has on a given subject, at which point the rolls can be made and their results noted.



Sections Found in Libraries

Section	Subsections	Wizardly	Noble	Bardic	Guild	Public	Clerical
<b>Alchemy</b>	Chemistry, <i>Poisons, Acids, Explosives</i>	All	1d4	General	All (Alchemists only)	General	1d2
<b>Anatomy</b>	(By race)	All	All	General	All (Healers, Artists & Assassins only)	General	General
<b>Ancient History</b>	Previous Civilisations, People of the Distant Past	1d2	1d2	All	General	General	All
<b>Arcane Magic</b>	Spell Theory, (by school)	1d2	40%	1	None	None	General
<b>Architecture</b>	Simple Structures, Walls, Bridges, Houses, Towers, Castles	General	1d4	1d4	All (Architects only)	1d3	1d4
<b>Armour</b>	Light, Medium, Heavy	General	1d3	1d3	All (Armour Crafters only)	1d3	1d3
<b>Art</b>	Painting, Sculpture	General	All	All	All (Artists only)	1d2	1d2
<b>Biography</b>	(By type of person, e.g. Criminal, Noble, Soldier, Paladin)	Wizards & Sorcerers only	All but Wizards & Sorcerers	50%	Only when relevant to Guild	Nobles, Royals, Soldiers & Heroes only	Clerics & Paladins Only
<b>Combat</b>	Armed, Unarmed, Monkish Unarmed	Poor	1d2	1d3	General	General	1d2
<b>Crafts</b>	(By craft), <i>Trapmaking</i>	Poor	1d2	1d2	Relevant crafts only	1	1
<b>Crime</b>	Thefts, Murders, <i>Rogues' Arts, Assassination Techniques</i>	Poor	1d2	1d4	Rogues and Assassins, All: other guilds, 1d2	2	1d2
<b>Cultures</b>	(By race)	General	All	All	General	70%	All
<b>Demonology</b>	Individual Demons & Devils, <i>Summoning</i>	1d2	30%	1d2	None	None	1d2
<b>Devices</b>	Tools, Simple Machinery, Locks, Inventions, <i>Traps</i>	1d4	1d4	1d4+1	Relevant guilds, All: all others, 1d3	1d4	General
<b>Divine Magic</b>	(By domain)	General	30%	30%	None	General	All
<b>Dragons</b>	(By colour)	70%	General	40%	Poor	General	30%
<b>Fiction</b>	Stories, Songs, Poetry, Epics	1d4	1d4	All	1d2	1d3	1d2
<b>Folklore</b>	Local Legends, Ghosts, Superstitions, Fey	1d3+1	1d4	All	1d3	1d4	1d4
<b>Geography</b>	(By city and nation), Maps, Land Types	1d3	1d3	All	1	1d3	1d3



## LIBRARY SECTIONS

<b>Geology</b>	Rocks, Precious Stones, Crystals	1d3	1d3	1d3	All (Stonemasons, Gemcutters & Jewellers Only)	1d3	1d3
<b>History</b>	Local, (By nation and district)	1d2	1d2	All	1	1d2	1d2
<b>Languages</b>	(By language)	70%	40%	80%	None	30%	50%
<b>Magical Items</b>	Wondrous Items, Arms and Armour, Wands, Rods, Staves, Rings, Constructs, Artefacts	1d4+4	1d6	1d8	30% chance of any one subsection relevant to guild	Poor	1d8
<b>Medicine</b>	Minor Wounds, Major Wounds, Diseases	General	1d3	1d3	All (Healers Only)	1d3	All
<b>Metallurgy</b>	(By metal)	General	40%	30%	All (Metalworkers and Jewellers only)	Poor	General
<b>Music</b>	(By instrument)	Poor	All	All	All (Musicians Only)	50%	General
<b>Nature</b>	Weather Lore, Plant Lore, <i>Dangerous Plants</i>	1d3	1d3	1d2+1	All (Healers and Herbalists only)	1d2	1d2+1
<b>Potions</b>	Healing Potions	All	30%	70%	All (Alchemists & Healers only)	Poor	All
<b>Psionics</b>	Modes, Disciplines, Creatures	1d3	30% General, otherwise none	1d2	None	None	30% General, otherwise none
<b>Professions</b>	(By profession)	General	60%	40%	All (Relevant profession only)	80%	General
<b>Religion</b>	Local religion, (all other religions)	General	1-2	1-2	General	1-2	All
<b>Planes</b>	Ethereal & Astral, Elemental Planes, Outer Planes	All	1-2	1-3	None	None	All
<b>Society</b>	Royalty, Nobility	General	All	1-2	1-2	1-2	General
<b>Spellbooks</b>	Special	Special	None	None	None	None	None
<b>Sports &amp; Games</b>	(By game)	Poor	All	All	60%	All	Poor
<b>Survival</b>	The Wilderness, Hunting, Tracking	General	1d2+1	All	All (Relevant Guilds Only), all others 1d3	1d3	General
<b>Transport (Land)</b>	Riding, Vehicles	General	1d2	All	All (Waggoners and Couriers only), all others 1d2	1d2	General
<b>Transport (Sea)</b>	Ships, Sailing, Navigation	General	1d3	All	All (Sailors Only), all others 1d3	1d3	General

<b>Undead</b>	(By undead type under 5 HD), (By undead type of 6 HD and over)	1-2	General	40%	None	Poor	All
<b>Warfare</b>	Tactics, Strategy, Siege, Maritime	General	1d3+1	General	General	General	General
<b>Weapons</b>	(By simple or martial weapon), (By exotic weapon)	General	1-2	1-2	All (Weaponsmiths only), all others 40%	70%	General
<b>Zoology</b>	Animals & Beasts, Humanoids, Giants & Monstrous Humanoids, Magical Beasts, Aberrations, (all other monster types except undead and dragons)	1d6	1d6	1d4+2	General	1d3	1d6

When a subsection's title is given in (square brackets), it means there is a subsection included for every instance of what is stated in the brackets. So, the subsection (by undead type under 5 HD) means that if the subsection is present, there is effectively a subsection on Zombies, Ghouls, Skeletons and so forth in the library, though there is only general information on Liches, Vampires and the like. Square brackets always mean that *all* instances are covered, even if this means there must be a lot of books present!

The following notations are used in the above table.

*None:* The whole section is absent from the library and no amount of searching will turn up anything useful.

*Poor:* Only a poor selection of books is available.

*General:* The library has a general selection of books on the subject but no subsections.

*Percentiles (e.g. 40%):* This is the percentage chance for the section to have the first (and only the first) subsection on the list. If it does not have this subsection, the section counts as General. So, a noble library has a 40% chance to have a section on Arcane Spell Theory in its Arcane Magic section.

A single roll covers all instances of an entry in square brackets. So, a public library has a 70% chance to have a subsection on each and every simple and martial weapon but will never have a subsection on exotic weapons at all.

*Quantity (e.g. 1-2):* The section contains at least one subsection. The amount is rolled randomly and

subsections are always included from left to right. This represents the relative scarcity of a given subsection. So, a Wizardly library that rolled a 2 on its Nature section would contain only Weather Lore and Plant Lore, whereas one that rolled a 3 would contain Weather Lore, Plant Lore and Dangerous Plants.

*All:* The section contains all of the possible subsections.

Volumes listed in *italics* are considered to be dangerous, illegal or otherwise controlled. They will be kept in a safe part of the library and not shown to anyone who does not possess the proper credentials. The penalty for possessing a forbidden book can range from having it confiscated to being burned at the stake, depending on the regime under which one lives. The Games Master should ignore any result that seems incompatible with the library, for example the occurrence of a Demonology (Summoning) subsection in a good-aligned clerical library.

Royal libraries, being furnished with the wealth of an entire kingdom, contain complete sections (with all subsections included, even illegal ones) except for Arcane and Divine Magic, which are General.

Private collections contain from one to three complete sections as chosen by the Games Master, representing the collector's personal interests. These *can* include Arcane and/or Divine magic, something that annoys many wizards, who would dearly love to get their hands on the tomes that these dilettantes are keeping to themselves.



# THE ART OF RESEARCH

In game terms, research (as distinct from study) is the art of using multiple books in a library in order to find out new information. As such it is distinguished from the use of individual books to improve skills or achieve other goals; these uses are covered in the next chapter. Research is the kind of library use that deals exclusively in the kind of information accessed by a Knowledge skill check or a bard's Lore ability. The only use for this information is the use a player makes of it. It has no other effect upon his abilities.

There are two principal objectives when conducting research. You are either trying to amass a quantity of information on a subject in order to broaden your knowledge of that subject, or you are looking for a specific answer to a specific question. As a general rule, questions involving the word 'a' belong to the first category, while questions involving the word 'the' belong to the second. So, even a question as specific as 'how can I kill a vampire?' is an instance of the first kind of query, as it does not concern any one particular vampire, but refers instead to vampires in general. However, 'where is the vampire called Azmodial buried?' or 'what was the vampire Azmodial's name before he became undead?' are examples of the second kind of query. The first kind is henceforth called a *general* query and the second kind a *specific* query.

The rewards of successful research are manifold. Specific uses will depend upon the campaign and the Games Master's degree of preparation, but in general library research can be used to:

- † Discover little-known biographical information about a person, such as his or her likes and dislikes, temperament, personal history, genealogy, strengths, weaknesses and vulnerabilities.
- † Find out about the various powers of a monster.
- † Identify a creature from a description or sighting.
- † Gain access to the floor plan of a city building, including any parts that are older than others.
- † Make a copy of a map of an area before venturing there.
- † Identify a person, item or place from its picture.
- † Reveal the history of an area in detail.
- † Discover the powers of a legendary magical item.
- † Find out the last recorded sighting of a person, item or creature.
- † Fill in the missing information necessary to make sense of a plot, conspiracy or other mystery so that the party can move on to the next stage.

## When Do Characters Conduct Research?

The short answer to this is 'not nearly often enough!' Perhaps because most games are strongly based around action rather than reasoning matters out, parties of adventurers are rarely found visiting their local library unless a scripted encounter is set there. The only character type to bother with research is usually the wizard, who is left to get on with his page-turning while everyone else goes down to the tavern.

Opportunities to research are usually dependent upon the kind of campaign being run, so it is up to the Games Master to point the characters subtly in the direction of a library when the situation calls for it. Once the players realise the benefits to be had from research, they will soon make a point of visiting libraries as often as they buy supplies.

Once a party is accustomed to using libraries, the typical points when they will hit the books are when there are no other obvious leads to follow, or when the party is about to enter a very dangerous situation. In the first instance, they are looking for information because they are unsure what to do next. This is usually because they have failed to collect information earlier in an adventure, though sometimes they are simply overlooking something that the Games Master expected to be obvious. Either way, the library is an ideal place to fill in the gaps, or at the very least to get some new ideas about where to go from here. A crafty Games Master can help the party recover a lost plotline in this way (or drop a few hints) without introducing a *deus ex machina* element to the game.

Researching so as to plan an attack, a theft, an escape or the like is an often neglected and extremely rewarding part of fantasy gaming. Players are much more willing to go in against the odds if they can use the territory to their advantage. If they have advance information, they can make plans instead of charging in and taking their chances. (Almost all players will do this if given the chance, with the possible exception of barbarians, who often like charging in.) Making a careful plan with the aid of diagrams is an absorbing and exciting way to spend part of a gaming session, particularly since there will always be a difference of opinion on the best way to go in. This advance planning is especially suited to rogues, who will often case the joint in advance and read up about the building they are planning to burgle, so that there are as few nasty surprises as possible.

## BROWSING THE SHELVES

When carrying out research for general queries, the process is fairly simple. The player must first choose which of the library's sections or subsections he wants to consult, to a maximum of one per hour of library use. He then makes an Intelligence check (DC 10) per section studied. Success means that while he is in the library, he may act

as if he has 1d4 Knowledge skill ranks on matters covered by that section. This method is referred to as ‘browsing the shelves’. It can only be used to answer general queries (not matters regarding individual people or items) and thus is best used when there are only a few questions to be answered or when time is pressing.

For example, Zu Kalao is investigating what seems to be the manifestation of an old horned god in an abandoned temple. She decides to spend the day studying History: Local, Folklore: Local and Legends: The Gods. She succeeds in her first two Intelligence checks and fails at the third. She rolls 2 and 4 for her skill ranks. Thus, while she remains in the library, she may act as if she had Knowledge skill ranks in ‘local history’ of 2 and ‘local folklore’ of 4. She may thus answer questions such as ‘Are there any local legends of horned beings?’ or ‘Who was the last person to officiate at the temple before it fell into disuse?’ Using any of these temporary skills takes half an hour per attempt. They are completely dependent upon the books being present and are not retained once the books are returned.

## Deep Research

Sometimes, a player will want to research an area that has no specific section to itself or research an aspect of a given section in particular depth. In order to do this, the player must first assemble a selection of books that bear upon the subject. He must describe his chosen subject as if it were a further subsection of an existing section (or subsection) that the library already has. So, if the library has a subsection on Siege Warfare in its Warfare section, he could specify that he is looking for Siege Warfare (ballista repair) or Siege Warfare (catapult use.) However, if the library only had a general Warfare section, he could specify Siege Warfare as his custom subsection, but not Siege Warfare (anything more specific.)

Collecting the books is carried out as follows. When doing deep research, a player may choose from as many potentially relevant sections as he or she wishes, at the Games Master’s discretion. An Intelligence check (DC 10) is needed to find the useful books in each section at all; the presence of a librarian who can help the character obviates this need. Chaotic and untidy libraries need a higher intelligence check (see Chapter 3) as their shelves are in disorder. A character who is intimately familiar with the library no longer needs to make an Intelligence check at this stage. It takes a month of daily study in the library to become intimately familiar with it; this time is halved for tiny libraries and doubled for huge ones.

Each section consulted may yield a certain number of useful books. A poor section yields 1d2-1 useful books, a general section yields 1d3-1 useful books and a specialist subsection yields 1d8-1 useful books, to a minimum of 0 in each instance. Other modifiers may apply, depending on the type of library: see Chapter 3, Libraries and Their Use. Note that a library must have a given subsection in order for a character to consult it! Browsing a section to find useful books takes 1d3 hours per section browsed.

Note that ‘useful books’ in this context does not mean ‘all books on the subject’. It only means those books that the character has managed to find, understand and make active use of. A library might contain ten books on Arcane Magic: Evocation, but a character could still fail to find anything useful *to him* in them when researching the finer points of *fireball* use. There are many reasons why this should be so. It could be that the ideal book has already been checked out, or that the necessary information is all there but is in terms too technical for the character to understand, that the books only cover material more (or less) advanced than the character seeks or that the character does not know the subject well enough to recognise a particular obscure-seeming book as relevant.

On the first trawl through the shelves when researching a given subject, a character may also make a special Search check to locate other books with bearing on the subject, with the results of the check translating into a set of bonus books. Every three points above 14 on the Search check result grants a bonus book, rounded down. So, a result of 21 grants two bonus books. This special Search check is not considered to take any extra time. It represents lucky finds that occur while the character picks over the shelves.

The total number of books in the pile the character has accumulated then becomes their number of ranks in the specialist custom knowledge skill. While a player has the books in front of them and can consult them, they are considered to have a number of ranks in a special Knowledge skill having to do with the area being researched. Accessing information with this skill takes an hour per question, whether the skill check is successful or not. A character may never take 10 or 20 on such a check.

So, if the wizard Vandegost is researching ‘Demon Armour’ and collects a pile of 7 books relating to that topic, he now has 7 ranks in a temporary Knowledge (demon armour) skill for the purpose of consulting the books. He may now make skill checks with this custom Knowledge skill, such as ascertaining the degree of natural armour possessed by a hezrou or the last known location of a set of magical demon armour.

A character who has 6 or more ranks in any Craft, Profession or Knowledge skill directly relevant to the subject he is researching receives a +2 synergy bonus to skill checks made with his custom Knowledge skill. So, if the worthy Vandegost described above happened to have 6 or more ranks in Craft (armoursmithing) he could include a +2 synergy bonus to his research checks on demon armour, as he already has some expertise on the subject.

The great advantage of this method is that a player may make a note of the books in his custom section and return on another day to reassemble it, providing he is allowed in. He may also make a book list and pass it on to another character, who may then consult the books in the same way.



## THE ART OF RESEARCH

This method is used when attempting to answer specific queries. The nature of the information sought is so precise that it is necessary to generate a custom subsection in order to have a chance of finding it. So, if the query made by the player was ‘What is the true name of the demi-lich Vastirak’, the appropriate custom subsection would be Undead (liches: names).

Research is taxing. Unless artificial stimulants such as strong coffee are used, which are at the Games Master’s discretion, it cannot be carried out for more than eight hours per day without a danger of the researcher becoming too tired to read any more. A successful Concentration check is needed to carry out any research at all beyond eight hours, with the DC beginning at 15 and increasing by 3 for every hour spent in research thereafter. If the check is failed, the character becomes fatigued (see *Core Rulebook II*) and receives a circumstance penalty of -4 to any Intelligence-based ability checks or skill checks until he has had a full night’s rest.

### Cross-Referencing

Sometimes when conducting research the possibility of cross-referencing occurs. This is what happens when new information sheds light on formerly obscure writing, or when one book provides what another leaves out and vice versa.

If information arises from research that adds to the number of sections that could be included in the research attempt, the character may broaden the search and look for useful books from the new section. If the pile is increased in size, a question asked previously may be asked again, as there is now more material.

For example, the studious monk Aran Zhang has been given the mission of finding out whatever he can about the sorcerer Morvis, who lived 500 years ago in a tower near the village of Bune. There is a rumour that Morvis somehow managed to cheat death and the party cleric is worried he might have become a lich or worse. Having looked up an old adventuring associate who owes him a favour, Aran has managed to gain access to a Wizardly library (no modifiers) and begins his deep research, defining his subject as ‘Biographies: Sorcerers: Morvis of Bune’. The wizard who owns the library is not present to act as librarian, so Aran will have to make Intelligence checks to find useful books in the various sections.

To start with, he attempts to draw useful books from the Biography: Sorcerers section and from the History: Local Region section, as these seem the most obvious sections to use. (Morvis lived only five centuries ago, so Aran Zhang does not need access to Ancient History texts.) The Games Master rules that each of these sections is directly relevant. Aran makes both Intelligence checks easily and gains 2-7 books from each specialist subsection; he rolls a total of 9 books, giving him 9 skill ranks in his custom skill. It takes him 1d3 hours per section to assemble his pile of reference books. He rolls a total of three hours. As this is his first

foray into the subject, he may make a one-off Search check to locate bonus books without adding to the time taken. Unfortunately, he does not roll well enough to find any bonus books and may not make this Search check again while researching Morvis.

Retreating to a nearby desk with his pile of nine books and a glass of water, Aran asks the question ‘How did Morvis die?’ The Games Master rules that this is a DC 20 question and Aran rolls. He fails to score highly enough to get the answer and curses his luck. He has now spent four hours in study.

Aran’s next question is ‘Was Morvis said to possess any unusual magical items?’ Again, the Games Master rules that this is a DC 20 question. Aran succeeds in his skill check and learns that Morvis was reputed to possess a unique silver rod inset with pearls, said to be imbued with magical powers. It takes him an hour to find this out: there are now five hours on the clock.

Struck by inspiration, Aran heads over to the Magical Items (rods) subsection of the library and tries to find more useful books here. Perhaps there is mention of the rod of Morvis and thus of Morvis himself amongst these books. He makes his Intelligence check and may now add a further 0-7 books to his pile. He rolls and adds another 3 useful books to his collection, bringing his Morvis research skill ranks up to 12 and adding another hour to his research time. So far, he has been poring over the books for six hours.

Now that he has some new material, he may ask his earlier question – ‘How did Morvis die?’ – a second time. This time he rolls successfully, learning that Morvis was buried when his tower collapsed around him. Another hour is added to his total study time; Aran has been hard at work for seven hours.

Inspired by his success in cross-referencing, Aran decides to check whether there is any mention of Morvis’ tower in any of the books dealing with architecture. Unfortunately, the Wizardly library only has a General Architecture section without any specialist subsections, as wizards are not generally interested in the mundane arts of construction, despite their tendency to live in high towers. Aran makes his Intelligence check, so if there are any useful books there he will find them. Sadly, he rolls a total quantity of 0 useful books and still uses up 2 hours in the fruitless search. Evidently the tower of Morvis was not notable enough to warrant mention in the small collection of architectural books owned by Aran’s wizardly friend.

Aran has now been working for nine hours and the letters are starting to swim about on the page. If Aran continues to work, he will have to start making Concentration checks or become fatigued. Though he has found out relatively little new information about Morvis, he has assembled an impressive collection of books, all of which have *some* information about that sorcerer from their various different

perspectives. Aran decides to call it a day and head to the dojo, where he clears his head with some sparring.

## Setting the Difficulty of Queries

For most queries, the Games Master should refer to the table used when determining the efficiency of bardic lore in *Core Rulebook II*. Other example queries are given here.

**DC 10:** Find out the typical habitat or preferred character class of a monster you already know about, e.g. a medusa: find a picture of a named individual or item for which you already have a verbal description: find an illustration of a local building.

**DC 15:** Identify the extraordinary abilities, typical hit dice and degree of natural armour of a named type of creature: find out when and where a named individual lived: find out when and where a given item was known to exist: find out the floor plan of a local public building: find an illustration of a local private building.

**DC 20:** Find out general details about a single event in a named individual's life or an aspect of his life, such as his marriage, his death, his religion or what gave him a distinctive scar: find out similar events in the career of an item, such as its circumstances of manufacture, recorded owners and last known resting place: discover the supernatural and spell-like abilities of a named type of creature, its degree of damage reduction and its spell resistance.

**DC 25:** Uncover all pertinent information about a named type of monster, including the names and details of individual members of the species: give a single name to an unnamed long-lived creature that may have had many names, such as a dragon or an elf: find out whether a character who was alive years ago is still alive now: find out the floor plan of a local private building.

**DC 30:** Find out the floor plan of a local private building that has not changed hands in 100 years. Discover the name by which a known historical person, place or item is now known, e.g. 'What is the ancient red dragon known in the past as Basthazzai now calling himself?' Give a name to a hitherto unnamed historical figure or item, e.g. 'Who was the assassin who killed Castria's mother?' 'Who was the sorcerer referred to in the Legend of Thrane?' or 'What was the name of the artefact that caused the submergence of Shantam-Kah?' Draw a hitherto undiscovered identity between two named individuals, e.g. 'Are Lyssa Semneir and the Princess of Jahari the same person?'

This may only be done if the Games Master rules that the information is recorded *somewhere* in the library's archives. It will not usually work in the case of 'famous mysteries', when the lack of a definite answer to a riddle is a matter for public speculation, such as the identity of a famous serial murderer.

### A Note on History Books

When consulting the various sections, note that History books having to do with the history of a practice or discipline, such as military history, are not found in the History section but are considered to be a part of the section relating to the practice. So, accounts of famous battles of times past would be found in Warfare (history of), rather than History (warfare). However, the history of a country would be found in History (that country).

Texts from the standard history section cover time periods up to two thousand years ago. Inquiries probing any further back than that must consult the Ancient History section, if the library has one.

## RESEARCHING THE MONSTROUS

There are certain pitfalls associated with conducting research on monsters and their kind that are not found in any other type of investigation. Those writers who have recorded descriptions and painted pictures of monsters were rarely doing so while the monster was standing there in front of them. In most cases, the account of the writer's encounter with the monster was written after some intervening time had passed. Writers are also prone to exaggerate, particularly when they are telling a story in such a way as to make themselves appear heroic or to frighten the reader. Studious wizards and experts who have dissected the creature's corpse and recorded their findings usually give more objective accounts of monsters, though this too can be distorted as it is difficult to learn much about a monster's abilities when it is dead.

The net effect of this distortion is that accounts of monsters are very rarely entirely accurate. Even the most thorough of bestiaries is liable to contain an error or two. It may have seemed to the writer of a report that a creature was twenty feet high and had four heads while it was chasing him, whereas it was really only ten feet high and had two heads; as far as he is concerned, the former description is correct, because it is how he remembers it.

In practice, any fact discovered about a monster has a straight 40% chance to be exaggerated significantly. For instance, the lethality of a creature's poison will be deemed to be greater than it is, a petrifying gaze will be said to be a death-inducing gaze and regeneration will be called indestructibility. If the researcher has been able to consult a subsection dealing with the appropriate monster type, such as Zoology: Magical Beasts, the chance of misrepresentation drops to 20%. A character may make a Wisdom check at DC 15 to notice the exaggeration but may not ascertain the true facts from this perception. He or she only knows that the writer or artist has let his imagination run away with him a little.



### Spellbooks in Libraries

Spellbooks proper are only found in Wizardly libraries. The number of spellbooks found and the levels of spell contained therein must be determined by the Games Master, as spells are more valuable than most treasures to a wizard. It is usually only by copying across new spells from existing spellbooks or scrolls that a wizard can broaden the number of spells available to him. The section below gives a method whereby he may take the time to research the spell himself if no spellbook or scroll is available. Most wizards understandably prefer to take the faster route of copying a completed spell.

As a rule of thumb, spells become significantly more rare after third level. Only a very few libraries will contain ninth level spells in their spellbooks and they will guard them as if they were weapons of mass destruction - as, in the right hands, they are.

### Paperback Spellbooks

Wizards may learn their spells from selections of specially written spellbooks, produced by knowledgeable wizards in order to be sold for profit. As they are intended for beginners, they are written in a readily decipherable script and in a style that is easy to follow. A wizard attempting to read the spellbook without *read magic* or copy out its contents receives a +2 circumstance bonus to his Spellcraft check in each instance.

The kind of spell found in these books is often a weaker version than that discovered by individual research or copied from a standard spellbook or scroll. The DC to resist the spell's effects is accordingly reduced by 2, where applicable; if the spell does not have a DC, its duration is halved. A wizard who has learned a substandard version of a spell in this way may learn the full version over the top of it, receiving a +4 circumstance bonus to his Spellcraft checks when he attempts to read or understand the full version of the spell.

## RESEARCHING UNKNOWN SPELLS

In the standard rules for level advancement, a wizard automatically gains access to a number of new spells every time he advances in level, these spells being the fruit of his own personal research, but must copy out any other spells from a scroll or a fellow wizard's spellbook. This limits the wizard to those spells he can get his hands on. Visiting libraries and consulting their spellbooks is one way to broaden your repertoire, if the librarian will allow you to copy the desired spells out. Friendly magical orders will often do this for low-level wizards with good references but the more potent the spell, the more hesitant they will be to do so. Spellbooks containing the highest-level spells are often kept in a private room concealed with the highest mundane security and cloaking magic.

As an alternative, a wizard may attempt to come up with a desired spell himself, consulting volumes on spell theory and (if possible) the specific school of magic to which the desired spell belongs. If he had enough time and was sufficiently intelligent, he could conceivably fill an entire spellbook with standard spells that he had reverse-engineered from their descriptions in the grimoires.

In order to research a spell from scratch, a wizard must conduct deep research (see above) on the spell. Before he can even start, he must have a clear understanding of what the spell is supposed to do and how it is supposed to work. This requires a Spellcraft check (DC 10 + level of the spell). If the intended spell is within the wizard's school of specialisation, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus on this check. Failure means that the wizard does not have the first clue where to start and may not gain the spell any other way than by copying it from another source.

Deep research begins after the Spellcraft check is successfully made and the wizard has a rough design for the spell in his head. For research purposes, he must define the spell as Arcane Magic (school) (spell title). Permissible subsections that may be consulted here are Spell Theory and the subsection relating to the spell's school. Having assembled his pile of books by the standard method, he must make three consecutive custom Knowledge skill checks at DC 12 plus the spell's level with each attempt taking a week. If the spell is within his school of specialisation, he receives a +1 circumstance bonus to these checks. Each week of research uses up 100 gp in components.

A wizard may not research a spell simply by sitting in silent study, turning pages and making notes. Every week on which he makes a research attempt includes at least one day of magical tests and trials. To carry these out properly, he needs a safe space in which to mix reagents, burn incense, experiment with hand gestures and recite incantations. Most wizardly libraries have an absolute rule forbidding any visiting or resident student to conduct magical tests within the library itself, so the researcher must perforce find a nearby area to carry out his tests, such as a hired room or a cellar. Many wizardly libraries are part of larger buildings, one room of which is designed purely for the purpose of magical testing. If a wizard cannot take the relevant books with him when he is performing his practical magical work, his daily research rolls suffer a -2 circumstance penalty.

For example, Landro the Lean has his heart set on learning *lightning bolt* but has not managed to find it written in scroll or spell form anywhere. He turns to his local wizardly library. He makes his initial Spellcraft check, so he does at least have a notion of how a *lightning bolt* spell might be engineered. Beginning his deep research, he draws 4 useful books from the Spell Theory section and 2 from the Arcane Magic: Evocation section. He is allowed his one-off Search check and adds a single useful book to the pile, for a total of 7 temporary skill ranks. Landro now

has to make three consecutive checks against a DC of 15. The day on which he makes his third successful check in a row, he has discovered *lightning bolt* and may copy it into his spellbook from his research notes by the usual method. He may also prepare the spell directly from these research notes.

Wizards who are in a hurry may opt to ‘cut corners’ in their spell research. When they come to a difficult calculation or a part of the spell they are not sure about, they make an educated guess and carry on instead of troubling to do the work properly. A wizard may shave up to six whole days off his weekly research, speeding up the process by a massive degree. To do so does not increase the chance of a mishap occurring (see below) but it does make mishaps more severe when they do occur. If a player does decide to cut corners, the Games Master should make his research rolls for him.

These rules add to and do not supplant those in *Core Rulebook II* for researching entirely new spells. However, they assume that ‘standard’ spells in current use are much easier to research than a spell that has never been seen before. Researching a standard spell from scratch is less costly than developing a whole new one, though it can sometimes take longer.

## MAGICAL RESEARCH MISHAPS

Magical research does not always go smoothly. Part of the reason for the insistence on magical testing areas being located in a separate part of the building from the library is that explosions, shock waves and accidental summonings sometimes occur, as imperfect formulas buckle under the strain of thaumaturgic currents and misapplied material components burst into multicoloured flame.

### Research Mishaps

d100 Roll	Mishap
01-30	Nothing hurt but pride. The wizard may resume his studies with no more of a handicap than singed hair and a nasty smell of creosote and figs.
31-40	Serious setback. An error creeps into the wizard’s calculations and he does not notice. The DC to discover the spell is raised by 1 plus one for every day of corner-cutting. The wizard also suffers 1d6 points of temporary Intelligence damage, which may be recovered after a full night’s sleep.
41-70	Something fizzes when it ought to have steamed, or vice versa. There is a bright flash and a violent explosion, followed by a sound like falling tinsel and distant sighing. The wizard suffers 1d8 points of damage, plus a further 1d8 for every day of corner-cutting.
71-90	A Thing is accidentally called up that ought not to have been. The region is subjected to a <i>monster summoning</i> spell of a level equivalent to 1 plus one for every day of corner-cutting. The entity is summoned as if by a 15 <sup>th</sup> level caster and attacks the researcher immediately.
91-00	Success! ... or not. If the wizard needed only one more successful check to learn the spell, apply this result; otherwise, roll again. The wizard is now convinced he has researched the spell successfully and may prepare it for use. However, the first time it is used, roll on this table again and apply the effects. If a 31-40 result is rolled, apply only the temporary Intelligence damage effect.

If at any point during research the wizard rolls a 1 in his skill check, he has suffered a mishap. The Games Master should either choose the result to suit the circumstances or roll upon the following table.

### Duplicating Metamagic Feats

Spells are usually prepared in a standard, unvarying form, with such variables as damage and duration deriving from the caster’s experience level. Those advanced enough in their studies may adjust these variables using metamagic feats, such as Empower Spell and Maximise Spell. Those who do not have these feats have no way to influence the variables of their spells.

However, if a character can find the necessary technical papers, he may work from them and incorporate their secrets while preparing a spell, with the result that the spell is enhanced as if by a metamagic feat. In game terms, a character with access to the proper books may use the knowledge therein to attempt to prepare a spell as if a metamagic feat had been used. Any of the Empower, Enlarge, Extend, Heighten, Maximise, Quicken, Silent or Still Spell feats may be duplicated. The metamagic effects only apply to the spell once. After it has been cast, the character may not prepare it this way again without returning to the library and repeating the preparation process.

In order to duplicate a metamagic feat effect when preparing a spell, the character must first look for useful books as if he were conducting deep research. Allowable sections are Spell Theory and the school of magic to which the spell to be augmented belongs. He must next make a Spellcraft check with a DC of 20 plus the spell’s level, adding the number of useful books found to the check result as a circumstance bonus. All the usual modifiers apply to spells prepared in this way, including



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the requirement of metamagic spells to occupy higher level spell slots than usual. A failed check means that the spell is not prepared at all. Every metamagic effect increases the preparation time of the wizard's spells by one hour. He is limited to a number of library-derived metamagic effects equal to his Intelligence modifier. Multiple spell effects may be applied to a single spell, but for the purpose of the Spellcraft check the spell's level is deemed to be that which it would be prepared as after each effect has been applied.

For instance, the elven wizard Menolly has several levels in rogue and is looking for a suitable spell to use when she does not have a weapon to sneak attack with. She thus attempts to prepare *magic missile* as a maximised, silent spell. She consults her library's shelves (as she is intimately familiar with it, she does not need to make an Intelligence check) looking for useful books on Spell Theory and Transmutation and discovers five such books. She now needs to make one Spellcraft check to apply the Silent Spell metamagic effect; this will be at a DC of 21. If successful, she may then go on to apply the Maximised Spell effect, this time at a DC of 22, since the spell now counts as a 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell. Should the second attempt also be successful, the maximised silent *magic missile* spell is prepared as a 5<sup>th</sup> level spell, adding 2 hours to Menolly's spell preparation time for that day.

Although it is not a metamagic feat, a Spell Penetration attribute may be added to spells prepared

in this way. Each +2 bonus added to the caster's level check when the spell is cast for purposes of penetrating spell resistance adds 1 to the spell's effective level for preparation purposes. The maximum bonus that may be achieved in this way is +8. So, a *flame arrow* spell prepared with +6 Spell Penetration is prepared as a 7<sup>th</sup> level spell. All spell penetration attributes are added at once and do not require separate Spellcraft checks.



# THE REWARDS OF STUDY

So far, we have looked at libraries as places to answer questions of varying degrees of difficulty. There are other applications of a library by which book learning can be put to more practical use. Players can study individual books to find new ways to apply the skills they already know, becoming more efficient and learning from the experiences of fellow practitioners in their field.

Unlike research, which involves multiple books being consulted at once, study only involves a single book. This usually has to be read in detail and its contents thoroughly assimilated before the player can gain any benefits. By studying a suitable book, a fighter can hone his combat techniques, a rogue can learn the finer arts of stealth and a cleric can arrive at a deeper understanding of the relationship he has with his deity. None of these benefits are magical in nature; all derive purely from the experience and wisdom of other people. Though books can be instructive and helpful, they are no substitute for first-hand experience gained in the field.

Books that can be used in study are of two kinds: manuals and reference books. Manuals are 'how-to' books, giving practical instruction and exercises to follow. The benefits a character gains from them can persist after the course of instruction has been finished and the book given back or passed on. Although the book is necessary while the character is practicing, the character does not need to have the book to hand to gain the benefit. An example would be a manual of conjuring tricks, which a bard would read from as he practiced the exercises but would not refer to when performing.

Reference books are compendia of useful information intended for consultation while the character is engaged upon the task. The character will find such books less and less useful as he grows in experience, since a major part of acquiring experience involves learning by heart the kind of information one might find in a reference book. An example would be a reference book of helpful herbs, intended for use by a healer. A beginning healer would find the diagrams extremely useful, as she would not yet know all useful plants by sight, whereas an experienced healer could probably tell a beneficial plant from a baneful one at a glance.

Books intended for study are graded as follows: Average, Good, Excellent and Definitive Work. The grade of a book relates both to its monetary value and the circumstance bonus gained from studying or referring to it, though what that bonus applies to will depend on the book and how it is used.

None of the books addressed here are at all magical. They may be about magic, or deal with other arcane topics, but the books themselves are perfectly mundane, even the most forbidding demonological texts. It is therefore impossible to locate a book of this kind with a detect magic spell. Books that have a magical aspect to them and are picked up by detect magic, such as spellbooks or wondrous items like the Tome of Torment, are dealt with in the next chapter.

## FINDING A GOOD BOOK

Whether a player is looking for manuals or reference books, the initial step is the same – you need to find a good one! Books, like weapons, armour or any other staple of adventuring life, are not all created equal. Some are well written, some badly; some are compendious, others sparse; some contain useful information, others are packed with apocrypha and wild inaccuracies.

To begin the hunt for a good book, a character must visit a library or a store that sells books, if he is fortunate enough to have such an outlet in his city. The search will not be difficult if there is a librarian or shop assistant on hand to help him find a suitable book. The stock held by a bookstore is up to the Games Master to determine. Bear in mind the high prices of the better books.

A library with a General section on any one subject automatically has 1d12 Average and 1d4 Good books on that subject; if it has any subsections, it will also contain one Excellent book and has a cumulative 10% chance per subsection of having the appropriate definitive work for each one. So, a Wizardly library with 3 subsections on Craft (alchemy) will yield Average, Good and Excellent Alchemy books, will have a 30% chance of having a copy of the *Ars Alchimia* of Alcofribias Augustus Marcanis and will also have a 30% chance of having the *Splendid Combustibles* of Vorn Kendish. For purposes of this check, a subsection in (brackets) counts as one subsection.

Note that the number of copies of each grade of book in any one library is finite. If one character is using a library's copy of the *Ars Alchimia*, another character may not consult it at the same time; if it is stolen, the library may not spontaneously generate another one!

A librarian who is well inclined towards a character can point out to him where the various Good and Excellent titles are to be found. Libraries will not usually lend out definitive works, even if they possess them. Their scarcity and value means that access to them is strictly controlled.

If there is no librarian, the character will have to search for himself. To find the best book available, he must make a Search check against DC 10. If he fails, he finds only Average books. Success finds a Good book, success by 5 or more finds an Excellent book if there is one and success by 10 or more finds a definitive work if there is one. Since the check is made in order to recognise a work



## THE REWARDS OF STUDY

of quality as much as to find an item among many similar items, the player gains a +2 synergy bonus if he has 2 or more ranks in a relevant skill or possesses a relevant feat. For example, a ranger searching for a quality manual of advanced horsemanship gains a +2 synergy bonus to his Search check if he has more than 2 ranks in Ride, as his knowledge of the subject helps him to tell a good book from a mediocre one. A character with 4 or more ranks in Appraise also receives a +1 synergy bonus to such a Search check, as he has an eye for quality wherever it may be found.

Average books confer a circumstance bonus of +1, Good books a circumstance bonus of +2 and Excellent books a circumstance bonus of +3. What the bonus is applied to will depend on whether the book is a manual or a reference book and what the subject matter is. Definitive works (a title only ever applied to reference books, not manuals) function as Excellent books, with additional benefits sometimes listed individually by book. Even if a definitive work is not listed as having additional benefits, its monetary value is considerable – see below.

Neither benefits derived from manuals nor reference books may be used in conjunction with any other kind of book use. For example, a character who has a manual-derived bonus to his Spellcraft skill checks cannot apply that bonus to spell research conducted in a library.

### The Price of Manuals, Reference Books and Definitive Works

The price of books varies widely, as they are frequently sold several times over in their useful life. A second-hand book may be sold in a beginning colony for twice as much as it cost new in a city, reflecting the relative scarcity of literary material in each environment. As a rule of thumb, Average books cost 5 gp, Good books 10 gp and Excellent books 20 gp. Definitive Works cost 100 gp per volume, so a complete copy of the *Ars Alchimia* would cost 1000 gp. A special limited edition of a definitive work, such as the clockwork cover edition of Tinkerbink's *Projects*, is worth four times the standard amount.

It is necessary to note that books are not viewed as useful things everywhere in the world. The market must exist first before the players can sell any definitive editions they may happen to possess. A rural innkeeper is not going to pay anything like the asking price for a definitive edition, no matter how pretty it is, because it is less use to him than a good oak table. However, a private collector or member of the nobility might even be prepared to pay more than the standard price, if the right contacts were made and the right strings pulled.

### Learning From a Manual

In order to assimilate the contents of a manual, a character must read it from cover to cover and carry out any prescribed exercises, which may require practice room. This takes at least two hours a day. To benefit from an Average

or Good manual, a character must have an Intelligence ability score of at least 8; to benefit from an Excellent book, they must have an Intelligence score of at least 10. Manuals cannot have the dignity of being a Definitive Work.

Reading a manual thoroughly takes 1d4 weeks, after which the character must make a Wisdom check at DC 15 in order to assimilate the information. Failure is not a disaster. The character may keep on studying the manual, making a new Wisdom check each week, until he either assimilates the information or gives up. Once the information is assimilated, the character only has to practice for two hours a week; however, if he neglects to do this, he loses the benefits and must start over.

Multiple manuals may be used but a character may only benefit from one manual at a time (beyond the first) per point of Intelligence modifier and must put in the two hours' study time for each manual every day. At any time, he may abandon the use of one manual, losing all associated benefits, and take up another.

Most manuals give training in physical skills. They are a poor substitute for a teacher, who can examine the student's progress and advise him on how to improve his performance, but they are better than nothing when there is no teacher available. A character learning from a manual is effectively 'teaching himself' to do something. As their lessons represent a form of halfway stage between one experience level and the next in which a character still has to think about what he is doing and cannot yet use his abilities as easily as breathing, drawing upon abilities learned from a manual means the character must slow down and think about what he is doing.

To apply the bonus derived from using a manual, a character must make a Concentration check as a free action before attempting the relevant action. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The DC for the check is ordinarily 10 plus the intended bonus. (If the use of the manual is for a cross-class skill, the DC of the check is raised by 3.) If the check is failed, the character automatically fails at the task; if he fails by 10 or more, he suffers a -2 circumstance penalty on any other checks and saving throws that round owing to his being distracted by his struggle to recall his training. He may attempt the task again if appropriate but may not attempt to apply the manual's bonus twice to any one task.

Under certain circumstances, the Games Master should make the Concentration check on the player's behalf, as the player may believe he is recalling his training properly when he has in fact failed the check. For example, the sorcerer Severin is trying to disable a mechanical contraption having studied *The Compleat Artificer* in his spare time. As he is not going to know whether the task is beyond his skills or not until he attempts it, the Games Master makes the Concentration check for him. If he fails by less than 5, he will not realise he has failed. If he fails by more than

5, he knows his manual-derived abilities are not up to the task and will therefore not attempt it in the first place. It is a major risk of manual study that the character cannot always judge his own degree of competence.

The above only applies to manual-derived skills or abilities used in situations when the character has time to reflect on his actions. In a combat or similar situation, the character must commit himself to an action and may not change his mind, irrespective of the results of the Concentration check.

Having the manual present does not help the character very much, as he is not trying to remember what the manual says but rather how to apply it properly in action; nonetheless, he gains a +1 circumstance bonus if he can consult his manual while using the skill or ability. Obviously, the circumstances must allow this; there is no way to fight off a horde of goblins with an axe in one hand and a copy of Elementary Axemanship in the other.

Abilities learned from a manual are ‘in the head’ rather than ‘in the guts’. They have been learned but can be forgotten just as easily. Though they may give a character a temporary advantage, they cannot substitute for proper training. They are always erased when a new level of experience is gained. This equates to the character having either turned his mere ‘book learning’ into robust competence (if his selection of skills and feats is similar to his manual training) or giving up his other partial studies to concentrate on the serious business of advancement in his chosen class. The training undergone during level advance is sufficiently intense and comprehensive to override any part-time study, such as a character might have gained from a manual.

Benefits gained from the use of a manual and lost when the character advances in level may never be regained, even if the character tries reading from a higher grade of manual. If the character wants to keep his benefits or duplicate them, he should use skill points and feat slots appropriately.

To make for a more realistic use of manuals, the Games Master may use the following optional rule. A character who has used a manual to increase his effective ranks in a skill could reasonably be obliged to invest the skill points gained when he advances in level in that skill, the argument being that he has already undertaken partial training in that skill and the investment of skill points to make the increase in ranks permanent represents the completion of that training. Similarly, a wizard who has used a manual to gain partial proficiency with a longsword must give this up altogether when he advances a level in wizard, however, if he seriously wishes to keep the ability, he can use his recent study as a justification for advancing a level as a fighter instead, or using up a feat slot (if he has one coming) to gain Martial Weapon Proficiency. Use of this rule is strongly advised, as there is not a great deal of sense in a character learning a skill from a manual then suddenly

advancing in a totally different skill when he goes up a level; however, some players resent any restriction on their use of skill points or feat slots, so the Games Master may disregard this rule if he wishes.

## WHAT MANUALS CAN AND CANNOT DO

When using a manual to improve skills or negate a ‘trained only’ restriction, the character may only improve class or cross-class skills and class features. A manual may never be used to learn a skill exclusive to a class in which the character has no levels, nor may it be used to gain an ability proper to a class the character does not have, such as Sneak Attack for a character who has only Paladin levels.

Manuals cannot improve any Craft, Profession or Knowledge skills (except where stated) or grant untrained use thereof. These skills require much broader training than a manual can offer.

Successful study and assimilation of a manual can produce the following results:

### Partial Proficiency

A character may gain partial proficiency in a weapon with which he is not proficient. A single weapon must be selected and an appropriate book found. The Concentration check must be made before the first attack in any combat in which the weapon is used but it need not be made afresh before each subsequent attack. Note that the character must commit himself to the attack before he knows the results of the Concentration check and cannot tell in advance whether his weapon skills are up to standard for that battle or not.

### Untrained Use of ‘Trained Only’ Skills

Manuals are mostly written to improve existing abilities and skills; thus, many of them have titles like Play Better Skullball or Lethbridge’s Advanced Pickpocketing Techniques. Some titles are however written for the complete beginner, such as Staff Combat in Seven Days or Tumbling for Dummies. By assimilating a manual as described above and succeeding at the appropriate Concentration check, a character with no training in a ‘trained only’ skill may attempt to use that skill as if it were allowed to be used untrained. In this case, the manual effectively bridges the gap between the skill being bewilderingly incomprehensible and it being familiar, though it bestows no actual ranks. It amounts to the very first stages of ‘training’.

This is the only benefit that an untrained character can derive from a manual on any subject. No other listed benefits apply. The manual used can only ever be of Average or Good quality, as manuals of higher quality than this are simply beyond the character’s comprehension.



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For example, referring to the table below, we see that a Good manual of Lockpicking confers a circumstance bonus of +2 on uses of the Open Lock skill. Tally the rogue has 3 ranks in Open Lock, so she can use the manual to gain the circumstance bonus to her Open Lock checks; Barnabas the monk has no ranks in Open Lock at all, so he can only use the manual to gain the benefit of attempting to use the skill untrained and does not benefit from any circumstance bonus.

A character may use this method to gain a partial ability to speak and read a language that he does not yet know. He is limited to simple expressions, such as 'I am hungry', 'which is the best way to the tavern' and 'please do not eat my comrade'. As usual, he has to make a Concentration check to use his manual-derived ability. If he fails by 5 or more, he may have said something unintentionally offensive or absurd, at the Games Master's discretion.

### Improvement of Existing Abilities and Skills

Recall of a manual's training may add to a circumstance bonus to a character's attack rolls, saving throws or skill checks. The allowed bonuses are listed in the table below. As stated before, average books confer a circumstance bonus of +1, Good books a circumstance bonus of +2 and Excellent books a circumstance bonus of +3.

Advanced books are not suitable for relative beginners and an expert has no use for average titles. To reflect this, no character may gain a bonus from a manual if the bonus is higher than his current skill rank (or whatever rating is appropriate as per the manual's description, such as base attack bonus.) Similarly, the bonus from a manual plus a given number of skill ranks (or other rating) may not exceed a given total listed in the manual description. For example, the limit on manuals of Lockpicking is 10, so a character with 8 ranks in Open Lock may only ever gain a bonus of +2 from a manual, whereas a character with 10 ranks in Open Lock may no longer gain any such bonus. By that stage of expertise, characters should be writing manuals, not reading them.

## USING A REFERENCE BOOK

Unlike manuals, which can help with skills the character does not even possess, reference books can only be used in conjunction with a skill or ability the character already has. Reference books store information that the average character cannot be expected to carry around in his head all the time. They are consulted when a skill or ability is used, so that the character may have as much information at his disposal as possible and reduce the amount of guesswork necessary. Like thieves' tools or a healer's kit, they add a circumstance bonus to the skill or ability check. No more than one reference book may be used in conjunction with any one check.

To use a reference book, the character must of course be able to understand it. It is possible to work with another person who understands the language the book is written in even if you do not, but they will have to make an Intelligence check (DC 10 +1 per point of bonus sought) to translate the book properly for you. If the book is in technical language (see below) and the translator does not have the appropriate skill, they suffer a -4 circumstance penalty on their Intelligence ability check.

Reference books are supposed to be used when the character has time to spare, so that he can look up relevant entries and read them at his leisure. If a character is attempting to use a reference book in a tense situation, such as in an attempt to discover the true name of a demon whilst it is battering down the door to the library, he must make a Concentration check at DC 15 every round as a free action or fail to benefit from the reference book.

The better the book, the more likely it is to be applicable to a given situation. As a result, the most comprehensive reference books tend to be enormous. Tomes, multiple folios and works divided into many volumes are common. Consider an encyclopaedia as an example. Almost every conceivable subject is addressed therein, with the whole collection being about as portable as a sack full of house bricks.

Reference books are available for the following skills: Craft (alchemy), Decipher Script, Disable Device, Disguise, Forgery, Heal, Open Lock, Speak Language and Spellcraft. They are also available for all Craft, Profession and Knowledge skills, which is in fact where they are most commonly used. Some specialist reference books deal with magical item creation; these have their own section following immediately after this one.

Speak Language reference books are phrasebooks or dictionaries, such as an Elven-Common dictionary. They allow the character an Intelligence check at DC 15 to decipher written phrases in a foreign language, with a check at DC 20 to decipher heard phrases. The book's associated circumstance bonus is added to this check.

Reference books may be used in association with manuals but only if the character has ranks in the relevant skill. Simply having the Untrained Use ability from a manual is not enough. The character does not gain any bonus from referring to the manual if he has it with him, as the reference book will already contain all necessary information. Moreover, the total bonus derived from manuals and reference books towards any given skill check can never exceed +5.

**Available Manuals**

Section	Subject	Untrained Effect	Bonus Applied To	Maximum Rating
Alchemy	-	Untrained Use	Craft (alchemy) skill checks	10
Arcane Magic	Spellcraft	Untrained Use	Spellcraft skill checks	10
Combat	Advanced Weapon Techniques	Partial Proficiency (Any Martial weapon)	Attack rolls with one specific weapon	6
Combat	Unarmed Fighting	-	Unarmed Attack rolls and Grapple checks	5
Combat	Monkish Combat	-	Unarmed Attack rolls and Grapple checks	10
Crime	Lockpicking*	Untrained Use	Open Lock checks	10
Crime	Stealth*	Untrained Use	Move Silently checks	6
Crime	Striking Unseen*	-	Attack rolls when carrying out a sneak attack	5
Crime	Assassination Techniques*	-	Level of assassin when calculating DC of the Fortitude saving throw to resist assassin's death attack	8
Languages	Speaking and Writing Languages	Partial Competence (see above)	-	-
Medicine	First Aid	-	Heal checks	6
Music	Playing Musical Instruments	-	Perform checks when using instrument	8
Nature	Calming Animals	-	Animal Empathy skill checks	6
Society	Winning Friends and Influencing People	-	Diplomacy skill checks	10
Sports & Games	Acrobatics	Untrained use	Tumble skill checks	6
Sports & Games	Athletics	-	Fortitude saving throws	5
Survival	Wilderness Survival	-	Wilderness Lore skill checks	10
Transport (Land)	Horsemanship	-	Ride skill checks	5
Weapons	Use of Unusual Weapons	Partial Proficiency (Any Exotic Weapon)	Attack rolls made with one specific exotic weapon	5

\*Books on this subject are illegal in most lawful societies.



## Known Definitive Works and Their Benefits

What follows is a listing of books considered to be masterpieces by those in the know. Details are given for each one in its original language and format; definitive works translated into other languages or produced in condensed versions are merely Excellent in quality. As well as additional benefits as listed each title bestows a +3 circumstance bonus on appropriate skill checks when used as a reference book.

The Games Master is free to create new definitive works or to change the descriptions of those presented here. They are intended mainly to give extra flavour to the game and give an example of the kind of benefit a definitive work is likely to provide. The section in brackets indicates which skill checks may benefit from a circumstance bonus when the book is consulted. A specific entry, such as Craft (alchemy), means the book's bonus only applies to uses of the skill having to do with that subject, such as the use of the Craft (alchemy) skill to identify a poison. Some definitive works are so comprehensive that they confer a bonus to more than one skill check.

### *Ars Alchimia by Alcofribias Augustus Marcanis* (Craft (alchemy), Heal)

This daunting ten-volume tome is written in flowing elven script. It is and has been for seven hundred years the most complete work available on the arts of alchemy. Each page is covered with closely written instructions, detailing the legendary properties of stones, minerals and liquids culled from various historical sources and illustrations of the various compounds at each stage of preparation. Guidelines are given for distilling out the necessary chemicals from the various raw ingredients, showing how to sublimate, condense and crystallise as appropriate. There are rumours that Marcanis managed to discover the fabled Philosopher's Stone, whereby base metals could be turned to gold and lost vitality restored and coded instructions for making this fabled item into the book somehow. At the Games Master's discretion, these rumours might be true.

An alchemist privileged enough to have access to the *Ars Alchimia* may produce exceptionally potent chemical blends. His acids inflict 1d8+2 points of damage instead of the usual 1d6, his alchemist's fire burns for an additional round before going out and his tanglefoot bags' contents stay gooey for 20 minutes before becoming brittle.

The work also contains lengthy accounts of the purgative, antiseptic and anaesthetic properties of various chemicals. This has made it a prized work among healers, who can use it as a reference book for their own arts as well as those of the alchemist.

### *Splendid Combustibles by Vorn Kendish* (Craft (alchemy), Craft (explosives))

A single tome written in the Common tongue by a retired cleric who had taken to firework manufacture to enliven his evenings, this comprehensive alchemical work concentrates on compounds that explode or burn. Alchemist's fire prepared in accordance with Kendish's recipe costs twice as much as the usual article but burns with unusual ferocity, inflicting 3d6 points of damage in the first round and 2d6 in the second. Kendish also gives instructions for preparing non-magical explosives that function as either application of a pyrotechnics spell as cast by a 10<sup>th</sup> level caster and smokesticks that function as a stinking cloud spell cast at the same level. These are each DC 25 items to make and require 900 gp worth of ingredients.

### *Venoms and Toxins of the Known World by 'A Gentleman'* (Craft (alchemy))

A three-volume set greatly desired by those professional ladies and gentlemen who prefer to wear unobtrusive colours and who go about their business with no more noise or fuss than cats do, this impressive collection details all manner of noxious substances, from the mild irritants that cause a nettle's sting to itch and burn to the lethal brews made from spider glands by the Drow. One could hope for no better reference work when identifying poisons, nor when preparing them for use. The owner of this dark masterpiece may use other sympathetic substances as carriers when bottling poisons, enabling him to dilute a dose once without reducing its efficiency. In practical terms, he may turn one dose of poison into two equally efficient doses, though these may not be diluted further. This enables him to derive maximum use from rare and expensive poisons.

This book is illegal in the same sense that the tarrasque is a bit big. Any government that is either good, lawful or both will have very severe penalties for owning, distributing or reproducing it. Only the royal library itself (and anyone licensed by the ruling power) is allowed to possess a copy, in the interests of state security. Despite this prohibition, it is still possible to find a copy outside the confines of assassins' guilds; one just has to be willing to pay the asking price, plus a little extra on top to keep 'goodwill' intact.

### *Leatherworking for the Apprentice, Journeyman and Master by Ghani Sceinlyr* (Craft (leatherworking), Craft (cooking), Heal, Wilderness Lore)

Ghani Sceinlyr was a true den mother amongst elves, disdaining the pomposity of the noble courts which were her birthright and living instead among the less well-to-do members of the community, where she spent many centuries perfecting her skills as a tanner and maker of leather goods. Whole generations of elven children grew to maturity protected from claws and thorns by her comfortable, practical clothes.

Her two-volume work (written in elven and translated into most languages) incorporated more than her own designs and insights alone; she also wove into the pages the tribal

knowledge of her wild elf cousins and many other nuggets of wisdom gleaned from centuries of forest life. The book grants a +4 circumstance bonus to Craft (leatherworking) skill checks and a +2 circumstance bonus to the other listed skills.

It is not immediately obvious why a book on leatherworking should help with so many other skills but a couple of hours reading through the pages provides the answer. As well as the chapters on leatherworking that form the bulk of the text, there are many tangential passages giving helpful advice on making your way in the wild and encouraging stories that can be applied to any purpose from quieting a frightened child to comforting a mortally wounded friend. She also applied the knowledge of anatomy she gained from skinning so many animals to medicine, learning to stitch wounds as deftly as she stitched leather and recording her techniques. Unsentimentally written and yet somehow heart-warming, Ghani's book is often found in the log cabins of those who choose to live away from civilisation. It is one of the few books that barbarians recognise as worth having.

***Turgan's Compendium of Hieroglyphs and Runes* by Hengit Turgan (Decipher Script)**

Few dwarves ever travelled so far from their home as the redoubtable Turgan, whose fascination with the mysterious inscriptions found on the walls of his ancestral vaults led him all over the world in search of ancient languages and their meanings. For over a hundred years he drafted and redrafted his magnum opus, becoming obsessively proud of it and stubbornly insisting that it remain in the dwarven language rather than being translated into any more common tongue, an attitude which infuriated his fellow scholars. The rare limited edition copies of Turgan's two-volume shelf-bending masterwork are in tome format and weigh twice as much as usual, being clustered with chunky metal ornamentation.

As well as being indispensable to the translator of dead languages, it is very useful to magicians as well, enabling them to draw upon the enormous archive of arcane symbols within when deciphering scrolls. Any character attempting to understand a magic scroll who has a copy of Turgan's Compendium to hand does not need either to make a Spellcraft check or use read magic to decipher the scroll and has a +2 circumstance bonus to his caster level check when attempting to cast a scroll spell of above his own available level. As well as this useful additional feature, the Compendium depicts many varieties of symbol, adding a +10 circumstance bonus to any Spellcraft check made to identify a symbol when using read magic.

***One Thousand and One Useful and Edificatory Mechanical Projects and Sundry Technical Pursuits for The Gentleman or Lady of Dextrous Digits and Adequate Hours of Leisure* by Nobdire Tinkerbink (Disable Device, Open Lock, Craft (locksmithing), Craft (trapmaking), Profession (engineer))**

A book every bit as cumbersome as its title, the *Projects* (to give it its most usual nomenclature) was the brainchild of the famous gnomish inventor, Tinkerbink, who included in it many of his most creative blueprints. There are six special editions of the *Projects* in existence, made by Tinkerbink himself to be sent as presents to friends and local royalty, which have an automatic mechanical clockwork binding and page-turning device. These require the bulbous pewter protuberances on the cover and spine to be pressed in the proper sequence or the book will not open at all.

Tinkerbink's technical schematics include not only finished devices (such as the Improved Repeating Crossbow, the Superior Mousetrap and the Ingenious Device for Cutting One's Own Hair) but also small sub-components used primarily in many of the more advanced locking mechanisms on the market. This was intended to assist the reader to make his own improved locks for greater domestic security; Tinkerbink, in his absent-minded way, did not realise it would also make the *Projects* a useful companion volume to have by one's side when picking locks. Its value in this regard means the work is especially prized amongst rogues, not that Tinkerbink himself would have wanted it that way, being as he is a most honest gnome.

***Memoirs of a Human Chameleon* by Jeremiah 'Proteus' Cadigan (Disguise)**

One of the greatest dramatic actors of his age and an accomplished comic entertainer, the extraordinary 'Proteus' amazed crowds night after night with his seeming ability to mould himself into other people, both to play diverse parts with total conviction and to lampoon political figures of the time by imitation. After his death, his memoirs were published posthumously in the common language and in a simple hardback format. As the crowds eagerly bought copies and began to read them, they had occasion to gasp once again upon learning that old Jeremiah Cadigan had been one and the same person as the Ruby Fox, the legendary spymaster for the Crown whose exploits were the stuff of children's adventure stories.

Along with his tales of espionage, adventure and sabotage work under deep cover, Cadigan divulged many of the technical secrets of disguise by which he had plied his trade. These do not only cover the use of theatrical makeup and suchlike professional accessories; they also present useful insiders' tips on how to improvise disguise materials from common ingredients. Tragically, many copies of this wonderful book were burned by the twitchy authorities, who felt the general public could not be trusted to use Cadigan's secrets wisely. A character with a copy of



## THE REWARDS OF STUDY

this book may create an improvised disguise kit from any pigments that come to hand (such as mud, flour, soap and lamp oil), so long as there are several different ingredients to pick and mix, by making an Intelligence check against DC 10.

### ***Inner Secrets of the Adamantine Hand* by Lee Hong (Heal)**

The enigmatic Hong (the name is undoubtedly a pseudonym) wrote his epic text on the secrets of the subtle bodily energies in the Draconic language, setting it down with a brush upon a silk scroll. It is never found in any other form. The title is misleading, as one could be forgiven for thinking it was a manual of unarmed combat techniques instead of the codex of ancient medicine that it is. A monk may however apply the techniques used in the work, which mostly involve chanting complicated mantras, to gain an extra stunning attack per day. He must be in privacy and seclusion for an hour to gain this effect; the conditions given in Core Rulebook I for spell preparation are ideal.

### ***The Forger's Companion* by Lemuel the Duplicitous (Forgery)**

Common consensus has it that this terse, technical and extremely readable tome was penned by none other than 'Lord' Matt Raglan, head of one of the most notorious rogues' guilds in the Crescent City. Whoever the author was, he evidently spent a good deal of time as an engraver, as the diagrams given of official seals and how to reproduce them are second to none. The book is full of useful information for the professional forger and the 'gifted amateur' alike, giving advice on such matters as the best ways to make a forged royal document look elaborate and rich without using expensive materials to do so, which coinage is easiest to forge, how to duplicate a watermark and how to assess a person's character from their

handwriting. There is so much tangential information on the latter subject that the user can attempt a Sense Motive check on a letter; if successful, he is able to assess from the writer's handwriting alone whether he means what he is saying or whether he is hiding something.

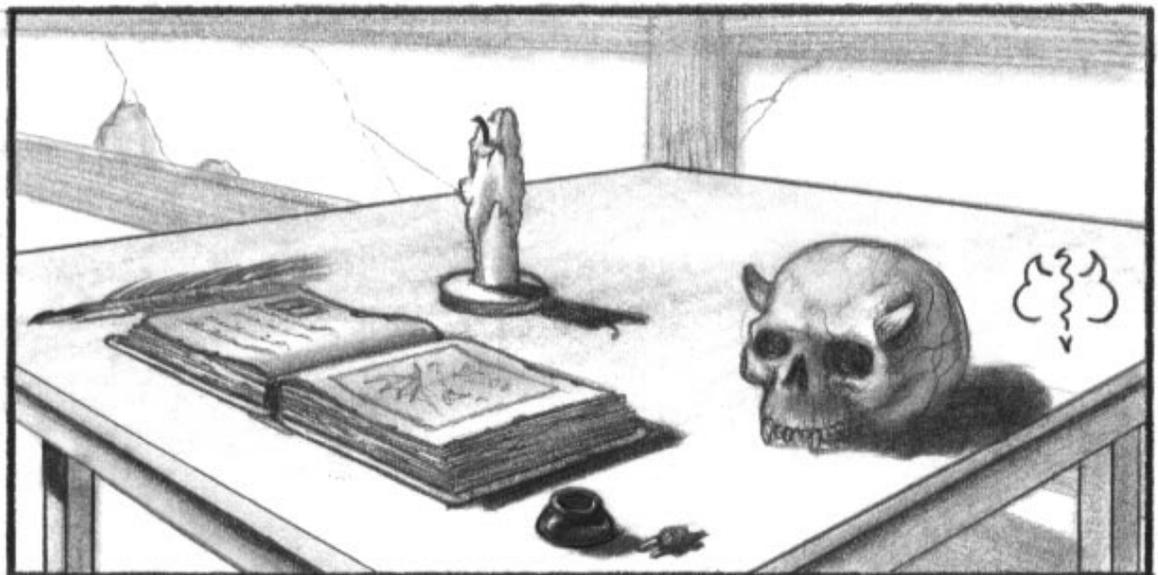
### ***Talleyrand's Atlas* by G.F. Talleyrand and Co. (Knowledge (geography), Profession (navigator))**

This definitive work is not counted as such because it is an ancient classic but because it is completely modern and right up to date. The publishing house owned by G.F. Talleyrand employs a select group of bards and rangers whose sole function is to collect geographical data and pass it back to the central office. Once every three years, a new copy of the Atlas is issued, updated to include shifts in political boundaries, new territories that have been discovered, sunken lands risen from the sea and so on.

The Atlas is produced in folio form, with a cheaper edition available in hardback. Only the folio is suitable for maritime use as its large format enables it to function as a book of maps, on which a navigator may chart routes with his instruments. If the Games Master uses the Navigator-Wizard class (found in *Seas of Blood* and *Ultimate Prestige Classes I*, both from Mongoose Publications) the use of a Talleyrand Atlas allows a member of that class to increase the benefit of his his Catch the Wind ability by 10% more than the amount listed.

### ***Bastions, Baileys, Battlements and Buttresses* by Tamerlane Mountainsheart (Knowledge (architecture and engineering), Profession (siege engineer))**

A female dwarf of unparalleled genius in the field of fortress construction, Tamerlane was employed by the Empire of Alvion to oversee the city defence plans when that



mighty theocracy was preparing itself for the Succession Wars. She applied mathematical principles to architecture in strikingly innovative ways, achieving synergetic effects that previous engineers had speculated would be impossible without magical assistance. Tamerlane also helped directly as a battle commander in many frontline engagements, distinguishing herself in the siege of Kestria, keeping the city's fortifications intact during a three-week bombardment that proved to be the decisive combat of the whole war.

Tamerlane was anxious to keep her discoveries preserved for later generations and took the trouble to write a lengthy tome so that her successors could carry on her work after her. As well as being a valuable resource for either an attacker or a defender in a siege situation, it is the definitive work for those who are wishing to build themselves a stronghold, or even a smaller fortification such as a wall. Using Tamerlane Mountainheart's secrets when making such a construction gives the stone or wood from which the fortification is made a +2 circumstance bonus to its hardness rating.

***The Bumper Book of Lawless Pursuits by Dash Fantastic (Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local, criminal only in each case))***

Along with the infamous Jack Dancer and the red-handed Pretty-Boy Lambkin, the highwayman with the curious pseudonym of 'Dash Fantastic' added charm and humour to his career in crime, even going so far as to write a 'how to' book on the subject. His masterwork chronicles some of the most famous crimes in history and gives a detailed (sometimes suspiciously detailed) expert's opinion on how the perpetrator did it. The book grants a +5 circumstance bonus to any Knowledge check relating to criminal activity in a given nation as set by the Games Master.

***Beliefs of the Civilised Races by Abelard Cunic (Knowledge (religion))***

It took a near-fatal accident to turn Abelard Cunic from a roving paladin who served his deity with sword and fist into a more contemplative cleric who spent almost as much time examining the faiths of others as he did pursuing his own. Convinced that there was truth in all faiths and fascinated by questions of theology (such as what happens to a God who nobody worships any more) he spent many long months travelling the world and talking to those priests and adepts who were willing to speak with him about the nature of their deities. In order that his work might be as complete as possible, Cunic even approached the priests of evil, though he did not always receive a reply and when he did it was usually an attempt to entice him into a trap. In such cases, his paladin training proved extremely useful.

Beliefs of the Civilised Races is written in the Common tongue and comprises a single large tome. It is comprehensive enough to provide a +5 circumstance bonus to any Knowledge (religion) check made in connection with it. In addition, its more cryptic contents dealing with theology address matters of divine energy and how it is channelled.

These enable a cleric reading from the book to add +2 to his Turning Damage, irrespective of the cleric's alignment. He must, however, be able to read the book and to brandish his holy symbol at the same time.

***The Erdskuni Sagas (Knowledge (history), Knowledge (religion))***

The fourteen scrolls of Erdskuni chronicle the events of a thousand years ago in song form. Tales are told of the rise and fall of kings, the destruction of cities, the establishment of temples to strange new gods, the deeds of heroes and the ravaging of monsters, some slain by the aforesaid heroes, some still alive and dormant, waiting their time to arise once again. Written in the Elven tongue, they were for many years the definitive record of a certain time in the world's history. The poetic style is repetitive and hypnotic, the type favoured by singing skalds and elder bards who would chant whole sections of the Sagas at the command of their liege-lord.

The Erdskuni Sagas add a +5 circumstance bonus to all Knowledge (history) checks made when using them; however, their relevance is limited to a time one thousand years before the current era. They also add a +3 circumstance bonus to all Knowledge (religion) checks having to do with the beliefs of and practices of elves at that time.

***Arcane Magic in Theory and Practice by Alastor Theron (Spellcraft, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (the planes))***

Few wizards have been as prolific as the notorious Alastor Theron, who as well as writing some extremely lucid works on the wizardly arts produced many highly collectible (and often banned) volumes of lewd verse, which we shall not further address here. Despite his chaotic alignment, something of which he was uncommonly proud, he was a disciplined student and practitioner of arcane magic and condensed the fruits of his work into one almighty tome. AMTP, as its users often abbreviate it, consists of three separate volumes in the common script. The language is sometimes dense but not so technical as to require a separate lexicon. Rumour has it that Theron considered producing the whole work in Draconic but abandoned the idea as overly pretentious even by his standards. He did, however, issue some limited edition copies bound in snakeskin as well as the ordinary edition.

Unfortunately for would-be readers, several substandard copies of lesser quality were made, the most widely circulated being the 'azure tome' edition, recognisable by its binding inset with artificial sapphires. The wizards who took over Theron's own order after him were fundamentally lawful and more concerned with respectability (and capitalising on the achievements of their most notorious member) than preserving his work as he meant it to be preserved. These watered-down editions are classed only as Good reference works. However, a copy of the real thing is worthy to form the centrepiece of a wizardly library, being the best reference book available both on Spellcraft, Knowledge (arcana) and Knowledge (the planes), providing a huge +5 circumstance bonus to these skill checks when consulted in conjunction with them.



### Optional Extra – Demonology

If the Games Master is using Encyclopaedia Arcane: Demonology, the following titles may be added to the list of Definitive Works:

#### *Liber HOPH vel Serpens (Book of the Serpent)* by Alastor Theron (Knowledge (the planes))

Whereas the great majority of demonic texts are abstruse and difficult to plough one's way through, requiring considerable skill with demon lore before one can make any headway with them, the little dark hardback by Alastor Theron is readily comprehensible to one who already knows his arcana – too much so, some wizards would argue. Its purpose is to act as a gazetteer for the practicing demonologist, offering clarification of obscure terms and giving avuncular advice from an advanced adept in the field.

If the reader can succeed at a Knowledge (arcana) check at DC 15 he can penetrate Theron's symbolic language and comprehend his meaning. Use of *Liber HOPH* adds a +3 circumstance bonus to his Knowledge (the planes) skill checks, including those made when attempting to understand other demonic texts.

#### *The Lesser Clavicle of King Belshegor (Demoniac reference work)*

This relatively short scroll, written in the tangled and corrupt language of the ancient demonologists, is said to contain the names and sigils of eighty-three malevolent spirits (identified by historians with demons as they are commonly understood) which were bound by King Belshegor of Arazia in a marble vault sealed with consecrated lead, only to be released again by the misguided barbarian hero Kolkamarg. Copies of the *Lesser Clavicle* are extremely rare, having been destroyed by agents of good and evil alike (demons are not fond of having their names known) and are inevitably found on aged papyrus or parchment, the surface webbed over with minute script.

A demonologist who can decipher the scroll (Demon Lore check, DC 20) will find himself in possession of a veritable catalogue of demonic sigils and names. Each given demon type has 1d8 instances of a greater name and 1d3 instances of a true name, enabling the demonologist to risk summonings which would ordinarily be far beyond his ability. The sigils contained in the book enable the demonologist to add a +5 circumstance bonus to any Summoning check made to call up the demon to whom the sigil pertains.

There are two downsides to this fiendish prize. One is that other demonologists have been calling up the demons of the *Lesser Clavicle* for many thousands of years now, since their names have been available and the demons are getting extremely tired of it. They are therefore far more furious at being summoned from the grisly comforts of the Abyss than demons usually are. The demonologist has to battle against the fury of several millennia of enforced service, giving a –2 to the Control check once the demon has

been summoned. Some such demons are crafty enough to feign compliance with the control check, offering false submission to the summoner's authority in order to tempt him to turn his back or relax his vigilance.

The other far more insidious problem is that demonic names are complicated affairs and papyrus is not the most robust of materials to write upon. Cracks and flakiness in the material and blots in the writing mean the demonologist has a 30% chance to copy or pronounce a demon's name (greater or true) wrongly. He is allowed a Spot check at DC 25 to detect his error. A name pronounced wrongly offers no modifiers to the controlling check at all...

There is something of a standard tale among wizards and clerics in which a young demonologist finds a copy of the *Lesser Clavicle* among the loose documents in a library or stuffed behind the paperbacks in a book store, rushes home to try it and is discovered with his various body parts in different rooms and his head impaled upon his own staff, with the *Lesser Clavicle* nowhere to be seen. These stories are all founded on truth. The demons are very keen to have all copies of the *Lesser Clavicle* found and destroyed.

#### *The Greater Clavicle of King Belshegor*

It is not entirely certain why the wise and fabled King of Arazia had his scribes note down his demonological knowledge in two scrolls rather than one; nonetheless, this is what he did. The so-called *Greater Clavicle* is considered to be a companion volume to the first, though some scholars believe it was written by a completely different authority, even going so far as to suggest that a benevolent wizard penned it in order to lessen the danger posed by the existence of the *Lesser Clavicle*.

Whichever of these tales be true, the *Greater Clavicle* does give clear instructions for the preparation of protective circles and linear figures, a precaution the demonologist can ill afford to do without. The scroll requires no special effort to translate, being written in an archaic yet comprehensible form of the common tongue. To use it, however, requires that the reader have at least four ranks in Knowledge (arcana). Every hour spent transcribing the seals of the *Greater Clavicle* gives a +1 circumstance bonus either to the Summoning or the Controlling check (the demonologist may choose) up to a maximum bonus of +5.

The clarity of the *Greater Clavicle* and the substantially lesser threat it poses to humankind and demonkind alike mean that it is not quite so rare as its sister text. It is even used sometimes by wizards who have no interest in demonology, as its symbols are potent when incorporated into a *magic circle*. An arcane spellcaster who has this scroll on hand for reference purposes may, when casting any of the *magic circle* spells, add a +2 circumstance bonus to his caster level check when attempting to overcome a creature's Spell Resistance.

# MAKING MAGIC ITEMS

The process whereby magical items are made is established and straightforward. There is little room for variance when constructing the magical items listed in *Core Rulebook II*, as wondrous items are made to a given ‘recipe’ and other items are made according to a formula whereby their powers can be tailored as the creator desires. Where, then, can the experiences of other item creators be of use? What good can a reference book be, however fine the quality?

In practice, magical item creation is far from being the finished science it would appear. Arcane magic itself is a living, volatile pursuit. The laboratory and the workshop are constantly producing results that the wizards and sorcerers using them never expected to see. Practice enables them to repeat their discoveries and eventually incorporate them into new spells, but in the interim period there are all manner of peculiar and unpredictable magical quirks happening along the way that can be taken advantage of.

It is therefore possible to draw upon the accounts of other wizards and attempt to use their experiences to give your own magical items a tweak or two. These tweaks are referred to here as ‘augmentations’. Most reference books for magic item creation are not ‘how to’ books (though these do exist, they confer no bonuses) since the creator already understands the principles involved in this as a logical extension of his studies in arcane magic. The typical reference book for this kind of work is, perhaps surprisingly, the journal.

## JOURNALS: THE REFERENCE BOOKS OF ITEM CREATION

Almost all wizards and sorcerers involved in the creation of magic items keep a magical diary in which the progress of their projects is recorded. This is extremely important, as the diary enables them to keep track of which enchantments have been laid and when, as well as other concerns such as the position of the stars or the amount of days to keep a preparation simmering. Moreover, any well-organized magician is going to want to keep track of how much he is spending on ingredients, so that the final bill for his services can be accurate down to the last copper bit.

As well as being a record of the magician’s work, the diary is also used to record any research notes or other points of interest. Making magic items is not a workaday process such as fletching arrows or hammering out a

metal shield, in which one commission is very much like another. Magic item manufacture can be attended by all manner of curious phenomena and side-effects. Wizards and sorcerers (especially the latter) are hungry for new knowledge. They can rarely resist the temptation to experiment when conducting their magical work. It is also much easier to learn from your own mistakes when you were keeping a careful daily record of what you were doing. By means of the magical diary, successes can be repeated and pitfalls avoided.

Wizards sometimes have their journals copied out or otherwise published. Sometimes this is done in order to help those new to the science of item crafting to learn from the experiences of those who have gone before; sometimes, it is for no more noble a motive than showing off. It is not every wizard who can create a *Staff of Power*; one who has managed to do so while coming up with some ‘really quite clever if I say so myself’ methods to do so more efficiently (or cheaply) than his colleagues is going to want to rub their noses in his own genius.

This ‘personal touch’ is the great benefit of being able to consult the journal of a magician who creates items while you are working on one yourself. By learning the little ‘tricks of the trade’ and ‘insider secrets’ of an experienced wand-maker, for example, a character can attempt to incorporate extra features into a standard wand. The only difficulty is that another wizard’s or sorcerer’s abilities are not your abilities. There is always some risk involved in trying to emulate a master of the art.

Reference works for item creation are, like other reference works, ranked according to quality: Average, Good, Excellent or Definitive Work. Instead of conferring a bonus to a character’s skills, they confer a bonus to Augmentation checks when making magical items. Average books confer a +1 bonus, Good books a +2 bonus and Excellent books a +3 bonus. They may be searched for in library sections in exactly the same way as other manuals and reference works. Books on applying augmentations to ordinary magic items and improving constructs may be found (unsurprisingly) in the Magic Item section. There are no books on building artefacts or applying augmentations to them *at all*. Such books simply do not exist; any books on artefacts are reference books only, giving accounts of the legends and rumoured powers of artefacts.

## Augmentations

Augmentations are the ‘special features’ that can be worked into a magic item or applied to the preparation process. To use an analogy, they comprise the difference between an ordinary *rod of wonder* and a fuel-injection *rod of wonder* with tinted windows, leather upholstery and a sunroof. They are often built into a magical item to satisfy the express wish of the person who commissioned it rather than because the creator believed it to be necessary; many augmentations are concerned with preserving the owner’s claim to his property. Each augmentation has to



## Augmentations for Magical Items

Item Type	Available Augmentations	Maximum Augmentations
Armour and Shields	Personalise, Locate, Region, Quick	2
Weapons	Personalise, Locate, Region, Quick	2
Potions	Raise Level	1
Rings	Personalise, Locate, Region, Vision, Quick	2
Rods	Personalise, Locate, Region, Vision, Quick, Potent Spell	
Scrolls	Lower Price, Potent Spell, Large Script, Contingent	1
Staffs	Personalise, Potent Spell, Vision, Recharge, Quick, Contingent	3
Wands	Personalise, Potent Spell, Recharge, Quick, Contingent	2
Constructs	Fortify, Repair, Quick	2

be applied by the creator while referring to his source text, inevitably the journal of some other magician who has attempted to apply the augmentation before.

The number of augmentations a given item creator may attempt to incorporate into an item is determined by the type of item and may never exceed the creator's Intelligence modifier. Each augmentation costs 25% of the item's total cost to apply.

To place an augmentation upon a magical item under construction, the creator must succeed in an Augmentation check (d20 plus caster level plus caster's Intelligence modifier) against the DC of the augmentation. If multiple augmentations are being placed, roll separately for each one. Each additional augmentation after the first adds +2 to the DC of the check. The reference work being consulted will confer a circumstance bonus to the check, depending on its quality. Success incorporates the augmentation, whereas failure simply means the additional money spent on special ingredients is wasted and the augmentation is not applied. Failure by more than 5 means the whole item is wrecked and may not be salvaged.

Wondrous Items are the only type of magical item that may not be augmented. They are built to a pre-set formula. While altogether new wondrous items may be engineered (which should be a process made easier by recourse to reference books, at the Games Master's discretion) the standard ones from *Core Rulebook II* are not changeable.

### Contingent (DC 25 or 30)

Contingent items use a cunning method of spell energy rerouting to draw upon energies available in the immediate environment and use them to boost their magical effects. Essentially, items duplicating the effects of spells that have elemental energy based effects work better when in the presence of large quantities of that energy in a suitable form. The effect is as if the spell had been *empowered* as per the metamagic feat. It is also possible to make an item

contingent so as to produce a *maximised* effect; this task has a higher DC of 30.

For example, a *wand of lightning* with a contingent empowering augmentation discharged in the middle of a violent thunderstorm would draw upon the electricity in the surrounding region to fuel its effect, with the result that the electrical blast would deal one and a half times as much damage as usual. The energy must either be present in the environment or strongly latent – an item with an acid effect would activate its contingent augmentation in an average alchemist's laboratory, while an item with a fire effect would do the same in a room filled with barrels of oil. The former would however not be activated by a barrel of vinegar, nor the latter by the trees of a forest.

### Fortify (DC 25)

This augmentation is applied to constructs, such as golems, built by the item creator. Use of the fortify augmentation does away with some of the doubt concerning the strength of one's creation, using heavy-duty magical engineering secrets to make limbs more resilient and artificial joints more durable. Successful application of this augmentation grants an automatic maximum result when the construct's first four Hit Dice are rolled. So, a flesh golem to which the fortify effect had been applied would have 5d10+40 hit points. The effect may be applied twice, but the DC for a second attempt is 30 rather than 25.

### Large Script (DC 20)

This augmentation is only applied to scrolls. The scribe uses an exceptionally simple variety of magical script, enabling the caster to understand what is written more easily. A character reading a scroll that has been written in large script receives a +2 circumstance bonus both to his Spellcraft check to understand the spell and to his caster level check to use the spell if it was scribed at a higher caster level than his.

### Locate (DC 20)

The locate augmentation is one of the easiest to place and one of the most commonly called for, as it is extremely useful for preventing the theft of precious objects. As with the personalise augmentation, a pint of the owner's blood is needed and the item is magically bonded to him, though not in such a drastic way as with the personalise effect. All abilities of the item still function irrespective of who is using it. If the item is removed from the owner's presence for whatever reason, he may make a Scry check at DC 10 to attempt to tell in which direction it lies. A character with 2 or more ranks in the Intuit Direction skill gains a +2 synergy bonus to this check. The character may only tell which direction the object lies in and not any other information, such as its distance away or who currently holds it. The owner can, however, tell if the item has been taken on to another plane.

As with the personalise augmentation, *dispel magic* and *antimagic field* suppress the locate effect but do not remove it. It is possible for another item creator to break the locate augmentation; this is resolved exactly as for the rules regarding removal of regional restriction augmentations.

### Lower Price (DC 25)

If this augmentation is applied, no other augmentation can be. It represents the item being manufactured 'on the cheap'. If the augmentation is successfully applied, the item costs 25% less than its stated price but takes twice as long as usual to make.

### Personalise (DC 30)

Fighters are often very concerned not to lose the weapons they have invested thousands of hard-won gold pieces in, while wizards are even more paranoid when it comes to keeping hold of their wands and staves. By incorporating a personalise augmentation at the time of an item's creation, the creator may specially twist the magical forces involved so that they are keyed to one person alone. This process always requires the use of at least a pint of the blood drawn from the person for whom the item is to be personalised.

A personalised item is (at least at first) significantly restricted to the owner. If another person picks it up and attempts to use it, they may only take advantage of any enhancement bonus it offers to attack rolls, damage rolls or armour class. No other special abilities will function. For example, the +2 *flaming* personalised longsword of Lady Cadrivaine will only function as a +2 longsword in the hands of Baron Mordent. He will not be able to make the sword flame for him, no matter how hard he tries or how many command words he experiments with. If the original owner dies, the personalising augmentation is negated.

*Dispel magic* or *antimagic field* cannot be used to break a personalising augmentation permanently, though either can suppress the effect along with all the other powers of the item. It is however possible to break the personalisation on an item through sheer force of will. To do this, the

character making the attempt must take a full-round action to make an opposed Charisma ability check with the owner. The owner need not be physically present or even conscious for this to take place. The owner receives a circumstance bonus to this check equal to 8 plus any enhancement bonus on the item. (If the owner and the item are on different planes, the person attempting to break the augmentation receives a +2 circumstance bonus to his Charisma check.) If the owner wins, the person trying to break the augmentation suffers one point of Charisma ability score damage (recovered after a night's rest) and may not make another attempt to break the effect that day. If the augmentation is broken, the personalising effect is utterly negated. The item does not now have a new owner, it simply functions as an ordinary magic item of its type, special abilities and all.

### Potent Spell (DC 25)

This augmentation accentuates the power of spells and spell-like effects as they are projected from the item. All spell effects the item produces that allow a saving throw add +1 to the DC of the saving throw in question. So, if a wand of fireball were being created and had the potent spell effect applied to it, the DC of the saving throw to take half damage from the spell's effects would be 15, calculated as 10 + the spell's level + the modifier of the minimum Intelligence ability score to cast fireball +1 for the aug-



## MAKING MAGIC ITEMS

mentation. This augmentation may be applied up to three times, with additional costs being incurred each time.

### Quick (DC 25)

This augmentation has no effect on the item itself, only on the time taken to complete it. A quickened item is ready in half the usual time. Although those who create magical items are often exhorted to hurry up and get it done, the process is a gradual one and cannot usually be rushed, nor can the magician work longer hours. The quick augmentation reflects the magician's ability to use alternative ingredients (taking less time to concoct) in the item's preparation and get away with it.

### Raise Level (DC 20)

An augmentation applicable to potions only, this allows the potion brewer to prepare a potion at a caster level higher than their own. (The base price of the potion is increased accordingly.) The augmentation may be applied multiple times, to a maximum of three levels above the caster's level. The cost of the augmentation must be paid afresh each time one is applied.

### Recharge (DC 30)

An item produced with limited charges, such as a wand, may be specially built with a partial recharge capacity. By being immersed in the broken remnants of any item that formerly held an enhancement bonus (such as a +1 mace) or any other charged item which still had 10 or more charges left for at least one hour, the item may regain 1d4 charges. The item destroyed must be smashed completely so that the rechargeable item can soak up the

magical charge. Items destroyed in this way lose their magic completely, leaving only material shards behind. There is no other way to take advantage of the item's recharge capacity than this. Using an item does not count as destroying it. Potions, scrolls and other single-use items do not confer any charges and may not be used to power a rechargeable item.

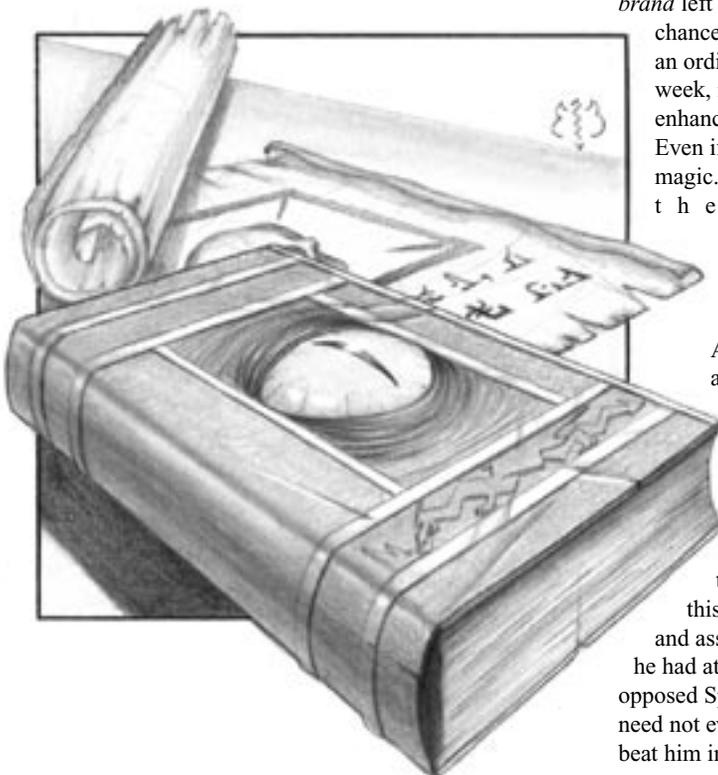
This augmentation is often used when in the last ditch; characters have been known to sacrifice non-essential magical items in order to recharge an item that gives them a better chance of escaping alive or destroying an important foe.

### Region (DC 30)

Sometimes, wizards and other item creators take commissions from nobles and the like, who out of a sense of social responsibility (or selfishness) wish its power to remain in one place. Such an item might be the hereditary magical spear used by the ruler of a small kingdom, or the *horn of the tritons* used by the members of a particular settlement. An item with a regional restriction augmentation simply shuts down when it is taken out of that region or on to a different plane. It still registers as a magical item but all the magic within it is suppressed. The creator may specify a region no smaller than a one-mile square and no larger than a two hundred mile square within which the item will function.

An item left outside its region for a week or more has a cumulative 5% chance per week of losing one of its features permanently, beginning with special abilities and working down to enhancement bonuses. So, a +3 *frost brand* left out of its region for 10 weeks would have a 50% chance of losing its *frost brand* quality and becoming an ordinary +3 greatsword; at the end of the next week, it would have a 5% chance of losing a point of enhancement bonus and becoming a +2 greatsword. Even if all its abilities are lost, the item still radiates magic. If the item is returned to its region of operation, the original creator may restore any lost abilities with an Augmentation check at DC 25; another item creator may attempt to do the same, with a similar check at DC 30.

A weapon subject to a regional restriction augmentation *may* have it removed by another item creator who knows how to apply augmentations and who has the appropriate item creation feat for the item concerned. To do this, the creator must first succeed in an Augmentation check at DC 30 and then succeed at an opposed Spellcraft check with the item's original creator. For the purposes of this check, the original creator's Spellcraft skill and associated Intelligence modifier are those which he had at the time he made the item, not at the time the opposed Spellcraft check is made – the original creator need not even be alive. The item creator attempting to beat him in the opposed Spellcraft check is battling against



the complexity and ingenuity of his work, not against him personally. Failure means the challenging item creator may not attempt to break the regional restriction again until he has gained more ranks in Spellcraft.

### Repair (DC 25)

This augmentation is applied to constructs that already have the ability to turn some spell energy into hit points, such as iron golems, who recover damage when subjected to fire spells. The construct fitted with a repair augmentation gains back 2 hit points for every 3 of the relevant kind of damage dealt to it, rather than only regaining 1. So, a flesh golem fitted with repair that was struck by a lightning bolt for 20 hit points of electrical damage would break any slow effect and recover 12 hit points of damage. By use of this effect, golem owners can restore their creations to full working order with much less expenditure of effort.

### Vision (DC 30)

This augmentation can only be applied to an item which already carries the locate augmentation. As it is an entirely compatible effect with locate and builds upon it, the vision effect does not cause the usual +2 increase to difficulty produced by applying more than one augmentation to the same item.

When an item with this attribute is not in the presence of the owner, they may attempt a Scry check to receive a sudden flash of inner vision, showing the object and what is currently happening around it. The DC of the check is 5 and it may be made a number of times per day equal to the owner's Charisma modifier (if positive) plus one. Anyone holding or carrying the item while this has a chance to notice the owner noticing them by making a Scry check at DC 20 to do so.

## DEFINITIVE WORKS ON MAGICAL ITEM CREATION

Slightly different from other definitive works, each one of the following titles functions as an Average reference book on the general subject of augmenting magical items, conferring the appropriate +1 circumstance bonus to any Augmentation check made while the book is to hand, while conferring a +4 circumstance bonus on Augmentation checks made to the specific kind of item covered in the book's subject matter. Each one was originally a journal or set of working notes that has now been produced in guidebook format because of high demand and frequent use.

### *Arms, Armour and Arcana* by **Jehethrian & Croke (Armour, Shields, Martial Weapons)**

The jovial, rotund sorcerer S.P. Jehethrian and his blacksmith friend Andy Croke together produced some of the most spectacular collections of magical arms and weaponry ever seen. Each a dedicated craftsman in his own field, their talents complemented one another perfectly. Eventually, they were called upon to armour and equip the dedicated paladin unit known as the Cisternian Swans, who famously laid siege to the sacred city of Abulkund during the Marian Crusades. This earned them enough royal gold to retire to a seaside residence each, where they produced this definitive work on crafting magical arms and armour as their finest and most enduring collaboration. Jehethrian and Croke were each simple men and kept to what they knew best: the only arms found in this four-volume tome are martial ones, though all grades of armour are covered.

### *The Ebon Book of Azaraque* **Malfaisance (Rings)**

It is surely one of life's ironies that the most comprehensive tome ever to be written on the art of forging magical rings was penned by an entity of known evil alignment, yet is to be found adorning the shelves of some of the whitest warlocks in the world. Editions have been produced in both the original Infernal language (which confers a +5 circumstance bonus to appropriate Augmentation checks instead of +4) and in Draconic. Some wizards feel it is ill-advised to own a copy of *The Ebon Book* while the lich Malfaisance is still not known to have been finally destroyed, but others consider this to be mere superstition. Though the book was written by the foulest of minds, they argue, it is not tainted and remains a technical masterpiece.

### *The Essential Stavewright* by **Melmoth Duranir (Staffs)**

Instantly recognisable by the filigree silver tree design that adorns its thick black binding, the work of the elven mage famous for his wandering (his autobiographical *Staff in Hand* recounts his travels in numerous lands, leading up to his meeting with his eventual wife, the dusky Tavis) draws on his familiarity with wood lore and high-level arcane magic both. A perfectionist, Melmoth would often spend far longer than necessary in the construction of his staves, taking advantage of his elven longevity to plant a tree of exactly the right kind in the right place to grow into the wood for a staff fifty years later. The book is written in elven throughout.



***Gems of Learning From the Academy of Zerul by various authors of the Pale Order (Wands and Rods)***

One of the most successful magical orders of its time, the Pale Order pushed back the frontiers of magical research on many occasions during its four-hundred-year lifespan. Creation of a magical wand was a prerequisite for acceptance into the 'Adeptus Competens' grade, and that of a rod for acceptance into the 'Adeptus Principalis' grade. As each item was an individual project into which many hours of hard graft were put, the accumulated research notes left behind by each mage to make the grade were one of the chief treasures of the Order. When the Academy of Zerul finally closed its doors and was sold to a private developer, the various notes on wand and rod making were collated by the last incumbent of the librarian's position, the tireless Ebenezer Braust, who made a tidy sum from the sale of copies of the manuscript.

***Infusions and Decoctions of Surpassing Potency by Bethany Entwistle (Potions)***

The halfling authoress of this compact little hardback text made her living for many years as a brewer of alcoholic beverages and a mixer of potions, often applying the principles learned in one branch of her craft to the difficulties encountered in the other. Entwistle's style is brisk and no-nonsense, giving recipes and preparation instructions both for the standard brews and for more potent versions. She herself was said to swear by the method of doctoring all potions with a little white rum, so as to induce the various ingredients to 'mingle more happily' as she put it,

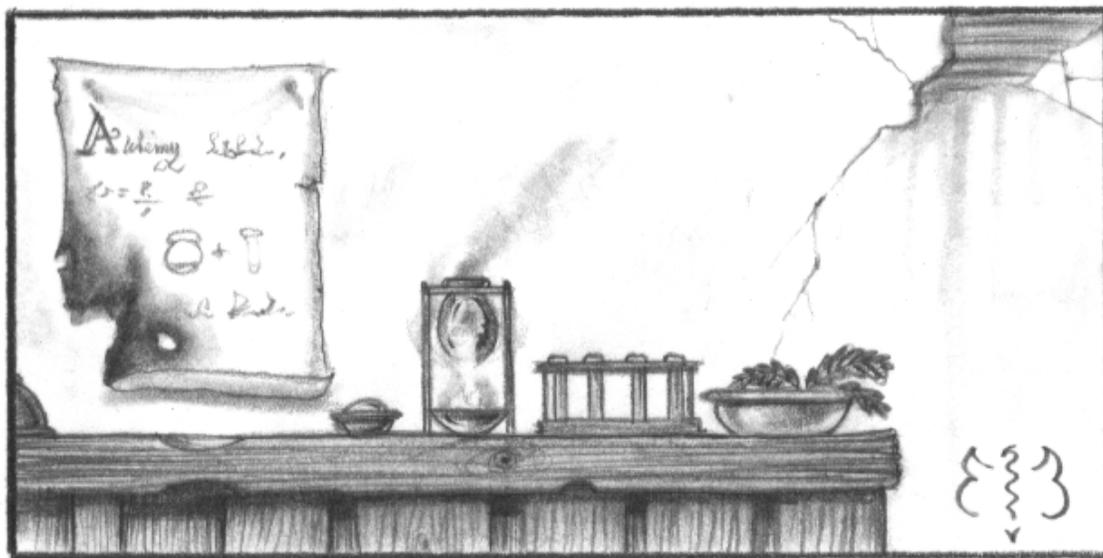
though nobody else appears to have had very much success with this particular technique.

Anyone who has the Brew Potion feat and a copy of *Infusions and Decoctions* to hand can make an Intelligence check at DC 10 to identify a given potion by the smell alone.

***Kernstein's Automata by Baron Helmut Kernstein (Golems & Other Constructs)***

The reclusive and taciturn Baron Kernstein was said by many in his native town to be more than a little mad, though history has since shown that his isolated ways were simply evidence of a burgeoning genius that found no ready outlet in his home. Upon reaching the age of majority, he found himself the sole heir to a huge mansion house and a set of magical research equipment, passed on to his father in lieu of unpaid debts and not used for centuries. Kernstein proved to have a gift for constructing simulacra of living creatures, beginning with tableaux of stuffed animals and moving on to mechanically animated models. It was not long before he incorporated magic into his work and soon he had the formerly silent house filled with peculiar artificial creatures that he had built and magically animated.

Quite contrary to the usual endings of such tales, Kernstein become very popular with the local community, particularly once his life-size puppets had entertained them on carnival days. His shyness and awkwardness overcome, he died a contented man, having spent the final years of his life writing the secrets of construct manufacture into a thick tome filled with intricate and beautiful illustrations.



# TOMES OF MAGIC AND OTHER CURIOSITIES

In this chapter, dear reader, we come to those exceptional books that are beyond the ordinary reference text on magical matters and beyond even the spellbook in their arcane significance. These are those tomes that have been enchanted as magical items in their own right. There are already some examples of these in *Core Rulebook II*, such as *blessed book* or the *tome of leadership and influence*. While many of these are one-shot items that have a permanent effect on the reader's ability scores, the tomes in this section are mostly reusable.

## BOOK-LIKE ITEMS

Any one or two of the following might be discovered in a decent library; placing of them is left entirely up to the Games Master, though scrolls are more likely to be found in bardic or ancient libraries and tomes in wizardly or clerical ones.

### Anthology of Inspirational Verses

A favourite among bards, this thick hardback is full of words of more than ordinary resonance and power. Drawing from thousands of years of literary tradition and from all the primary civilised cultures, it contains appropriate quotable material for any conceivable occasion. By reading out a suitable quotation from the *anthology* in connection with any Charisma-based skill check or ability check requiring speech, a character may add a +2 enhancement bonus to his check result. It is most common for the *anthology* to be quoted from when people are trying to win over a crowd, instil fear in a foe, seduce a person of the opposite sex or give an impression of wit and charm.

*Caster Level:* 6<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, 6 ranks of Perform; *Market Price:* 1,500 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

### Binding of Disguise

This nondescript seeming item resembles a leather folder with stiff boards at the front and back, like a binding waiting to have the pages glued in place. If it is wrapped around a book of Tome size or smaller and a command word is spoken, every page of the book becomes cloaked by a *secret page* effect, so that the book seems to be a fairly uninteresting text on treating the diseases of cattle

(or other dummy text, at the Games Master's discretion.) A second command word removes the cloaking effect.

Cunning wizards will often use a *binding of disguise* to prevent a spellbook from being stolen by thieves, disguising their spellbook as one dull book among many and preparing a large (sometimes boobytrapped) tome to look like their spellbook in the hope the thieves will take that instead.

*Caster Level:* 10<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *illusory script*, *secret page*; *Market Price:* 20,000 gp; *Weight:* 1lb.

### Book of Bestial Savagery (Cursed)

This horrific object causes untold damage in libraries unless it is found and destroyed. In form, it resembles an innocuous tome of medium size, though it is in fact a form of construct. Two small protrusions are found on the spine, whose function is unclear. When the book knows it has been surrounded by darkness and silence for long enough, the protrusions open to reveal catlike eyes and two rows of teeth like those of sharks emerge from the edges of the cover. The book then goes on a rampage, rending and devouring the other books around it and causing as much chaos as possible before changing its form subtly and hiding in another section of the library. If it is discovered, it will either flee or attack. Its statistics are those of an Animated Object with a Fly speed of 30 ft. and a bite attack inflicting 1d8 points of damage. Its hardness is 10 because of its strong metal cover, though it's vulnerable pages mean it takes full damage from fire and acid attacks.

Any other tome bitten by a *book of bestial savagery* that survives the attack may, at the Games Master's discretion, become infected with a form of magical literary lycanthropy and become a *book of bestial savagery* itself. The book's bite has no lycanthropic effect on anything but other books. A plague of such ghastly things can turn an orderly library into a seething mass of champing jaws and flying pages in less than a week. This fate has in fact befallen some libraries, whose curators had no choice but to barricade up the doors and wait for the books to tear each other to pieces.

*Caster Level:* the book is a creature and cannot be manufactured; *Market Price:* 1,200 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

### Book of Fabulous Drama

The plays and poems written in this book are all illustrated with hand-painted plates. Each one of the dramas is a primary piece from one of the main cultures, such as the riveting (and riveted) operas of the dwarves, or the lengthy revenge-tragedies so beloved of elven noble houses. If the book is opened flat to a given play's illustration, placed upon the floor or a similar flat surface and the first line read aloud, a magical illusion effect begins. By means of an extended *major image* effect, the events of the drama play themselves out as if performed by expert actors, within a 30 ft. square area with the book at its centre. Closing the



book at any point immediately stops the illusion. One such illusory drama may be performed per day and the book contains eight classic stories in total. The primary purpose of the book was to provide entertainment for nobles who could not be bothered to go to the theatre and preferred to stay at home in their warm parlours, though an ingenious player could doubtless think of other ways to make use of events such as those found in the game world's equivalents of *Macbeth* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

*Caster Level:* 12<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, 6 ranks in Perform, *major image*; *Market Price:* 16,000 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

### Book of Fascinating Absorption (Cursed)

Said to have been created by a furious wizard in order to get back at the comrades in his party who mocked him for constantly having his nose in a book, this innocuous-looking hardback appears to be a story of high adventure filled with rollicking heroes, thrilling swordfights and steamy, passionate scenes of romance. It is easy to read, the text appearing in the language the reader is most familiar with. Any character who spends a round or two reading it finds it unusually gripping and wants to carry on reading; he even believes the story is doing him some kind of magical good, as he feels himself growing more heroic and strong in sympathy with the story's protagonist. Reading the book for more than two rounds requires the character to make a Will saving throw against DC 20 or be immersed in it.

In reality, the book is a trap. It has no other purpose than to keep the character buried in its pages, uninterested in anything but reading. The story does not go anywhere, but a magical effect placed on the book occupies the character's attention while erasing his short-term memory of what he has just read and replaying the same events again and again. If the character is asked to describe the story, he will only be able to repeat similar-sounding events – 'they killed a monster', 'one of the party had to leave and everyone was sad', 'somebody new joined them', 'the dwarf sat down and started singing about gold'.

A character immersed in the book will not put it down. Every spare moment will be spent reading; Spot and Listen checks are each made at a –4 circumstance penalty, whilst tasks requiring concentration, such as lockpicking, are made at a –8 circumstance penalty to the skill check. Tasks requiring the reading of other books, such as spell preparation, may not be undertaken at all. If the character has to fight, he will keep the book in his off hand rather than a shield, second weapon or anything else he might ordinarily use. He cannot do anything requiring the use of both hands. He will jealously guard the book as his most treasured possession, resisting attempts to take it away. If the book is taken away from him, he will react as if subjected to an *emotion* (despair) spell effect and will seek to get it back. If he goes without reading the book for an

hour, he may make a second Will saving throw at DC 20 every hour thereafter to resist its effects.

*Caster Level:* 10<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *bestow curse*, *enthrall*; *Market Price:* 15,000 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

### Book of Instantaneous Correspondence

These smart notebooks are bound in black leather, with shiny golden fittings on the corners. They are always found in sets of two, three or four. A powerful magical effect binds each book in a given batch to the others, so that what is written into one appears in its fellows. These books are used by ostentatious wizards the world over to keep in touch with one another. Royal houses, spies and other important persons who need to make daily reports of their doings also sometimes use them. Only mundane writing may be transmitted through a *book of instantaneous correspondence*: spells and *symbols* may not. Each book contains 50 pages.

*Caster Level:* 16<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *whispering wind*; *Market Price:* 7,500 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

### Scroll of Cartography

This useful little item appears at first to be a wholly unremarkable sheet of parchment. Those in the know understand how to use it. Writing the word 'start' anywhere on the scroll triggers an effect whereby the immediate surroundings are swiftly and accurately mapped, as if by the work of an invisible draughtsman. The scroll will detect and incorporate any subtle changes in direction or depth of a passageway and note the presence of doors as they are found. It cannot, however, detect secret doors until they have been opened, after which it will mark them on its map. If the bearer of the scroll is subjected to any effect that moves him away from the region being mapped by means of other than ordinary locomotion, such as *fly*, *teleport*, *dimension door* or *ethereal jaunt*, the mapping stops.

*Caster Level:* 12<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *legend lore*; *Market Price:* 2,400 gp; *Weight:* -

### Scroll of Combustion

This pale length of parchment is always found in the company of a stick of sealing wax and a small seal, whose end is circular and marked in increments like a dial. The scroll is used to convey messages that are so sensitive in their content that the writer cannot afford to risk another party reading them. Once the seal is broken, the scroll bursts into flame after a set number of seconds; this may be between 20 and 360 and is usually set at 120 to give the reader a chance to read and memorise the contents of the letter. The timing of the combustion effect is determined by the degree of rotation of the seal when it is pressed into the wax.

The burning scroll is not particularly hot, inflicting a mere point of damage if it is held while it burns. The combustion is absolute, instantly reducing the whole scroll to an almost undetectable fine grey ash, which can easily be blown away by a light breeze.

*Caster Level:* 3rd; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *burning hands*; *Market Price:* 50 gp; *Weight:* -

### Scroll of the Delver

This scroll is always found sealed in a special watertight casing in case the bearer should be subjected to underground drips, puddles or lakes. It requires no light to read, being made of a luminous material as tough as leather. The magics placed upon the scroll enable it to detect significant masses of non-living substance within a 100 foot radius. As the bearer comes within range of these masses, the appropriate word appears on the scroll, faintly at first and growing darker and bolder as the quantity increases or the bearer moves closer to the substance.

The main use of the scroll is to find deposits of underground resources, to assess how much air is left in a sealed area and to find a way back to the surface if possible. The word 'granite' is usually found on the scroll, as is 'air'. The appearance of the words 'gold', 'silver' or even 'coal' is enough to make the eyes of dwarves (who usually own these scrolls) light up, while 'water' is usually a bad sign and 'gas' is generally considered to be the worst word of all to have appearing on your scroll. 'Lava' is a sign that you have dug too far down. The scroll only functions when underground.

*Caster Level:* 12<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *continual flame*, *legend lore*; *Market Price:* 10,000 gp; *Weight:* -

### Scroll of the Gallant Quest

When a paladin is first setting off on a heroic errand, his patron church, temple or other religious institution may present him with one of these small scrolls. It is filled with small reminders of the paladin's code, the tenets of his faith and the simple wisdom of those knights who have gone before him on similar quests. The paladin is supposed to read a little from the scroll every night before retiring and every morning after his ablutions, in order to comfort and fortify his heart as the quest goes on and the trials become more burdensome.

On every day on which the paladin studies the scroll, he benefits from a +1 morale bonus to all saving throws. Should he finish or give up the quest, the scroll's magic is negated. A scroll of this kind will not confer any benefit to anyone who is not a paladin engaged upon a single specific mission.

*Caster Level:* 6<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *prayer*; *Market Price:* 200 gp; *Weight:* -

### Tome of Anatomical Revelation

This stark white volume is fitted with scalloped ornamentations that seem oddly organic, as if they had been grown from bone or sculpted from ivory. The front cover shows a skinless human body with arms and legs extended. Within the first part of the book are various anatomical diagrams, illustrating the skeletal system, circulation, internal organs, nervous system and such like inner workings of the various humanoid races. The rear part of the book does not have pages at all, but plates of some glass-like substance that are cold to the touch and radiate a faint purplish light. These plates are labelled in the same way as the preceding chapters: skeleton, musculature, circulatory and so on.

A person standing in front of the open book when a given plate is exposed suffers a very disturbing magical effect. Their body begins to turn transparent by degrees. The first plate turns their skin invisible, revealing the muscles and veins beneath. The second strips away another layer, showing the viscera and nerves. As the plates are turned, the various layers of the character's body are revealed, until with the last plate they appear to be a skeleton. Only the flesh of the character is affected. Gear and clothing carried or worn is not turned invisible by the tome's radiation.

The main function of the book is to assist with Heal checks. If a character can use the book to see the internal parts of an afflicted person, he can add a +4 insight bonus to his Heal check. At the Games Master's discretion, the book might also allow the various *cure wounds* spells to work more efficiently on the grounds that injuries may be more clearly seen, with any result of 1 rolled being counted as a 2.

*Caster Level:* 12<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *invisibility*, *legend lore*; *Market Price:* 12,000 gp; *Weight:* 2 lb.

### Tome of Chronicling

The first words a player reads in a *tome of chronicling* are his own name, usually followed by the words 'gazed into the book, wondering how it knew his name and beginning to feel rather worried that the book was writing itself as he watched - and he seemed to be the subject'. *Tomes of chronicling* are always blank when first discovered and bind themselves to the life of the first character to open and attempt to read them. So long as the book is kept close to the character at all times (within 30') it will automatically record, in neat handwriting, an accurate account of his life. If the book is moved more than thirty feet away, the book will simply state 'To be continued' and pick up afresh once it is back in the character's vicinity. It cannot document events at which it was not present. At the Games Master's discretion, the Tome may sometimes be able to warn a character in advance of trouble in store, along the lines of 'As Morgrim walked down the rocky path, reading in his *tome of chronicling* to see if anything was waiting to



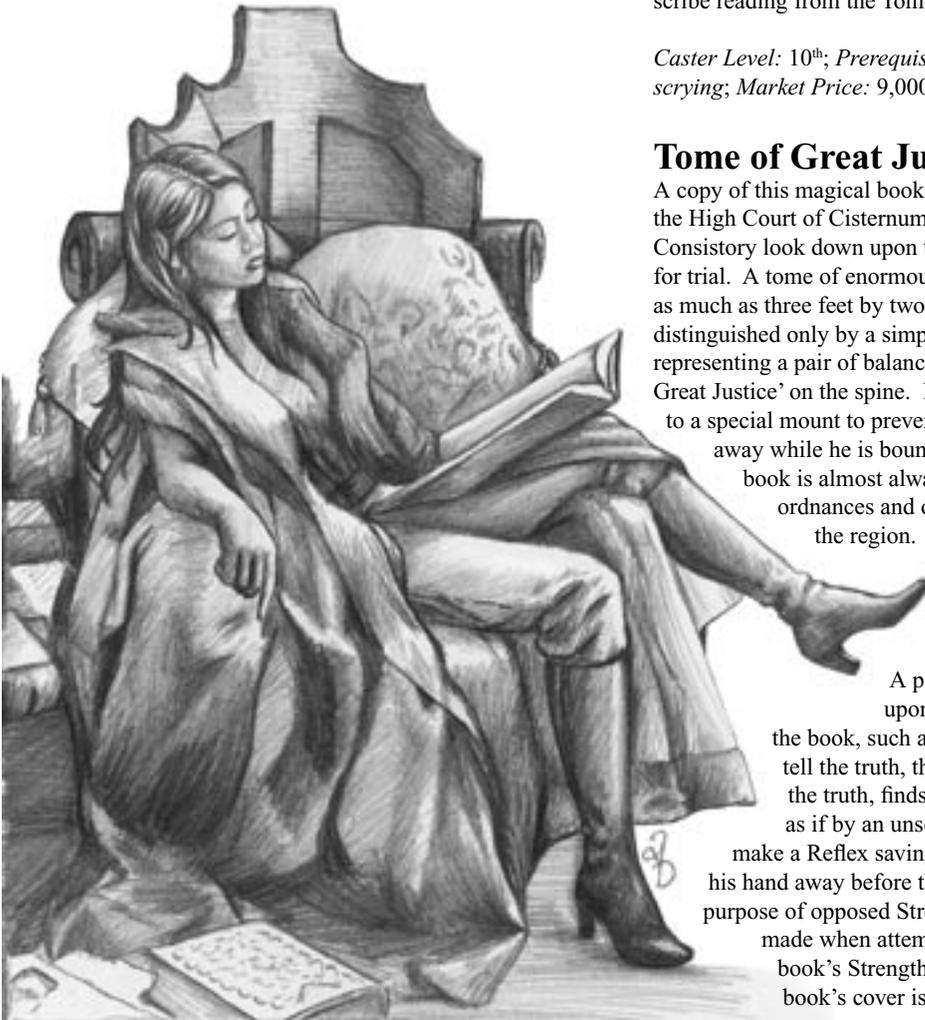
## TOMES OF MAGIC AND OTHER CURIOSITIES

ambush him, he failed to notice the rogue who was even now drawing a bead on him with a heavy crossbow’.

*Caster Level:* 11<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *legend lore*; *Market Price:* 12,000 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

### Tome of Concealment

An oddity among magical books, this largish volume is remarkable not for what it contains but for what it does *not* contain. The book is bound in leather and metal and has a deceptively simple-looking lock on the clasp that is actually very hard to pick (DC 30). Within, the book seems to be a fairly bland and nondescript work on history, such as a scholar might carry with him. One of the pages, is, however, concealed by a permanent *secret page* effect. Pronouncement of the command word reveals not a hidden page but a variety of *portable hole*, a foot by a foot and a half across and four feet deep. Though there is enough room inside to store a weapon or a small creature, there is only enough air to keep such a creature alive for 3 minutes. This book is frequently used to smuggle weapons in and out of places where books can be taken but more dangerous items cannot.



*Caster Level:* 12<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *secret page*, *plane shift*; *Market Price:* 18,000 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

### Tome of Convenience

Sometimes a wizard or other researcher, particularly those who do a lot of travelling, will need to bring a book with them for reference purposes but will not want to risk losing it or having it stolen. The *tome of convenience* is a thick book with a pewter-coloured binding and pages that seem oddly thin and translucent, like onionskin. It is found along with a large box of the same pewter colour the size of a suitcase, whose interior emits a soft blue glow.

The blank tome instantly replicates the contents of any book (other than a spellbook or magical book) placed into the pewter-coloured box, with the pages scaled down if necessary. This replication is temporary, the pages becoming blank again if the book is removed from the case. In this way, a traveller may keep his precious first-edition folio at home while studying it out in the wild. Whole books may even be transcribed in this way by libraries across the world from each other, as book after book is placed into the pewter case and replicated by a scribe reading from the Tome of Convenience.

*Caster Level:* 10<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *scrying*; *Market Price:* 9,000 gp; *Weight:* 2 lb.

### Tome of Great Justice

A copy of this magical book forms the centrepiece of the High Court of Cisternum, where the Knights of the Consistory look down upon those brought before them for trial. A tome of enormous size, sometimes measuring as much as three feet by two feet by half a foot, it is distinguished only by a simple symbol on the cover representing a pair of balances and the three words ‘For Great Justice’ on the spine. It is usually kept shackled to a special mount to prevent the prisoner from running away while he is bound to it. The writing within the book is almost always a copy of the laws, edicts, ordinances and other governing principles of the region. It is not, however, the writing within that is the important feature of the book, but its cover.

A person who places his hand upon the cold metallic cover of the book, such as when swearing an oath to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, finds he is magically bound to it as if by an unseen grappling hand. (He may make a Reflex saving throw at DC 20 to snatch his hand away before the binding occurs.) For the purpose of opposed Strength checks, such as those made when attempting to pull oneself free, the book’s Strength ability score is 24. Once the book’s cover is touched, both the book and

the character alike become wreathed in ice-blue flames, which while visually impressive have no other effect. A command word, usually found within the book itself and known to those who use it for judgement purposes, may be uttered to release a person who is bound to the book.

Any person who is bound to the book and who consciously tells a lie must make a Will saving throw (DC 25) to keep the magic of the book from detecting this. A detected lie causes the blue flames to burn red for an instant, inflicting 2d6 points of fire damage to the victim and leaving the book completely unharmed.

*Caster Level:* 18<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *hold person, discern lies, flame strike*; *Market Price:* 60,000 gp; *Weight:* 50 lb.

### Tome of the Handyman

A thick ragged-edged tome with a crossed saw and hammer on the front cover, a sprinkling of plaster dust rubbed into the leather and a cup mark on the title page, this practical tome appears at first to be a guidebook to conducting everyday repair jobs around the home and making simple items from metal and wood. The inside of the rear binding, however, has several secret trans-dimensional compartments built into it, which can be located with a Spot check (DC 25). Each of these compartments is full of a useful type of item and will always be full so long as the compartment is never emptied. At the Games Master's discretion, most of the smaller items found on the Adventuring Gear section of *Core Rulebook I* (page 108) can be found inside the tome's compartments, with nails and screws being particularly plentiful and a small tap inside the last compartment dispensing hot beverage.

The tome has one additional power. If a broken item is touched to it or laid upon it and a command word spoken, a *mending* effect (subject to the usual limitations of the spell) takes place. This may be called upon once per day.

*Caster Level:* 12<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *mending, major creation*; *Market Price:* 20,000 gp; *Weight:* 2 lb.

### Tome of the Helmsman

A sturdy work intended to be fixed to the helm of a ship, this tome enables the fellow at the wheel to keep track of whereabouts he is when on the open sea, removing the need for a navigator of any kind, wizardly or otherwise. The tome has two modes: opened to one page, it shows the surrounding territory as if it were a page on an atlas, with the ship's course marked as a red dotted line. Opened to another, the ship is shown as an animated illustration with little chubby-cheeked cherub faces puffing wind and any more immediate local features shown, such as rocks, reefs, triton castles, other ships, giant squid and such like. While the tome is invaluable to a ship's captain from a navigational point of view, it cannot detect invisible objects

and it is extremely vulnerable to water. If even a few raindrops wet the book, the picture becomes blurry and indistinct and it cannot be used again until it has been dried out for 2d4 hours. The tome's magical powers are linked to the sky; if the tome is taken indoors, it is effectively 'blind' and must be taken back out under the open sky again before it can rediscover the ship's position.

*Caster Level:* 12<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *silent image, legend lore*; *Market Price:* 30,000 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

### Tome of Hilarity

This lightweight tome has a moulded image of a jester's cap on the cover, adorned with real bells that tinkle as the book is turned. It is full of assorted jokes taken from different civilizations, some ancient, some modern, for the book seems to have some thaumaturgical means of keeping its contents up to date and relevant. It is a dangerous book to consult, for a character who opens it is liable to read one of its many thousand jokes and suffer the effects of its hilarity-inducing magic.

A character reading any joke, whether deliberately or by accident, must first make an Intelligence check against a DC of 5. If he fails the check, the joke essentially flies right over his head and he does not see what is funny about it at all. If he makes the check, he gets the joke and finds it funny; he must make a Will saving throw as if struck by a *tasha's hideous laughter* spell cast by a 10<sup>th</sup> level caster.

Jokes from the book can be used on other people. A character reading a joke aloud from the book can subject other creatures to the *tasha's hideous laughter* effect exactly as if they had read the joke in the book. The same trans-species penalty applies as for the spell. A character with any ranks in the Perform skill may add those ranks to the DC to resist the spell, to a maximum of 5 additional levels of DC. The book is good for one such joke per day.

*Caster Level:* 6<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *tasha's hideous laughter*; *Market Price:* 5,000 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

### Tome of Origami

This elegant book is square rather than rectangular, with a picture of a folded paper stork on the front. It is written and illustrated in a precise hand using black ink on thin, strong paper. Instructions are given for folding a single sheet of paper into various different complicated designs, such as a sword, a fancy box, a pegasus, a mantis and a scorpion. In the back are fifty perforated sheets (if the book is found unused), which are charged with magical energy.

If a character successfully folds one of the designs and speaks a command word (usually found encrypted within the book itself) the small paper design expands into the real article, if it has room to do so; if it does not, it remains a



folded paper model. Creating a design properly is a fiddly task, taking ten full rounds and requiring a successful Dexterity check against DC 15. Failure does not use up the paper unless it is torn. Objects created and brought to life in this way are unexceptional: creatures are treated as if called by the *summon monster* spell. Origami objects and creatures last for 1d6 hours before crumpling back into small pieces of paper again, their magic spent. They all suffer double damage from any fire-based damage.

The items that can be made are *sword, box, dagger, ladder, mask, sailboat* and *tree*.

The creatures that can be made are *pegasus, giant mantis, dolphin, stork, frog, unicorn, goblin* and *huge scorpion*.

*Caster Level:* 16<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *major creation, summon monster VI*; *Market Price:* 16,000 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

### Tome of the Dead

The sorcerer Quentin Anaxagoras, midway through a research project on the life and culture of the Perengi people of Lower Mostok, was heard exclaiming aloud to himself how much more convenient it would be if the ossified remains of the tribesmen could just *tell* him how they spent their day instead of his having to make educated guesses. There was the unmistakable silence that follows a brilliant idea spoken aloud, as all present chewed its implications over; several months later, following extensive consultation and negotiation with a nearby temple of clerics, the first *tome of the dead* was brought into use.

The book's pages are all blank when it is first created. When opened and placed opposite the skull of a dead creature (which must have been dead for over a hundred years and must have been illiterate while alive) the scholar may converse with the dead creature's remnants as per a *speak with dead* spell, with certain limitations. The dead creature answers by writing its answers in the tome; these appear magically, as if an invisible hand was writing them down. However, it is as limited in its comprehension and use of languages as it was in life. It will not understand questions put to it in a language it does not speak, nor will it be able to express itself in any more recent versions of a language than those it knew. The same restrictions apply to the use of the tome as apply to a standard *speak with dead* spell, including those having to do with alignment difference, except that the skull need not have any mouth left; it may even be missing its lower jaw altogether. The dead creature may also be conversed with for up to an hour before the effect ends and may not be used again for up to a week.

*Caster Level:* 12<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *speak with dead, legend lore*; *Market Price:* 18,000 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

### Tome of Torture

The neat, sensible, brown leather cover of this book gives no clue whatsoever to the horrors found within. It is no less than a guidebook for inflicting pain, giving horribly detailed instructions as to the most sensitive parts of the various races' bodies and designs for instruments that can inflict the most agonising wounds upon them. Not all of the techniques involve hooks, needles or branding irons; the torturer who wishes to wrack the victim without leaving a mark will find plenty of direction herein. Towards the back of the book, there are five stained pages covered with what seem to be meaningless syllables.

These pages have been imbued with a powerful and deadly magic. When the syllables are chanted aloud, a task that requires a successful Charisma check against a DC of 15, all creatures within a 30 foot radius of the speaker begin to suffer the effects of magical torture. (This reading counts as reading a scroll for the purpose of attacks of opportunity.) Each page produces a spell effect as if cast by an 18<sup>th</sup> level caster. The moment the recital begins, a high-pitched whining sound like a drill emanates within the effect radius, causing intense pain and functioning as an *emotion* spell with a despair effect. The next page subjects the target(s) to a *hold person* effect, the third to an *enervate* effect, the fourth to a *harm* effect and the last to a *phantasmal killer* effect. If at any stage a subject is killed by one of the book's effects, the book loses all its magic and becomes an ordinary (if grim) object. Otherwise, the functions may be used once per day. They must be activated in sequence, as they represent the various stages of torture. Although it is quite possible to kill a target with these effects, the idea is for the torturer to terrify the subject into giving him the information he wants, not for the subject to die and say nothing more. Saving throws against the various spell effects are made against a DC of 18.

*Caster Level:* 18<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *hold person, emotion, enervate, harm, phantasmal killer*; *Market Price:* 60,000 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

### Tome of Transfiguration

This weighty volume appears at first to be a moral tract, exhorting the benefits of a given alignment type (good, evil, lawful or chaotic). There are thus four separate types of this tome, each indistinguishable from the other except to a *detect* spell or by perusal of the contents. There is a potent magical effect woven into the pages, whereby the reading of certain key passages can cause the character to be overwhelmed by a surge of energy, effectively turning him into an avatar of the alignment type for the duration of the effect.

Irrespective of which alignment type the book belongs to, the character activating the effect receives a +2 enhancement bonus to his Strength, Constitution and Wisdom ability scores. Characters of good or evil alignment also benefit from the effects of a *holy* or *unholy*

*aura* as appropriate, whilst lawful or chaotic characters gain the extra benefit of a *shield of law* or *cloak of chaos* spell. All effects last for 18 rounds, with spell effects manifesting as if cast by an 18<sup>th</sup> level caster. Once the transfiguration magic has been activated, the book becomes inert and has no further use except as an ordinary work of its kind. A character of the opposite alignment type to that of the book who attempts to read it must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 20) or be blinded for 1d4 hours.

*Caster Level:* 20<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *holy aura* or *unholy aura* or *shield of law* or *cloak of chaos*; *Market Price:* 5,000 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

### Tome of Vampirism (Cursed)

Another book as undesirable as the Tome of Bestial Savagery, yet more stealthy than its lycanthropic cousin, the Tome of Vampirism seems at first to be a black-bound, crimson-endpapered collection of rather bleak and morbid verse by a young and unknown poet. It feeds on the information contained in other books, draining the text from the books on either side of it and leaving their pages blank, parched and brittle. It does this simply by a form of hostile osmosis, draining the ink from the books through its own cover. Books of spells and other magical tomes are especially vulnerable to this parasitic item, as it relishes the crackle and savour of magical energy. Having drained a book or two from one section, it will flutter off and settle amongst the other books on a different section, hiding itself away. Its statistics are identical to those of the Tome of Bestial Savagery (q.v.) with the exception that its bite inflicts 1d4 points of damage only. If damaged, the tome regenerates all lost hit points overnight. It is not undead and cannot be turned.

If a living person handles the Tome of Vampirism, it may attempt to drain them of vital energy. It does so stealthily, so that the effects do not manifest until later on. If the character makes a successful Spot check at DC 30, he notices that something strange is happening and may release the book before the draining effect takes place. Otherwise, the character must make a Fortitude saving throw against a DC of 15 to avoid taking 1 point of Constitution damage one hour after handling the book.

*Caster Level:* the book is a creature and may not be created; *Market Price:* 1,200 gp.

### Tome of Unholy Torment

This volume is instantly recognisable as something uncanny as it sits brooding darkly upon a shelf, with the other books slanting away as if they feared to come near it. Its covering is an extraordinarily soft black leather, with bluish-black metal fittings on the spine and corners. It is unpleasantly warm to the touch apart from the metal parts, which are just as unpleasantly cold. A *detect evil* spell reveals the unmistakable taint of evil upon the work. It has no title, but the image of three barbed hooks arranged in a

swastika-like wheel upon its cover gives some clue as to its content.

If the book is opened, the pages within instantly fade to reveal the image of a stone shaft, as if the book had in some dimension-wrangling way been the covering to a chimney or well. From the darkness at the shaft's bottom, chains with cruel hooks on the ends come zooming towards the reader.

The shaft is a small pocket dimension in which a bound kyton dwells. (See *Core Rulebook III*, Devils, for details of the kyton.) To open the book is to enter into an immediate battle of wills with its occupant. The reader must make an opposed Charisma check against the kyton, which receives a +2 circumstance bonus to its check because of its accumulated fury at being incarcerated. (If the reader is a demonologist, he may instead attempt a Control check as if he were facing a demon he had summoned.) If the reader is of evil alignment, he receives a +2 circumstance bonus to his check; if he is of good alignment, he suffers a -2 penalty.

If the character loses the contest or attempts to slam the book shut, the kyton will climb free and attempt to slaughter him; if the battle goes badly for it, it will return to its book, which it may do simply by fading away and reappearing at the bottom of its shaft. Characters may climb into the shaft to finish a battered kyton off; destroying it ejects all occupants back into the prime material, the shaft vanishes forever and the book turns blank.

If the character wins, the kyton will act as if summoned by a *lesser planar ally* spell. It will offer service to the character but will insist on being reimbursed for it. If the character does not provide the necessary payment, the kyton is released from its obligation of service and will attempt to slay the character or to find a new master.

*Caster Level:* 20<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *lesser planar ally*, *plane shift*, *binding*; *Market Price:* 30,000 gp; *Weight:* 2 lb.

### Traveller's Memograph

A picture, it is said, is worth a thousand words. Those that have seen the sun rise over the Amethystine Ice Floes of Jeroon or stared into the flaming jaws of Denigros the Ravening and lived to tell the tale are frequently lost for suitable words to tell their tales with. In order to help such souls out, the Traveller's Memograph was created. It is a folio book, somewhat on the small size and containing only fifty blank and oddly smooth pages. The cover inevitably presents the design of a human female eye, rendered in high detail.

By holding this eye up to a scene one wishes to preserve and speaking the command word, one of the pages within the folio is transformed into a perfect likeness of the scene. These ingenious books have sometimes been used to make



accurate copies of hard-to-reach or delicate items for later study. Some unscrupulous persons have even attempted to use them for blackmail purposes, though their assertion that 'the memograph does not lie' have been met with the counter-assertion that since it is a magical device, it can undoubtedly be *made* to lie.

*Caster Level:* 12<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *silent image, arcane eye; Market Price:* 7,000 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

### Miscellaneous Items

Here we will be looking at those peculiar items often found in a wizardly library, which ingenious minds have come up with so as to make their research easier or less liable to be disturbed.

### Cap of Thinking

When a wizard is struggling with an especially knotty problem, so that no matter what he does he cannot make the astral flux coefficient X achieve parity with the non-local thaumic discharge compensation field Y, he may sometimes slap on a Cap of Thinking and have another go at knuckling down to the matter. The Cap usually resembles a plain black skullcap made from velvet, as are worn by the more old-fashioned scholars. Some are more like a nightcap, being conical and floppy, made from soft cloth and sometimes with a bobble on top.

The effect of the Cap of Thinking is to provide a +3 enhancement bonus to the wearer's Intelligence ability score while he is wearing it. Unfortunately, it does not do so without cost. Intellectual ability is enhanced at the cost of acuteness of perception and social competence. The wearer suffers a -1 penalty to Wisdom and a -2 penalty to Charisma while the cap is worn. These effects may go

some way towards explaining why those hoary wizards who spend much of their time in libraries are near geniuses in terms of their mental acumen, but are fairly absent-minded and imperceptive and are either socially withdrawn or grouchy when they have visitors.

*Caster Level:* 8<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *commune or legend lore; Market Price:* 6,000 gp; *Weight:* -

### Draught of Tireless Study

This philtre of frothy brown liquid tastes bittersweet. It enables a subject to study continually for up to 36 hours without a break, ignoring the usual effects of fatigue on research. However, they must follow this marathon study session with at least 24 hours of continuous sleep or be fatigued for the next 8 hours following.

*Caster Level:* 3rd; *Prerequisites:* Brew Potion, *endurance; Market Price:* 300 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

### Orb of Location

The most sumptuous, lavish libraries will sometimes contain an *orb of location* as a luxury, whereas the more gigantic wizardly ones often have one as a necessity. The *orb* is a small glassy sphere two inches across, pulsing with internal lights to make it easy to see. Its function is to find books on demand. It hovers in the air, zipping around and shining a bright indicator beam where it intends a person to look. It is attuned to one library at a time; the attunement process takes it three days, during which time it will whizz from book to book storing the titles and authors in its crystal matrix.

The Orb of Location helps greatly when looking for useful books, such as when doing deep research or trying to find a good book on a subject. When doing deep research with the help of an Orb, the number of useful books

found is increased to the maximum for the section and a +1 circumstance bonus is granted to the one-off search for bonus books. The Orb can also act as a friendly librarian when pointing out the best book available on a given subject, so the character will not have to search for himself.



*Caster Level:* 10<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *dancing lights, locate object, fly*; *Market Price:* 12,000 gp; *Weight:* -

### Pillow of Studious Repose

Sometimes there just are not enough hours in the day to do all the studying you would want to do. Drinking stimulants such as the *draught of tireless study* is one way to eke more study time out of your schedule, but all that sleep still has to be caught up on. It was frustration with the inevitability and uselessness of sleep that led some unnamed magician of former times to come up with the *pillow of studious repose*.

A large and pleasantly plump cushion in outward appearance, it is designed to be placed on top of a single book. The information in the book then transfers itself into the sleeper's brain, enabling him to carry on researching during his hours of rest. It is even possible for a wizard to prepare spells this way, if he places his spellbook under the pillow. Only one book may be consulted at any one time; attempting to place multiple books under the pillow leads to a nasty headache overnight and a cricked neck in the morning.

*Caster Level:* 18<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *legend lore, dream*; *Market Price:* 40,000 gp; *Weight:* -

### Pinkerton's Extensible Grasper

The redoubtable gnome Tenkis Pinkerton, upon inheriting the library of a deceased wizardly colleague after said gentleman was pulverised in an encounter with a boulder trap, was dismayed to find many of the better volumes had been placed on secure upper shelves, where they were out of his reach. Grumbling ruefully at the final joke his friend had enjoyed at his expense, he set about ordering a dozen ladders on castors; but then his gnomish ingenuity began to work on the problem. By the next day he had drafted blueprints for a magical device which would not only assist in the fetching down of inaccessible books but which would find hundreds of other applications.

The *extensible grasper* resembles a mechanical human hand on the end of a telescopic rod, with a socket at the other end that resembles a boxing glove. The operator places his own hand into the socket and the hand on the other end imitates its every movement. The rod may be extended or withdrawn by pushing the hand in the socket gently forward or backward. It has a range of fifty feet when fully extended, easily enough to fetch down the most remote jar, tome or scroll case from its perch.

Leaving aside the rumoured use of the *extensible grasper* to commit acts of gross impropriety (for we would not wish to offend our reader with such scurrilous accounts) we may remark that it has been used in the past to remove valuables through open windows and to extract coinage from the pockets of the unwary. In game terms, the *grasper* may be used to perform any simple manipulation

task that could be done with a single hand, so long as the user can see what is going on at the end of the rod. A circumstance penalty of -2 is applied to any Dexterity-based task attempted in this way.

*Caster Level:* 8<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *enlarge, unseen servant*; *Market Price:* 2,000 gp; *Weight:* 2 lb.

### Spectacles of Comprehension

There are few moments more annoying to a researcher than to feel one is closing in on the one critical fact one needs to find to complete one's work, only to run headlong into a paragraph so filled with jargon, so abstruse or so badly composed that it might as well be written in Abyssal for all the sense that can be made of it. Fortunately, the *spectacles of comprehension* have been invented and many wizardly libraries have at least one pair, which is passed around the various occupants as and when needed. The *spectacles* provide a +3 insight bonus to any skill or ability score check having to do with comprehension of a difficult text in order to get at the meaning. Thus, they would help with a Decipher Script check or the Spellcraft check made to understand a scroll, but not with a Research check or a Search check to find bonus books. It is sometimes necessary, particularly in a library frequented by older wizards, to make a Search check to find the *spectacles of comprehension* in the first place...

*Caster Level:* 8<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* 6 ranks of Knowledge (arcana), Craft Wondrous Item, *tongues*; *Market Price:* 5,000 gp; *Weight:* -

### Winchurch's Automatic Amanuensis

That most scholarly and self-obsessed of wizards, Septimus Winchurch II, often found himself bereft of adequate writing implements when attempting to record his thoughts. The slowness of quill and paper annoyed him; he wished to have a second person present who could take down an account of every inspired syllable that passed his lips. He attempted to hire several secretaries but none of them could tolerate his presence for more than a week, both because of his overbearing pomposity and his fondness for pickled herring and pipe-smoking. Impatient with the frailty of mortal flesh, he built himself a magical construct who would do the job quietly and efficiently without moaning, walking out or requiring pay.

The *automatic amanuensis* is a humanoid torso made from bronze segments. Small drawers for several inkwells are present along its chestplate. Coloured inks may be fitted into these if desired. The *amanuensis* is capable of writing down everything that is spoken within its presence. It has an effective Listen skill of 25. In order to avoid filling up pages with 'um's, 'er's and coughs, it may be set to 'edit' mode via a small lever in the back, in which case it will present the dictated text fully laid out and with punctuation in place. It may record the utterances of up to three voices



## TOMES OF MAGIC AND OTHER CURIOSITIES

at once. More than this creates a 10% chance per voice per round of causing the contraption to seize up. If this happens, it will automatically restore itself to working order in 2d6 hours.

Although the original purpose of the *automatic amanuensis* was to take down the dictated works of Winchurch, similar magical contraptions have been extensively used in important court cases and in interrogations, in which every word spoken is important. There are even cases on record of conspiracies having been overheard by an *amanuensis* that was left switched on, the plotters being amazed to find their previous night's conversation presented to them in immaculate handwriting.

The other function of the *amanuensis* is to play board games, which it does extremely well, with an effective Intelligence ability score of 17 for this purpose. Some models come with a set of legs and a writing surface attachment, so that the *amanuensis* can follow its owner around and note down what is told to it.

*Caster Level:* 12<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*; *Market Price:* 40,000 gp; *Weight:* 90 lb.

### Minor and Major Artefacts

The tomes in the following section are extremely powerful and highly dangerous. The Games Master is advised to use caution when letting the players near any one of them.

### Bestiary of Unparalleled Realism

The magical nature of this folio is immediately obvious to anyone looking through it. Some of the pages contain static portraits of the monsters described, as would be found in an ordinary bestiary but others show an animated picture of the creature pacing to and fro, as if the page were a window on to a cage in a zoo where the creature was being held. The moving creatures are all actual monsters, trapped within the pages of the book in a form of *temporal stasis*, which removes any need for them to be fed or watered.

The monsters can be liberated from their prison. The way in which this is done varies from book to book: some have a specific command word per page, while some require a gesture, such as holding the book open, turning it upside

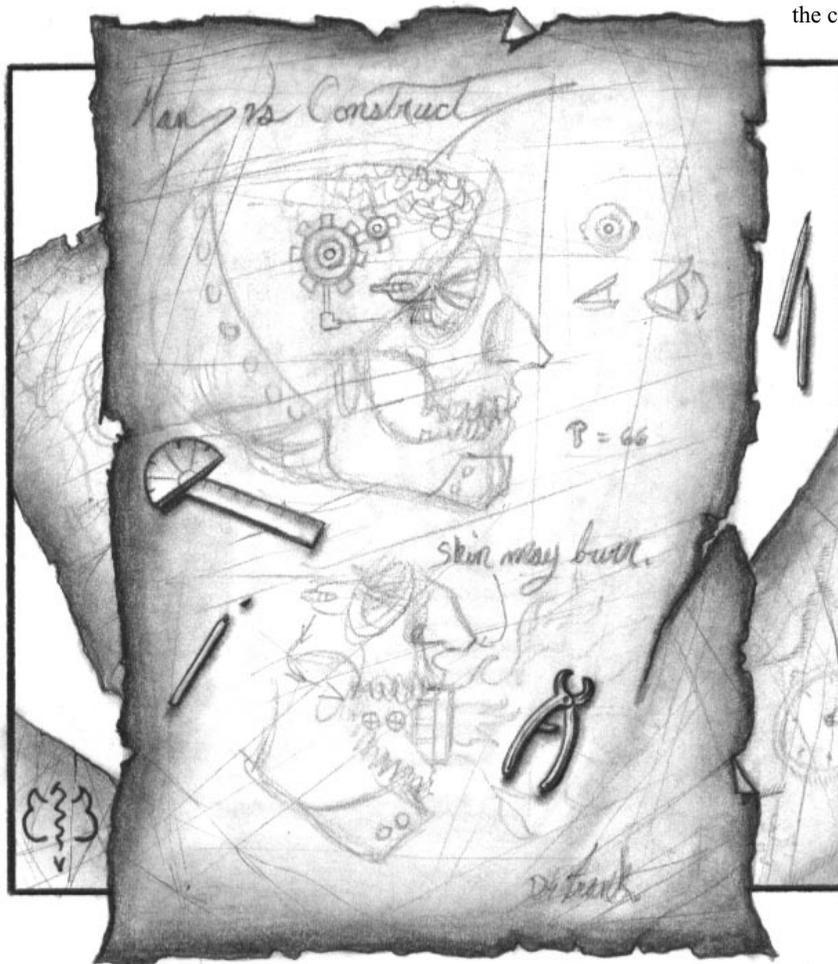
down and shaking it. The books all have the common feature that the binding is critical to the custodial magic.

If the binding is destroyed, *all* the creatures within the bestiary are released. The number and quantity of the creatures within the bestiary are left to the Games Master's discretion but it is suggested that they should be only those creatures a naturalist might encounter in the wild; giants, monstrous humanoids, magical beasts and even dragons but very few outsiders or constructs.

*Caster Level:* 18<sup>th</sup>.

### Bible of Discord

Mystery surrounds the creation of this tome. Legend has it that it was brought back from a distant plane by a band of amoral and depraved pirates, voyagers between the worlds and worshippers of a fire-haired Goddess of Chaos. In it they wrote the



sum of their deranged wisdom, scrawling anything from drunken babble to intricately beautiful paintings upon its shifting, chimerical pages. It has no constant form, changing shape and size from moment to moment, though it will occasionally settle into one of three favourite forms; a thin book with a golden apple on the front, an armoured tome with an eight-pointed star adorning it and a blood-red book with the face of a laughing goddess embossed upon it. When on the prime material plane, the book is but an emanation of its true self. If the book is destroyed, such as by being burned or *disintegrated*, it will retreat to its own plane (much like a demon or devil) until it can form a new body for itself.

A spellcaster of chaotic alignment with access to the Bible of Discord may freely cast any of the chaos domain spells from the book as if from a scroll; the spells are all written at a caster level of 20 and each one may be used three times per day. A character of lawful alignment who reads the book must make a Will saving throw (DC 15) or suffer one of two possible effects, determined randomly: either loss of 1d6x1000 experience points or a *polymorph any object* effect which transforms them into a fruit, most usually a banana, though pineapples have been known.

As well as this ability, the book is rumoured to possess powers of its own. It is a sentient being in its own right, albeit a completely insane sentient being. The independent powers of the Bible of Discord are left to the Games Master to determine, as they have the potential to wreck a campaign. It has been known to provoke anything from *earthquakes* lasting several hours, causing the destruction of cities, to the random opening of *gates* to both the planes of lawful good and chaotic evil simultaneously, calling in potent archons and vast demons to the same place. Magical investigations have revealed that the Bible of Discord does this 'for a laugh' or 'to see who would win in a fight'.

*Caster Level:* 19<sup>th</sup>.

## Folio of Astounding Tattoos

This exotic-looking folio appears to have been bound in human skin and has intertwined tribal designs on the front and back covers. Within are page after page of tattoo designs in brilliant, vibrant colours. Even a cursory examination reveals that these tattoos are moving very slightly, as if rustled by a faint breeze. A character who investigates the book further may make a Spot check (DC 20) to notice that the tattoos seem to be removable. Each tattoo in the book may be peeled from its page, after which it resembles a transparent coloured film that undulates slightly in the hand. If it is then applied to living flesh, it grafts itself into place immediately and leaves the recipient with a vivid tattoo that appears to have been there for several months.

Most of the *tattoos* are cosmetic in nature but there are some that have magical properties. These last for three days before fading. Although the powers do not last, the *tattoo* itself does. A character cannot apply a new *tattoo* over an old one; there must be at least a square foot of ink-free skin available for a tattoo to be applied. There are three styles of each magical tattoo included in the book: for example, there is one leaping unicorn, one seated unicorn and one stylised silhouette unicorn, all of which confer the unicorn tattoo powers. Only one *tattoo* may confer benefits to a player at any one time. There are, at most, fifty total *tattoos* in the book.

**Coyote:** The character gains a +4 enhancement bonus to his Dexterity ability score, increases his base speed by 10 ft. and gains a +4 insight bonus to all Bluff and Diplomacy checks.

**Dice or Playing Cards:** The character gains a +4 Luck bonus to all Reflex saving throws.

**Dragon:** The character gains a +4 enhancement bonus to his Charisma ability score, a natural armour bonus of +2 to his armour class and a +3 enhancement bonus to all attack and damage rolls.

**Mermaid:** The character gains a +5 insight bonus to all Perform, Profession: Sailor and Swim checks.

**Raven:** The character gains a +4 enhancement bonus to his Wisdom ability score, increases his base speed by 10 ft. and gains a +4 insight bonus to all Scry and Spellcraft checks.

**Skull:** The character gains a +4 enhancement bonus to his Constitution ability score and receives a +4 circumstance bonus to all Intimidate and Ride checks.

**Spider:** The character gains a +4 enhancement bonus to his Intelligence ability score and receives a +4 insight bonus to all Climb, Move Silently, Hide and Craft skill checks.

**Tiger:** The character gains a +4 enhancement bonus to his Strength ability score, increases his base speed by 10 ft. and may inflict the next highest die in damage when making an unarmed attack.

**Tribal Armband Pattern:** The character gains a +4 resistance bonus to all Fortitude saving throws.

*Caster Level:* 20<sup>th</sup>.



# CUSTOMISING LIBRARIES

No two libraries are alike. There are several features to incorporate and customise when a library is being designed; these will ensure that your game-world libraries are more than just collections of bookshelves. There is always more to a library than meets the eye. As the saying goes, a book should not be judged by the cover alone.

## Browsers

The other people using a library at the same time as you can be some of its most interesting features. The Games Master can use the library setting to foreshadow or introduce important non-player characters, or just to create a bit of diversionary role-playing opportunity. Typical characters to find might be the gaunt young woman working intently with a pile of books beside her, the cloaked figure hidden in shadow who has not turned a page of the book he pretends to read in the last five hours or the old man rocking back and forth cackling to himself with an open folio on his lap.

## The Librarian

The librarian is either a member of the class associated with the library (such as a cleric in a clerical library) or

an Expert, usually of at least 6<sup>th</sup> level. The personality of the chief librarian influences the atmosphere of the whole place. He or she will always have a retinue of assistants, usually experts of between first and third level.

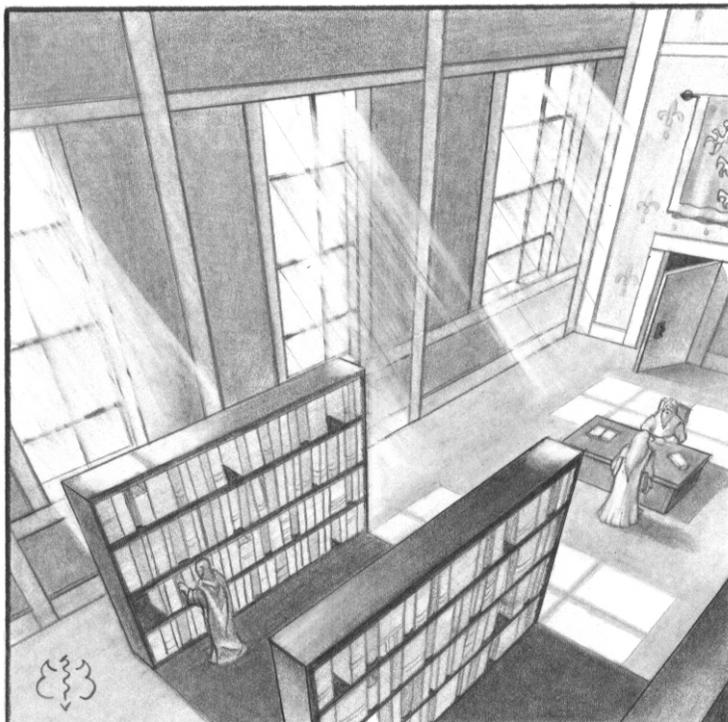
It is an unfortunate feature of the librarian profession that those called to it have a reputation for being austere and strict. They have the task of restoring order, over and over again, to a collection of precious items whose value is often overlooked, so a lack of patience is understandable. Nonetheless, they are often approachable people. Nothing is more likely to endear you to a librarian than an express respect for learning. Any character who attempts to use a Charisma based skill on a librarian (such as a Bluff check to persuade him than he has every right to consult the dark tomes in the private room) suffers a -2 circumstance penalty if he is carrying a weapon, is physically untidy or obviously wounded. Such people set a librarian's alarm bells ringing. By contrast, a character who is wearing scholarly or wizardly garb or a clean set of bards' travelling garments is likely to incur a +2 circumstance bonus to such checks.

Every librarian will have rules by which the library is run; these will always include 'no unnecessary noise', 'no spellcasting' and 'no eating or drinking', the latter caution including the quaffing of potions. If characters break the rules or cause disturbance in any other way, the librarian will either issue a stern warning or throw them out, possibly calling upon the library's security.

Librarians are not necessarily human or humanoid. As a change from the usual encounters expected by players, consider having a librarian who is a non-evil ogre mage or a sphinx. An ancient library might be presided over by a vampire or even by a dragon, who could use his tail to point researchers to the sections they were looking for.

## Library Security

Only well-frequented libraries or those that contain many precious books bother with security. Noble libraries are usually kept locked up and public libraries rarely contain anything worth stealing. The bards themselves usually defend bardic libraries, while wizardly and clerical libraries are most usually defended by constructs. Wizards often opt for stone golems and shield guardians, whereas clerics prefer to use clay golems to defend their archives. There are usually at least two of these present. Hapless would-be thieves often mistake these for statues.



## Portraits, Framed Pages and Ornaments

Being large high-walled spaces, libraries often have a good deal of room left on the walls above shelf level. It is customary to fill this space with portraits of the library's founders, former luminaries, noted benefactors of the library and other persons of note. On the lower levels, single framed pages are sometimes found, preserving letters from famous people, such as a piece of correspondence from a national hero to his wife at home, or important manuscripts such as the first draft of a famous bardic song. Other ornaments are stationed on pedestals, such as the Platonic Solids (look no further than the average set of polyhedral dice to find these!) marble busts, vases of flowers and sources of ambient light.

## Reading Room

Just about any library other than noble or guild libraries will have a special room where rare, dangerous or precious manuscripts may be consulted under close supervision. Precautions will be taken when the visitor is escorted into the room; the library security will definitely be present. Books fetched from the secure vault are brought here. Only a limited amount of study time is allowed.

## Secret Passages

Pull the right book and the bookcase swings open to reveal a shadowy tunnel beyond; the image is one of the most recognisable clichés of mystery fiction, second only to the secret passage which is opened by pulling on a torch sconce. Libraries are expected to have secret rooms in them, though the purpose of each room varies depending on the library itself. Some will contain nothing more remarkable than a few private papers or a valuable painting or two; some are even jokes, such as the secret room where the wizards go to smoke a surreptitious pipe or have a drink and a game of cards. Others are far more sinister. Noble libraries could contain a secret room where an insane relative is kept, or where the bony remains of a would-be seducer of one of the family's daughters are still chained to the floor. Wizardly libraries use secret rooms to store spellbooks with high-level spells in them, so as to avoid Warpstress. Some such libraries have hidden workshops, a necessity when the wizards wish to build flesh golems or other similar constructs and do not want too many people to know about it.

A few libraries will contain more than one secret passage. The first is difficult to find, the second next to impossible. It has not escaped the attention of library owners that the library is the first place where curious persons will look for secret passages. They thus set up a secret room filled with convincingly valuable goods, so that anyone finding it will think they have found all there is to find. The real secret room will be concealed by a far more devious stratagem.

There are many ways to conceal a secret passage in a library:

- † Use a variant on the old 'pull the book' technique; so that pulling the book outwards opens the bookcase on to one room, while counter-intuitively pushing it inwards opens the next bookcase along on to a different room.
- † Have a large portrait be an empty frame, the picture within being illusory. Situate this nine feet up the wall, so that it is not easy to examine. Have plenty of ladders and sliding steps around; after all, the users of the secret passageway have to get up there somehow.
- † Instead of having a book as a lever, give one of the shelves at the bottom of a bookcase a false back. An exploring character will first have to remove all the books from that shelf and then prise the backboard away to reveal the crawlspace or storage cavity beyond.
- † Have a heavy fixed chair or comfortable pivoted seat be the trigger, so that if it is rotated or rocked back on the proper number of times, a panel opens or the chair sinks down into a chamber below.
- † Have a dimension door effect situated permanently just off a high balcony, so that a character has to step out into thin air before his feet pass through the dimension door and on to a staircase below (or above) the library. Anyone watching will see him seem to walk off the rail and vanish down an invisible stair.
- † If the library is defended by a construct such as a golem, locate the passage behind an enormous heavy object. The proper commands given to the construct compel it to move the obstacle aside with its tremendous strength, a task few characters could manage.

## Secure Vault

Some libraries opt to have a chamber which is not concealed by secrecy but by thick armouring and elaborate locks, with some magical protections usually added to boot. The secure vault will house precious nonmagical texts like incunabula, dangerous magical books such as Liber HOPH vel Serpens or any spellbook containing eighth level spells or above.

## Shrines

Libraries will sometimes keep lights burning in small alcoves in memory of former contributors, departed scholars or wizardly colleagues who have died. Images of deities whose particular domain is learning, study or order are also revered. These calm, silent places add a hallowed atmosphere to a library. They are good places to meditate, make an offering or prepare spells. Occasionally, shrines will be erected to an abstract concept, sometimes symbolised by a 'muse', such as Mathematics, Epic Poetry or Harmony.



### Symbols and Inscriptions

The larger libraries have often had a good deal of work put into them; they have been built to last, not only to store books but to commemorate the process of study itself. It is not unusual to find the library's motto or a similar inspirational phrase set around the upper storey, worked into a mosaic on the floor or spelled out in brass letters across the tops of the shelves. Typical mottoes are 'Man is The Measure of All Things', 'Through Study to the Divine', 'Wisdom is More Precious Than Pearls' and 'A Surpassing Power There Is In Silence'.

### Traps

The traps found in libraries are always non-destructive, for obvious reasons. One does not want to go detonating acid or fire all over the place when there are vulnerable manuscripts to preserve. As a rule, traps in a wizardly or clerical will be intended to immobilise the target or slow him down so that the library security golems can catch up with him and apprehend him. Golems are not very fast-moving, so the traps are intended to compensate for this. Gas, glyph and symbol traps are common, the latter two being especially easy to secrete in a library.

### Unusual Information Storage

Most cultures stored information by making marks on a surface, but why not involve some that did not? For example, the Games Master could include a system of metallic heads, which speak the information aloud - the records being kept on engraved copper discs made thousands of years ago. Large crystals might have texts embedded within in a refractive matrix, requiring only strong light to project their contents against the wall. Silvery rings could, when spun or struck, play out events in a shimmering hologram-like display above them. Let your imagination run free; there are all sorts of outlandish ideas that can be included in a library and credited to 'long lost cultures' or 'those who went before'.

### Desiccating Dust

This is one of the hazards of working in libraries that have a great number of older volumes. Desiccating dust is a form of fungal parasite that clings to the insides of book covers, especially those whose pages are made of papyrus or low quality parchment. It has the effect of sucking moisture from living tissue, making flesh brittle and joints stiff and immovable.

If a book has become infected with desiccating dust, a cloud of the stuff goes up when it is first opened. All within 10 feet of the cloud must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) or take 1d6 points of temporary Dexterity damage. A second Fortitude saving throw (DC 15) is required one minute later, even from those who made the first saving throw, to avoid taking a further 2d6 points of temporary Dexterity damage. Unless the victim drinks at least one pint of water within one hour of suffering

Dexterity damage from the dust, one point of Dexterity is permanently lost.

Those who have been exposed to repeated doses of the dust (and have lost multiple points of Dexterity by not drinking water afterwards) develop extensive baldness, drawn-back lips and sunken eyes. Their bones creak painfully as they move and they begin to resemble living mummies, the texture of their skin being much like that of parchment.

The threat of desiccating dust can be bypassed by opening suspicious volumes upside down over a bowl of water. Spraying water over a volume, or dunking the volume into water, also renders the dust inert but is highly likely to turn the pages into a sodden unrecoverable mess, too.

## WARPSTRESS

In our final section, we will take a brief look at the cause of most of those unusual phenomena that manifest within wizardly and religious libraries and account for the curious legends attached to so many of them. In particular, we will look at the hazards attendant upon storing up great piles of magical books as if they were treasure. There is a very good reason why wizards do not stockpile spellbooks.

### The Causes of Warpstress

Some people find libraries to be oppressive places, unable to bear the thought of millions of words in thousands of pages surrounding them on all sides. While there is not generally anything to fear in a mundane library, libraries that specialise in books of a magical nature do present a very real cause for concern. Magic is not a stable force. Fixing it into a vessel, such as a scroll or a book, only contains it without altogether curbing it; the radiation picked up by a detect magic spell is proof enough that some leakage takes place.

A completed spellbook of one hundred pages will contain approximately fifty levels of spells. Magicians have found in practice that storing more than five hundred levels of spells in magical books (including spellbooks and spell scrolls) within a region tentatively estimated as a ten-foot radius places a strain upon the membrane separating the prime material plane from the other planes. This strain is known as 'warpstress' and can produce various undesirable results.

Warpstress occurs most frequently when a person has stored several magical books in the same area and is not aware of the phenomenon. To detect Warpstress, which manifests initially as a feeling that 'something, somewhere nearby, is very wrong', a character must succeed at a Wisdom check at DC 15. If he has more than two ranks in Knowledge (the planes) he receives a +2 synergy bonus to this check.

Damage caused by built-up Warpstress does not automatically fade away once the books that caused the problem are removed. Like a strained cloth placed under pressure, the

etheric membrane can unravel even further if the trauma is not found and repaired. A region with a Warpstress rating of up to 5 has a 50% chance per day of spontaneously healing all Warpstress damage, dispelling the breach; if Warpstress is as high as 6, the breach is only going to get worse.

Any given area is allocated a Warpstress Rating the moment the requisite number of magical books is brought together within the area of effect. The below modifiers apply:

The effects of Warpstress are manifold. Characters using the library late at night may hear odd noises and snatches of conversation in unknown tongues. Shadowy figures are seen moving among the shelves. Books rearrange themselves overnight for no reason, or are found in the morning laid out in a snowflake pattern on the floor. To determine the daily effect of mounting Warpstress, roll D10, add the Warpstress rating and consult the list below. The effects take place anywhere in the library, not just within the stressed area.

Below 10: One corridor or aisle within 200 ft. of the afflicted area is filled with dancing lights or ghost sounds for one hour per day.

10-12: Miniaturised weather effects take place inside the library for up to thirty seconds at a time. Storm clouds flash tiny bolts of lightning, rain falls and fog gathers around the knees of those browsing the shelves.

12-13: Vast amounts of static electricity build up in the area. Hair begins to stand on end and metal objects deliver a shock (1d4 points of electrical damage). The effects last for an hour.

14-15: From one to four ghosts (see Core Rulebook III) take up temporary residence in the library, curious about the unusual etheric activity. They are not hostile unless attacked.

16-17: An item of furniture within 100 feet of the stressed area is subjected to an animate object effect and goes on a rampage, viciously attacking anyone who comes near it.

### Warpstress Modifiers

Event	Modifier to Warpstress
Every day Warpstress left unchecked	+1
More than 700 levels of spells in 10 ft. radius	+2
More than 900 levels of spells in 10 ft. radius	+4
Magical book or scroll (other than spellbook or spell scroll) in 10 ft. radius, such as tome of anatomical revelation or scroll of cartography	+3
Summoning spell cast within 100 ft. of Warpstress area	+1 per level of summoning
Plane Shift cast within 100 ft. of Warpstress area	+6
Gate spell cast within 100 ft. of Warpstress area	+10
Extreme emotions (hate, anger, fear) within 100 ft. of Warpstress area	+1
Bloodshed within 100 ft. of Warpstress area	+1
Death within 100 ft. of Warpstress area	+2
Attempting to cause direct damage to the breach, such as with a ghost touch weapon (the breach is a Large stationary target)	+ half of all damage dealt

18-19: In a region within 100 feet of the breach, books begin to fire themselves off the shelves, like projectiles shot from cannon. Shelves seem to war with one another, bombarding each other with their contents. After ten minutes, the effects cease. Characters passing into range may be targeted: the shelves attack with a ranged attack bonus of +4. Hardbacks inflict 1d4 subdual damage if they hit, whereas tomes fitted with metal bindings inflict 1d8 actual damage.

20-21: An ethereal marauder (see Core Rulebook III) is drawn towards the breach and manifests itself within the library, taking advantage of the presence of any characters to go hunting for food.

22-23: A person or creature within 100 feet of the breach is subjected to an enlarge or reduce effect as if cast by a 5<sup>th</sup> level caster.

24-25: From two to five phase spiders (see Core Rulebook III) phase in from the ethereal plane, attracted by the breach and hungry for fresh meat.

26-27: A section of wall, ceiling or floor within 100 feet of the breach is subjected to a passwall effect, possibly causing persons or furniture to fall into the chambers below. The passwall remains open for ten minutes before closing itself.

28-29: A prismatic spray erupts from the breach (giving away its location) in a randomly determined direction as if cast by an 18<sup>th</sup> level caster.



### Warpstress Overload

If Warpstress ever reaches 30, the results are devastating. A hole is punched straight through the interplanar barrier, causing lurid light of impossible colours to burst forth from the afflicted sector of the library, utterly consuming all the magical books (including scrolls) within a fifty-foot radius. A rippling blast of magical energy spreads out from the breach, causing 6d8 points of damage to all within the same area (a Reflex saving throw against DC 15 is allowed for half damage). The next round, a gate effect opens to a plane determined at random and one of its denizens of up to 18 hit dice is pulled through. If the magical books contained a majority of spells of a particular alignment type, then the gate has a 75% chance to break through to the opposite aligned plane. The round after the gate opens, the warpstress is completely dissipated and the etheric breach is healed.

### Healing Warpstress

The breach itself is an incorporeal phenomenon. A character with the ability to perceive ethereal phenomena may see it as it is; a ragged (but not quite burst) rip in the etheric membrane, as if something heavy had been pressing into it.

Warpstress is best tackled by targeting it with dispel magic. The breach has an effective caster level equal to its Warpstress rating minus ten. Each successful use of dispel magic reduces the breach's Warpstress rating by 1d4 plus the spellcaster's Intelligence modifier. An antimagic field applied in the area has the same effect. A dimensional anchor spell does not heal the breach but it does stop it from getting any worse (so long as the books have been removed) and prevents any Warpstress effects from taking place that day.

The moon had risen, like a hole cut out of blue paper; some stars made pinhole twinkles in the layer of darkness beyond. Beneath, a landscape of dunes and white pyramids, a dead camel and two exhausted elves, one of whom was me.

The Wanderer looked gaunt and unearthly in the brilliance from his staff-tip. That morning, he had barely eaten, taking only a little wine and water. I began to think he was subsisting on his nervous energy alone. It annoyed me. We were at a critical stage of our mission and physical frailty was the last thing we needed, with everything else we had riding on our heels.

Abruptly he smiled; it was not a pleasant sight. He whispered something I could not hear and knocked with his staff on the stone. There was a sound of primordial mechanisms brought back to life and complaining violently about it; something sank. Like ink tipped into a tray, shadow rapidly filled up a deepening rectangular section.

'Welcome, young apprentice, to the Library of Ezulkun,' he said and coughed. 'I only hope the librarian still remembers me.'

My first thought was this is a tomb, not a library. The shaft ran downwards, ornamented on either side by friezes of gods I had never heard of and heiroglyphs so pictorial that I was not sure if they represented a language or some kind of drama in images. The sand had spilled a ways inside, but soon our worn heels were clicking on the bare marble. The place felt sterile, utterly dead. Still, I was damned if I was going to play the intimidated apprentice.

We went on for a long, long time, so much so that I was wondering to myself if we had walked into some kind of magical defence mechanism that repeated the same stretch of corridor over and over again, when the library opened up before us. It was like the inside of some titanic clock, a layered masterpiece of rods and catwalks and rotating circular shelves, with uncountable thousands of glassy cylinders – rank upon rank of them – reaching high into the darkness. The mechanism was still working, with grabs plucking cylinders from their housings and dropping them into tubes, while others dropped like ovipositors from overhead and plopped cylinders back in what I assumed were their proper places.

Inside every cylinder was a parchment scroll.

I remembered to breathe.

The breath I had remembered to take expelled itself as a scream. Something was filling my vision, a nightmare of wavering legs and feelers. I saw goggling compound eyes the size of footballs, a huge furry body looming over me. Then there was darkness.

I thought for a moment I had passed out, but realised that if I was thinking that, I could not have done. I had simply fallen backwards into a foetal position. Though every instinct screamed at me not to open my eyes, I did so anyway.

It was still there. It was towering over the Wanderer, who turned and looked at me.

'Apprentice, I would like you to meet Brobeshkilub, an old associate of mine. He is librarian here. He asks you to forgive him for startling you, and assures you his appearance belies his contemplative nature.'

# HELP FOR GAMES MASTERS

In our penultimate section, we will look at ways to introduce libraries and their contents into the campaign. In most games, they are merely set dressing, an environment where players can find the occasional magical book or the inevitable secret passage. Whatever else is done in libraries, players very rarely read in them. The advice in this chapter should help the Games Master change that sorry state of affairs!

## Plot Hooks and Other Applications

Let us be frank: libraries are not the first place one thinks about when contemplating an exciting adventure. The classic image of a library is of regimented order, enforced silence and frightening harridans with grey hair in a bun. How, then, can libraries be brought into the game in such a way as to enrich the session, rather than bore the players rigid?

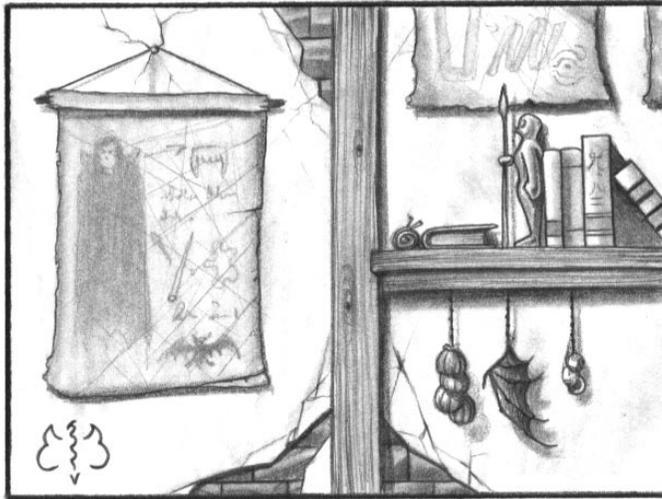
## Books as Treasure

Treasure is usually conceived of as gold, jewellery or magical items, but artworks such as rare books are treasure too. The rarity of an item can give it a value much higher than the mere material worth of its components. If you want to start your players down the road to library use, throw in a particularly interesting reference book, even perhaps a definitive work, as part of the haul in some other adventure. It is best if you can make this a book they will be able to use and derive benefit from, such as something to help the party rogue disable traps, or a manual to help another character become semi-proficient with a new weapon. Once the players realise that a book does not have to be magical to be interesting, they may come to look at libraries with newfound respect.

## The Ally's Library

A good way to get the players used to working in a library and using its resources is to have them hired to do a complicated job by a patron, who tells them that 'the library is at their disposal'. As the patron has made something of a point of this, the players will naturally be curious as to what the library could possibly be good for. With a helpful librarian to assist them, they will soon get the knack of browsing the shelves and conducting research.





As an alternative, the players could come into sudden possession of a library of their own. Important foes of the evil genius or arch-conspirator type almost always have a library to consult; what happens to the books when the players have finished the adversary off? Usually, there is nothing more than a cursory search for secret passages or magical books, but a few hints as to the value and social desirability of libraries could be enough to get at least one of the players to make the library his own.

### Knowledge is Power

It was only by consulting the ancient scrolls held in a secure library that a particularly famous wizard was able to determine the significance of the gold ring held by his diminutive friend. There are some questions that cannot be answered with quick-fix solutions like an identify spell or a bard's Lore ability. Get the players used to the idea of consulting the books by presenting them with tantalising enigmas that they have a vested interest in solving. It does not hurt to have a friendly non-player character offer the use of a wizardly or noble library (if the players are out in the sticks) or point them in the direction of one (if they are in a major city).

Who was that enigmatic woman who boarded the coach shortly after the players' patron was murdered? Maybe the crest on the coach is in a book on the local noble families. Does the local baron have any skeletons in his closet? It is possible that the archives in the local library have some letters in the loose documents section that might throw something up. Are there any legends of local treasure hordes that might enliven a dull afternoon? Well, there is always the Folklore section to browse through. What was the nameless thing, half spider and half wolf, that dragged young Bloxham out of his cot in the middle of the night? Best check the bestiaries and have a look at Folklore while you are at it; maybe it is not nameless after all.

Sometimes the path of an adventure will simply run straight through the library. When designing an adventure,

here is a fine line to be trodden between leading the players by the nose and leaving them out in the cold with no leads, or at least none that they recognise. Forcing the players' hands by obliging them to go and do some research may seem a little heavy, but it is at least realistic. The world does not revolve around the players; to drop clues into their path just spoils the suspension of disbelief and lessens the reward of figuring things out for themselves.

There will be times when there will be nothing to go on but the information that has already been gathered. If the players have the idea that libraries are places where you can (with a little work) turn a weak lead into a strong lead, then they will come to see the local library as the place to go when they are fresh out of ideas.

### Information as Key

There are many conceivable cases where knowing just one fact can make the difference between victory and defeat. In a fantasy game environment, this can be as short as a single word. Words can have immense power in a world where magic works. Magic items often need command words to activate them. Some need command words to shut them down! The hunt for a single word can be the object of an epic quest. In the language of classic science fiction, the words that come to mind are 'Klaatu Barada Nikto'. Fantasy literature is full of accounts of ancient words of power that have been lost. Some legends, such as those of the Qabalah in the real world, even state that the universe itself was called into being as an act of speech.

There is a tradition that powerful beings can be bargained with, even faced down, if their true names are known. It is said among magicians that 'the name of a thing is the thing and has the power of the thing'. Demons, devils and dragons are especially likely to resent the use of their true names; only the most ancient libraries are likely to have any record of such arcane things. Some beings are crafty and change their everyday names several times over the course of their long lives, so as to give the impression that they are not a classic figure of the myths whose true name is known. For a superb piece of fiction in which the true name of a creature is of paramount importance, see *A Wizard of Earthsea* by Ursula K. LeGuin.

### The Library as Encounter Setting

The library setting has the great advantage that the Games Master can at any moment turn it from the background to a routine task (conducting research) to an arena for adventure and exploration. The library is unusual in that it is usually a very large chamber with more than one level to it, with a great deal of open space in some areas (such as the void above the first level of bookcases) and hardly any room to manoeuvre in others.

As an environment, it has plenty of features to spice up an encounter. As well as the various aisles that effectively constitute a small labyrinth in their own right, there are precarious ladders to climb, enormous windows to avoid swinging through, sliding steps to shove in an opponent's path, huge top-heavy shelves to push over (possibly causing a domino effect), secret passages to open, banisters to slide down, balconies to leap from and a great many shadows to hide in. Both chaotic combats and hide-and-seek searches are excellent encounters to include in a library. For extra challenge, set up an encounter where the players will need to do something difficult or dangerous, such as steal an item, abduct a person or carry out an assassination, in a library which is already being used by wizards who will resent any disturbance. Alternatively, have them break into the place at night to steal a valuable book.

Long-deserted libraries are some of the most atmospheric locations you can draw upon. Libraries have a reputation for being haunted and full of unwholesome secrets. Often it is very hard to see what is lurking behind the next aisle.

## Maps, Plans and Advance Information

Present your players with an obstacle which is just too tough for them and they will stay up all night to find a way around it. Nobody likes to be presented with a cut and dried linear plan of how they are expected to go about doing something. That just turns an adventure into an egg and spoon race, where the challenge is simply to do the expected tasks in the expected order without dying. However, if players have an idea of the territory that lies ahead of them rather than a set route, they will think up all manner of ingenious ways to make tactical use of the territory. Part of the pleasure in gaming for the players is making use of the abilities and items their characters have.

For this reason, encouraging the players to find out information in advance is both an excellent way to get them back into the library and a sure way to get them thinking about their next move. The classic example is when a group needs to get into a building and goes to dig up a floor plan from a library archive. By including this element in a 'heist' type adventure, you not only give the players a chance to plan things out in advance, you let them confront dangers that they would otherwise have no hope of dealing with. There is a particular kind of reward in using your wits to get by an adversary without resorting to unthinking violence.

It is also a curious feature of gaming that players will often spend five times as long discussing a potentially dangerous situation and the best way of dealing with it as they do in actually dealing with it. The more advance information they have, the more they can imagine what is in store for them; the more their imagination can work on a future encounter, the easier it is for the Games Master to create an atmosphere of suspense and challenge. If, for example, the players are just entering an underground complex that

they have had a map of for the last week of game time, the Games Master can emphasise how the place looks in real life, taking careful note to point out such things as blocked-up passageways and other altered features. Paradoxically, if the players have an idea of what is in store for them, they become more apprehensive rather than less.

## Dealing With Unexpected Queries

The Games Master cannot be expected to detail every part of a non-player character's life in advance or to prepare a ground plan of every building in a city in case the players want to look it up. So, when a player is enthusiastically pursuing what he thinks is a hot lead and the rolls indicate that he is getting answers to his questions, it is sometimes difficult to know what to tell him.

In many cases, the Games Master's only option is to improvise. It is perfectly legitimate to tell a player that the floor plan he has found will not be ready until the next game session; most players would rather have a believable set of diagrams that have taken time to construct than one which has been dashed off on the spur of the moment because the players wanted to see *something*.

Having stated that, marvellous plot ideas can arise from ideas that just pop into your head when making up answers to a player's queries. It is even possible that a player might come up with a plot that works better than the one you had in mind, in which case (if you can) feel free to substitute the player's 'ingenious discovery' for what you originally had in mind. One word of caution, though: *annotate*. Keep notes of everything you tell the players while they are doing research, however trivial it may seem at the time. You can't be expected to think of everything in advance, but when it comes down to it, they don't know which parts you have prepared a month ago and which ones you just made up on the spot. The point is that you have to be equally consistent with either. If, for example, you tell a player that a building has no rear exit and then he finds one when he goes to scope the building out on the next game session, he is apt to be a little annoyed; rightly so, since he is trusting to the consistency of your game world when formulating his plan and if you change your mind, he has wasted his time.

It is especially important to keep track of any *names* you conjure up on the spur of the moment. Make sure all of these are carefully noted. Remember, the players don't care if you planned it out or if you just made it up, so long as it is self-consistent.

If a player's query really does call for some detailed work which will have to wait until the next session and the Games Master does not want the players to know this, there are a number of tricks that can be used. A player can discover that the page he was looking for has been torn out of the book or that the volume he needs has mysteriously gone missing from the library.



# RULES SUMMARY

## BROWSE THE SHELVES

Choose one or more sections to browse, taking an hour to wander through each one. Make an Intelligence check (DC 10) per section studied. If you succeed, you may act as if you had 1d4 Knowledge skill ranks on matters covered by that section while you remain in the library. This method may only be used to answer general queries, not matters regarding individual people or items.

## DEEP RESEARCH

Formulate your specialist subject as a category within a subsection. Choose from as many potentially relevant sections as you wish, at the Games Master's discretion. Make an Intelligence check (DC 10) to find the useful books in each section as you visit them. If the librarian or a qualified assistant is helping you or you are intimately familiar with the library, you do not need to make this check.

Roll to see how many useful books you find. A poor section yields 1d2-1 useful books, a general section yields 1d3-1 useful books and a specialist subsection yields 1d8-1 useful books, to a minimum of 0 in each instance. Browsing a section to find useful books takes 1d3 hours per section browsed.

If it is your first trawl through the shelves looking for books on this subject, make a Search check to locate other books with bearing on the subject, with the results of the check translating into a set of bonus books. Every three points above 14 on the Search check result grants a bonus book, rounded down. This special Search check takes no extra time.

The number of useful books in the pile then becomes your temporary ranks in Knowledge (your subject).

To avoid fatigue when studying, make a successful Concentration check every hour past eight hours, with the DC beginning at 15 and increasing by 3 for every hour spent in research thereafter. Failure means you become fatigued (see *Core Rulebook II*) and receive a circumstance penalty of -4 to any Intelligence-based ability checks or skill checks until you have had a full night's rest.

## Grades of Manual or Reference Book Present in a Library or Store

Games Master determines which grades of book are present. A library with a General section on any one subject automatically has 1d12 Average and 1d4 Good books on that subject; if it has any subsections, it will also contain one Excellent book and has a cumulative 10% chance per subsection of having the appropriate definitive work for each one. For purposes of this check, a subsection in (brackets) counts as one subsection.

## Finding a Good Book (Manual or Reference Book)

Librarian or storekeeper can point good books out for you if he is present and favourably inclined. Otherwise, make a Search check against DC 10. If you fail you find only Average books. Success finds a Good book, success by 5 or more finds an Excellent book if there is one and success by 10 or more finds a definitive work if there is one

You gain a +2 synergy bonus if you have 2 or more ranks in a relevant skill or possess a relevant feat

## Learning From a Manual

Study manual for at least two hours a day. Minimum Intelligence ability scores apply. The manual takes 1d4 weeks to read. Make a Wisdom check at DC 15 to assimilate information; try again each week if you fail.

To apply the manual's benefits, make a Concentration check as a free action before attempting the relevant action. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The DC for the check is ordinarily 10 plus the intended bonus. (If the use of the manual is for a cross-class skill, the DC of the check is raised by 3.) If the check is failed, you automatically fail at the task; if you fail by 10 or more, you suffers a -2 circumstance penalty on any other checks and saving throws that round.

## APPLYING AUGMENTATIONS TO MAGICAL ITEMS

Each augmentation costs 25% of the item's total cost to apply. Check maximum number of augmentations for item type.

Augmentation check is (d20 plus caster level plus caster's Intelligence modifier) against the DC of the augmentation. If multiple augmentations are being placed, roll separately for each one. Each additional augmentation after the first adds +2 to the DC of the check.

Success incorporates the augmentation. Failure wastes cost of augmentation and does not apply it. Failure by more than 5 wrecks whole item.

**Available Manuals**

Section	Subject	Untrained Effect	Bonus Applied To	Maximum Rating
Alchemy	-	Untrained Use	Craft (alchemy) skill checks	10
Arcane Magic	Spellcraft	Untrained Use	Spellcraft skill checks	10
Combat	Advanced Weapon Techniques	Partial Proficiency (Any Martial weapon)	Attack rolls with one specific weapon	6
Combat	Unarmed Fighting	-	Unarmed Attack rolls and Grapple checks	5
Combat	Monkish Combat	-	Unarmed Attack rolls and Grapple checks	10
Crime	Lockpicking*	Untrained Use	Open Lock checks	10
Crime	Stealth*	Untrained Use	Move Silently checks	6
Crime	Striking Unseen*	-	Attack rolls when carrying out a sneak attack	5
Crime	Assassination Techniques*	-	Level of assassin when calculating DC of the Fortitude saving throw to resist assassin's death attack	8
Languages	Speaking and Writing Languages	Partial Competence (see above)	-	-
Medicine	First Aid	-	Heal checks	6
Music	Playing Musical Instruments	-	Perform checks when using instrument	8
Nature	Calming Animals	-	Animal Empathy skill checks	6
Society	Winning Friends and Influencing People	-	Diplomacy skill checks	10
Sports & Games	Acrobatics	Untrained use	Tumble skill checks	6
Sports & Games	Athletics	-	Fortitude saving throws	5
Survival	Wilderness Survival	-	Wilderness Lore skill checks	10
Transport (Land)	Horsemanship	-	Ride skill checks	5
Weapons	Use of Unusual Weapons	Partial Proficiency (Any Exotic Weapon)	Attack rolls made with one specific exotic weapon	5

\*Books on this subject are illegal in most lawful societies.



# DESIGNER'S NOTES

My first reaction to being asked to write a book about libraries was to panic. This, I thought, is going to be like writing the *Slayer's Guide to Brown Mould*. How exactly am I supposed to produce a guidebook that not only makes libraries *interesting* but more importantly makes them *useful* too? Library use is a habit far more associated with horror gaming than with fantasy. In the horror genre, you go to the library to read up on the thousand names of dread Guthlug the Incoherent in the hope that you will be able to preserve your pitiful life for one more day; in the fantasy genre, you are far more likely to wade into the priests of dread Guthlug, hack them to bits and vaporise Guthlug himself with a barrage of spells. Research just does not seem to be something that many characters in fantasy games can be bothered with.

Several cups of caffeine later, I was thinking. My accumulated pile of notes contained comments on that early scene in *Lord of the Rings* where Gandalf is poring over the scrolls, on the Library of Alexandria, on the Copper Scroll, on episodes from the fantasy writing of Donaldson, LeGuin and Eddings. I thought about the books in a local alternative bookshop and how many of them seemed to be 'teach yourself' guides. More than anything, I thought about a certain television series involving an undead-bashing teenager and how those stories combined the ideas of action adventure and deep research extremely well. Evidently, there was a middle ground between the cerebral and the combative approach that could be translated into game terms. The next thing I knew, it was three in the morning and I was still typing feverishly. There was much, *much* more meat on this bone than I had imagined.

The biggest challenge in the whole book was to prepare a set of rules that would govern research. Not just grabbing a book and reading it, but the real full-on kind of research in which you are surrounded by teetering piles of books and are still reading when the owls go to bed, knowing that everything you can find out is going to help keep your friends alive. Somehow, I had to come up with a way to simulate the effect of being surrounded by thousands of different books, any one of which might or might not be useful, without detailing the separate contents of each book. There was, in a word, a certain question of *granularity* to consider here. How to make research neither too simple nor too time-consuming?

There was no way on earth that research was going to be represented by a single roll of a d20. Where was the fun in that, or the scope for player ingenuity? Equally, there seemed no way to write a section full of 'suggestions' or 'storytelling techniques' that would have substituted a game mechanic with mere narrative plot advancement. In all frankness, a Games Master can do that *anyway* if he or she does not want to go through the business of doing it by the book. None of you need me to tell you that when the session truly calls for it and nobody objects, you skim over the rules and decide what happened. What I most wanted to avoid was a vast table or flowchart with all sorts of 'percentile chance of' this and 'add modifiers for' the other, as this would have bogged the game down drastically if anyone had actually bothered to use it. So, I came up with the research rules presented here. I hope you like them and find them workable.

In writing the chapter on making magical items, I have also stuck my neck out a bit. The rules presented in *Core Rulebook II* for the creation of magical items are just so damn comprehensive and well put together that the only way I could see of expanding upon them was to imagine the existence of what were essentially 'luxury' features for items, which magic item crafters *could* include but probably would not unless they were making an item to order, as mastercrafters do. This, it seemed to me, would give an extra edge and touch of pizzazz to those magic item creators lucky enough to have reference books, while not monkeying around with the basics and upsetting game balance.

For various reasons, books are particularly important to me; I am the owner of a bookshop and writing a book about books has been a chance to re-emphasise the importance of something I care about. For that, I am grateful.

A final note: The Bible of Discord is based upon a tome that really exists. I am eternally indebted to the crew of rusty-tufted pirates whose collective wit, wisdom and sexual neurosis went into filling it. May your golden apple pie never go cold.

**Adrian Bott**

Gonzalvo strode purposefully through his library. Well, not quite *his*, perhaps, but as good as. The two minions in his wake would certainly not be in any sort of rush to disagree with his silent assessment.

The brusque pace was somewhat malapropos, but few in the newly completed Grand Library of the Thieves' Guild would be likely to openly criticise their master, especially in his holy of holies. Huaraca, the chief librarian, glanced up disapprovingly as Gonzalvo approached, but he kept his thoughts to himself. The Master of the guild was an arrogant man, not noted for his concern when it came to his employees and, as such, it was best to keep one's tongue in one's head when in his company. At any rate, the Guild Master had saved Huaraca from a fate nearly-worse-than-death a mere two months before, and the reprieved fraudster could not help but feel gratitude to the man he so despised.

'So, everything in place?' Gonzalvo enquired, his tone implying that a negative response would be unwise.

'Quite ready, Master,' confirmed the chief librarian. *I have only accomplished in a matter of weeks what should have taken years to lovingly nurture and develop*, he silently added. 'The grand opening should be quite an occasion.'

'Opening?' Gonzalvo sounded shocked. 'What opening?'

'When we open our doors to the public,' replied Huaraca, his stomach suddenly tightening.

The Master belched a guttural laugh which chilled his employee to the bone. 'We will not be opening up to those scum,' he gestured towards the direction of the city. 'My people haven't appropriated all these books to show their former owners just what we have acquired.'

Huaraca shuddered, but displayed no outward emotion. *Acquired*. He knew full well what that meant. The guild had obtained the books in a most familiar manner. Now it would no doubt use these superb tomes to its own end, chiefly against its great rival, the Guild of Wizards, who had held sway in the city for many years. *The contents of these books will end that*, though Huaraca. Indeed, many of the books had probably been taken from the wizards' library itself.

At that very moment one of Huaraca's assistants, a withered creature known as Piquet, was placing a particularly impressive, ironbound book into the Magic section. He paused to admire it, noting the interesting protrusions on the spine. He rubbed at them thoughtfully, wondering at the craftsmanship that made them feel almost lifelike...a clock chimed somewhere.

Piquet looked up, a slight smile creasing his unsightly visage. Home time. He quickly slid the book into its waiting space and turned on his heel. Darkness was already descending and he wanted his evening meal.

Gonzalvo too was leaving, the ever-present henchmen in tow. He was smugly happy, his plans reaching fruition. Few realised that this library was not designed for public consumption, but rather to deny access to his rivals. Shortly he would begin laundering the stock out of the city, selling world-wide to the highest bidder, whilst his agents replenished the stock from the very customers he would attract. It was a brilliant plan – and it would work. After all, who would suspect?

Unbeknownst to the Guild Master, his chief librarian was already well on the way to assessing the situation. Huaraca looked down at the record sheet, freshly designed. *Why do we need to know from whom each volume was acquired?* He asked himself, guessing the answer. It would be most inconvenient to sell a book to the man from whom it was stolen, after all.

He sighed, loudly enough to make him look up in horror. Yet there was nobody else left to hear his melancholy lament. Already it was getting dark and he would be here a lot longer. Lighting a single candle, the chief librarian began cataloguing his shameful stock.

Elsewhere in the library two eyes opened as one. The iron-shod book betrayed no satisfaction as it studied its surroundings. It knew what it had to do and it was nearly time. Straining gently, it eased its covers away from its neighbours, slowly exposing two rows of savage teeth as it floated in the darkness. It listened intently, making sure it was alone.

After five minutes without a sound, save the scratching of a mouse somewhere in the hall, the creature considered that it was time. Turning to its immediate neighbour, the teeth opened savagely and without a sound before rending the book apart. In the space of an hour several hundred books were ruined and the construct had replaced itself in another section, its eyes closed once more, now just another innocent tome.

Huaraca would have needed to be a mind reader to know that he would be dead the following morning. After all, who else had both opportunity and motive to destroy so many valuable books?

The Master of the guild did not rate pity amongst his finer points.



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# TOMES AND LIBRARIES

## SECRETS OF THE WRITTEN WORD

Although wizards and libraries are so often connected, very little time has been spent on exploring the function and powers of the library. Libraries usually turn up as scenic backdrops or repositories for purely magical resources, whereas there are more potentially useful books in a library than there are supplies in an adventuring gear shop. We will therefore be taking a long overdue stroll down the library aisles and finding out how to use its stored wisdom to our best advantage. Magic-using characters, who have more of a natural inclination towards reading than characters of other classes, will find an abundance of new ways to apply the knowledge set down in their books – and a whole lot of new books to go searching for!

Players of any class who prefer to use their brains as well as their sword arms will find new roles to play and new ways to tackle the challenges they encounter. Strength can see you through a tough battle, health can keep you standing when you are wounded and luck can sometimes get you out of trouble; but knowledge can trump any of these, because knowledge can find ways of applying strength more efficiently, avoiding wounds in the first place and substituting a blind trust in fate with advance planning. You will never look at a library in the same way again.

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