

Old-School Gazette

Number 3: September 3, 2006

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This Old-School Gazette gives you the statistics you need to guard the spellbooks of your magic users and illusionists. Also, there are 8 new magic security spells to surprise the unwary. So enjoy this third Old-School Gazette and look forward to many more! Issue 4 of the Old-School Gazette will contain information on unusual food, drink and food-related items.

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Some of you may be unaware of OSRIC™. Go and download the product from the above link and then come back. As you can see from the above, OSRIC™ is a freely available, OGL role-playing system that pays homage to the style of role-playing games we grew up playing. The Old-School Gazette is designed to support the OSRIC™ system by releasing compatible material, not only to players and Game Masters, but to other publishers as well.

We plan on featuring monsters, magic items, spells, and anything else you can think of relating to old-school gaming via the OSRIC system in future Old-School Gazettes. Have any ideas? Send an e-mail to josephbrowning@gmail.com and let us know! And yes, it's a paying gig. *smile*

Spellbook Covers

Spellbook covers are crafted from a variety of diverse materials, however wood remains the most widespread material. Often covered in wax or bound in leather, wooden book covers prove exceptionally durable and highly affordable. Metallic book covers, especially those comprised of precious metals, are usually reserved for the spellbooks of wealthy casters. Most spellbooks are also adorned with other materials such as inexpensive gemstones and flecks of gold or silver.

Wood: Although durable, untreated wooden book covers are extremely rare given their penchant to warp. Pine and oak are the most popular varieties. *Cost:* 1 cp. *Effect:* -2 to saves against water or fire.

Treated wood: Leather bound, treated wood books easily outnumber the combined total of the remaining varieties. Although equal in durability and function, the less fashionable waxed treated wood covers remain largely confined to lesser duplications of fairly unimportant spellbooks. *Cost:* 5 gp. *Effect:* None. This is the "standard" spellbook cover.



Bronze and copper: These two metals are the most used metals for metallic book binding. Many contain an assortment of intricate carvings and symbols that may drastically increase the price of these covers. *Cost:* 4 gp. *Effect:* +2 to saves against fire, but -2 against electrical attacks.

Silver: Often adorned with a variety of pastoral scenes, elf casters treasure these spellbooks above all others. Silver offers the lustrous beauty of its more expensive counterparts without the weight or the prohibitive cost. *Cost:* 50 gp. *Effect:* +2 to saves against cold and fire.

Gold: Avaricious human magic users prize their golden spellbooks, meticulously polishing and cleaning the

shining covers. Purchased largely as an exhibition of conspicuous spending, golden spellbooks brazenly proclaim their owner's arrogance or tremendous wealth. *Cost:* 500 gp. *Effect:* +2 to all saves except crushing blows.

Platinum: Only the bravest mages encase their spellbooks in this metal: or those so certain of their power that they fear not the common, or even the extraordinary, thief. Platinum bound spellbooks are usually the end result of a life-long adventuring career encompassing the entirety of a single caster's most powerful spells. They are always intricately carved and typically adorned with precious gems. *Cost:* 5,000 gp. *Effect:* +4 to all saves.

Spellbook Storage

Like any other prized possession, magic users and illusionists go to exceptional lengths to protect the integrity of their spellbooks against natural and magical hazards as well as theft. Some of the aforementioned materials provide additional protection against a variety of different attack forms; however, none of those measures prevents the violation of their spellbook by an unwelcome reader. Casters continually devise new strategies to combat such intrusions ranging from the use of mechanical locks to potent protection spells. Only a handful of foolish mages leave their spellbooks in plain sight, the majority conceal their books within secret panels or magically alter their appearance. Despite the effectiveness of many of these methods, magic users and illusionists continually research new and innovative means of safeguarding their spellbooks.

Magical Wards

Although usually more time consuming than mechanical devices, higher level spellcasters preferentially protect their spellbooks with an assortment of spells and magical wards. Many of these spells such as *explosive runes*, *secret page*, and *sepia snake sigil* enjoy a great deal of popularity with spellcasters. However, some spellcasters realize that the proliferation of these protective spells detracts from their effective usage.

Rogues and rival spellcasters, aware of these spells' devastating consequences, continually devise new methods of detecting and circumventing them. For that reason, a growing number of powerful magic users conduct clandestine magical research searching for alternative magical wards to protect their precious spellbooks. Despite their best efforts, most spells eventually circulate among the spell-using population.

Regardless of the aforementioned drawbacks, the traditional collection of protection spells continues to

enjoy widespread popularity. They fall into two general categories, passive and active wards. Passive spells include *illusory script* and *secret page*. They afford protection through illusion or trickery, concealing the spell book's actual nature by donning the guise of a mundane book or other written work. Unlike their active counterparts, passive spells generally do not harm the warded spellbook or the trespasser. However, once bypassed by an authorized reader, they allow unfettered access to the spellbook.

Active spells, on the other hand, prevent access by injuring or perhaps killing any unwanted intruders. Included in this list are *explosive runes*, *fire trap* and *sepia snake sigil*. They prevent theft through violent force, regardless of the potential destructive consequences to the protected item. Active spells unleash energy in a variety of forms ranging from fiery explosions to conjured guardians. In contrast to passive spells, they often embody the spiteful and vindictive nature of their casters.

Mechanical Devices

Less costly but also less effective than magical wards, novice spellcasters usually opt for mechanical devices as the primary means of protecting their spellbooks. Although a wide assortment of variations is available, all of these systems operate on a lock and key premise. The cost depends entirely upon the materials used to secure the book as well as the lock's complexity. A simple device utilizing steel wires and an average lock costs no more than 21 gp, while a secure and intricately carved iron box with a complex combination lock (-35% from open locks) can run more than 500 gp. The subsequent list describes the costs and statistics of the various mechanical systems available. All costs are separate and cumulative. For example an illusionist securing his spellbook with an average key lock (20 gp) and two steel clamps must spend 26 gp, but upgrading to an average key lock and an iron box would only cost 45 gp. What price, security?

Steel wires/iron bands: A pair of metallic wires with looped endings encircle the book. The wires' endings are attached into the locked mechanism, securing the book. This type of device can only be used with a key lock. **Cost:** 1 gp.

Sturdy wooden box: Oak and pine are the most common wood, although more exotic wood such as sandalwood and teakwood are also used. Hinged from the inside, the lock is built into the box connecting the top and bottom portions. Intricate carvings and inlaid gemstones adorn many of these items for a corresponding increase in price, of course. **Cost:** 2 gp.

Steel clamp: A total of four steel clamps can secure the book, however most casters opt for only two. The clamps operate much like a vise grip, securing the book's corners. Because of their relatively small size, nothing less than a sturdy combination lock works properly. **Cost:** 3 gp.

Iron box: Less decorative but much stronger than the wooden box, iron boxes afford a relatively inexpensive alternative to steel clamps. Like their wooden counterparts, iron boxes are hinged from the inside, and the lock is built into the front of the box, connecting the top and bottom portion. **Cost:** 25 gp.

New Spellbook Security Spells

Magical research continually uncovers new and innovative means of protecting spellbooks. While most spells generally rely upon the principles espoused by active and passive spells, a handful of spells challenge traditional methodologies, progressing in previously unknown directions.

Approaching Wizard

Arcane Illusion/Phantasm or Phantasmal Illusion/Phantasm

Level: Magic User 1 / Illusionist 1

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Duration: Permanent until discharged

Area of Effect: One object

Components: V,S

Casting Time: 3 rounds

Saving Throw: Negates

Whenever someone other than the caster touches the designated target, the sound of approaching voices and footsteps fill the area. Any creature within 60 ft. of the object easily hears the disturbance. The illusion lasts for 1 round/level, although affected creatures disbelieving the illusion no longer hear it.

Champion of the Tome

Arcane Conjuration/Summoning

Level: Magic User 6

Range: Touch

Duration: Permanent until discharged

Area of Effect: One book

Components: V,S

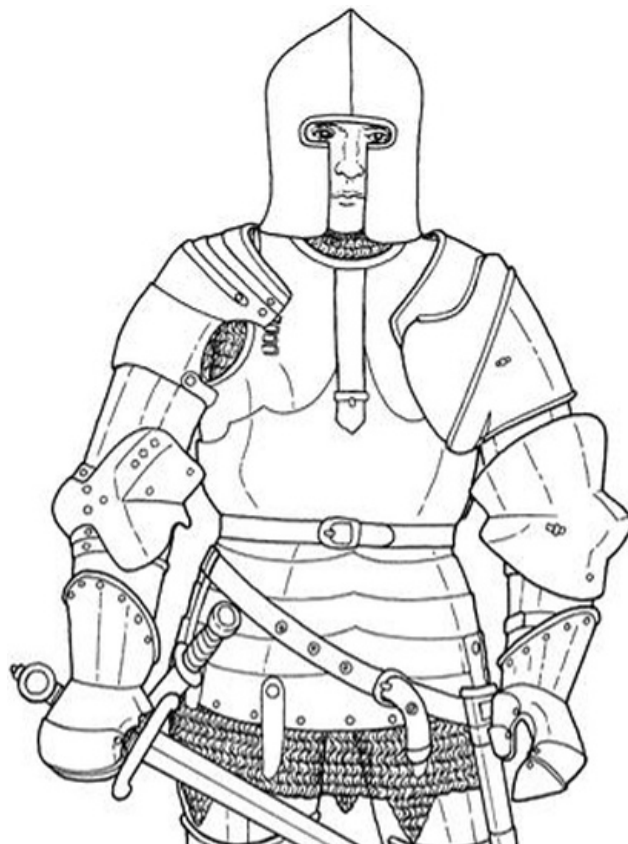
Casting Time: 6 turns

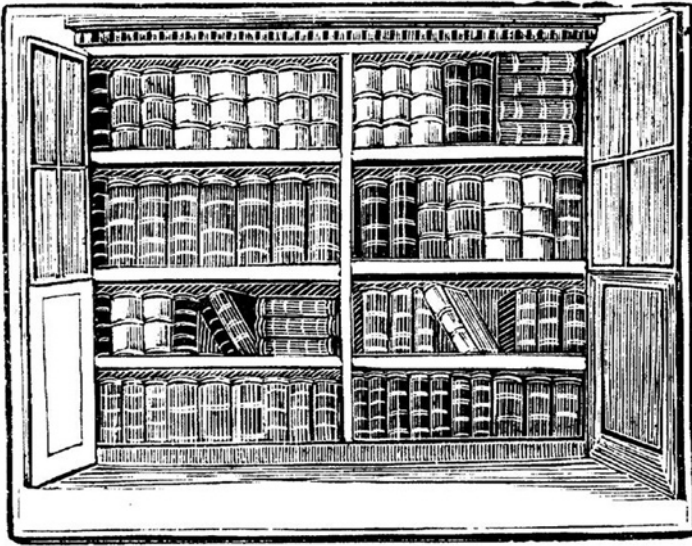
Saving Throw: None

Whenever any creature other than the caster approaches within 10 feet of the protected spellbook, a magical warrior instantly materializes in the space directly in front of the intruder. If that space is otherwise

occupied, it appears in the next closest space. Dressed in a shimmering suit of plate mail and armed with a longsword, the warrior otherwise appears as the caster's exact duplicate, but vastly more muscular. Its attack bonus, saving throws and the number of attacks it receives are identical to those of a fighter of the same level as the caster. A successful hit inflicts 1d8+7 points of damage, and its sword is considered a +3 weapon. The warrior's armor class is 2 minus the casters Intelligence modifier, and it possesses the same number of hit points as the caster at the time that the spell was cast.

The champion of the tome cannot be dispelled, but it must remain within 70 ft. of the book, otherwise it dissipates. Once triggered, the warrior remains for 2/ rounds per caster level or until slain.





Ethereal Library

Arcane Conjuration/Summoning

Level: Magic User 5

Range: Touch

Duration: 30 days or until discharged

Area of Effect: 10 books/level

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 turn

Saving Throw: None

This spell causes the caster's spellbook to exist simultaneously on the ethereal and material plane. The spell requires an expertly crafted miniature replica of the caster's library, constructed by a skilled carpenter, dollmaker or toymaker. The replica must include furniture and its materials cost no less than 1,000 gp. Once this replica is finished (taking at least 1 week), the caster can successfully cast the spell. *Ethereal library* creates miniature copies of the books that then appear in the corresponding location in the replica. The replica along with the duplicates vanishes into the ethereal plane.

Meanwhile, the copies of the books remaining on the material plane appear blank to everyone else but the caster. The effect can be removed by a *dispel magic*, returning the books to their normal state, or *true seeing*, enabling the caster to read the books normally. When the spell expires, the replica returns to the material plane, and the books resume their original appearance.

The replica can be used multiple times. However, the chance of permanently losing the library and its contents on the ethereal plane cumulatively increases by 1% per additional usage after the first.

Illusory Glue

Phantasmal Illusion/Phantasm

Level: Illusionist 2

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 day/level

Area of Effect: 10 touched pages/level

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 2 rounds

Saving Throw: Negates (see text)

Casting this spell upon any book causes the affected pages to seemingly bond to one another as if smeared with incredibly potent glue. Anyone attempting to separate the amalgamated pages must succeed at a save vs. spells in order to negate the spell's effects. If successful, the individual easily turns the pages. Otherwise, no physical force can separate the conjoined pages. Grease automatically negates the spell. The spell component is a barnacle.

Oozing Script

Arcane Illusion/Phantasm or Phantasmal Illusion/Phantasm

Level: Magic User 3 / Illusionist 2

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 day/level

Area of Effect: One book

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 2 rounds

Saving Throw: Negates (see text)

At the time of the spell's casting, the caster authorizes a number of readers no greater than his caster level to read the targeted book. The caster does not count towards this limit, nor is there any requirement to authorize anyone besides the caster to read the book. Whenever an unauthorized reader attempts to read the book, the ink apparently alters its shape, forming oozing streams of liquid that pour down the page. The creature must then make save vs. spells; otherwise it believes that the ink is trying to devour it. A successful save ignores this effect, but still does not allow the reader to decipher the script. Failure panics the stricken creature for one round per caster level, forcing it to flee. Such creatures utterly refuse any attempts to read the work for one hour per caster level, violently resisting all efforts to even view the book. *True seeing* enables the viewer to read the text, provided that he comprehends the text's language. The material component is octopus ink.

Phineus' Writhing Tentacles

Phantasmal Conjuration/Summoning

Level: Illusionist 4

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 turn/level

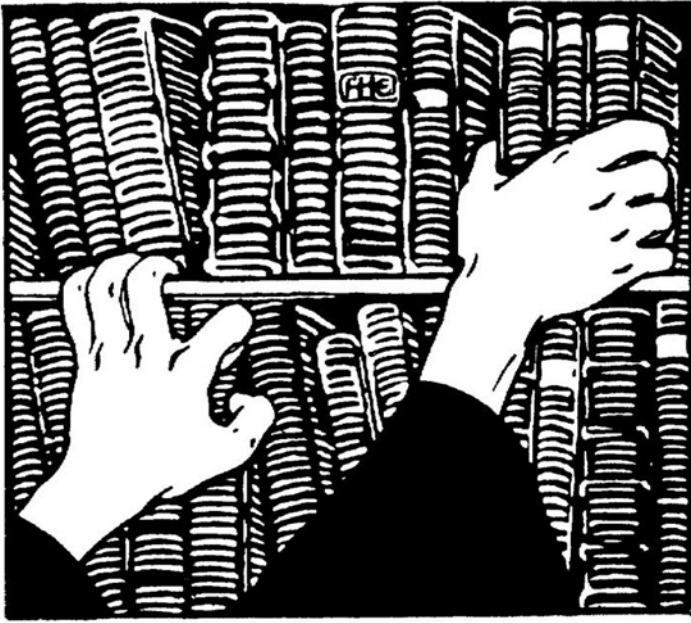
Area of Effect: One book

Components: V,S

Casting Time: 2 rounds

Saving Throw: None

Whenever anyone but the caster touches or opens the protected book, writhing gray tentacles emerge from the ground in a 5 ft. radius centered on the book. The



spell creates 1d4 tentacles, plus an additional tentacle per caster level up to a maximum of fifteen tentacles. For example, an 8th level illusionist creates 1d4+8 tentacles. Each tentacle is 20 feet long and saves as the caster. Each tentacles has an AC 6, 1 hit point/per caster level and an attack bonus of +1/per caster level. The tentacles attack as mindless creatures, randomly striking anything, including anything larger than a tiny object. On a successful hit, the tentacles deliver 1d4 points of damage, and also secrete a thin, black mucous through their porous skin. Any creature struck by one of the tentacles must make a successful save vs. poison or be blinded by the foul liquid for 1d6 rounds. The tentacles cannot move beyond their creation point, and once summoned remain in existence for 1 round/per caster level or until slain, whichever occurs first.

River of Blood

Arcane Conjuration/Summoning
 Level: Magic User 3
 Range: Touch
 Duration: Until discharged
 Area of Effect: One book
 Components: V,S,M
 Casting Time: 1 action
 Saving Throw: Half damage (see text)

Whenever anyone other than the caster opens the warded book, a river of globular, black blood spews from its pages dousing everyone within a 10-ft. radius of the book. The vile substance inflicts 5d4 points of damage and also nauseates affected humanoids for 5d4 rounds, causing a -1 to attack and damage rolls. A successful save vs. spells halves the damage, but does not negate nausea.

Extremely popular among evil magic users, this spell's material component requires the usage of ink crafted from humanoid blood. Triggering the spell destroys all

spells penned with the ink. It can be removed with a *dispel magic* or when the caster elects to end the spell.

Venomous Pages

Arcane Necromancy
 Level: Magic User 4
 Range: Touch
 Duration: 1 day/level
 Area of Effect: One page/level
 Components: V,S,M
 Casting Time: 2 rounds
 Saving Throw: Negates

The caster's touch coats a number of pages equal to his level with a virulent contact poison. Anyone other than the caster touching the page comes into contact with the deadly toxin. The use of gloves or other protective devices adds a +6 bonus to the victim's saving throw. The poison immediately inflicts 4d8 points of damage and another 4d8 points damage within the next hour. The victim receives a save vs. poison to negate the damage in both instances and if the first save is successful the poison has proven ineffective and there is no second save. The material component is a drop of snake, spider or scorpion venom. Detecting *venomous pages* is difficult; attempts to find traps are reduced by 25% when faced with *venomous pages*.



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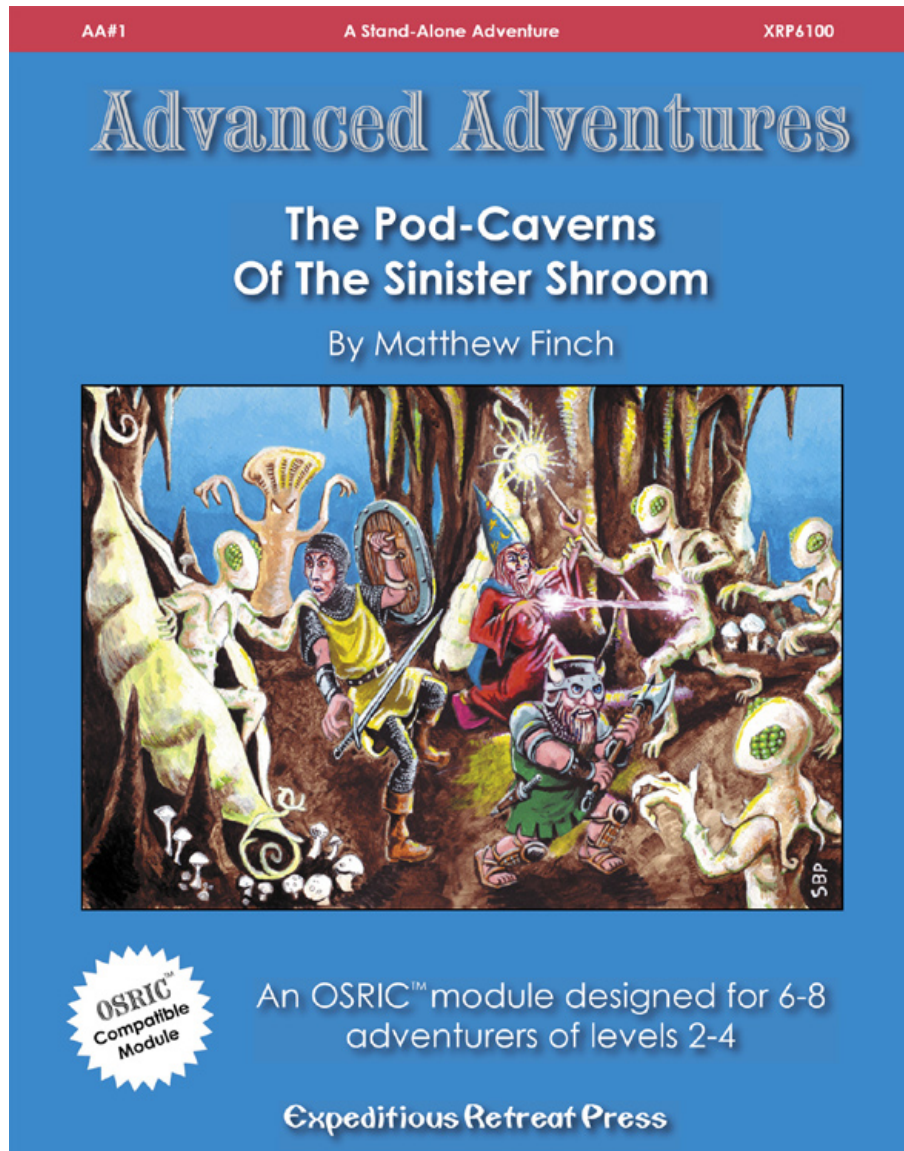
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