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ENCYCLOPEDIA  
ARCANE

# MAGIC ITEM CREATION

Forging Legendary Power



Patrick Younts

# Encyclopaedia Arcane Magic Item Creation

Patrick Younts

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# INTRODUCTION

**E**xcalibur. The One Ring of Power. Merlin's Staff. Mjolnir. The Spear of Destiny. All names for objects of legend. Objects of power. To speak the name of one of these items is to evoke images of great deeds done, of dragons, of heroism and of terrible villainy. The true power of magic items comes not from their ability to work miracles, but from their ability to evoke wonder in all of us.

It is no wonder then, that magic items continue to dominate the imaginations of both fantasy readers and, more importantly, fantasy gamers. Who among us does not remember the first time their character, at the successful conclusion of a hard-fought adventure, lifted a new sword and pulled it, glittering and smoking in the dim light, from its bejewelled sheath? Who among us does not recall with fondness the first time their wizard pointed a staff, uttered a few cryptic phrases and caused the world to erupt in fire? And who among us, for that matter, does not feel a sudden thrill each and every time a simple *detect magic* spell wreathes the treasury in cold, blue possibility?

Yes, magical items have a long and wondrous history in fantasy gaming and the future holds limitless possibility, particularly now that d20 gives us rules that allow our characters to construct their own items of power.

## ENCYCLOPEDIA ARCANE

*Encyclopaedia Arcane: Magic Item Creation* is the latest in Mongoose Publishing's Encyclopaedia Arcane line, presenting a new look at one of the most critical components of any fantasy game, the magic item. Designed to be slotted seamlessly into any fantasy based d20 system, these sourcebooks enhance and expand every element of arcane magic, adding a whole new dimension to your campaigns. Each book of the Encyclopaedia Arcane line is not just intended for the Games Master to enhance his campaign, however. Players themselves will find full details on how to use the new magic systems with new or existing characters, greatly increasing the wealth of options they are presented with in *Core Rulebooks I and II*.

## MAGIC ITEM CREATION – FORGING LEGENDARY POWER

This book, the *Encyclopaedia Arcane: Magic Item Creation*, is dedicated to the expansion and exploration of all the possibilities of magic items in fantasy role playing. Within these pages, you will find many new options to take the magic items of your characters and your campaigns to the next level. There are new powers, new feats and even a few new prestige classes, all focused on the use and creation of magic items. There are rules for expanding the role of intelligent magic items and for placing unique qualities and drawbacks in your magic items. Most importantly, there is a new system, the Mythic System, which supplements the basic rules for creating magical items and allows you to forge items of power in a way which is more in line with the stories and legends of old. With the Mythic System, when you want to create a flaming sword, it matters less that you know how to cast *burning hands* than it does that you know where to go to pluck a tail feather from the phoenix. With the Mythic System, your swordsmen and rogues will be able to take a more direct hand in constructing what will be their most prized possessions, giving them a greater sense of ownership and accomplishment.

No two magic items should ever be the same, and thanks to this book and to your imagination, they never will be again.

*The grand doors opened and the mousy acolyte stuck his head into the chamber. 'It is nearly time, my lords. My master bids you attend him and plead thy case in hopes of earning his favour.'*

*Rogerio favoured the acolyte with his widest grin, his teeth, recently made perfect in the arcane salons of Tarak-Albay, glittered brightly in the candlelight. 'We seek the favour of the one your master serves, unless you imply the archbishop has received some impressive promotion no one has seen fit to tell us about.'*

*The acolyte's mouth dropped open and then snapped shut again. He fled away down the hall, stockinged feet whoosh, whoosh, whooshing like leaves flitting on cobblestones, hounded by Rogerio's derisive laughter.*

*Rogerio stood, brushed the dust from his silken finery and turned to Thorvald. 'Ah, my friend. As always, your silence speaks less eloquently than you probably imagine.' He laughed again, then sighed. 'Come now, Thorvald, we do this for your benefit as much as mine. Say something. You speak so seldom that you had best practice when you are able. We do intend to seek the favour of a god, you will remember.'*

*Thorvald rose to his feet and stood, towering over the bard. 'Fine. I will speak plainly with you, Rogerio, as banter is not in my nature. I like this not. I like this not at all. I have sacrificed too much in this quest already. The thought of pleading at the soft feet of toads does not sit easy with me. And make no mistake, the archbishop is a toad. I would do nearly anything to see this quest succeed but I do not think you should ask me to do this.' Thorvald gripped Rogerio's arm, his thick, gnarled fingers engulfing the smaller man's upper arm entirely. 'Do not ask me to do this. He has an ill-favoured look.'*

*Rogerio snorted. 'If I mistrusted every man with an ill-favoured look, I'd naught be able to sleep in the same room with myself.' He patted Thorvald's hand reassuringly. 'Our enemies already wish to send us to an early grave, no need to worry yourself into it for them. Come.'*

\*\*\*\*\*

*'Your words are as eloquent as the stories say,' the acolyte said, as the archbishop nodded in the background, chins jiggling. 'Truly, Rogerio, your reputation is well earned. Yet, it pains me to say my patron remains unmoved. The Father of All Winters will not help you in your fool's quest. Of course, a substantial donation to the church's coffers may serve to –'*

*'Enough!' Thorvald's shout echoed through the audience chamber. He strode forward, shoving aside the stunned acolyte and marching past the now pale archbishop. 'I say, enough! Rogerio, do you not understand? When you seek the master's favour, you do not whisper honeyed words into the ears of his dog.' Leaping up onto the altar, Thorvald squelched a score of half-burned, tallow devotional candles beneath the heavy bulk of his boots.*

*'Hear me, o' Father of Winters! Here is the voice of one who seeks your favour, your patronage and your power! Here is the voice of Thorvald, son of Thorovask, son of Thorovalk, friend to Rogerio and his brother in all but blood. We are servants of snow, servants of winter! I come to you now hiding nothing, openly, without artifice and without feigned humbleness.'*

*Thorvald pulled his axe free of its bindings and waved it over his head, its blade slick and wet as ice. 'We have slain in your name. We have torn down thrones in your name. We have built churches in your honour, we have built a nation and kept it free! I come to you here seeking only the means to serve you still more. You respect strength and we have it. You respect courage and we have shown it. Give us now your patron's pledge and we will do more, we will make this world tremble! Give us the means to bring magic to our weapons and in exchange I offer this pledge. I offer...'*

*The archbishop began to laugh. 'What, barbarian? What can one such as you hope to offer his magnificence?'*

*It was Rogerio who answered, whispering. 'We can slay the Sun King.'*

*And thunder rocked the crystal columns as a voice like the arctic winds boomed in the audience hall...*

*'LET IT BE DONE.'*



# NEW ARMOUR, SHIELD AND WEAPON ABILITIES

Enchanted armour and weapons are perhaps both the most famous and the most sought after of magic items, which is understandable. Such tools of warfare, particularly swords, are the most ubiquitous magic objects in fantastic literature and in heroic legend. So it follows, of course, that magical armour and weapons are the most ubiquitous enchanted items in d20 fantasy gaming, with a plethora of choices already presented for use in campaign.

These new enhancements are intended to fill some obvious (and not so obvious) holes in the already expansive list of weapon, armour and shield special abilities. Using this list in conjunction with the special abilities provided in *Core Rulebook II*, and with the other rules provided in this book, should give you all you need to create almost any kind of magical armour or weapon.

## NEW WEAPON ENHANCEMENTS

The new weapon enhancements presented below are intended to supplement those found in *Core Rulebook II* and to greatly expand your options for the creation of powerful and memorable magical weapons. Unless otherwise noted, the new enhancements are suitable for any sort of weapon. The normal rules for applying special abilities apply to the new special abilities introduced here.

*Acidic:* Upon command, an acidic weapon is sheathed in a viscous, dripping sheet of acid. The acid, even those droplets which drip and splash off, does not hurt the wielder. An acidic weapon deals an extra 1d4 points of damage on a successful hit and half that amount (minimum one point) on the following round. Bows, crossbows and slings so crafted bestow the acid energy upon their ammunition when fired.

Moderate conjuration; CL 10<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *acid arrow*; Price +1 bonus.

*Acid Flare:* An acid flare weapon functions as an acidic weapon which also explodes with acid upon striking a successful critical hit. The acid does not harm the wielder. In addition to the extra acid damage from the acidic ability (see above), an acidic flare weapon deals an extra 1d6 points of damage on the following round, and half that damage (minimum of one point) on the round immediately following. If the weapon's critical hit multiplier is x3, add an additional 2d6 (plus half on the following round) damage instead, and if the multiplier is x4 add an extra 3d6 (plus half on the following round) instead. Bows, crossbows and slings so crafted bestow the acid energy upon their ammunition when fired. Even if the acidic ability is not active, the weapon still deals its extra acid damage on a critical hit.

Strong conjuration; CL 12<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *acid arrow*; Price +2 bonus.

*Cunning:* A weapon with the cunning ability is strongest when wielded in secrecy, shadow and silence. When a critical hit is scored against a flat-footed opponent, or against an opponent who is denied his Dexterity bonus for whatever reason, the weapon's critical hit multiplier is increased by one step, from x2 to x3 for example. Only melee weapons can be enhanced with this special ability.

Moderate illusion; CL 9<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *silence* or *darkness*; Price +1 bonus.

*Destructive:* A weapon with the destructive special ability is especially good at sundering weapons and overcoming hardness. Its enhancement bonus to damage is doubled when sundering, or when attacking an object. This confers no special ability to damage non-living creatures (such as constructs). Only melee weapons can possess this special ability.

Strong transmutation; CL 9<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *shatter*; Price +1 bonus.

*Explosive:* On a successful critical hit, a magic item with this special ability erupts in concussive force, dealing 1d6 fire damage to every being within a 5 foot radius of the target (including the wielder if he is within 5 feet). If the critical hit multiplier of the weapon is x3, the damage is increased to 2d6 and if the critical multiplier is x4, then the damage is increased to 3d6. The explosive special ability can only be added to ranged weapons. Bows, crossbows and slings so crafted bestow this special ability upon their ammunition when fired.

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## NEW ARMOUR, SHIELD AND WEAPON ABILITIES

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Moderate evocation; CL 9<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *fireball* or *flame strike*; Price +2 bonus.

**Hammering:** Charge attacks made using a weapon with this special ability are resolved as touch attacks. The hammering weapon ignores armour bonuses, shield bonuses and natural armour bonuses when determining whether an attack is successful. Only non-light blunt and piercing melee weapons can benefit from this enhancement.

Moderate evocation; CL 9<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *bull's strength*; Price +1 bonus.

**Heaven's Wrath:** Ranged weapons imbued with this special ability are soaked in powerful emanations from the eternal heavens. When launched, a bright flare of sacred energy springs up around them, in the shape of delicate, spectral swan's wings. If targeted against a being of evil alignment, the missile strikes unerringly, always hitting the target. An attack roll is still made as normal – if it results in a successful critical hit, the missile strikes for an additional 1d6 points of holy damage, or 2d6 if the critical multiplier is x3, or 3d6 if it is x4. Heaven's wrath missiles can also strike non-evil beings but do not inflict additional damage and do not strike unerringly. Only ranged weapons can benefit from this special ability, with bows, crossbows and slings imbuing their missiles with this special ability.

Faint conjuration; CL 5<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *true strike*, *detect evil*; Price +2 bonus.

**Hell's Fury:** Ranged weapons imbued with this special ability are soaked in powerful emanations from the endless pits. When fired, a bright flare of profane energy springs up around them, in the shape of tattered, smoky bat's wings. If targeted against a being of good alignment, the missile strikes unerringly, always hitting the target. An attack roll is still made as normal – if it results in a successful critical hit, the missile strikes for an additional 1d6 points of unholy damage, or 2d6 if the critical multiplier is x3, or 3d6 if it is x4. Hell's fury missiles can also strike non-good beings but do not inflict additional damage and do not strike unerringly. Only ranged weapons can benefit from this special ability, with bows, crossbows and slings imbuing their missiles with this special ability.

Faint conjuration; CL 5<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *true strike*, *detect good*; Price +2 bonus.

**Honourable:** A weapon with this special ability is tailor-made for honest combat against honourable foes. It grants a +1 insight bonus to Armour Class against any attack made while the wielder is either flat-footed or denied his Dexterity bonus. It also bestows a competence bonus to Sense Motive checks equal to the weapon's magical attack bonus but only for the purpose of opposing Bluff checks in combat. Conversely, an honourable weapon imposes a penalty to attack equal to its normal enhancement bonus to attack rolls whenever it is wielded against a flat-footed opponent.

Moderate divination; CL 9<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *detect thoughts* or *zone of truth*; Price +1 bonus.

**Howling Fury:** A weapon of howling fury is a great boon to a barbarian, or to any other character who has the ability to rage or frenzy in combat. A weapon with this special ability increases the duration of a rage or frenzy by the enhancement bonus of the weapon (not including the howling fury ability) in rounds.

Moderate enchantment; CL 9<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *remove fear*, *heroism* or *rage*; Price +2 bonus.



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## NEW ARMOUR, SHIELD AND WEAPON ABILITIES

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*Idiocy:* A weapon of idiocy is quickened with the power of senseless chaos. It deals one point of temporary Intelligence damage when it hits a creature. A critical hit does not multiply the Intelligence damage. Creatures immune to critical hits (such as plants and constructs) are immune to the Intelligence damage dealt by this weapon, as are beings which are immune to mind affecting spells and spell-like effects. Bows, crossbows and slings so crafted bestow this ability upon their ammunition when fired.

Moderate transmutation; CL 12<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *touch of idiocy*; Price +2 bonus.

*Overpowering:* On a successful hit, a weapon with this special ability allows you to make a free bull rush attack against your victim. You need not move into the defender's square when doing so and do not provoke an attack of opportunity. To resolve the bull rush attempt, roll opposed Strength checks as normal, adding the weapon's bonus to attack as an enhancement bonus to the check. If the check succeeds, the opponent is moved back 5 feet for every 5 points by which your check result exceeds his own. If your check fails, you do not need to move.

Moderate evocation; CL 10<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *bull's strength*; Price +2 bonus.



*Resonating:* A weapon with this special ability is a bard's best friend. Its magic resonates with and bolsters bardic music abilities. It adds its enhancement bonus to attack rolls to all Perform skill checks which involve the use of bardic music abilities. The resonating special ability can only be applied to melee weapons.

Moderate enchantment; CL 9<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *charm person*, *suggestion*, creator must be a bard; Price +1 bonus.

*Ruinous:* A weapon with this special ability inflicts gaping wounds which are hideous to look upon and which can potentially disfigure the victim permanently. A ruinous weapon deals 1 point of Charisma damage when it hits a creature. A critical hit does not multiply the Charisma damage. Creatures immune to critical hits (such as plants and constructs) are immune to the Charisma damage dealt by this weapon. Bows, crossbows and slings so crafted bestow this ability upon their ammunition when fired.

Moderate transmutation; CL 10<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *symbol of pain* or *symbol of fear*; Price +2 bonus.

*Shredding:* A weapon with this special ability strikes especially vicious blows which shred natural armour like tissue. On a successful critical hit, the weapon imposes a -2 penalty to natural armour. This penalty is cumulative and can lower the victims natural armour below 0 but only to a negative value equivalent to the original natural armour bonus. So, for example, a creature with a natural armour bonus of +4 could be reduced to a maximum -4 natural Armour Class value. Natural armour damaged in this fashion heals at the rate of 1 + Constitution modifier (one point minimum) points per day. Only slashing melee weapons or slashing ranged weapons can possess this special ability.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *keen edge*; Price +1 bonus.

*True Death:* A weapon with the true death ability is the bane of those who count on their allies' ability to raise or resurrect them should they fall in combat. A creature brought to -10 or fewer hit points by a blow from a true death weapon must immediately attempt a Fort save; if the save is failed, the body is instantly *disintegrated*. On a successful save, the body is not *disintegrated*. Bows, crossbows and slings so crafted bestow this special ability upon their ammunition when fired.

Strong transmutation; CL 15<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *disintegrate* or *destruction*; Price +3 bonus.

*Virulent*: A weapon with the virulent special ability carries within itself a magical plague which sickens and weakens those who are struck by it. On a successful critical hit, the victim must attempt a Fortitude save (DC 14) or suffer 1d2 initial points of temporary Strength damage and 1 point of secondary temporary Constitution damage. The effects of multiple critical hits stack. Creatures which are immune to critical hits and those which are immune to magical poison are likewise immune to the virulent special ability. Bows, crossbows and slings so crafted bestow this special ability upon their ammunition when fired.

Strong necromancy; CL 12<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *poison* or *cloudkill*; Price +2 bonus.

### Specific Weapons

The following weapons are almost always constructed with exactly the qualities described below. Do not forget, however, that they can also possess unique quirks that will serve to better differentiate them from one another

**Lance of the Stately Charger**: This +2 *hammering lance* adds +20 feet to a mount's base speed for the purpose of determining how far it can charge. In addition, it adds its enhancement bonus to attack to the Armour Class of both the wielder and his mount, but only during a charge.

During a charge attack, the *lance of the stately charger* sheds light as a torch, a light which cannot be dimmed for any reason.

Moderate transmutation; CL 12<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *expeditious retreat*, *phantom steed*; Price 25,310 gp + 1,500 XP.

**Fool's Sceptre**: On a successful critical hit, this +2 *light mace* forces its target to succeed at a Will save (DC 13) or be confused for one round, as per the spell *lesser confusion*. Once per day, the *fool's sceptre* can cast *confusion* as the spell.

Light enchantment; CL 5; Craft Arms and Armour, *lesser confusion*, *confusion*; Price 12,312 gp + 1,100 XP.

### Armour and Shield Special Abilities

The new armour and shield enhancements presented below supplement those found in *Core Rulebook II* and are intended to greatly expand your options for the creation of powerful and memorable magical armours. Unless otherwise noted, the new enhancements are suitable for any sort of armour or shield. The normal rules for applying special abilities apply to the new special abilities introduced here.

*Boosting*: A suit of armour with this special ability can improve its wearers ability to attack, at the cost of defensive effectiveness. The wearer can add some or all of the armour's enhancement bonus as a bonus to his attack rolls that stacks with all others. As a free action, the wearer chooses how to allocate the armour's enhancement bonus at the start of his turn, before taking any other actions. The bonus to attack rolls applies until the start of his next turn. Points of enhancement to attack rolls do not count towards the wearer's Armour Class.

Moderate transmutation; CL 8<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *mage armour*, *true strike*; Price +2 bonus.

*Frightening*: A suit of armour or shield with this enhancement is dreadful to look upon. While worn or carried, the armour or shield grants a +5 competence bonus to Intimidate skill checks

Faint enchantment; CL 5<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *cause fear*; Price +3,700 gp.

*Frightening, Improved*: As *frightening* but the armour or shield grants a +10 competence bonus to Intimidate skill checks.

Moderate enchantment; CL 10<sup>th</sup>; Craft Arms and Armour, *cause fear*; Price +15,000 gp.

*Frightening, Greater*: As *frightening* but the armour or shield grants a +15 competence bonus to Intimidate skill checks.

Moderate enchantment; CL 15<sup>th</sup>; Craft Arms and Armour, *cause fear*; Price +33,750 gp.

*Kinetic*: A shield with this enhancement can absorb almost all the force of a blunt impact. While in hand, it provides the bearer with damage reduction 5/energy, slashing or piercing, making the wielder very hard to hurt with bludgeoning attacks. As a side effect of the magic used to cushion impacts, kinetic shields cannot





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## NEW ARMOUR, SHIELD AND WEAPON ABILITIES

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inflict damage, making shield bashes completely ineffective.

Moderate abjuration; CL 9<sup>th</sup>; Craft Arms and Armour, *shield, feather fall*; Price +2 bonus.

*Nimble*: While most armour restricts the wearer's agility, armour enchanted with this special ability actually increases its wearer's ability to roll, dive, tuck and tumble. The magic of the armour provides a +5 competence bonus to its wearer's Tumble checks. Normal armour check penalties still apply.

Faint transmutation; CL 5<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *cat's grace*; Price +3,700 gp.

*Nimble, Improved*: As with *nimble*, but the magic of the armour provides a +10 competence bonus to its wearer's Tumble checks. Normal armour check penalties still apply.

Moderate transmutation; CL 10<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *cat's grace*; Price +15,000 gp.

*Nimble, Greater*: As with *nimble*, but the magic of the armour provides a +15 competence bonus to its wearer's Tumble checks. Normal armour check penalties still apply.

Moderate transmutation; CL 15<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *cat's grace*; Price +33,750 gp.

*Refracting*: A suit of armour or shield with this enhancement traps and absorbs ambient light. Once per day, it can be called upon to unleash that light in a 20 foot radius burst around the wearer, a burst which deals 5d4 points of damage. Undead suffer double damage from the sunburst. In addition, the wearer or bearer gains a circumstance bonus to saving throws against light-based spells or spell-like effects (like the spell *sunburst*) equal to the item's enhancement bonus to Armour Class. Only metal armour and shields can bear this special ability.

Strong evocation; CL 15<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *sunbeam* or *sunburst*; Price +3 bonus.

*Spring Heel*: This specially crafted armour has reinforced and spell enhanced greaves and foot protection, which grant a +5 competence bonus to all Jump checks. Normal armour check penalties still apply.

Faint transmutation; CL 5<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *jump*; Price +3,700 gp.

*Spring Heel, Improved*: As with *spring heel*, but the magic of the armour provides a +10 competence bonus to its wearer's Jump checks. Normal armour check penalties still apply.

Moderate transmutation; CL 10<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *jump*; Price +15,000 gp.

*Spring Heel, Greater*: As with *spring heel*, but the magic of the armour provides a +15 competence bonus to its wearer's Jump checks. Normal armour check penalties still apply.

Moderate transmutation; CL 15<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *jump*; Price +33,750 gp.

### Specific Armours and Shields

The following suit of armour and shield are almost always constructed with exactly the qualities described below. Do not forget, however, that they can also possess unique quirks that will serve to better differentiate them from one another

**Jacks' Costume**: The armour of this strange, semi-mythical figure explains a lot of his supernatural abilities. It functions as *nimble, improved spring heel padded armour* +1, but also grants the wearer the ability to cause his eyes to glow a fiery red once per day. This effect lasts for five rounds, during which the wearer may make one gaze attack as a free action every round. All those affected by this mind-affecting gaze attack must make a Will save (DC 14) or cower for 1d4 rounds.

Moderate transmutation; CL 12<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *cat's grace, fear, jump*; Price 22,855 gp + 700 XP.

**Conner's Buckler**: This +2 *light fortification buckler* has proved the bane of many an escaping fugitive. Conner never believed in using lethal force to apprehend escapees, instead developing this remarkable buckler to help him in his endeavours. Twice per day, the buckler may be thrown as a ranged weapon with a range increment of 20 feet. This attack deals 1d6 + Str modifier in nonlethal damage to the target. If this attack results in a successful critical hit, the damage is not modified but the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 16) or be stunned for 1d4 rounds.

Light enchantment; CL 15<sup>th</sup>; Craft Arms and Armour, *hold person plus limited wish or miracle*; Price 12,165 gp + 650 XP.

# MAGIC ITEM QUIRKS

Not all magic items are created the same. The vagaries of magic and the unique ways in which each caster manipulates magical energies ensure that, even amongst items which are otherwise identical in their powers, there will be easily identifiable quirks which will make each one unmistakable. Sometimes, these quirks will be beneficial, giving the wielder access to a minor power, or perhaps increasing the item's effectiveness in some particular situation, but it is equally likely that these quirks will be detrimental, perhaps inflicting the owner with warts, or perhaps simply failing to work at random intervals.

This chapter introduces a new concept for magic items in the form of quirks, minor magical effects which allow both Games Masters and Players to personalise the items they create, giving them unique attributes which serve to both further differentiate items from one another and make them more noteworthy. The use of these quirks is, of course, entirely optional but they will do much to spice up the magic items in your game without actually increasing or decreasing their power.

Note that no table for rolling random quirks is included with these optional rules. This is intentional. While rolling randomly can be entertaining, it can too easily lead to strange combinations of results which destroy the believability of a magic item, or at least stretch it to the point where it becomes the butt of Player's jokes; after all, the *ring of invisibility* which is lucky but unreliable is much more mythic than the *ring of invisibility* which constantly tolls like a bell. Should you wish, it will still prove easy enough to add an element of randomness to the quirks presented below, though it is strongly advised that you still hand select the positive and negative major quirks.

## QUIRKS

Magic item quirks are to a magic item's powers what cantrips

are to spells, minor effects which are interesting but not especially powerful. Quirks take many forms, sometimes manifesting as actual magical effects and sometimes as unique physical properties which come about as a result of enchantment but are not in and of themselves magical.

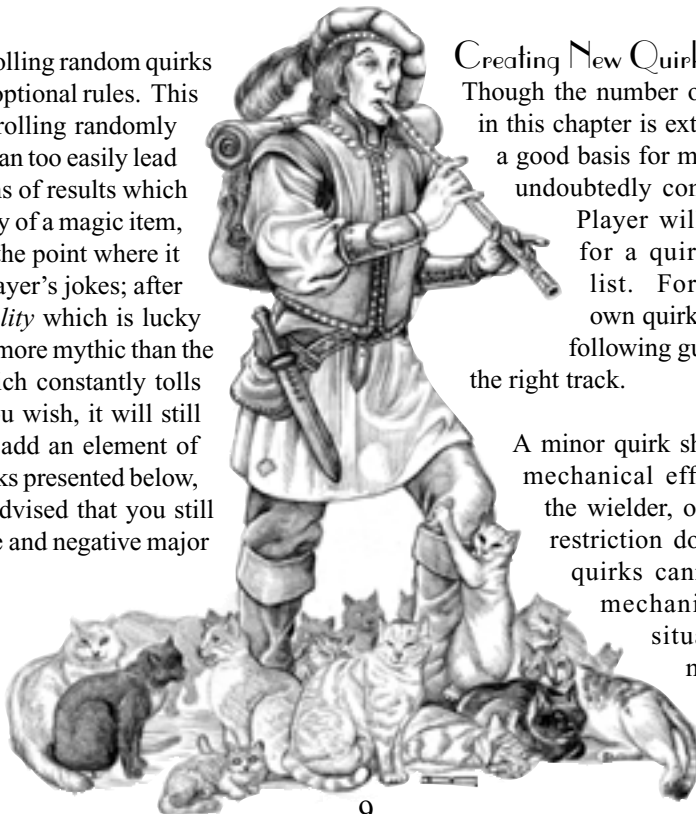
Quirks, both positive and negative, are separated into two categories, major and minor. The difference between them is one of scale. A minor quirk is one which is nothing more than a limited special effect, or a physical property which has no mechanical effects. A major quirk, while still not as powerful as an actual item ability, is one which can have actual mechanical effects on the wielder or those around him.

Any permanent item (meaning one which is not a single-use item, like a scroll) can have one or more quirks. The exact number of quirks which can be embedded in an item is left up to the Games Master's discretion but it is recommended that an item, regardless of its power, be allowed no more than one major positive and one major negative quirk, and no more than two minor quirks. While minor quirks can be selected in any combination (subject to Games Master approval, of course), a positive major quirk must be accompanied by a major negative quirk and vice versa. Under no circumstances should two quirks which directly counter one another's effects be applied to a single magic item.

## Creating New Quirks

Though the number of suggested quirks listed in this chapter is extensive enough to provide a good basis for most campaigns, there will undoubtedly come a time when either a Player will come up with an idea for a quirk which is not on this list. Fortunately, creating your own quirks is a simple matter. The following guidelines will keep you on the right track.

A minor quirk should never have a direct mechanical effect on the magic item, the wielder, or any target being. This restriction does not mean that minor quirks cannot result in incidental mechanical effects in unusual situations, simply that the mechanical effect cannot be incorporated into the quirk. So, for example, an effect which causes



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nearby cats to howl when the item is activated would qualify as a minor negative quirk, but an effect which causes a  $-2$  penalty to Non-Player Character reaction checks would be a major negative quirk.

Major quirks, conversely, can have direct mechanical effects, though under no circumstance should they grant a bonus or penalty greater than  $\pm 2$ . Bonuses and penalties to attack rolls, damage rolls, skill checks and saving throws can be considered quirks, but must be balanced against rarity, as outlined below:

A  $+1$  bonus can apply to a broad group or relatively common environmental condition, so long as it is

### Far from an Exact Science

As you may have guessed, creating major and minor quirks is far from an exact science. To use quirks effectively, they must be balanced against the needs and realities of your campaign. In a campaign which features nothing but drow enemies, a  $+1$  bonus to strike drow is a major bonus which will simply not be balanced by a  $-1$  penalty to strike goblins. In such a situation, even a  $-1$  penalty to damage rolls against drow may not be sufficient to counterbalance it. To compensate, you might decide that the bonus can only be applied to drow who are from a specific city, or only against drow fighters, or you might simply outlaw the quirk altogether. Ultimately, as in all situations, the Games Master has the final say.

### Not all Bonuses are Created Equal

As characters advance in levels, gaining more feats and abilities, certain penalties begin to lose some of their impact, with penalties to base damage perhaps chief among them. Thanks to feats like Power Attack and Greater Weapon Specialisation, magic weapon enhancements which add raw dice of damage, ever increasing Strength scores and exotic abilities gained as a result of advancing in a class or prestige class, a weapon's base damage rapidly becomes unimportant. Therefore, should you choose to balance positive bonuses to attack rolls with negative bonuses to damage, it is suggested that you use a 1 for 2 formula, meaning that a quirk which adds  $+1$  to attack rolls should be balanced by a  $-2$  penalty to damage. Conversely, a  $+2$  bonus to damage can be balanced by a  $-1$  penalty to attack rolls. Remember that a bonus to attack rolls against a specific gender, for example, can also be balanced by an equal attack penalty against the opposite gender, or even by a damage penalty against either gender (so long as the rule of 2 for 1 is observed).

balanced by a  $-1$  penalty which applies to an equally common group or environmental condition. A specific race is an appropriately broad group, as is a specific sex. So, for example, a sword could be given a  $+1$  bonus to strike during daylight hours, so long as it suffered a  $-1$  penalty to attack rolls made at night. Likewise, a  $+1$  bonus to Intimidate checks against men is an appropriate major quirk, but must be balanced with a  $-1$  penalty to Intimidate checks made against women. A  $+1$  bonus to attack or damage rolls, or to saving throws can also be balanced by its opposite; so a  $+1$  bonus to damage against drow could be balanced with a  $-1$  penalty to attack rolls against them. Equally, a  $-1$  penalty to Fortitude saves whilst using the magic item could be balanced by a  $+1$  bonus to Reflex saves.

A  $+2$  bonus can only be applied to a very specific group or rare environmental effect, but need not be balanced by an opposite effect (though it must still be balanced by a major negative quirk of some sort). Appropriate examples of bonuses include, but are not limited to, a  $+2$  to attack rolls against female drow, a  $+2$  to damage only when fighting in arctic environments, or a  $+2$  bonus to Bluff checks attempted within an open air market.

As a general rule of thumb, just remember – if it has a consistent mechanical effect, it is major quirk, if it does not, it is a minor quirk.

### Thematic Quirks

Quirks work best when they are themed to each magic item, as themed quirks lend the item an aura of believable mystery which will add to your campaign and keep campaign verisimilitude. Conversely, adding quirks which make no sense in the context of the item's power will strain suspension of disbelief and may lead to your magic items becoming ridiculous, rather than the impressive rewards you would hope they would be.

### Removing Quirks

The only way to remove a quirk from an item is either to destroy that item, or completely drain or suppress all of its magical abilities. As long as there are any magical abilities resident and active (or able to be activated) in an item, the quirk will continue to express itself. In areas that suppress magic, the quirk will be suppressed for as long as all of the abilities of the item are suppressed. Basically, the quirk is intrinsically linked to the magic of the item and cannot be individually erased or removed.

## LISTS OF QUIRKS

The following quirks are separated into the categories minor quirks, major positive quirks and major negative quirks.

### Minor Quirks

These minor quirks are only examples, not a comprehensive list of all the possible minor magic item quirks. Note that in every case, the minor quirk is simply a nuisance or odd trait, it will never have any innate mechanical effect (though the *light* minor quirk is a possible exception).

*Animal Call* – Each time you activate an item's powers, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), all non-magical animals of a specific type begin to call out, howling, barking, croaking or crowing as appropriate.

*Buttons Loosen* – When you use the item, first activate or don it, or when you draw the item from its sheath (in the case of weapons), any buttons and clasps loosen. This can prove to be a bit of an embarrassing annoyance.

*Everclean* – The item resists grime of all sorts, including blood. It need never be cleaned, as dirt and muck simply slides off it like water off oilskin.

*Extremities Swell* – When you first activate the item's powers, your hands and feet swell. This has no effect on your Dexterity but it does leave you feeling somewhat clumsy.

*Font of Youth* – When drawn, when worn, or when activated (depending on the type of item), your visage changes so that you look 10 years younger than your actual age. This has no mechanical effect.

*Frost/Flame* – While the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), both the item and your body become coated with fingers of spectral frost or flame. These flames have no mechanical effect but do look impressive.

*Hair Growth* – this quirk can only be applied to continuous-use objects, such as magical armour. Each hour you wear or use the item, your hair grows one inch. When the item is removed, your hair shrinks back to normal, at the rate of one inch per round.

*Light* – The magic item radiates light while in use. The light is equivalent in brightness to a strong candle

flame, illuminating a 5 foot radius around you. The light cannot be dimmed by yourself, but any magical darkness effect will immediately quench it. This quirk cannot be applied to items whose primary abilities are concerned with stealth, such as a *ring of invisibility*.

*Phantom Smell* – Each time the item is activated, or for the duration of its use in the case of items with a continuous effect, a phantom smell issues forth from it. The smell is weak enough to be almost undetectable to anyone save yourself and those in close physical contact with you. The scent which issues forth should, whenever possible, relate to either the item's powers or to its origins, so a *staff of healing* might bring to mind the aroma of medicine, while armour with the *ghost touch* property might smell of freshly turned grave dirt, or perhaps of embalming fluids.

*Phantom Sound* – Each time the item is activated, or for the duration of its use in the case of items with a continuous effect, a specific sound issues forth from it. This sound is roughly equal in volume to a low whisper and can normally only be heard by the wielder and those who are in close physical contact with him. The sound can be almost anything and is usually related to the powers of the item, so a *monk's belt* which this



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quirk might continuously issue a low chant while the wearer is in combat and a *cloak of etherealness* might whisper with a sound akin to a spirit's ghostly wail. This quirk cannot be applied to items which depend on sound for their effects, like a *horn of blasting* or magical harp.

*Rainbow Aura* – Can only be applied to a weapon or other magic item which radiates light (see *Core Rulebook II*), or which has the light minor quirk. You can alter the colour of the radiated light as you choose, as a free action.

*Sands of Time* – When drawn, when worn, or when activated (depending on the type of item), your visage changes so that you look 10 years older than your actual age. This has no mechanical effect.

*Shadow Vagabond* – While the item's powers are activated, or while the item is held in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), your shadow disconnects from your body and vanishes. It returns as soon as the item is no longer active, or is no longer in hand. This has no mechanical effects but can be disconcerting, both for you and those around you.

*Shivers* – You feel an involuntary thrill of fear when you first activate the item.

*Skin Tint* – While the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), your skin takes on an unusual tint, perhaps turning red like a fire giant's, or blue like a frost giant's – the shade should be related to the powers or origin of the item. In any case, the tint fades one round after the item is no longer active or held in hand.

*Sneeze/Cough* – When you use any item powers, or when you successfully strike an opponent in combat (if the item is a weapon) you involuntarily cough or lightly sneeze.

*Spectral Aura* – While the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), the item is wreathed in a corona of spectral imagery. The aura is barely visible and can take any form, usually related to the powers or history of the magic item. So, for example, a sword crafted by a wizard obsessed with insects might be surrounded by buzzing, spectral flies, or be covered by an army of phantasmal ants.

*Static Electricity* – Each time the item is activated, static electricity arcs through your body. While this has no mechanical effect, it does cause your hair to stand on end and will result in an unpleasant jolt should you touch another being or conducting object.

*Voice Alters* – While the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), your voice alters, becoming inhuman, grating like stone against stone or taking on tones reminiscent of the item creator's voice.

*Void Eyes* – While the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), your eyes become a black void, or shift in colour to an alien shade or perhaps resemble cat's eyes. Your vision is unaffected and there is no mechanical bonus or penalty but it can be disconcerting to look at you.

*Warm/Cool* – The item is always pleasantly warm or cool to the touch.

*Warts/Scales/Etc* – While the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), your body becomes covered with a light smattering of warts, scales, freckles, pimples or some other minor disfigurement. This disfigurement has no mechanical effect.

### Major Positive Quirks

The following quirks are major positive, meaning they offer some benefit to either the wielder, or the magic item itself.

*Eager* – A magical item with this quirk is always eager to use its powers. While the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), you enjoy a +1 enhancement bonus to Initiative checks.

*Environment Bonus* – For whatever reason, a magic item with this quirk thrives in a specific environment, its powers enhanced by exposure to the air of its favoured land. Choose a single environment, something as specific as arctic lands or the jungle but not so specific as arctic mountains; while within that environment, the item gains either a +1 bonus to attack rolls, a +2 bonus to damage rolls (following the rules for balancing such bonuses in the sidebar above) or a +1 increase to the saving throw DCs of its magical abilities. This quirk is almost always accompanied by the negative quirk environmental weakness, or balanced as listed in the Far from an Exact Science sidebar.

*Eternal* – The magic of an item with this quirk is intrinsically linked to reality and cannot easily be destroyed. It gains a +1 bonus to resist *disjunction* and spells and spell-like effects which could conceivably destroy it, such as a *fireball*. Magical items of draconic origin often have this quirk, as the innate magic of that long lived species often infuses items they create.

*Faceless* – While the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), your facial features are erased and you are left with a smooth orb where a face should be. This can be extraordinarily disconcerting for those around you but it is not without its benefits. You retain full use of your senses and gain a +1 bonus to saves against blindness, deafness and spells and



spell-like effects which are based on vision, smell or hearing, such as a medusa's petrification ability. This quirk is automatically paired with the major negative quirk of the same name. This quirk cannot be attached to magic items which alter your appearance, or which render you invisible.

*Fury* – An item with this quirk resonates, for whatever reason, with an intense hatred for a particular race, a particular gender, or members of a particular group and lashes out at them with exceptional fury. When a weapon has this quirk, it adds either a +1 or a +2 bonus to attack rolls against the members of a particular gender, race, or group. The amount of the bonus is directly proportional to the rarity of the group the bonus applies against. This quirk must be countered by a major negative quirk which lowers your attack bonus against another group of the same comparative rarity, by a penalty to damage rolls, or by any other major negative quirk which the Games Master decides is appropriate (see the Far from an Exact Science sidebar for greater details on balancing fury and other, similar quirks).

*Hardy* – An item with this quirk is more resistant to damage than other, more fragile magical items of the same sort. It gains a +1 bonus to hardness and its break DC is increased by an equal amount. Magical objects of dwarven make often possess the hardy quirk.

*Impressive* – This quirk can only be applied to magical weapons, shields and armour. The item is almost supernaturally impressive; though it may not appear expensive or fancy, there is some innate quality in the item which commands the viewer's attention. While the weapon or shield is in hand, or when the armour is worn, you gain a +1 or +2 circumstance bonus to Intimidate checks, but only against the members of a particular gender, race or group. The amount of the bonus is directly proportional to the rarity of the group affected (see sidebar, above). This quirk is often countered by a major negative quirk which



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## MAGIC ITEM QUIRKS

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makes you less impressive to another group of the same comparative rarity.

*Inconspicuous* – For whatever reason, a magic item with this quirk is neither impressive nor memorable in any fashion, meaning those who look will be hard pressed to recognise it as a magic item, or even pay attention to it in the first place. The power of this quirk is such that, regardless of its true strength, it never radiates more than a faint magical aura and imposes a –1 penalty to Spellcraft checks made to identify its properties.

*Light* – While the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), it radiates light equivalent to a light spell (bright light in a 20 foot radius, shadowy light in a 40 foot radius). These glowing items are quite obviously magical and cannot be concealed, nor may its light be shut off. Light cannot be selected as a major positive quirk for items whose primary abilities are concerned with stealth, such as a *ring of invisibility*.

*Loyal* – A magic item with this quirk is intensely loyal to you and will not suffer to be separated from you. It imposes a –1 penalty to all Disarm checks made to remove it from your grasp and a –1 penalty to Sleight of Hand checks made to steal it from you.

*Lucky* – While the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), you enjoy good fortune in all that you do. Once a day, or more if the Games Master feels it appropriate, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to any one skill check or saving throw. The lucky quirk can be paired with the unlucky negative quirk, making for a fascinating, monkey's paw-like magic item. Gnome and halfling magic items often possess this quirk, as both races are known for being favoured by fortune.

*Nightsinger/Daysinger* – An item with this quirk embraces and is invigorated by either the warmth and light of the sun, or the cool, dark caress of midnight air. When wielded in its preferred element, it either adds a +1 bonus to attack rolls, benefits from a +1 circumstance bonus to the saving throw DCs of all its powers or, in the case of magic items which do not have such abilities, it gains a +2 bonus to resist *dispelling* and similar effects. Unless the Games Master gives permission otherwise, this quirk must always be coupled with the nightbane/daymourner major negative quirk.

*Pristine* – While the item is carried upon your person, or otherwise in contact with you, neither you nor the weapon are ever touched by ichor, mud or muck of any sort. You, your clothing and your other possessions are always pristine and crease free. While this has no direct mechanical effect, you may sometimes gain a circumstance bonus to Non-Player Character reaction checks and to socially-based skill checks when dealing with those who are impressed by a snappy appearance.

*Resistant* – The magic of an item with this quirk clings stubbornly to existence and refuses to be quenched even for a moment; its caster level is increased by +2 for the purposes of resisting *dispel magic* and other, similar spells and spell-like effects.

*Savage* – An item with this quirk resonates, for whatever reason, with a savage hatred of a particular race, a particular gender, or members of a particular group and lashes out at them with exceptional fury. A weapon with this quirk adds either a +1 or a +2 bonus to damage rolls against the members of that particular gender, race or group. The amount of the bonus is directly proportional to the rarity of the group the bonus applies against. This quirk must be countered by a major negative quirk which lowers your damage bonus against another group of the same comparative rarity, by a penalty to attack rolls or by any other major negative quirk which the Games Master decides is appropriate (see the Far from an Exact Science sidebar, for greater details on balancing savage and other, similar quirks). The savage quirk appears frequently in weapons forged by orcs and half-orcs.

*Warmth/Chill* – While the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), both the item and your body are either warmed or cooled by 20 degrees. This strange quirk grants you a +1 bonus to saving throws against either cold attacks (if you are warmed) or fire and heat based attacks (if you are chilled). Likewise, you gain a +1 bonus to all checks to resist either arctic or desert level environmental effects.

*Wise* – A magic item with this quirk possesses some measure of wisdom and while it may not possess any actual sentience, it seems to steer its owner towards the best course of action in every circumstance. Once a day, if you are about to use the magical item in a way which would prove disastrous, the item will simply refuse to work.

### Major Negative Quirks

The following quirks are major negative, meaning they impose some penalty to either the wielder, or the magic item itself. In many ways, they are like minor curses and some, in fact, replicate certain curses (see *Core Rulebook II* for details on cursed magic items). Generally, it is not recommended that a magic item which already possesses one or more curses be burdened with major negative quirks as well. A curse can be considered sufficient balance for a major positive quirk, even one which adds bonuses to hit.

*Aged* – While the item’s powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like) and for one full day after, you are aged to the midpoint of your next age category, suffering all the benefits and penalties for doing so. So, for example, if you are a young adult human, you would, upon activating this item, immediately become middle aged. You cannot be aged beyond venerable by this quirk.

*Blunted* – An item with this quirk is filled, for whatever reason, with a reluctance to harm those of a particular race, particular gender or members of a particular group and will not harm them if it can help it. A weapon with this quirk suffers either a  $-1$  or a  $-2$  penalty to damage rolls against members of that particular gender, race or group. The amount of the penalty is directly proportional to the rarity of the group the penalty applies against, with the greater bonus applied to exceptionally rare groups (see the sidebar, above, for details). This quirk is usually countered with a major positive quirk which raises your damage bonus against another group of the same comparative rarity, by a bonus to attack rolls, or by any other major positive quirk which the Games Master decides is appropriate (see the Far from an Exact Science sidebar for greater details on balancing blunted and other, similar quirks).

*Clumsy* – An item with this quirk is afflicted, for whatever reason, with an innate clumsiness when wielded against members of a particular race, a particular gender or a particular group. When a weapon has this quirk, it subtracts either a  $-1$  or  $-2$  penalty to attack rolls against the members of that gender, race or group. The amount of the penalty is directly proportional to the rarity of the group the penalty applies against. This quirk is usually countered by a major positive quirk which increases your attack bonus against another group of the same comparative rarity, by a bonus to

damage rolls, or by any other major positive quirk which the Games Master decides is appropriate (see the Far from an Exact Science sidebar for greater details on balancing clumsy and other, similar quirks).

*Dangerous* – The item is inherently dangerous to you, for whatever reason. Once a day, when you first activate the item, don it or draw it forth (in the case of armour and weapons, respectively), you suffer 1d6 points of damage; this damage cannot be restored by magical healing of any sort and must be healed naturally.

*Disfiguring* – While the item’s powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like) and for a full day after, your body becomes covered with a thick smattering of warts, scales, freckles, pimples or some other skin disfigurement. You suffer a  $-2$  penalty to all Non-Player Character reaction checks. The disfigurement cannot be healed by magic.





## MAGIC ITEM QUIRKS



*Draining* – Some strange property of the item requires it to drain your soul energy before its powers can be quickened. Each day, when you first activate the item, don it, or draw it forth (in the case of armour and weapons, respectively), it drains 2 points of one of your ability scores. The ability score which is to be drained is dependant upon the nature of the item, so a *mask of the skull* would drain Charisma, for example. A draining quirk cannot drain an attribute which the magic item bolsters, so a *cloak of charisma* cannot drain Charisma, for example.

*Faceless* – While the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like) and for five rounds after, your facial features are erased and you are left with a smooth orb where a face should be. This can be extraordinarily disconcerting for those around you and carries with it an associated drawback, in the form of a  $-4$  penalty to all Charisma based skill checks. This quirk is automatically paired with the major positive quirk of the same name. This quirk cannot be attached to magic items which alter your appearance, or which render you invisible.

*Fickle* – A magic item with this quirk does not abide the touch of a particular owner for long and will always seek to leave its master in pursuit of another,

more desirable one. It imposes a  $-1$  penalty to your attempts to resist Disarm checks and grants a  $+1$  bonus to any Sleight of Hand checks made to steal the item from you.

*Hair Loss* – Whenever you use the item, all of your hair falls out. While it will grow back at its natural rate, the regrowth cannot be aided through the use of magic.

*Hatred* – While the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), you are filled with a palpable anger. You suffer a  $-2$  penalty to all Non-Player Character reaction checks made against members of the race (species), gender or group which the item hates.

*Loud* – When the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), a tremendous sound issues forth from the item, equal in volume to a drunken man singing at the top of his lungs. The exact sound which emanates from the item varies, based on the powers and origin of the magic item. So, for example, a sword might pound out a sound exactly like a war drum, while a hammer might ring with the sound of the forge. An item whose powers depend on sound cannot possess this quirk.

*Reluctant* – A magical item with this quirk is always reluctant to use its powers. While the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), you suffer a  $-1$  penalty to initiative checks. This quirk is never found in items which increase either your initiative score or your Dexterity score and may not be paired with the major positive quirk eager.

*Siren* – While the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), the item calls out to a specific animal or type of vermin and they come to sit in its presence. All creatures of that type, for example cats or spiders, within a range of one mile of you come at their fastest possible speed, to crowd around you as a crow hovers over carrion. The quirk grants you absolutely no measure of control over the summoned animals or vermin but they are no more hostile to you than they normally would be.

*Unlucky* – While the item's powers are active, or while you wear it or hold it in hand (in the case of weapons, staves and the like), you are plagued with misfortune in all that you do. Once a day, or more if the Games Master feels it appropriate, you suffer a  $-2$  penalty to any one skill check or saving throw. The unlucky

quirk can be paired with the lucky major positive quirk, making for a fascinating, monkey's paw like magic item. Gnome and halfling magic items rarely possess this quirk, unless it is accompanied by the lucky quirk.

*Unreliable* – An item with this quirk cannot be trusted to work when it is most needed. At the beginning of each day, the Games Master should roll a save for the item against a DC of 15. If the save fails (a natural 1 always fails), the item's powers cease to function for a single round during that day. The item will always fail at a critical juncture; the specific moment is selected by the Games Master.

## SAMPLE ITEMS

What follows are a few sample items, to demonstrate to you the many ways in which quirks can be used to add flavour to the magic items of your campaigns and to add a legendary, mythic quality to your campaigns.

### The Black Widow

The *black widow* was forged on the *womb of the midnight sun*, a powerful anvil which is also an altar consecrated to the Dark Mother of Spiders, the chief goddess of the drow. The *black widow* is a powerful short sword with a malevolent hatred of female surface elves, a hatred beaten into it on the forge by its crafter, the drow priestess Melecatra. To feed its hate, the *black widow* draws life energy from its wielder, a price most who possess it are happy to pay.

The *black widow* is a +2 dagger of venom, with the major positive quirk fury (female surface elves) and the major negative quirk draining (-2 Constitution).

### Cavellan's Gem of Great Insight

The arch-wizard Cavellan was, in his lifetime, perhaps the most learned of all mortal scholars, a genius unparalleled in the fields of magical research and medicinal studies. In addition to his sharp mind, Cavellan was also famed for both his incredible age and his fussy obsession with neatness. Upon his death, his vast collection of magical knick knacks and bric-a-brac quickly began to circulate throughout both the adventuring and the scholarly community. His most favoured magical item, *Cavellan's gem of great insight* quickly gained a reputation for both its usefulness and for its singularly unpleasant side-effects.

*Cavellan's gem of great insight* is a gem of true seeing, with the major negative quirk aged and the quirk warts, a combination which serves to transform the wielder into an aged, lumpy and doddering codger, rather like Cavellan himself. Fortunately, the gem also possesses the major positive quirk pristine, which at least keeps the wielder clean in his temporary dotage.

### Thrax's Armour of Glorious Fury

Thrax is an orc warlord from the Seven Gates Mountain range, a demon-haunted madman with both a thirst for carnage and a surprisingly delicate and refined artistic sensibility. Thrax most prized possession is a suit of beautifully filigreed armour, all in jade and gold and obsidian, which he wears at all times. Thrax's armour is famed far and wide for its indescribable magnificence, as well as for its inexplicable ability to disappear for long stretches, always at the most inappropriate of times.

*Thrax's armour of glorious fury* is a suit of +3 full plate of moderate fortification. It possesses the major positive quirk impressive (which grants a +1 bonus to Intimidate checks made against orcs), the major negative quirk fickle and the minor quirks everclean and light.



# NEW INTELLIGENT ITEM OPTIONS

Intelligent magic items are, other than artifacts, the rarest and most desired magical objects in fantasy gaming. Sadly, while almost every Player wants one for his character, very few ever actually attain them. The thought of introducing a magic item so powerful and self aware that it is, in effect, a new member of the adventuring party is a daunting one, both for the Games Master of the campaign and for the Player who must take on the additional role.

Despite the extra work involved, it is eminently worth the effort to create and use intelligent magic items in your campaigns, as the adventure and roleplaying opportunities they provide can really add vitality to your roleplaying. After all, without intelligent magic items in fantasy, the black sword could never have proved that it was 'a thousand times more evil than thou' and a great, dark eye could never have cast its long shadow across the Third age. Just as those intelligent items fundamentally invigorated fantasy literature and changed it forever, so too can intelligent items invigorate and change your own campaign.

This chapter of *Encyclopaedia Arcane: Magic Item Creation* introduces a host of new options and powers specifically designed for use with intelligent magic

## Crafting Intelligent Items and Random Tables

The tables presented in this chapter all include a random element, in the form of a d20 roll. When a Player wishes his character to create an intelligent item, or when you wish to create a specific item, however, relying on the roll of the dice can be frustrating. In these situation, it is recommended that you simply choose the results you want and, with your supervision, allow Players to do the same.

Alternately, you might rule that all intelligent magic items must have their capabilities rolled randomly, to better represent the fact that you can never predict the mysteries of life.

items. Using these rules will open up new vistas for roleplaying and offer both you and your Players exciting new opportunities in adventuring.

The rules in this chapter are intended to supplement, and in some cases replace, those found in the *Core Rulebook II*. In all cases where a chart duplicates and expands upon one found in *Core Rulebook II*, then the chart here supercedes it.

## CREATING AN INTELLIGENT ITEM

To create an intelligent magic item, the first step is to determine its mental acuity. Just as with living beings, not all intelligent magic items are created equal. Roll on the chart below to determine the raw numbers for magic item's mental statistics, then assign them to the item's Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma as you see fit. The chart also lists a bonus or penalty to the item's capabilities. Apply this bonus to all later rolls when determining the item's senses, its capabilities and its ability to communicate with both its wielder and other beings.



### Intelligent Item Ability Scores

d20	Mental Ability Scores	Capabilities Modifier
1–2	One at 12, one at 11, one at 10	–3
3–4	Two at 12, one at 10	–2
5–6	One at 13, one at 12, 11	–1
7–8	Two at 14, one at 11	–1
9–10	One at 15, one at 14, one at 11	—
11–12	Two at 16, one at 11	—
13–14	One at 17, one at 16, one at 11	+1
15–16	Two at 17, one at 11	+2
17–18	One at 18, one at 16, one at 11	+2
19	Two at 18, one at 12	+3
20	One at 19, one at 18, one at 12	+3

Now that you have determined the item’s mental abilities, you must roll to determine how easily the item can communicate with other beings. Roll on the following chart, remembering to apply the bonus or penalty, as appropriate.

### Intelligent Item Communication

d20	Communication
1–2	Empathy <sup>1</sup>
3–4	Empathy <sup>1</sup>
5–6	Speech <sup>2</sup>
7–8	Speech <sup>2</sup>
9–10	Speech <sup>3</sup>
11–12	Speech <sup>3</sup>
13–14	Speech <sup>4</sup>
15–16	Speech <sup>4, 5</sup>
17–18	Speech, telepathy <sup>4, 5, 6</sup>
19	Speech, telepathy <sup>4, 5, 6</sup>
20	Speech, telepathy <sup>4, 5, 6, 7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The possessor feels urges and sometimes emotions from the item that encourage or discourage certain courses of action. The item can likewise feel emotions from the wielder but only so long as the item is in hand, worn, or otherwise in contact with its wielder.

<sup>2</sup> The item can speak only the language of its creator.

<sup>3</sup> The item can speak common and the native language of its creator.

<sup>4</sup> The item can speak common and the native language of its creator and one additional language per point of Intelligence bonus.

<sup>5</sup> The item can read any language that it can speak but only so long as the item is in hand, worn, or otherwise in contact with its wielder.

<sup>6</sup> The item may now also communicate telepathically with its wielder, but only so long as the item is in hand, worn, or otherwise in contact with its wielder.

<sup>7</sup> The item can now telepathically communicate with others within 10 feet, but only so long as the item is in hand, worn, or otherwise in contact with its wielder.

Once you have determined the item’s ability to communicate, the next step is to determine its magical senses. Every intelligent item has some ability to perceive the world around itself, though some items are severely limited in this respect. Roll on the following table, remembering to apply the appropriate capabilities penalty.

### Intelligent Item Senses

d20	Senses
1	30 ft. vision
2–3	30 ft. vision and hearing
4–5	60 ft. vision and hearing
6–7	90 ft. vision and hearing
8–9	120 ft. vision and hearing
10–11	120 ft. vision and hearing
12–13	120 ft. vision, hearing and darkvision
14–15	180 ft. vision, hearing
16–17	120 ft. vision, hearing, darkvision and blind sense
18–19	180 ft. vision, hearing, darkvision and blind sense
20	120 ft. vision, hearing, darkvision, blind sense and smell

Having determined the item’s senses, it is time to determine its alignment. If crafting an intelligent item, then the item’s default alignment is the same as the crafting character or Non-Player Character. Otherwise roll to determine the item’s alignment on the table below. From this point on, the bonus or penalties to capabilities no longer applies.

### Intelligent Item Alignment

d20	Alignment
1–2	Lawful Good
3–4	Lawful Neutral <sup>1</sup>
5–6	Lawful Evil
7–8	Neutral Good <sup>1</sup>
9–12	Neutral <sup>2</sup>
13–14	Neutral Evil <sup>1</sup>
15–16	Chaotic Good
17–18	Chaotic Neutral <sup>1</sup>
19–20	Chaotic Evil

<sup>1</sup> The item can also be used by any character whose alignment corresponds to the non-neutral portion of the item’s alignment. So, any chaotic character can use an item with a chaotic neutral alignment

<sup>2</sup> The item can be used by neutral good and neutral evil characters as well.



## NEW INTELLIGENT ITEM OPTIONS

A character of a particular alignment who chooses to use, or even pick up, an intelligent item whose alignment does not correspond to his own is penalised in some way. To determine the exact penalty, roll or select from the chart below. Items with an ego score of 20 – 29 inflict double the penalty, and items with an ego of 30 or above triple the penalty.

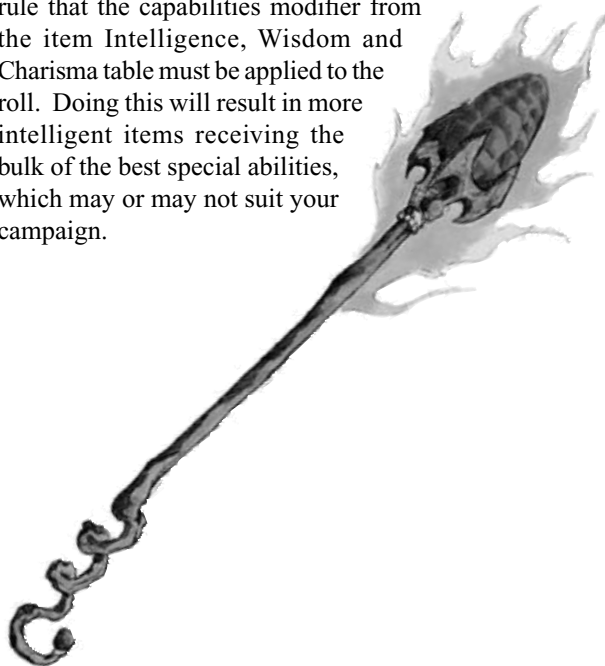
### Non-Compatible Alignment Penalties

d20	Penalty
1–4	The item inflicts one non-permanent negative level <sup>1</sup>
5–8	The item inflicts one point of temporary ability damage to all ability scores <sup>1</sup>
9–12	The item deals two points of hit point damage every round it is held
13–16	The item changes the wielder's gender <sup>1</sup>
17–20	The item does not function

<sup>1</sup> The penalty persists as long as the item is in hand or worn (in the case of magical rings, cloaks and the like). The penalty can not be reversed by magic of any sort but disappears as soon as the item is no longer in hand or worn.

## INTELLIGENT ITEM POWERS

Every intelligent magic item has powers of some sort, special abilities which are in addition to those found in a normal item of its sort. The first step to determining an intelligent item's special abilities is rolling on the table below. Typically, this is an unmodified roll of a d20 but if the Games Master so chooses, he can rule that the capabilities modifier from the item Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma table must be applied to the roll. Doing this will result in more intelligent items receiving the bulk of the best special abilities, which may or may not suit your campaign.



### Intelligent Item Power Determination

d20	Powers
1–2	One lesser
3–4	Two lesser
5–6	Three lesser
7–8	One lesser, one greater <sup>1</sup>
9–10	Two lesser, one greater <sup>1</sup>
11–12	Two lesser, two greater <sup>1</sup>
13–14	Three lesser, one greater <sup>1</sup>
15–16	Three lesser, two greater <sup>1</sup>
17–18	One lesser, three greater <sup>1</sup>
19	Two lesser, three greater <sup>1</sup>
20	Three lesser, three greater <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One of the item's greater powers can instead be dedicated to a special purpose. See below for rules for special purpose items.

Once the number and type of intelligent item powers has been decided, it is time to determine exactly what those powers are. The following table lists lesser powers which an intelligent item may possess. Roll once on the table for each lesser power.

### Intelligent Item Lesser Powers

d20	Lesser Power
1	Item can <i>bless</i> the wielder 3/day
2	Item can use <i>faerie fire</i> 3/day
3	Item can cast <i>minor image</i> 1/day
4	Item can <i>detect magic</i> at will
5	Item adds 5 ranks to two Knowledge skills
6	Item adds 5 ranks to Intimidate and Bluff
7	Item adds 5 ranks to Appraise and Sense Motive
8	Item adds 5 ranks to Spot and Search
9	Item adds 5 ranks to Listen and Survival
10	Item adds 5 ranks to Diplomacy and Gather Information
11	Item can cast <i>darkness</i> 3/day
12	Item can render itself <i>invisible</i> at will
13	Item adds 5 ranks to Jump and Tumble
14	Item adds 5 ranks to Climb and Swim
15	Item adds 5 ranks to Ride and Handle Animal
16	Item can use <i>cure moderate wounds</i> 3/day
17	Item can use <i>hold person</i> 1/day
18	Item can <i>detect (any alignment)</i> at will
19	Item can <i>detect thoughts</i> 2/day
20	Item can cast <i>disguise self</i> 2/day

Once an item's lesser powers have been selected, it is time to determine the extent of its greater abilities.

Roll once on the following table for each greater power, remembering that special purposes and related powers have their own table.

### Intelligent Item Greater Powers

d20	Greater Power
1	Item can <i>detect thoughts</i> at will
2	Item can <i>detect undead</i> at will
3	Item can <i>cause fear</i> in enemies at will
4	Item grants fast healing 1 to its wielder
5	Item can <i>see invisibility</i> 3/day
6	Item grants +10 bonus to any one skill each day, as chosen by wielder
7	Item radiates <i>protection from evil/good/chaos/law</i> 3/day
8	Item has continuous <i>detect scrying</i> effect
9	Item can use <i>clairvoyance</i> 3/day
10	Item can <i>dispel magic</i> 3/day
11	Item grants +5 bonus to any two skills each day, as chosen by wielder
12	Item can create <i>magic circle</i> against opposing alignment at will
13	Item cannot be detected by <i>detect magic</i>
14	Item can cast <i>bull's strength</i> on wielder 3/day
15	Item can cast <i>fox's cunning</i> on wielder 3/day
16	Item can cast <i>owl's wisdom</i> on wielder 3/day
17	Item can <i>quench</i> fires at will
18	Item can use <i>lesser globe of invulnerability</i> 1/day
19	Item can cast <i>whispering wind</i> at will
20	Item can detect secret doors at will

## SPECIAL PURPOSES AND INTELLIGENT ITEMS

If you have decided to give an intelligent item a special power, then you are creating a great deal of work for yourself but are also taking a step which will add greatly to the richness of your campaign. An item with a special purpose should be driven to accomplish its goal; since it was created specifically to achieve that purpose, it is not capable for the item to transcend its need to see its work completed. That said, special purpose items possess varying levels of dedication to their causes, since just as mortals vary in their commitments to what they hold most dear, so it is for intelligent magical objects.

The first step to creating a special purpose is to decide exactly what that purpose will be. The following table provides a number of options, which should be customised to fit the needs of your campaign.

### Special Purposes

d20	Purpose
1	Defeat/slay diametrically opposed alignment <sup>1</sup>
2	Defeat/slay warriors
3	Defeat/slay arcane spellcasters <sup>2</sup>
4	Defeat/slay divine spellcasters <sup>3</sup>
5	Defeat/slay a particular creature type
6	Defeat/slay a particular race
7	Defeat/slay a particular gender
8	Defeat/slay the servants of a particular deity
9	Defeat/slay all (excluding the wielder)
10	Defend/preserve a particular race
11	Defend/preserve a particular gender
12	Defend/preserve the servants of a particular deity
13	Defend/preserve a particular kingdom or area
14	Resurrect/recreate a particular being <sup>4</sup>
15	Restore/rebuild a particular area/object <sup>5</sup>
16	Defeat/eradicate a particular ideology
17	Defend/preserve a particular ideology
18	Sow dissent/create conflict on nationwide scale
19	Corrupt innocence/redeem evil
20	Destroy all magical items <sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The purpose of a neutral version of this item is to slay/defeat powerful beings of all other alignments, to preserve balance.

<sup>2</sup> This includes spellcasting monsters, or those with spell-like abilities.

<sup>3</sup> This includes divine entities and servitors with spell-like abilities.

<sup>4</sup> Typically, this is the item's crafter but it does not have to be. Kings, rulers, powerful monsters, gods, all are acceptable choices. Should the item succeed, its special purpose will then become to preserve that being. Think carefully before allowing this special purpose to be added to an item crafted by a Player.

<sup>5</sup> This can be anything from a single temple to an entire nation. Should the item succeed, its purpose will then become to preserve the restored structure.

<sup>6</sup> This may or may not include the item itself. Depending on the strength of conviction, the item may allow the wielder to possess other items, so long as he still works to eventually destroy all items.

Once the item's special purpose is decided, you must then determine how strong its resolve in accomplishing its special purpose is. The stronger the conviction, the more unyielding and inflexible the item is in pursuit of its goals. Note that no matter how lax in their beliefs, all items will eventually become resentful if they decide their wielder/partner is not working to fulfill their purpose well enough. Weapons which feel betrayed



## NEW INTELLIGENT ITEM OPTIONS

will refuse to function for their wielder. Remember, however, that all but the most fanatical items will, grudgingly, forgive a wielder for ignoring its special purpose in pursuit of a goal critical to the welfare of the wielder, or the world as a whole.

### Special Purpose Conviction

d20	Strength of Conviction
1	<i>Lax</i> – the item will permit the wielder up to a year of ignoring the item’s purposes
2	<i>Forgiving</i> – the item will permit half a year of ignoring its purpose
3–7	<i>Understanding</i> – the item will permit a season to pass between pursuit of its special purpose
8–12	<i>Firm</i> – the item will permit a month of ignoring its special purpose before it is angered
13–16	<i>Resolved</i> – the item will permit no more than two weeks to pass before it is used towards its purpose
17–18	<i>Stubborn</i> – the item will permit no more than a week to pass before it must be used in pursuit of its purpose
19	<i>Obstinate</i> – the item will permit no more than two days to pass before it must be used for its purpose
20	<i>Fanatical</i> – the item will only function while in pursuit of its purpose

Every special purpose item has a dedicated power, which is a special, powerful ability which the item will only use in pursuit of its goals. The use of the dedicated power is solely up to the discretion of the item and the more fanatical the item is in pursuit of its goals, the more exacting it is in the use of that power. That said, the more fanatical the item, the more vigorously the item will use its power once it has decided its purpose is being fulfilled. The following chart gives a wide range of special powers but is by no means a comprehensive list.



### Dedicated Power

d20	Power
1	Item can cast <i>ice storm</i>
2	Item can cast <i>confusion</i>
3	Item can cast 10d6 <i>fireball</i>
4	Item can cast 10d6 <i>lightning bolt</i>
5	Item can cast <i>scrying</i>
6	Item can <i>haste</i> wielder
7	Wielder gains +3 luck bonus to saves, attack rolls, skill and ability checks
8	Item can cast <i>charm person</i>
9	Wielder gains fast healing 5
10	Item can <i>dimension door</i> itself and wielder
11	Item can cast <i>hold monster</i>
12	Item can cast <i>break enchantment</i>
13	Item can <i>teleport</i> itself and wielder
14	Item can use heightened (to 4 <sup>th</sup> level) <i>poison</i> as a touch attack
15	Item can cast <i>mass inflict light wounds</i>
16	Item can cast <i>rusting grasp</i>
17	Item can cast <i>harm</i> (once per day)
18	Item can cast <i>heal</i> (once per day)
19	Item can cast <i>stoneskin</i> on its wielder
20	Item can cast <i>true resurrection</i> , , once per month, on wielder only <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If the item’s special purpose is to defend/preserve, it can use this ability in pursuit of that goal.

The act of granting an item a special purpose creates a fundamental imbalance in the fabric of magic. The backlash from this imbalance infects each special purpose item with a specific weakness, a condition or defect which can, potentially and in the worst case, fatally affect a special purpose’s ability to complete its mission. Even if it does not do that, this weakness will certainly affect the wielder’s ability to survive his item’s obsession.

There are two conditions which will trigger the item’s weakness. If the item’s powers are not used in the furthering of its special purpose within a time it finds acceptable (see the Special Purpose Conviction table), then the weakness takes effect until its special purpose is advanced. Second, if the item’s special purpose dedicated power is used in pursuit of its special purpose, but in a way which leads to a monumental failure, then the item’s weakness comes into effect. The weakness halts only when the item achieves a lasting success in pursuit of its special purpose.

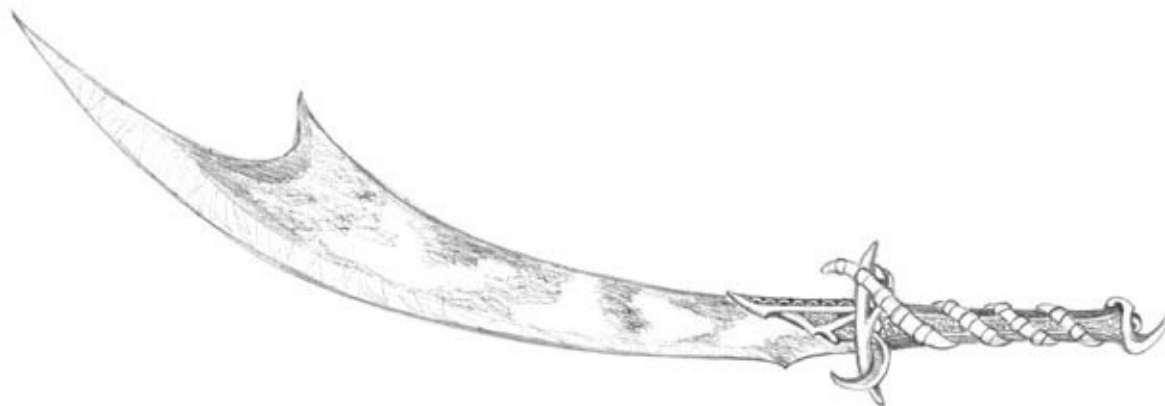
**Special Purpose Weaknesses**

d20	Weakness
1	The item is cowardly and imposes a -3 penalty to saves against fear on its wielder <sup>1</sup>
2	The item must succeed at a Will Save against DC 15 to use any of its lesser or greater powers
3	The item's ego score is increased by 10
4	Item falls into depression, imposing a -2 penalty to wielder's Strength and Charisma score <sup>1</sup>
5	Item gives into anger, imposing -2 penalty to wielder's Wisdom and Charisma <sup>1</sup>
6	Item becomes dismayed, suffering a -3 effective caster level penalty to resist dispelling
7	Item can refuse to allow wielder to access any powers, not just its special purpose ability <sup>2</sup>
8	When not used in furtherance of its purpose, the item inflicts 1 point of damage (which bypasses any damage reduction) on the wielder each time any of its powers are used <sup>1</sup>
9	The item becomes fragile and its hardness drops by 4
10	The item temporarily loses one point from one of its attributes each day, to a minimum of 3 each. If a single ability scores falls to 3, then the item's special purpose power can no longer be used, at least until some great advance in pursuit of its special purpose is achieved. Lost scores return immediately if this happens.
11	The item actively despises wielder and seeks to harm him. If it achieves dominance, then it will force the wielder into harmful situations
12	The item will attempt to leave the wielder. If it achieves dominance, then it will force him to give it to someone more suitable
13	Wielder gains 1 negative level whenever he wields or even touches the item. This cannot be overcome by magic of any sort
14	Item sickens, imposing a -2 penalty to the wielder's Constitution
15	Item drains luck from wielder and his allies, imposing a -1 penalty to attack rolls, saving throws and all skill checks tot he wielder and all allies within 10 feet.
16	The item must draw vitality from the wielder in order to maintain its dedication to its purpose. It drains one hit point per wielder's character level or hit die (whichever is higher). These drained hit points may not be restored by any means so long as the item is in use, or even in contact with its wielder
17	The item loses hope and becomes lax and uncaring, imposing a -2 penalty to wielder's Dexterity and Intelligence
18	The item loses all ability to activate its powers independently, though the wielder can activate them as normal
19	Roll three times on this chart and choose two results as weaknesses. Ignore additional rolls of 19
20	The item has two unique personalities, each diametrically opposed to the other <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If the item's ego is dominant, then the penalty is doubled.

<sup>2</sup> This applies even if the item's ego is not dominant.

<sup>3</sup> Roll again on all previous charts to determine the second personalities abilities. The item's special purpose is, whenever possible, diametrically opposed to the original personality's. Do not roll an additional curse, as this curse applies to both personalities.





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## NEW INTELLIGENT ITEM OPTIONS

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Roll once on the table Special Purpose Weaknesses table to determine the item's weakness. If you roll a weakness which is not appropriate for the item, then roll again until a more appropriate result is achieved.

Whenever possible, an intelligent item's powers and abilities should be tied together into a coherent theme, the better to define the item's purpose and personality. If you find yourself absolutely unable to mesh one of an item's powers or abilities with the rest, you are encouraged to either roll again on the appropriate chart until you find a more thematically appropriate ability, or simply select an ability which you consider to be a good fit.

### SAMPLE INTELLIGENT ITEM

To give you an example of the kind of results you can achieve with this expanded list of intelligent item powers, here is a sample item:

#### The Carpet of Arad-Albed

The *carpet of Arad-Albed* is a *flying carpet* of most sublime and wondrous enchantment, a tapestry woven of fine gold, silver and crimson threads and reinforced with bits of obsidian so thin and cunningly wrought they are as soft and pliable as silk. Arad-Albed was a powerful illusionist and thief who lived in a time that was ancient when the oldest dragons were still in their eggs and the djinn and gods warred for supremacy of the endless sands. Arad-Albed trusted no man and believed the words of no woman, yet he still craved the pleasures of conversation and the warmth only close companionship can bring. He wove his living carpet after first tricking the Caliph of the Forgotten Dunes into sharing the secrets of granting life with him and then absconded with that magnificent despot's most prized tapestries.

Arad-Albed and his carpet were as close as brothers and shared

many adventures but in time, Arad-Albed died, as all men must, leaving the carpet alone. Now the carpet waits, carelessly sprawled across the throne room floor in its former master's sky palace, waiting for a new master as clever and daring as its legendary creator. The carpet will willingly serve anyone who it deems worthy but its burning desire is to resurrect Arad-Albed and soar again with him across endless desert skies.

The *carpet of Arad-Albed* has an Intelligence of 19, a Charisma of 18, a Wisdom of 12 and an Ego of 20. It speaks and reads common, the ancient tongue of its master and four other languages. It can see, hear and taste the desert air as well as any man and can see in the dark as clearly as an owl. It is chaotic good and capable of turning those who do not share its moral outlook into the opposite gender, an ability it relishes using.

The carpet has two lesser powers and a special purpose. It can use *minor image* at will and grants its master a +5 bonus to Intimidate and Bluff skill checks. Its special purpose is to return Arad-Albed to life but it is lax in the pursuit of this goal. While in pursuit of its special purpose, the carpet grants its owner a +3 luck bonus to attack rolls, saves and skill checks. The carpet is fickle, however, and if its owner does not put forth a reasonable effort to fulfill the carpet's purpose, it steals his luck entirely; the wielder and his allies within 10 feet suffer a -1 penalty to all attack and damage rolls, saves and skill checks.



# PRESTIGE CLASSES

While all adventurers eventually use magic items in the course of their heroic escapades, some rely upon them more heavily than others. In the craft halls of the dwarves, the treetop observatories of the elves and in dank laboratories in the cities of men, there are master mages who specialise in the creation of magic items, who come to rely upon them so heavily, in fact, they cannot work magic in any other fashion. So too, there are champions striding the face of the world, men and women who have aligned themselves so closely to the powers of a single magic item that they are now as one with it, as inseparable as night and the stars. Some of these champions wield mighty weapons, or bear impregnable armour and shields, while others link themselves to staves of power, or wands of fire, bonding with them in much the same way that a sorcerer bonds with his familiar. This chapter is for these remarkable characters.

No discussion of characters who rely heavily upon magical items would be complete, however, without discussing their opposites. Yes, there are those who refuse to touch magic items altogether, who view them as a blasphemous abomination upon the world and seek to destroy them every opportunity that they get. These beings, the unbound, are discussed here as well.

As you might imagine, the prestige classes presented in this book are primarily concerned, in one way or another, with the use of magic items. They are intended to fill certain roles within a fantasy world which have not yet been adequately addressed. Some you may recognise as being based on influential characters of fantasy fiction, while others you will only recognise for the role they fill. The majority of the prestige classes herein are suitable for both Players and for Non-Player Characters, though you are cautioned to think twice, and then again, before allowing a Player to take more than one or two levels of the unbound prestige class.

## THE BONDED CHAMPION

The bonded champion is a warrior who has formed an unbreakable bond with a magical weapon, suit of armour or shield. The reason for this bond could be anything; perhaps the warrior was selected by the gods to serve as their champion; perhaps the item he is bonded to is an ancient family heirloom, which has served the scion of the house for centuries; or perhaps the item itself chose its wielder, for its own hidden reasons. In any case, the bond between champion and item is closer than the bond between brothers, closer than the bond between a knight and his lady, closer even than the bond between mother and child. The champion and his bonded item are one another's boon companions and it is their gift, and their doom, to possess power enough to rock the foundations of the world, to shape destiny and to carve their place at the forefront of history, whether they would wish it or not.

The magical item a bonded champion bonds with reveals much about his character and his destiny. A bonded champion who chooses, or is chosen by a weapon will be a conqueror, destined to gain or lose a kingdom in a storm of fire and blood, while a champion who instead bonds with a suit of magical armour or with a shield is destined to stand alone between the dark forces and all that he holds dear, to raise a mailed fist and rage against the dying of the light.

All bonded champions are powerful warriors, as only the warrior has both the martial training and the martial spirit necessary to truly justify the gestation of the unbreakable, mystical bond. Most bonded champions are either fighters or paladins, with the former bonding with weapons or armour they have seized from the treasure hoards of their slain enemies and the latter most commonly forming bonds with items which are considered holy to their god. Rangers and barbarians also follow the path of the bonded champion, with the latter most often bonding with mighty weapons which bear the totem symbols of their tribes and their ancestors. Clerics and druids occasionally become bonded champions and like paladins, they almost always bond with items which are sacred to their faith. Monks, rogues and bards bond with magical armours and weapons only rarely and even then they rarely form a strong enough bond to progress more than a few levels in this prestige class. Sorcerers and wizards,



## PRESTIGE CLASSES

meanwhile, almost never become bonded champions; for them, instead, is the way of the bonded master.

Bonded champions can be of any alignment and of course, their bonded item will be of an alignment that is compatible. Most Non-Player Character bonded champions will be active in the campaign world. Nomads, vagabonds and searchers, they are consumed by a restless passion to seek out challenges, to pit their mystic strength against the greatest challenges the mortal world, and the worlds beyond have to offer. Depending on their alignment and their goals, Non-Player Character bonded champions can either be powerful allies for the Players, or their most implacable foes.

**Hit Die:** d10.

### Requirements

In order to become a bonded champion, the character must meet all of the following requirements:

**Base Attack Bonus:** +8 or higher.

**Skills:** Concentration 4 ranks, Use Magic Device 4 ranks.

**Feats:** Bonded Armour, Shield or Weapon, Soul Armour, Shield or Weapon.

**Special:** The character must have directly participated in the creation of his bonded weapon or armour, or must have claimed it at the end of a great quest. Further, the item must either be unaligned, or it must possess an alignment which is compatible with the prospective bonded champion's.

### Class Skills

The bonded champion's class skills (and the relevant abilities for each) are Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (armoursmith, weaponsmith) (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (arcane) (Int), Profession (any) (Int), Ride (Dex) and Spellcraft (Int).

**Skill Points Per Level:** 2 + Int bonus.

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the bonded champion.

**Weapon and Armour Proficiencies:** The bonded champion gains no new proficiencies with weapons, nor does he gain proficiency with armour or shields.

**Chosen Bearer (Su):** The bonded champion and his bonded magical item were predestined to find one another and what destiny brings together, no mortal can pull asunder. The bonded champion's equipment is as much a part of him as his soul is; his bonded item calls to him and he cannot be separated from it, or denied its power, for long.

Beginning at 1<sup>st</sup> level, the bonded champion can sense the presence of his bonded magic item anywhere on the mortal plane, regardless of distance and regardless of magic effects put in place to thwart his attempts. In addition, once a day per class level, a bonded champion can call his bonded item to him as a standard action, so long as he can see it and so long as it is within a 30 foot radius of him. The weapon or shield will instantly appear in his hand, regardless of the obstacles which stand between them and the armour will likewise instantly fit itself to his body, so long as he is not already wearing another suit of armour.

**Growth (Su):** As the bonded champion grows in power, so too does his bonded item. Beginning at 2<sup>nd</sup> level, a bonded champion can spend experience points to awaken special, magical abilities within his chosen item, in a similar way to how a spellcaster crafts a magic item.

In order to strengthen his bonded item, the bonded champion must hunt down and destroy or overcome powerful threats, with the assistance of the bonded item. Each time that happens, the object absorbs the experience points the bonded champion would normally receive for overcoming that challenge



(to the minimum required for the strengthening). When the total number of absorbed experience is equal to that required to strengthen the item, it automatically gains the appropriate new abilities. The Bonded Item Improvements table shows the amount of experience which must be absorbed by the bonded item at each level.

Since a bonded champion's bonded in item is already magical in nature, he can only begin to improve it once his personal link is strong enough to surpass the item's already awakened powers. Due to this, a bonded champion can only increase the strength of his bonded item's magic once his level has exceeded its equivalent enhancement bonus. So, a bonded champion whose companion item is a +2 *flaming sword* cannot increase its power through the use of this class ability until 4<sup>th</sup> level, since the bonded weapon has an equivalent enhancement bonus of +3. Once a bonded champion can increase the power of his item, however, he need only pay the difference in experience point costs between creating an item of the bonded item's original potency and one of its new strength.

The bonded champion can reconfigure the abilities of his item as he so chooses, so long as he pays an additional sum of experience points equal to 50% of that needed to increase the item's power at that level (see the Bonded Item Improvements table). This normally entails discarding some abilities or enhancement bonuses of the weapon in order to make space for new ones. Eventually, the bonded champion may add the most powerful enhancements to his items (such as the *vortal* property, the equivalent of a +5 enhancement bonus) without forcing him to horde bonuses over a period of several levels. The bonded champion *must* either have an example of the magical quality in another item that the bonded item can 'copy', or a scroll of the appropriate spell(s) necessary to normally make the new enchantment. Scrolls will be consumed in the reconfiguration process, and the entire process always takes a number of days to achieve equal to the item's total enhancement bonus. So, for example, a 3<sup>rd</sup> level bonded champion with a bonded +2 *shield of blinding* could, upon reaching 4<sup>th</sup> level, alter his shield so that it is a +2 *animated shield* instead. This would cost 325 experience points, consume a scroll of *animate objects* (or copy the ability from an *animated buckler*), and take 3 days to complete.

If a bonded weapon is broken or disenchanting, the bonded champion can repair it by dedicating one full

week of time to quiet meditation and contemplation and then paying a number of experience points equal to 5% of the total he has paid for enhancement to that point. So, for example, a 5<sup>th</sup> level bonded champion, who has invested a total of 2,700 experience points into his weapon, can reforge and reawaken it by meditating for a week and expending another 270 experience. Once this is done, the item regains all its lost abilities.

**Undaunted (Su):** The bonded champion can draw upon the strength of his bonded item when he needs it most, nourishing and sustaining him against the actions of those who would dare pit themselves against his destiny. Beginning at 3<sup>rd</sup> level, so long as the bonded champion weapon, shield or armour is in hand, he may add its enhancement bonus as a bonus to all saving throws. When calculating the save bonus, only add those bonuses which directly apply to attack rolls and damage; effective enhancement bonuses do not apply. This means that a bonded champion with a +3 *longsword* would add a +3 bonus to his saves, while a bonded champion with a +2 *keen longsword* would add only a +2 bonus to his saving throws. The bonus gained from undaunted is an unnamed bonus, meaning it stacks with all other bonuses, such as a paladin's divine grace class ability. Undaunted can be used an unlimited number of times per day, but it is a supernatural ability, meaning it can be thwarted by anti-magic fields and other, similar spells and spell like effects.

**Awakened (Su):** The bonded champion's chosen item is not an ordinary magical object. Thanks to the

### Bonded Item Improvements

Bonded Champion Class Level	Bonus	Experience Cost
1	+1	50 <sup>1</sup>
2	+2	200
3	+3	400
4	+4	650
5	+5	1000
6	+6 <sup>2</sup>	1,500
7	+7 <sup>2</sup>	2,100
8	+8 <sup>2</sup>	2,800
9	+9 <sup>2</sup>	3,600
10	+10 <sup>2</sup>	4,500

<sup>1</sup> Since a bonded champion's bonded item must be magical, this is included only for the sake of completeness.

<sup>2</sup> A bonded item cannot actually have an enhancement bonus higher than +5 but it can have special abilities which are equivalent to enhancement bonuses.



## PRESTIGE CLASSES

link between it and its champion, the item becomes sentient, drawing upon its partner's personality and values to birth a thinking mind. At 4<sup>th</sup> level, the bonded item becomes an intelligent magical item. If the item is not already intelligent, then roll for its mental prowess on either the tables provided in *Core Rulebook II* or, if you have chosen to implement them, on the expanded section provided in the New Intelligent Items Options chapter of this book. An awakened bonded item's alignment is always fully compatible with its champion's. Rather than rolling the item's lesser and greater powers, however, the Player of the bonded champion and the Games Master should work together to select powers which best represent the personality and actions the character has displayed since becoming a bonded champion.

If the item is already intelligent, move it one step higher on the Item Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma and Capabilities table (see the New Intelligent Items Options chapter), selecting new abilities as outlined above.

Awakened bonded items have an ego score as other intelligent items do but they will only dominate their bonded partner under the most extreme circumstances, such as if the bonded champion chooses to throw himself from a cliff, rather than face a powerful opponent. Under no circumstances will the bonded item purposefully lead its champion to harm, nor will it ever cause him to divest himself of other normal or magical items, unless the bonded item has reason to believe they will do the champion harm.

**Primal Focus (Su):** The bonded champion and his item understand one another on a primal level and because of this, the bonded champion can use his item with a grace and skill that can only be called supernatural. Beginning at 6<sup>th</sup> level, when the bonded champion

uses his bonded item, he gains the appropriate bonus listed below.

If bonded to a weapon, the champion gains a +1 to attack and a +2 to damage when wielding that weapon, a bonus which stacks with that gained from Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialisation, Greater Weapon Focus and Greater Weapon Specialisation.

If bonded to a shield, the champion can choose to either gain a +1 bonus to attack and a +2 bonus to damage when making a shield bash with his bonded item, or to benefit from a +1 bonus to Armour Class when equipped with his bonded item. As above, the bonus gained from primal focus stacks with all other relevant bonuses. Once the choice has been made, it cannot be reversed.

If bonded to a suit of armour, the champion benefits from a +1 bonus to Armour Class. As above, the bonus gained from primal focus stacks with all other relevant bonuses. Once the choice has been made, it cannot be reversed.

**Inseparable (Su):** At 7<sup>th</sup> level, the mystic link between bonded champion and bonded item is further strengthened. Now, the bonded champion can call his bonded item to him as a free action, so long as it is within 30 feet + 10 feet per class level of him. Further, he no longer needs to be able to see the item to call it to him. As before, the called weapon or shield appears in his hand, ready for use, or his armour laces itself to his body, so long as he is not already armoured.

**Heightened (Su):** The bonded champion is doomed to live a life of great import, to change the world for better or worse, as his conscience and the whims of an uncaring universe decide. Such a destiny is not easily thwarted, nor will the would-be denier of destiny be

### The Bonded Champion

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+0	+0	+2	Chosen bearer
2	+2	+0	+0	+3	Growth
3	+3	+1	+1	+3	Undaunted
4	+4	+1	+1	+4	Awakened
5	+5	+1	+1	+4	
6	+6	+2	+2	+5	Primal focus
7	+7	+2	+2	+5	Inseparable
8	+8	+2	+2	+6	Heightened
9	+9	+3	+3	+6	
10	+10	+3	+3	+7	Unbreakable

forgiven. At 8<sup>th</sup> level, the bonded champion's bonded item gains a special purpose. If the bonded item already possesses a special purpose, then it gains a second dedicated power usable when pursuing its special purpose.

**Unbreakable (Su):** By the time a bonded champion reaches the end of this prestige class path, he and his weapon have become as one and what the weapon has given him in terms of strength and force of will, he now returns tenfold. At 10<sup>th</sup> level, a bonded champion and his bonded item can no longer be separated by any means, nor may the bonded item be destroyed or rendered powerless for long. The benefits received by this class ability vary depending on the bonded item.



A bonded weapon can no longer be sundered, nor can the wielder be disarmed. Attempts to *disintegrate* or otherwise irrevocably destroy the bonded item automatically fail and if the weapon fails a saving throw against *disjunction*, *dispel magic*, or any other similar spell or spell-like effect, its powers return at full strength at the beginning of the bonded champion's next turn.

A bonded shield can no longer be destroyed by any means and as with a bonded weapon, *dispelled* powers return at full strength at the beginning of the champion's next turn. A bonded shield also provides its Armour Class bonus to the champion even if he uses it in a shield bash.

A bonded suit of armour can not be destroyed by any means and as with a bonded weapon or shield, it regains its powers at the start of the champion's next turn should they be *disjuncted* or *dispelled*. Furthermore, a bonded suit of armour no longer imposes an armour check penalty of any sort and it cannot be bypassed by touch attacks, meaning the champion retains his armour's full bonus to Armour Class in almost all situations.

## THE BONDED MASTER

Some wizards and sorcerers bond their spirits to a living creature, a familiar who serves their whims, assists them in their adventures and research and gives them much needed companionship as they explore the ether of the cosmos and of the mind. Other spellcasters, however, choose to bond themselves to beloved magic items instead, drawing the same strength from them as their peers do from magical toads. Over time, if they are truly dedicated, they can awaken sentience in their favoured items, creating a companion who is all the more marvellous and precious for its almost miraculous 'birth'. Such mages are known as bonded masters and they are to the tools of the wizard and sorcerer as bonded champions are to the implements of the warrior.

The type of item which a bonded master chooses to bond with depends upon both his preferences and his personality. Masters who come from warlike cultures, or who keep company with hardened mercenaries and adventuring warriors prefer to bond with items which possess great destructive potential, such as *wands of fireball*, or *staves of power*. Other masters, particularly those who favour trickery and subtlety, prefer to bond with *rings of invisibility* or *staves of illusion*, as the link of shared interest strengthens the magical bond between master and servant. Unlike a bonded



## PRESTIGE CLASSES

champion, a bonded master's item is truly his servant; it is, for all intents and purposes, his familiar.

All bonded masters are, of course, primarily spellcasters, as only they can take advantage of the class' full abilities. Wizards and sorcerers are the most common members of this prestige class, though bards infrequently pursue it as well. Multiclass characters, particularly sorcerer-fighters, wizard-fighters, sorcerer-rogues and wizard-rogues sometimes take levels in this class as well, the fighters bonding themselves to *rings of the ram*, *rods of lordly might* and the like and the rogues bonding themselves to *staves of charming*, *rings of invisibility* and other, similar items.

**Hit Die:** d4.

### Requirements

In order to become a bonded master, the character must meet all of the following requirements:



**Skills:** Concentration 8 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks, Spellcraft 8 ranks.

**Feats:** Bonded Ring, Rod, Staff or Wand, Craft Rod or Craft Staff or Craft Wand or Forge Ring.

**Class Ability:** Must be able to cast arcane magic spells of 3<sup>rd</sup> level or higher and must have the ability to possess a familiar.

**Special:** The character must have directly participated in the creation of his bonded ring, rod, staff or wand, or must have claimed it at the end of a great quest.

### Class Skills

The bonded master's class skills (and the relevant abilities for each) are Concentration (Con), Craft (any) (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (any) (Int), Profession (any) (Int) and Spellcraft (Int).

**Skill Points Per Level:** 2 + Int bonus.

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the bonded master.

**Weapon and Armour Proficiencies:** The bonded master gains no new proficiencies with weapons, nor does he gain proficiency with armour or shields.

**Spellcasting:** The bonded master continues to improve his spellcasting as he increases in level. At every level save 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, the bonded master gains new spells per day, exactly as though he had gained a level in an arcane spellcasting class he belonged to before becoming a bonded master. He does not, however, gain any other benefits a character of that class would have gained (bonus feats, etc). This means that he essentially adds his levels of the bonded master prestige class (excepting 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> levels) to his existing caster levels to determine caster level and spells per day.

**Item Familiar:** The bonded master and his bonded item share a link which is much like that between a wizard and his familiar. Beginning at 1<sup>st</sup> level, the bonded master's bonded item is considered to be his familiar. The bond provided benefits which are slightly different from those gained by linking to a living being, as outlined below.

**Call:** The bond between the master and his bonded item is so strong that he can call it to his hand as a

**Bonded Item Familiar Abilities**

Bonded Master	
Class Level	Special
1 – 2	Call, shielded
3 – 4	Special ability
5 – 6	Heightened intellect
7 – 8	Master's grace
9 – 10	Special ability
11 – 12 <sup>1</sup>	Heightened intellect
13 – 14 <sup>1</sup>	Heightened intellect
15 – 16 <sup>1</sup>	Heightened intellect
17 – 18 <sup>1</sup>	Mutual bolster
19 – 20 <sup>1</sup>	Heightened intellect

<sup>1</sup> These higher levels are included as a character may add his previous class level which had the familiar class feature to his bonded master level for the purposes of determining his item familiar's abilities.

standard action, so long as he can see it and it is within 30 feet + 10 feet per class level of him.

*Special Ability:* A bonded item familiar also grants a special ability to the bonded master. This special ability applies only so long as the item is in hand, or on the bonded master's person. See the Bonded Item Special Abilities sidebar for details of special

*Shielded:* A bonded item familiar is far more hardy than other magic items and is highly resistant to destructive magic. A bonded staff, rod, ring or wand gains +1 hardness and two extra hit points per class level and its break DC is increased by a total of +2.

*Heightened Intellect:* Each time the item familiar gains this special ability, its Intelligence score increases by one step, with a commensurate increase to its special abilities.

*Master's Grace:* The bond between master and familiar is such that the item can draw strength from him even when they are not together. The item familiar uses its bonded master's saving throws at all times and gains a +1 bonus per two bonded master class levels to saves to resist *disjunction*.

*Mutual Bolster:* While the bonded master and the item familiar are in contact with one another, both benefit from a +2 bonus to all saving throws.

Characters who already possessed familiars before becoming a bonded master lose the spiritual link which bound them to their familiars. Both they and their former companion lose all familiar benefits, and

**Bonded Item Familiar Special Abilities**  
 Each type of bonded item familiar grants two special abilities to its master, with one ability granted at 2<sup>nd</sup> level, and the second at 9<sup>th</sup> level.

*Ring* - +2 bonus to Craft checks when making rods *or* +2 bonus to saves to resist spells and spell-like effects cast through or from magical rings

*Rod* - +2 bonus to Craft checks when making rods *or* +2 bonus to saves to resist spells and spell-like effects cast through or from magical rods.

*Staff* - +2 bonus to Craft checks when making staves *or* +2 bonus to saves to resist spells and spell-like effects cast through or from magical staves.

*Wand* - +2 bonus to Craft checks when making wands *or* +2 bonus to saves to resist spells and spell-like effects cast through or from magical wands.

the previous familiar leaves the character forever. Any levels in a class which granted a familiar stack with those gained via this prestige class, meaning a character with 6 sorcerer levels and 10 bonded master class levels would gain all item familiar benefits up to 16<sup>th</sup> level.

Should the item familiar be destroyed, the bonded master must attempt a DC 15 Fortitude saving throw. Failure means he loses a number of experience points equal to 1/25th the base price of the item; success reduces the cost to one half that amount. A destroyed item familiar can be crafted anew immediately, though the new item familiar must be exactly identical to the 'slain' one and it must be crafted and paid for by the bonded master in the normal fashion.

**Simple Recharge:** Since it would not do for the bonded master's item familiar to run out of charges – causing it to, in effect, die – the bonded master can, once he reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> level, recharge his item familiar. The method used to recharge the item familiar is similar to that used to create it in the first place and requires that the bonded master be in a quiet location for the duration of the recharging. Recharging an item requires one day for each 3,000 gold pieces in the base price of the item and the expenditure of 1/50th of the base price of the item in experience points. Recharging an item familiar in this fashion returns it to its full, normal complement of charges.





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## PRESTIGE CLASSES

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### The Bonded Master

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Item familiar	+1 level of existing class
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Simple recharge	+1 level of existing class
3	+1	+1	+1	+3		
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Awakened	+1 level of existing class
5	+2	+1	+1	+4		+1 level of existing class
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	Empowered	
7	+3	+2	+2	+5		+1 level of existing class
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	Item mastery	+1 level of existing class
9	+4	+3	+3	+6		
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	Limitless	+1 level of existing class

**Awakened:** The bonded master's item familiar is not an ordinary magical object. Thanks to the link between it and its master, the item becomes sentient, drawing upon its master's personality and values to birth a thinking mind. At 4<sup>th</sup> level, the item familiar becomes an intelligent magical item. If the item is not already intelligent, then roll for its mental prowess on either the tables provided in *Core Rulebook II* or, if you have chosen to implement them, on the expanded section provided in the New Intelligent Items Options chapter of this book. An awakened item familiar's alignment is always fully compatible with its master's. Rather than rolling the item's lesser and greater powers, however, the Player of the bonded master and the Games Master should work together to select powers which best represent the personality and actions the character has displayed since becoming a bonded master.

If the item is already intelligent, move it one step higher on the Item Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma and Capabilities chart, selecting new abilities as outlined above. Awakened item familiars have an ego score as other intelligent items do but they will only dominate their bonded partner in under the most extreme circumstances, such as if the bonded master finds himself controlled by a powerful opponent. Under no circumstances will the bonded item purposefully lead its master to harm, nor will it ever cause him to divest himself of other normal or magical items, unless the bonded item has reason to believe they will do its master harm.

**Empowered:** A bonded item familiar can draw upon its master's arcane strength to enhance the power and effectiveness of its enchantments. Beginning at 6<sup>th</sup> level, the bonded master can, once a day per two bonded master class levels, focus his will through his item familiar, so that its spells or spell-like powers are

cast as though affected by one of the following feats, chosen at the time of casting: Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Maximise Spell or Widen Spell. The master must already possess the feat selected in order to focus the item's enchantments in such a manner.

**Item Mastery:** The bonded master's item familiar is to other items of its type as a king is to the most humble peasant. Once a day per two bonded master class levels, the item familiar can, as a free action on its master's turn, attempt to seize control of another magical item of its type (meaning a rod can attempt to control another rod, for example). To do so, it rolls an Intelligence check opposed by a caster level check, using either the targeted item's caster level or its wielder's caster level, whichever is higher. If the check fails, then nothing happens but if the check succeeds, then the item familiar seizes control of the targeted item. An item familiar can, as a free action on the controlled item's wielder's next turn, block the use of the targeted item's powers, redirect the effect's of the power being used to a target of its choice, or cause the targeted item to use a different power than its wielder intended. It cannot make the wielder use the magic item, however. For the purposes of redirecting the controlled item's powers, the item familiar can cause powers which normally affect only the wielder (those with a range of personal, for example) to affect its bonded master instead. The item familiar can use Item Mastery once per round.

**Limitless:** When the bonded master reaches this consummate level of power, the link between he and his item familiar has become so strong that his own soul energy now feeds his familiar, meaning it never truly runs out of energy. When the bonded master uses his simple recharge ability, he still must dedicate one day per 3,000 gold piece value of the item familiar's base price but need no longer spend experience points at all.

## THE UNBOUND

In a fantasy world, it is a given that magic will exist, at least in some form or another. Some few fantasy denizens embrace magic, revel in it and even worship it. Most simply accept it as a natural part of the world, as unstoppable, unchangeable and unavoidable as sunshine and rain. Others, however, openly rail against magic, spit venom in its face and work to destroy it wherever they find it. Some of these folk call themselves the unbound (others call them insane).

To say that an unbound hates magic is to say that red dragons are 'grumpy', or the ocean is 'big'; in other words, it is an understatement of immense proportion. The unbound's rage sustains him, defines him and shapes the course of his life. An unbound's hatred is so complete, in fact, that it allows him to transcend the laws of the universe and abjectly refuse to be affected by magic in any way – at least at higher levels of power.

The unbound do not deny the existence of magic; only a fool would do that and for all their, perhaps misguided, hate unbound are not fools. Instead, unbound believe magic to be unwholesome, unnatural and wholly dangerous and corrupting. Unbound despise divine and arcane magic equally, viewing them as simply different sides of the same coin. They also loathe any creature which is innately magical and believe them to be abominations unworthy of life; after all, their reasoning goes, if such creatures were intended to exist, they would not need unwholesome magic to sustain them. Well educated and well spoken unbound, few and far between as they are, are particularly dangerous, as they not only believe wholeheartedly in the rightness of their beliefs but have the capacity to sway others to their views. Fortunately for the magic-wielders of the world, most unbound lack the capacity to articulate their beliefs and are too busy killing and destroying to bother trying.

Unbound almost universally come from the warrior classes, with fighters and especially barbarians making up the greatest percentage of unbound. Rogues also pursue the ways of the unbound, though their stealthy approach to problem solving does not mesh particularly well with the unbound's more straight-forward smash and gloat diplomacy. Rangers can and occasionally do become unbound, though they lose their supernatural powers and spellcasting abilities instantly upon doing so. For understandable reasons, bards, clerics, druids,

sorcerers and wizards never become unbound, as their professions are too intrinsically tied to the flow of eldritch energy.

Non-Player Character unbound spend most of their time either raging wildly through magic heavy areas, crushing and destroying all the magic they can, or sequestering themselves in remote locations, as far from the 'corrupting' presence of magic as they can. As might be expected, those who are particularly proactive in their destruction of magic live brief but highly eventful lives.

*Note:* Unbound are generally unpleasant folk to be around, at least if you are an adventurer, because adventurers always seem to have more than their fair share of magical accoutrements. Unbound destroy magic wherever and whenever they can, no exceptions, no excuses, no reasoning. Realistically, this makes them very poor candidates for Players, unless they are the sole heroes of the game. Therefore, it is recommended that Games Masters limit the unbound to Non-Player Characters, or to those Players who they believe can handle the abilities and 'special' world-view of the class in a mature fashion.

**Hit Die:** d12.



## PRESTIGE CLASSES

### Requirements

In order to become unbound, the character must meet all of the following requirements:

**Skills:** Knowledge (arcana) 4 ranks.

**Feats:** Great Resistance, Iron Will.

**Special:** The character must have directly participated in the destruction of a powerful magic item and must willingly forswear the use of all magic.

### Class Skills

The unbound's class skills (and the relevant abilities for each) are Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (armoursmith, weaponsmith) (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Profession (any) (Int) Ride (Dex), Spellcraft (Int) and Swim (Str).

**Skill Points Per Level:** 4 + Int bonus.

### Class Features

All the following are class features of the unbound.

**Weapon and Armour Proficiencies:** The unbound is proficient with all martial weapons, with all armours and with shields. In addition, he gains a free exotic weapon proficiency of his choice, since unbound have a lot of time on their hands to practice wanton destruction.

**Free From The Burden:** The unbound will not permit himself to use magic, nor will he allow himself to be limited by that refusal. Beginning at 1<sup>st</sup> level, the unbound's hatred of magic super charges his convictions, allowing him to smash through magically enhanced defences and deny the power of blows from magical weapons. The unbound gains a +1/two unbound class levels bonus to attack and damage rolls. This bonus counts as a magic bonus for the purposes

of defeating damage reduction but *is not* itself magical in nature. The unbound also gains damage reduction equal to his class level against magical weapons of all sorts, meaning that weapons which are not enchanted can cut or break him as normal, but magical weapons are blunted against his shield of absolute, indomitable hate.

**Sworn Vow:** Upon taking the 1<sup>st</sup> level of this prestige class, the unbound makes a silent vow to the universe, that he will never again touch a magical item of any sort, nor willingly permit himself to be affected by magic spells or abilities of any sort. This vow echoes unceasingly in every fibre of the unbound's being and cannot be easily broken. Immediately upon swearing his vow, the newly unbound permanently loses all use of any supernatural or spell-like powers he already possessed and loses all ability to cast spells. He may never again take levels as a bard, wizard, sorcerer, cleric, druid, monk or paladin and if he advances as a ranger, he never gains access to that class' spells.

If the unbound willingly uses a magic item of any sort, or willingly permits himself to be affected by any form of spell, spell-like ability or supernatural power, then he loses all class abilities until he atones (to himself), by single-handedly destroying a magical item, or a number of items whose total market value is equal to the suggested wealth of a character of his class level. Alternately, he can instead seek out and destroy a magic-wielding or innately magical being of a challenge rating equal to his own; he must do this by himself, with no outside assistance of any kind. Immediately upon successfully completing either task, the unbound's faith in his hate is restored and so too are his abilities.

An unbound who is somehow forced by magic to wield a magical item, or who is unwillingly affected by

### The Unbound

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Free from the burden, sworn vow
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Spell resistance
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	Spell refusal, hate's vitality
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Weak point +2
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Spell refusal
6	+6	+5	+2	+5	
7	+7	+5	+2	+5	Weak point +4
8	+8	+6	+2	+6	Spell refusal
9	+9	+6	+3	+6	
10	+10	+7	+3	+7	Denial, so much kindling

magic need not atone to himself for that transgression. If anything, it reinforces his belief in his views.

**Spell Resistance:** Unbound are shielded from magic by the strength of their convictions, so much so that most spells simply sluice off them like water off a duck's back. At 2<sup>nd</sup> level, the unbound gains spell resistance equal to 2 x his unbound class level + his Constitution modifier (if applicable). In order for a spellcaster to affect an unbound with a spell, he must successfully bypass his spell resistance with a caster check. The unbound's spell resistance is absolutely involuntarily and cannot be lowered by him or by anyone else to allow a spell to pass through.

**Spell Refusal:** When an unbound reaches this level of power, he truly becomes a magic wielder's nightmare, as he is capable of ignoring even the most powerful of enchantments simply by refusing to let them harm him. Beginning at 3<sup>rd</sup> level, he completely ignore all spells or spell-like effects of a single school. He can choose to ignore the spells of any spell school (abjuration, conjuration, divination, enchantment, evocation, illusion, necromancy, or transmutation) and once he has made that choice he can no longer be targeted or affected by spells of that school, nor by spell-like effects or supernatural abilities which replicate a spell of that school. So, for example, an unbound who chooses to ignore the Evocation spell can no longer be injured by a *fireball*, nor may he be targeted by *magic missiles*. Likewise, if the unbound chooses to ignore the Divination school, he can no longer be the subject of any divination spell, nor will he appear in scryings of an area he happens to be in. Spell refusal does not, however, allow the unbound to ignore summoned creatures or pass through a conjured *wall of stone*; in either case, since the summoned creature or object does not target him in any way, his stubbornness cannot refuse it. At 5<sup>th</sup> level and again at 8<sup>th</sup>, the unbound can select additional schools of magic to refuse. Once the choice to refuse a school has been made, it cannot later be altered.

**Hate's Vitality:** It can be difficult to survive as an adventurer in a fantasy world, at least without access to potent healing magic. Fortunately for him, the unbound abjectly refuses to believe that is true. Beginning at 3<sup>rd</sup> level, when healing naturally, the unbound heals at a rate of 5 hit points per day for each unbound class level. So, for example, an 8<sup>th</sup> level fighter / 10<sup>th</sup> level unbound would heal 58 hit points per day, rather than 18.

**Weak Point:** Unbound like to destroy magic items. In fact, they love to destroy magic items of all sorts. Big, little, weak, or strong, it matters not; if it is magical, they want to make it kindling or scrap metal. At 4<sup>th</sup> level, the unbound gains a +2 bonus to damage when attempting to sunder a magical item and a +2 bonus to all attempts to exceed a magical object's break DC. At 7<sup>th</sup> level, the bonus increases to +4.

**Denial:** When the unbound decides that he will not be affected by a spell, he really means it. Once an unbound reaches 10<sup>th</sup> level, there is not a force on the mortal plane, or any other, which can affect him with a spell if he puts his mind to it. Once a day, if a spell, spell-like ability or supernatural ability overcomes the unbound's formidable anti-magical defences, he can ignore its effects entirely. As with his spell refusal ability, the unbound cannot ignore a wall conjured in front of him, nor may he ignore a summoned creature which is attacking him. Denial also cannot be used to ignore base damage from magical weapons, though it can be used to refuse to permit a weapon's special ability to be used, such as a *vorpal sword's* ability to remove the unbound's head from his shoulders.

**So Much Kindling:** When an unbound strikes to destroy a magical object, his blows land with the force of a thunderbolt and only the hardest of items can hope to survive them. On a successful strike to sunder a magical object, all damage inflicted above the object's hardness is doubled. So for example, if an unbound strikes a hardness 10 magical object for 15 points of damage, he inflicts 10 points of damage ( $15 - 10 \text{ hardness} = 5, 5 \times 2 = 10 \text{ damage}$ ).

## THE MASTER CRAFTER

The master crafter is an inspired artist of enchantment, who specialises in weaving the spark of magic into ordinary objects, infusing them with a beauty and power which is breathtaking to behold. The master crafter's dedication to his art is so absolute, in fact, that he loses the ability to wield magic in any other fashion. This does not concern him, as he is so fulfilled by what he does that he does not view the loss of his ability to casts spell by word and gesture as a loss at all. Master crafters are few in number and all the more precious for that; true artistic genius is, and probably should be, rare.

Master crafters come from all races and backgrounds, with dwarves, gnomes and elves most commonly and skilfully practicing its ways. Dwarf master crafters,



## PRESTIGE CLASSES

### The Master Crafter

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Creation focus	+1 level of existing class
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Fast crafting	+1 level of existing class
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Bonus feat	+1 level of existing class
4	+2	+1	+1	+4		+1 level of existing class
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Consummate art	+1 level of existing class
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	Bonus feat	+1 level of existing class
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	Good as new	+1 level of existing class
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	Bonus feat	+1 level of existing class
9	+4	+3	+3	+6		+1 level of existing class
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	Unsurpassed understanding	+1 level of existing class

in particular, are revered for their brilliance; though dwarves are often emotionally staid and gruff in manner, their master crafters are anything but reserved in their crafting and the raw emotion and passion they pour into their finest works is unmistakable and enough to set even ancient dragons to weeping.

All master crafters have a background in arcane or divine magic and most are dedicated wizards. Sorcerers and clerics sometimes become master crafters but the former are hampered by their lack of breadth in their known spells and clerics generally too martially inclined to be comfortable crafting items every day. The life and abilities do not mesh themselves well with more martially inclined classes, so few warriors ever take up the tools of the master crafter.

Non-Player Character master crafters are usually found in the largest communities, as their skill are so much in demand that they can find easy patronage with the wealthy and powerful. The most skilled of master crafters often work exclusively for the kings of the realm, for the high priests of major faiths, or at the pleasure of powerful creatures such as ancient

#### A Very Fair Trade

While the idea of giving up the ability to cast spells entirely may seem painful, the advantages the master crafter enjoys definitely make up for it, especially as the character advances through the class. At higher levels, the master crafter is capable of churning out magical items in such numbers that he can cast spells all day long. Do not be afraid to sunder, steal or use *disjunction* on the crafter's favoured item; chances are good he will have two or three more to replace it.

dragons. Some few master crafters spurn the notion of working for wealth or prestige altogether; these crafters instead choose to sequester themselves in hidden workshops, producing powerful magical items for the pure love of creation.

**Hit Die:** d4.

#### Requirements

In order to become a master crafter, the character must meet all of the following requirements:

**Skills:** Craft (armoursmith, weaponsmith, woodworking) all at 6 ranks, Profession (jeweler) 6 ranks.

**Feats:** Any two Item Creation feats.

#### Class Skills

The master crafter's class skills (and the relevant abilities for each) are Appraise (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (any) (Int), Disable Device (Int), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Profession (any) (Int), Spellcraft (Int) and Use Magic Device (Int).

**Skill Points Per Level:** 4 + Int bonus.

#### Class Features

All the following are class features of the master crafter.

**Weapon and Armour Proficiencies:** The master crafter gains no new proficiencies with weapons, nor does he gain proficiency with armour or shields.

**Spellcasting:** At each level, the master crafter gains a new level of spells, exactly as if he had gained a level

in a spellcasting class which he already possessed. He does not, however, gain any of the other benefits a character of that class would have gained (bonus feats, etc). This means that he essentially adds his levels of the master crafter prestige class to his existing caster levels to determine caster level and spells per day.

**Creation Focus:** When the character takes up the mantle of the master crafter, he becomes so focussed on the creation of magical items that he loses the ability to cast spells through simple words and gestures. Beginning at 1<sup>st</sup> level, the master crafter can no longer cast spells in the normal fashion at all, meaning he simply cannot cast a spell on himself, on an ally, or on an enemy. Attempts to do so automatically fail.

Instead, the master crafter's spellcasting ability is solely focussed on the creation and quickening of magical items. To compensate for his lost of spellcasting ability, the master crafter learns a new spell each time he gains a new level; this spell can be of any level which the crafter is able to cast and is gained in addition to any gained upon achieving a new level. By the time the master crafter reaches the highest level of understanding, there is almost no spell he cannot infuse into a magic item.

**Fast Crafting:** Master crafters are so practised in the art of crafting magical items that they can build them with a speed that defies belief. Starting at 2<sup>nd</sup> level, a master crafter need only spend one day per 1,000/class level gold piece value of the object. This means that a 10<sup>th</sup> level master crafter need only spend one day crafting an item per 10,000 gold pieces of base value.

**Bonus Feat:** At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, the master crafter selects a bonus feat from the following list: Brew Potion, Craft Magic Arms and Armour, Craft Rod, Craft Staff, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Forge Ring or Skill Focus (craft – any). The master crafter gains an additional bonus feat from this list at 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> class levels.

**Consummate Art:** When the master crafter reaches this level of understanding, the primal consciousness of magic itself recognises his artistry and willingly lends itself to his efforts. From 5<sup>th</sup> level on, the master crafter need only spend 1/50<sup>th</sup> of an item's base price in experience points when crafting a magical item. This ability stacks with the Improved Item Creation feat; when creating magical items pertinent to this feat's focus, the master crafter need only spend 1/100<sup>th</sup> of an

item's base price in experience points, to a minimum of a single experience point.

**Good As New:** Just as the master crafter is unsurpassed in the art of crafting magical items, so to is he unmatched in the art of repairing them. When repairing a broken magical item, the master crafter need spend only one quarter the experience points, one quarter the raw materials and one quarter the time it would take to craft the item in the first place. This ability stacks with the Reforge Item feat; when fixing magical items the master crafter need only spend 1/8<sup>th</sup> of an item's base price in experience points and materials, and takes 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the time to fix.

**Unsurpassed Understanding:** A master crafter of this skill is an artist of legend, capable of crafting the most wondrous of devices with ease. A 10<sup>th</sup> level master craftsmen need only spend 1/100<sup>th</sup> (1/150<sup>th</sup> with the Improved Item Creation feat ) of an item's base price in experience points when crafting an item, to a minimum of a single experience point. In addition, the cost to create a magical item is reduced to only 1/4 of the base price.



# MAGIC ITEM FEATS

While the metamagic feats are certainly more flashy and more obviously useful in day to day adventuring, it is the item creation feats which truly demonstrate the immense power of the spellcasting classes. With the purchase of a single feat, a spellcaster can craft an effectively limitless number of items, from the mightiest of swords, to baubles with weak but singularly fascinating powers. In the same way, it is only thanks to the knowledge gained from item creation feats that a wizard or cleric can arm himself and his allies with the tools they need to challenge the greatest foes that fantasy gaming has to offer.

It is critical, then, that every arcane caster be able to make the most of his item creation feats, the better to reward him for giving up pure spellcasting versatility in return for the usually difficult and always time consuming ability to craft magic items. The feats which follow are intended to supplement the various item creation feats, to expand their uses and to give your arcane craftsmen stronger tools with which to create. These feats are not limited to spellcasters, however, as there are also feats which more closely bind a warrior to his weapons and armours, or which themselves serve as armour against the sometimes deadly powers of crafted items.

Though this book is part of the *Encyclopaedia Arcane* line, the nature of magic items in d20 fantasy gaming is such that divine craftsmen will see many benefits in these feats as well. It is recommended that the Games Master allow these feats to be applied to any character, whether arcane or divine, who meets the feat requirements.

## Awaken Magical Properties

Your mere presence is enough to stir the magical properties of enchanted items.

**Prerequisites:** Cha 13+.

**Benefits:** You radiate a natural aura which, in a method similar to the *detect magic* spell, allows you to automatically sense the presence of magical items. When you pass within a 10 feet + 5 feet/point of Charisma bonus radius of a magical item, you automatically sense its presence and general location.

## Bonded Armour, Shield or Weapon

You have formed a bond with a particular suit of armour or with a weapon, a bond which is not easily broken.

**Prerequisites:** Iron Will.

**Benefits:** Select a single suit of magical armour, a shield or a weapon, with a +1 or greater enhancement bonus. You are now and forever bonded with that item. The bonuses gained for bonding depend on the type of bonded item, as listed below.

- † If the bonded item is a weapon, you gain a +4 bonus to opposed disarm checks when attempting to retain your weapon, a bonus which stacks with all other applicable bonuses.
- † If the bonded item is a weapon or shield, the hardness bonus is increased to +3 per point of enhancement bonus, rather than +2. In addition, it gains +15 hit points per point of enhancement bonus, rather than +10. This bonus applies while the item is in hand, or on the bonded character's person.
- † If the bonded item is a shield or suit of armour, then the armour check penalty of the item is reduced by 2, to a minimum of 0. This reduction stacks with that gained from using exotic materials.
- † If the bonded item is a suit of armour, the amount of time necessary to don or remove the armour is reduced. Bonded armour can be donned normally in the time required for non-bonded armour to be donned hastily and can be donned hastily or removed in a single round, regardless of type. Bonded half plate and full plate armour assist you in the donning, meaning he can armour himself normally in two minutes, rather than four.

Regardless of the type of bonded item, you can sense its location to a distance of 100 feet.

A character can be bonded to a maximum of two weapons, one suit of armour and a single shield. Should he lose his bonded item, should it be destroyed or should he simply wish to bond himself to a new item, he can do so but must wait until he advances a level and must pay a cost in experience equal to 100 x the total effective enhancement bonus of the new item.

## Bonded Ring, Rod, Staff or Wand

You have formed a bond with a particular ring, rod, staff or wand, a bond which is not easily broken.

**Prerequisites:** Iron Will.

**Benefits:** Select a single magical ring, rod, staff or wand. You are now and forever bonded with that item. The bonuses gained for bonding depend on the type of bonded item, as outlined below.

- † If the bonded item is a ring, then it becomes so intrinsically bonded to your soul energy that it becomes merely an extension of your body. It no longer counts against the total number of magical rings which you can carry, meaning you can wear and successfully wield a total of three magical rings.
- † If the bonded item is a rod, staff or wand, then the item gains a +2 bonus to its Armour Class, its total hit points triple and its hardness and break DC increase by 3.

Regardless of type of item you are bonded to, you can active activate its command words by silent thought as a standard action. You can also sense its location to a range of 100 feet.

A character can be bonded to a maximum of one ring, rod, staff and wand. Should he lose his bonded item, should it be destroyed or should he simply wish to bond himself to a new item, he can do so but must wait until he advances a level and must pay a cost in experience equal to 100 x the caster level of the new ring, rod, staff, or wand.

### Borrow Strength (Item Creation)

You can leech the life force and experience of others to power the creation of magic items, allowing you to preserve your own energies.

**Prerequisites:** Any Item Creation feat, Int or Wis 17+.

**Benefits:** You can take arcane fuel, in the form of experience points, from willing beings to empower those magic items you create. In order for you to leech another being's experience, they must be present throughout the crafting process. You make take any number of experience points from the being, up to half the cost required to enchant the magical item. You can not take experience from the being to pay for any abilities which cast or replicate spells with an experience point cost, other than Item Creation abilities. As always, if the enchantment process is abandoned, or if it is for any other reason ruined, the leeched experience points are lost. Only one being, not including the crafter, can donate experience to the creation of each magic item.

**Special:** If you have the feat Improved Item Creation, its benefits extend to those from whom you leech experience, meaning they need only sacrifice experience in an amount equal to 1/50<sup>th</sup> of the base price of the item to be enchanted.

### Great Resistance

You have a natural resistance to spell and spell-like effects generated by magical items.

**Prerequisites:** Iron Will, Wis 15+.

**Benefits:** You gain a +2 innate bonus to resist all spell and spell-like effects which originate from magical items of any type. Further you gain damage reduction 2/nonmagical, meaning you suffer 2 points fewer damage whenever you are struck by a magical weapon of any sort. This natural resistance to the effects of magic items does not prevent you from using magic items yourself, so you need not fail a save to benefit from a *potion of cure light wounds*, for example.

**Special:** You can select this feat twice. The second time, your innate bonus to resist spells and spell-like effects cast from magic items increases to +4 and your Damage Reduction increases to 4/magical.

### Greater Capacity (Item Creation)

When you create a magic item which carries charges, you are able to fill it with far more magical energy than is normal.





## MAGIC ITEM FEATS

**Prerequisites:** At least one of Craft Rod, Craft Staff or Craft Wand.

**Benefits:** When you craft or recharge a rod, staff, or wand, it contains 75 charges. For the purposes of expending experience points or raw materials during creation, the base price of the item is not increased in any way. This, of course, has no bearing on the final cost for which you can sell your increased capacity magical item.

**Special:** This feat cannot be used to add charges to a potion, scroll or other such expendable item, nor can it be used to increase the uses of a weapon, suit of armour or wondrous item with a limited number of uses, for example a *nine lives stealer* sword.

### Improved Item Creation (Item Creation)

You are a skilled crafter of magic items and are able to pull ambient magic energy from the natural world, allowing you to preserve your own strength and life force.

**Prerequisites:** Any two Item Creation feats.

**Benefits:** Select two of your Item Creation feats. When crafting items using those feats, you need only expend 1/50<sup>th</sup> of the base price in XP.

**Special:** You can select this feat more than once, applying it to up to two different Item Creation feats each time. Alternately, you can choose to apply it to a feat which has previously been enhanced by Improved Item Creation, in which case you no longer have to pay XP when crafting magic items with that feat.

### Increased Effectiveness

Magic items respond to your touch and gain strength from your spellcasting power.

**Prerequisites:** Spellcraft 8 ranks, any Item Creation feat, ability to cast arcane or divine spells.

**Benefits:** The saving throw DCs and ability to pierce spell resistance of any magic items you wield are calculated as though you were casting the spell, including caster level and all appropriate modifiers. If the normal save DC of the magic item's ability is higher than yours would be, you can choose instead to use its save DC. So, for example, if you have a Intelligence 16, the Spell Focus (evocation) feat and are wielding a *wand of burning hands*, the saving throw DC of the wand would be 16 rather than the normal 11. In the case of staves, whose saving throw DCs are already based on your own, you instead add a +2 bonus to all saving throw DCs when casting spells from the staff.

**Special:** This feat applies only to those magic items which you yourself could create, meaning you



must have the appropriate Craft Item feat to gain the benefits.

### Item Aptitude

You have a natural knack for discovering an item's magical effects and triggering them.

**Prerequisites:** Cha 15+.

**Benefits:** When you select this feat, you gain Use Magic Device as a class skill and a +2 competence bonus to all Use Magic Device checks.

### Soul Armour, Shield or Weapon

You have found a weapon, shield or suit of armour which resonates with your warrior spirit. Perhaps it is destiny, perhaps simple chance, but you and your chosen item are now as one, two beings sharing one purpose and growing in strength together.

**Prerequisites:** Bonded Armour, Shield or Weapon.

**Benefits:** You and your bonded weapon, shield or armour are now linked by destiny and popular stories always link you together. The incredible ease with which you wear your armour or shield reduces its armour check penalty by one point. A soul weapon may always be drawn as a free action, even if you do not have the Quick Draw feat. Any kind of soul item will grant a +1 competence bonus to your Initiative as long as it is worn (in the case of armour) or held (in the case of shields or weapons). Anyone touching or attempting to steal your armour gains a clear mental picture of yourself, and a sense of great peril. Potential thieves must make a Will save (DC 10 plus

half your character level), or leave the item alone. Bardic knowledge checks reduce their difficulty by your Charisma bonus (if applicable) when trying to remember knowledge about you or your weapon, as you have become such an iconic figure.

### Reforge Item (Item Creation)

You know the secret of repairing magic items, even ones which have been completely destroyed and can reforge an item so that it does not lose its magical abilities.

**Prerequisites:** Int 15+, at least one of Craft Magic Arms and Armour, Craft Rod, Craft Staff, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item or Forge Ring.

**Benefits:** You can reforge magical items fully, so that even if they are completely destroyed and then reformed, they retain their magical essence. The cost of repairing the item is equal to one quarter the experience, the raw materials and time necessary to craft the item in the first place. If you are successful in your Craft check, the item is reformed and regains its full powers. You can only reforge magical items which you are capable of creating, so you may only reforge items for which you have the correct item creation feat.

In addition, the Reforge Item feat can be used to restore magical power to an item which has been successfully disenchanting through the use of *disjunction* or other, similar spells and spell-like effects. In order to do so, you must expend half the amount of experience, materials and time necessary to craft the item in the first place. Rather than simply using the Craft skill to repair the item, you must instead succeed at both Craft checks and Spellcraft checks against a DC equal to double that required to craft the item in the first place. So, for example, to reawaken the enchantment in a longsword, you must succeed at both DC 30 Craft and Spellcraft checks for the duration of the repairs.

**Special:** An item which has been completely *disintegrated* or otherwise reduced to its component elements cannot be reformed through the use of this feat. In order to reforge an item so that it retains its abilities, a minimum of 50% of the original item must remain. The Reforge Item feat can even be used to repair an item of even major artefact power, though the cost of doing so is considerable; just how considerable is left up to the Games Master's discretion.

### Speedy Crafting (Item Creation)

You are a gifted crafter of magic items and you have learned many techniques with which to speed the creation of your items.

**Prerequisites:** Dex 13+, at least one of Craft Magic Arms and Armour, Craft Rod, Craft Staff, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item or Forge Ring.

**Benefits:** When crafting or forging any magic item, you need only spend one day crafting the item for every 2,000 gold pieces of the base price.

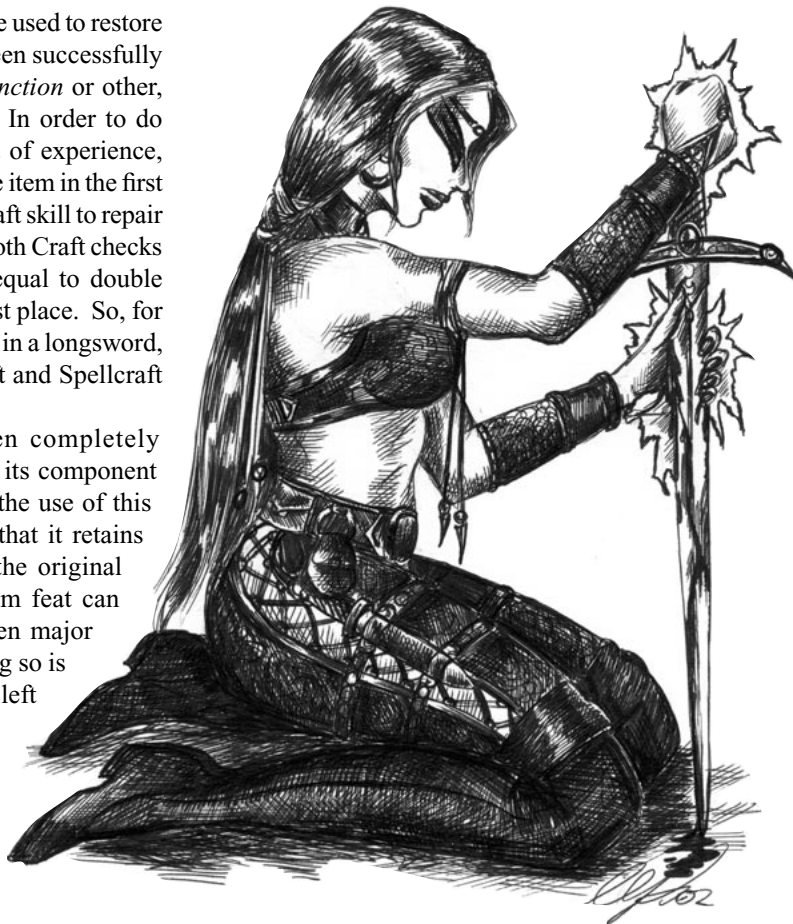
### Strange Affinity (Item Creation)

You find it a relatively simple matter to create items which run counter to their normal affinity (see *Core Rulebook II*). This enables you to combine unusual objects with exceedingly unusual abilities, creating *gloves of minute seeing*, for example.

**Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item.

**Benefits:** When crafting a magic item which does not normally have an affinity for the body slot it will occupy, the cost of the item is increased by 20%, rather than 50%.

**Special:** Note that this does not permit you to create items in body slot/power combinations which the Games Master has specifically forbidden.



# THE MYTHIC SYSTEM

In Lord Dunsaney's masterwork of fantasy fiction, *The King of Elfland's Daughter*, the hero crafts a magical blade with the help of a witch, some runes and some captured lightning; in legend and myth, great heroes and smiths forge implements of great mystical power by slaying dragons and distilling their essence; and even now, somewhere, a child crafts a magic sword from nothing but a stick and the power of his imagination. One of the best things about the d20 fantasy rules is that, finally, Games Masters and Players have been allowed to peek behind the rule book's curtain and have become empowered with the tools needed to customise and create new magic items for individual campaigns. No longer do Games Masters have to create magic items for their campaigns purely through trial and error and no longer do Players have to depend on finding magic items in treasure hoards; this is quite a terrific evolution of the game and a real strength of the d20 game. Unfortunately, this evolution comes at a bit of a cost. Namely, when you give rules for something, when you lay out, step by step, the formulaic skeleton of creation, you take away a bit of the mystique; that is why magicians never give out the secrets of their illusions and that is why movie special effects are never so mind blowing after you know how they were created. The Mythic System is intended to bring back a little bit of that mystique, by giving you instructions, tools and guidelines for returning some of the magic to magic item creation; it sews a new curtain, if you will.

This chapter introduces the Mythic System, a new optional system which provides you with a new way of crafting magic items. The Mythic System is intended to supplement, rather than replace the existing rules for magic item creation provided in *Core Rulebook I* and *Core Rulebook II*. This means that you will be able to use both the Mythic System and the standard rules in your campaign, unless you choose otherwise. On occasion, slightly modified versions of the standard magic creation rules will be provided in this chapter; in all cases, these rules are intended to supercede those found in *Core Rulebook I* and *II* but only for the purposes of using the Mythic System.

## WHAT IS THE MYTHIC SYSTEM?

As has been said, at its heart the Mythic System is a set of optional rules designed to reintroduce the illusion of the magical and the wondrous to the creation of magic items within the d20 game. It is also a tool which will allow both Games Masters and Players greater freedom in the creation of magical items for their campaigns. Using the Mythic System, no longer will the creation of magical items be restricted to members of the spellcasting classes. Instead, these rules will allow those playing rogues, fighters, barbarians or anyone else to take control of their character's destiny, to use their character's wit and skill and heroic desire, rather than gold or luck, as the means of gathering the magical items they desire.

The Mythic System is divided into two separate but related categories. In the first, Games Masters and Players are given rules for allowing Player Characters and Non-Player Characters to use exotic, magical materials in lieu of required spells or as a method of replacing spells needed to imbue magical enhancements in weapons, shields or suits of armour. In the second, they are given rules for their characters doing the same things using divine energies given to them in exchange for the performance of heroic deeds. In addition, the section detailing divine sponsorship also includes rules for using divine energies to replace needed Item Creation feats, or even for replacing spells needed in the imbuing of special properties in magical weapons, shields and suits of armour.

## EXOTIC MATERIALS

Roc feathers. The still-beating heart of a genie. The skin of a dragon. The first breath of a newborn babe. All these things are considered examples of exotic components. Exotic components have a power all their own, power enough to equal that of even the mightiest spells. This means that they are ideal candidates for use in the creation of magical items. Exotic components are broken down into several broad groups, namely:

- † **Creature Components** – Creature components are rare or supernatural materials harvested from living or recently deceased supernatural beings. Components can take almost any form but are subject to the specific requirements of the item they are intended to be used to create. In addition, creature components must be relatively intact, or their magic will not work; this means that while a gorgon hide with a few sword holes in it is still acceptable as a creature component, a half-

disintegrated dragon skin which is mostly composed of cinders is not. Creature components can only come from creatures which have supernatural powers, or which are innately magical; creatures of the animal and vermin types are not normally suitable sources of creature components. Typically, the more powerful the item which is to be created, the more powerful the being who must provide the component.

Creature components cannot come from creatures summoned via *summon monster*, *summon nature's ally* or other, similar spells or spell-like effects.

† **Non-animate Components** – Non-animate components are exotic materials which are harvested from non-sentient objects. Chunks of tree bark, fist-sized diamonds and pieces of marble taken from consecrated altars are all examples of non-animate exotic materials. Non-animate components need not be taken from innately magical objects (bark from a dryad's tree, dirt from a saint's burial mound) but often are. Typically, non-animate components are otherwise mundane materials which are harvested from locations which are touched by supernatural,

spiritual, or otherworldly locations, like grass from the rolling fields of fae, or lava from the boiling heart of the Ninth Plane of Hell, or a chunk of altar from a deity's throne. The exact nature of the non-material component which is acceptable for use as an exotic material in the creation of a magical item depends on the powers of the item to be created. Typically, the more powerful the item to be created, the more rare and difficult to require are the non-animate components.

† **Esoteric Components** – Esoteric components is a catch all category for exotic materials which cannot be harvested from either sentient beings or non-sentient objects. The true name of love, the last snowflake of winter, the deepest shadow in the under earth, the final memories of an ant crushed beneath a giant's heel and the first lie told by an honest man are all examples of esoteric components. In essence, if it cannot be held in the hand, if it cannot be carried in a box, or if it is only an idea, a thought, a memory or a concept, then it is an esoteric component. One of the most important aspects of gathering esoteric components is intent; no matter how skilled the adventurer, no matter how wise, no matter how fortunate, an esoteric component cannot be gained through happenstance, nor may it be gathered ahead of time, 'just in case'. Instead, an esoteric component can only grant a magical spark if it is gathered expressly for the purposes of crafting a specific magic item (though the Games Master is of course free to disregard this rule in the interest of creating a good adventure).

## USES FOR EXOTIC MATERIALS

Exotic materials can be used in several fashions, each with its own set of specific rules and requirements. These specific rules are outlined following the universal limitations which are described below.

† An individual exotic material can only be applied to a single use outlined below. So, if a crafter wishes to use exotic materials to both replace needed spells and to defray experience point costs involved in creation, then he must use two different exotic materials.

† Two identical exotic materials cannot be used to fulfil multiple purposes. That is to say that, for example, two phoenix pinions cannot be used to both replace a needed spell and to defray



## THE MYTHIC SYSTEM

experience point costs. The same general type of exotic materials can be used, however, meaning two different creature components could be used for two different purposes.

† Exotic materials which are already required as part of the creation process cannot also be used for any of the purposes outlined below, nor may an exotic component which is identical to any required component be used for any of these purposes.

† Exotic materials are always, without exception, consumed or drained in the item creation process. This does not, however, mean that a true name or other, similar object or concept of similar cosmic import is destroyed. Instead, upon the completion of the creation process, all knowledge of the secrets of the concept flee the crafter's mind and any captured energies are instantly released to disperse back into the celestial ether.

### Using Esoteric Components

Esoteric components are perhaps the most mythic of all the mythic components, or at least the ones most likely to evoke memories of fairy and storybook tales from childhood. Unfortunately, they are also the most likely of the exotic materials to evoke painful memories of new age, feel-good, faux mythic hokum, the sort of stuff which is the bane of good fantasy literature. So how do you stay on the right track? By Games Mastering boldly.

The worst way to introduce esoteric concepts into your campaign is timidly and apologetically. Remember that the thematic inspirations for esoteric concepts have existed for thousands of years. If esoteric concepts are good enough to form the basis of society building myths, they are certainly good enough for your campaigns. That said, there are few things worse than an esoteric concept which is overly twee, precious and pretentious. Esoteric concepts should be bold and should be based around strong, easily understood ideas. Look to real world mythology for inspiration, as well as to fairy tales and the fantasy stories of the golden age of 20<sup>th</sup> Century fantasy. A good esoteric concept is one which can be summed up in only a few words and which does not require you to embellish it with words best left to the pages of bodice-ripping romance novels. As a good rule of thumb, an esoteric concept should involve no more than 3-4 key descriptive words: the **first snowflake** of **winter**, the **scream** of a **dying god**, the **shadow** of a **demon's tear**, that sort of thing.

### You want us to find a What?

Esoteric concepts as exotic components can be a hard sell to roleplaying gamers for two reasons. First, much of the d20 fan base is drawn from those who are most familiar and comfortable with sword and sorcery tales, a genre which tends towards the down to earth and which concerns itself more with glittering jewels and notched iron than it does with eye of newt and seventh sons of seventh sons. Second, the historical culture of fantasy gaming is one which concerns itself primarily with the tangible, even where magic and spirituality is concerned; rewards of gold and titles, monsters which give physical embodiment to evil, avatars of gods which stride the earth, treasures and spell components which can be picked up and clenched in a heroic fist. Given the above, it is to be expected that Players may be taken aback when you first tell them that, to forge the mighty sword *Nightbane*, they must capture the true name of bats and trap the hangman's shadow in an ivory box.

To avoid this, it is best that you insure that the Player's first exposure to esoteric concept components be a gradual one. Mention the use of esoteric concepts in the histories of famous magical items, or in the flavour text describing the exploits of the campaign world's most famous and chronicled heroes. An effort can be made to use reasonably tangible elements in the first esoteric concepts introduced into the campaign. A quest to find the first blossom of spring on the mountain of Foozle is a good example of a esoteric concept with some very tangible elements; Mount Foozle is a definite place and a blossom is an object the Players can (metaphorically) grasp, so it fits into the scheme of tangible reward for achievement of a tangible goal which is at the heart of d20 fantasy gaming.

You should also not be afraid to use real world mythological, fairy tale or fantasy literature examples to illustrate what you are trying to accomplish. Do not be afraid to directly tell Players that you are 'wanting this adventure to be like the *Earthsea* books', or that you want the campaign to evoke Norse mythology. If you give Players good, solid reasons for the use of esoteric concepts, then they will rise to the occasion and willingly suspend their disbelief.

### Using Exotic Materials to Replace Needed Spells

Every magic item includes required spells which must be known by the crafter and prepared during the construction of the magical item. As a consequence of this, even the most learned and experienced spellcaster is severely limited in the number of magic items which he will be able to create using only known spells. Unfortunately, this means that there will be occasions during which an adventurer will find himself in dire need of a specific magic item with no way, short of divine providence or tremendous outlays of cash, of acquiring them.

In order to overcome this limitation, a crafter can use exotic materials to empower his items rather than spell energies. In order to do this, he must gather one or more exotic materials which meet the standards outlined below.

† **Creature Components** – A component from the sentient being can only be used to replace needed spells if it is taken from a creature who possesses a supernatural power or spell-like ability which is similar or identical in nature to the spell to be replaced. In addition, it must come from a creature with a challenge rating equal to or higher than the caster level required to cast the spell, or from a creature whose spell-like ability has an effective caster level equal to or higher than that required to cast the spell to be replaced. Alternately, in the case of spells to be replaced which have an elemental or alignment descriptor, such as fire or good, the component can come from a supernatural being which is of that subtype (celestial or fiendish for good or evil, respectively).

A component from a creature whose nature is fundamentally opposed to that of the spell to be replaced cannot be used. This means that a fiendish creature cannot provide components to replace a spell with the good descriptor.

† **Non-animate Components** – A component from a non-animate source must be harvested from a location or object whose fundamental nature corresponds to that of the spell to be replaced. This means that in order to replace a spell-like *burning hands*, the exotic material must come from an object or location which is related to heat or fire, such as a volcano. Likewise, in order to replace a spell-like *charm person*, the exotic material must come from an object or location related to the Plane of Faerie, or another, similar place like a temple dedicated to the goddess of love or trickery. In addition, the

component must come from a location or object which possesses ambient magic of some sort. In a typical campaign, this means that the exotic material must be taken from an other-planar source, from a material world location linked to an appropriate plane (like a faerie circle), or from a church, druid's grove, or other consecrated area. Some campaign worlds, however, also have areas which have innate mystical properties unconnected to any of the sources listed above – it is up to the Games Master to determine the appropriateness of using objects taken from such locations in the replacement of needed spells.

In addition to meeting the above requirements, the non-animate exotic material must, in order to replace a spell with a holy or unholy descriptor (or alternately sacred or profane), be gathered from a location which is infused with holy or unholy power. This means that it must, at minimum, be taken from a church or other area consecrated to a god whose alignment is good or evil, as appropriate. For the creation of more powerful items and for the replacement of especially powerful spells, the non-animate component must be harvested from an other planar area whose nature corresponds to the holy or unholy descriptor.

The rarity of the non-animate exotic material required in the substitution of a spell is directly related to the level of the spell to be replaced. A spell of 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> level can be replaced by an object taken from a source on the material plane which meets the above requirements, while a spell of 4<sup>th</sup> level or above can only be replaced by an object taken from an extraplanar location, or from a specific location on the material plane.

† **Esoteric Concepts** – An esoteric concept must be related to the nature of both the spell to be replaced and the object to be enchanted, with the rarity and difficulty required to capture the energies of that concept are directly related to the level of the spell to be replaced. So, for example, capturing the shadow of an invisible stalker is sufficient to replace the *improved invisibility* spell, while the knowledge of the true name of life would be required to replace *true resurrection*.

Regardless of the rarity of the exotic material, in no case may it be used to replace more than a single required spell. This restriction holds true even if the source of the exotic material meets all the minimums necessary to allow it to replace all spells required in the creation or an item.



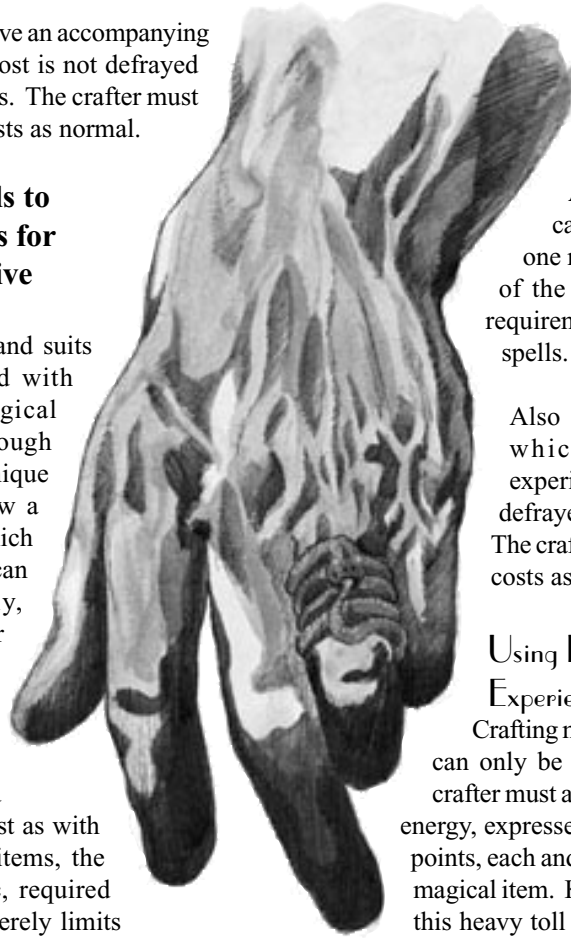
In the case of spells which have an accompanying experience point cost, the cost is not defrayed by the use of exotic materials. The crafter must pay the experience point costs as normal.

### Using Exotic Materials to Replace Needed Spells for the Imbuing of Effective Enhancements

Magical weapons, shields and suits of armour can be imbued with powerful and unique magical properties. There are enough different types of these unique magical properties to allow a crafter to design an item which can do almost anything he can dream of. Unfortunately, imbuing a weapon, shield or suit or magical armour with one of these properties is not as simple as waving fingers, whacking the object with a hammer and calling it a day. Instead, just as with the creation of wondrous items, the crafter must know specific, required spells; this requirement severely limits the crafter's ability to take advantage of the many choice enhancements available.

It is a good thing, then, that exotic materials can be used to replace spells required for the imbuing of magical properties. The rules for replacing spells required in the imbuing of magical enhancements are exactly the same as those listed for *Using Exotic Materials to Replace Needed Spells*, above, with the following additions:

- † **Creature Components** – A creature can only be used as the source of an exotic component if it has a challenge rating which is equal to or higher than the caster level required to imbue the magical enhancement. So, for example, a magical enhancement with an effective caster level of +5 can only be imbued by a caster of 15<sup>th</sup> level or higher, meaning only a creature with a challenge rating of 15 or higher is considered suitable as a source of exotic materials.
- † **Non-animate Components and Esoteric Components** – The rarity of the non-animate or esoteric component required is based off the minimum caster level required to cast the spell to be replaced,



or the minimum caster level required to imbue the magical enhancement, whichever is higher.

As above, no exotic material can be used to replace more than one required spell, even if the source of the exotic materials meets all the requirements for replacing all required spells.

Also as above, in the case of spells which have an accompanying experience point cost, the cost is not defrayed by the use of exotic materials. The crafter must pay the experience point costs as normal.

### Using Exotic Materials to Defray Experience Point Costs

Crafting magical items is tiring work which can only be accomplished at great cost. A crafter must always give up a portion of his life energy, expressed as the spending of experience points, each and every time he wishes to create a magical item. Knowing that he must always pay this heavy toll leaves many crafters (and those playing said crafters) understandably reluctant to create truly potent magic items. Fortunately, exotic materials can be used to defray these costs, at least somewhat.

- † **Creature Components** – In order for a creature to be considered suitable as a source of exotic materials with which to defray experience point costs, it must meet or exceed all the minimum requirements necessary for it to be able to replace the highest level/most powerful spell required for the crafting of the item. If it meets this minimum standard, then the creature component reduces the amount of experience points the crafter must invest in the item's enchantment to 1/50th the base price of the item. Note that a creature component used in this fashion does not replace the required spells, even though it meets or exceeds the minimum standards required to do so.

The benefits of using a creature component to defray experience point costs do not stack with any other method of reducing experience point costs, including feats and/or abilities granted from levels in any prestige class. Likewise, creature components cannot be used to reduce the experience points the

bonded champion prestige class must sacrifice to imbue his bonded weapon with magical energy.

- † **Non-animate Components** – Regardless of their rarity or mystical power, non-animate exotic materials cannot be used to defray experience point costs. This is due to the fact that they do not possess a life energy of their own.
- † **Esoteric Components** – In order for an esoteric component to be considered suitable for defraying the experience point costs of imbuing a magical item, it must meet or exceed all the minimum requirements for replacing the highest level spell required in the crafting of the item. This is because the crafter is attempting to draw upon the ambient magical energies of the cosmos itself, to tie the item to reality on a fundamental level and to, in essence, convince existence that it should embrace the item as an extension of its own ethereal flesh.

Esoteric components which meet this minimum requirement reduce the amount of experience points the crafter must invest in the item's enchantment to 1/50th the base price of the item. Note that an esoteric component used in this fashion does not replace the required spells, even though it meets or exceeds the minimum standards required to do so.

The benefits of using an esoteric component to defray experience point costs do not stack with any other method of reducing experience point costs, including feats and/or abilities granted from levels in any prestige class. Likewise, esoteric components cannot be used to reduce the experience points the bonded champion prestige class must sacrifice to imbue his bonded weapon with magical energy.

**Using Exotic Materials to Replace Needed Feats**  
 Regardless of their rarity or mystical power, exotic materials cannot be used to replace needed Item Creation feats. Only the gods have the power to grant a prospective crafter knowledge of the intricacies required to enchant an object of mystical power. It is not recommended that the Games Master ever allow exotic materials, even those gathered from the most esoteric of sources, to be used in this fashion.

## DIVINE SPONSORSHIP

In a typical d20 fantasy campaign setting, the gods are meddling, parental figures, forever sticking their divine noses into mortal business. In this, they are much like the gods of our own real-world myths and legends.

Fortunately for mortals, the gods of fantasy gaming also tend to be easily impressed by the exploits of heroes and champions. Wise and daring mortals can use this to their advantage, by seeking out divine patrons to help them in the creation of mighty implements of war, healing and spell weaving. Such heroes need not even be particularly pious, though it certainly does not hurt; the gods, particularly those who embody the domains of war, strength and protection, consider the performance of great deeds in their name to be the truest form of worship. The following rules provide you with all the guidance you need to utilise divine sponsorship in your campaigns.

### Acquiring and Using Divine Sponsorship

While every use of divine sponsorship has certain requirements which are unique to that use, there are a few universal rules which apply to all forms of divine sponsorship. These are outlined below.

- † Great deeds performed in the name of divine sponsorship must be performed with intent and must be performed after the hero has successfully gained sponsorship. No matter how impressive the action, no deed can ever grant the character any of the divine sponsorship bonuses presented below if it is not performed under existing patronage.
- † All forms of divine sponsorship require either the hero approaching the god directly and offering to perform great deeds in his name in exchange for patronage, or the god approaching the hero, either through a cleric or through dreams and visions, and offering patronage in exchange for the hero's service.

A hero seeking sponsorship must approach the god directly, or through an intermediary. He can only communicate his intent through prayer and only if he is in a church dedicated to the god whose patronage he is seeking, or in another location which is sacred to that god. The hero, or his intermediary, must spend a minimum of one hour in prayer to the god, stating his intentions and communicating his desires to the god. At the end of this period of prayer, the hero (or an intermediary) must attempt a Diplomacy check, with the intent to alter the god's attitude to Helpful. With a successful Diplomacy check, the god accepts the offer. There is no penalty for failing the check. The initial attitude of the prospective patron depends upon the hero's relationship with the deity. Deities are considered Friendly to those who are dedicated worshipers, Indifferent to those who are of similar alignment, Unfriendly to those whose alignment is opposed to the deity's and





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Hostile to those who are dedicated worshippers of gods considered hostile to the deity.

A character with 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (religion) gains a +2 competence bonus to his Diplomacy check when seeking patronage. Likewise, a character who sacrifices an amount of gold or other precious objects with a value equal to 1,000 gp x the caster level of the magical item which is to be created gains a +3 circumstance bonus to the check. Finally, a character who is a cleric, paladin or druid in service to the prospective divine patron gains a +2 circumstance bonus to their Diplomacy check.

Should a god wish to approach a hero to offer him patronage, then he may do so at any time. The god then offers to invest the hero with divine power in the cause of creating a powerful magical item. The character is free to accept or refuse the offer as he wishes, with the repercussions of refusal determined by the manner in which the hero conducts himself in the course of declining the offer. Typically, when a god offers patronage, he will do so with the creation of a specific magic item in mind; this item will always be invested with holy or unholy energy and the god will expect the hero to only wield the weapon in his name and to serve his interests. To do otherwise is to risk the wrath of even the most understanding of divinities.

† In order for a mortal hero to gain the benefits of patronage, he must complete a quest of a magnitude suitable for the power of the item to be crafted. Most often, the hero agrees to destroy a powerful opponent of the god who is sponsoring him; in such cases, the hero must singlehandedly slay the monster or being, and the monster or being must have a challenge rating equal to or greater than either the caster level of the item to be crafted or the hero's own character level, whichever is higher. The quest can take other forms as well, with the difficulty of the quest directly related to the power of the item to be created. Examples of appropriate quests include the construction of a church in hostile territory, the conversion of a certain number of worshippers (numbering in the thousands), or the restoration of the faith of a fallen member of the faith (a task which will require far more than the use of an *atonement* spell).

† Once given, patronage lasts only until the hero successfully crafts the specific magic item, or until the quest is abandoned. A hero who wishes to use divine sponsorship to craft another magic item can later seek

patronage with the same god, or with another god; should he decide to seek patronage with the same god, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus to the check if the original patronage was completed successfully, or a -2 penalty if the quest failed or was abandoned.

† Once a hero has acquired divine sponsorship, whether by pursuing it or by having it offered to him, he may not accept more divine sponsorship. Attempts to do so will not only automatically fail but will cause the character's initial divine sponsorship to end. The consequences of ending sponsorship in this fashion are up to the Games Master to decide and should be based upon the relationship between the god and the hero and between the gods who were 'competing' to offer sponsorship. If the hero is lucky and his relationship with the original sponsoring god is an especially good one, then the consequences will not be life or soul threatening. Under no circumstances, however, will there be no negative consequences.

Should a hero be required to complete more than one quest in the course of enchanting a magical item (such as when a barbarian warlord wishes to gain access to the both the Craft Magic Arms and Armour feat and the ability to imbue his desired weapon with effective enhancement bonuses), then



the sponsoring god will automatically give a new quest when the first is completed. The character will continue to gain new quests each time he completes the previous, until he either fails to complete a quest, or he successfully completes all required quests.

- † The divinely sponsored hero need not craft the item himself. So long as he is present throughout the crafting process, the divine energies he gains access to can be used as needed by the item's actual crafter.
- † Once a hero has received divine sponsorship for the completion of a quest, he must endeavour to complete the quest in a timely fashion. The hero is effectively placed under a *quest* spell which cannot be dispelled or ended by any means short of the god choosing to do it himself. The sponsored hero does not suffer any damage for failing to honour the quest but does have to make Fortitude saves to avoid becoming sickened.

### Using Divine Sponsorship to Replace Needed Spells

Even the greatest of mortal spells is as nothing compared to the power of a god. It is therefore a simple thing for a divine patron to invest his chosen hero with divine power enough to overcome the limitations of his spellcasting knowledge.

In order for a divine sponsor to be able to grant his chosen hero divine power, the hero must successfully complete a task which is thematically appropriate to the spell to be replaced. This means either defeating a creature who has access to a spell-like ability or supernatural power which is identical to, or similar to the spell to be replaced, or completing a quest of a difficulty commensurate to the power of the spell. In either case, to earn his divine energy, the hero must singlehandedly overcome at least one encounter with an encounter level equal to or greater than either the caster level required to cast the replaced spell, or the hero's character level, whichever is higher.

In order to use divine sponsorship in this fashion, the sponsored hero must normally have character levels at least equal to the caster level normally required to cast the spell which is to be replaced. The Games Master can, if he so chooses, waive this requirement but should only do so if it will serve the needs of the adventure and the campaign as a whole.

### Using Divine Sponsorship to Replace Needed Spells for the Imbuing of Effective Enhancements

While clerics, paladins and other servants of the divine spend much of their time in combat against enemies of their faith and thus have great need of effective enhancements to their weapons, shields and armour, the majority of those enhancements require spells which few, if any divine spellcasters have access to. Fortunately, a god's power can easily compensate for this weakness.

As with replacing required spells in the crafting of wondrous items, the divinely sponsored hero must successfully complete a task which is thematically appropriate to the effective enhancement to be imbued. This means either defeating a creature who has access to an ability which is identical to, or similar to the enhancement to be imbued, or completing a quest of a difficulty commensurate to the power of the enhancement. In either case, to earn his divine energy, the hero must singlehandedly overcome at least one encounter with an encounter level equal to or greater than the caster level required to cast the highest level of spell required to imbue the effective enhancement, the minimum caster level required to imbue an effective enhancement bonus of that power (the effective bonus of the enhancement x 5, meaning a +5 effective enhancement can only be imbued by a caster of 15<sup>th</sup> level or higher), or the hero's character level, whichever of those is the highest.

When imbuing a weapon, suit of armour or shield with an effective enhancement ability in this fashion, the character can ignore any normally required spells, subject to the rules above.

In order to use divine sponsorship in this fashion, the sponsored hero must have character levels at least equal to the caster level normally required to imbue the effective enhancement (the effective bonus x 5, as above). The Games Master can, if he so chooses, waive this requirement but should only do so if it will serve the needs of the adventure and the campaign as a whole. Even then it is recommended that the Games Master strongly consider all the implications of doing so, as many of the more powerful effective enhancements can wreak havoc with low challenge rating opponents.

### Using Divine Sponsorship to Defray Experience Point Costs

Normally, a crafter must dedicate a portion of his own life energy, in the form of experience points, to every item he creates, lest jealous reality destroy his



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hard work. Deities, however, have no such restriction and thanks to their sponsorship, neither do daring and resourceful heroes.

With the successful completion of an appropriate quest, the sponsored hero gains a number of extra experience points equal to the reward given for successfully overcoming the highest encounter level encounter of the challenge. In order to gain access to these extra experience points, the hero must overcome the challenge singlehandedly. The extra experience points gained from divine sponsorship can only be used in the crafting of the magic item the hero undertook the quest to create; the gained points can pay for both the standard experience point expenditures which all craftings require (typically 1/25th the base price of the item) and for any extra experience points costs which must be expended as part of the casting of required spells.

As with other uses of divine sponsorship, the hero must complete a quest which has at least one encounter with an encounter level equal or greater to the caster level of the item to be created, or the minimum caster

level required to imbue the item with an effective enhancement bonus ability, or the minimum caster level required to cast the highest level required spell, whichever is highest.

### Using Divine Sponsorship to Replace Needed Feats

The power of the gods is such that they can even inspire and guide heroes they favour in the creation of items which they could normally never conceive of creating. A god will only do this for those heroes who have earned his special favour, so this use of divine sponsorship is normally limited only to those heroes who worship their sponsoring god, who serve their in some capacity as a cleric or paladin or the like, or who have proven themselves again and again to be friends to, and champions of, their sponsoring deity. Even then, the gods will only sponsor heroes in this fashion if the hero intends to make a magical item which will be of direct, long term value to the god and his mortal church and only if the hero pledges to only use it in such service.

Should a god consider a hero worthy of gaining this most powerful of all divine investitures, then the hero given the chance to reap the benefits of this most holy boon must still singlehandedly complete a highly dangerous and difficult quest. In the course of the quest, the hero must singlehandedly overcome an encounter with an encounter level at least equal to the minimum caster level required to select the desired Item Creation feat + 5. This means that, for example, a divine sponsored hero who is questing to gain temporary knowledge of the feat Craft Magic Arms and Armour must overcome a challenge with an encounter level of at least 10. In addition, the hero must have character levels equal to the minimum required to select the feat, but need not meet any other requirements.

If a divinely sponsored hero successfully completes his quest, he gains knowledge of the appropriate Item Creation feat but does not gain knowledge of the spells needed to craft the specific item. These he must gain in some other fashion (often by completing another quest). Once the item in question has been crafted, all knowledge of the Item Creation feat is lost.



# HELP FOR GAMES MASTERS

**M**agic items are a critical part of d20 fantasy gaming and a key reason why Players keep coming back for more and more adventures. The rules for creating magical items are well documented and there are ample examples in myth, legend, films and novels of exactly what makes a good and memorable magic item. For all of that, there is precious little solid advice for the Games Master on how exactly he should incorporate magic items into his campaigns, and how he should balance the presence of magic items against the needs and wants of his Players and the flavour of his campaign. This chapter will hopefully remedy that, at least in some small way.

The following chapter offers advice and suggestions for fluid incorporation of magic items into your campaigns and for balancing your campaign world with various levels of magic item rarity. It closes with a discussion of how to use the Mythic System of magic item creation in your campaign, to better integrate the new system with the rules of the old.

## AVAILABILITY OF MAGIC ITEMS

One of the key decisions you must make when first beginning a new campaign is deciding exactly how rare magic items will be in your world. The consequences of this decision will be felt in every aspect of the game. Make items too rare and you risk both alienating your Players, who are likely to view the accumulation of powerful and unique magic items as part of their just reward for adventures well played, and throwing off the balance of your campaign, since magic items are necessary to defeat the most powerful, supernatural opponents. On the other hand, if you make magic items too common, you again risk alienating your Players and throwing off the balance of your campaign; only this time, instead of resenting you for being miserly, Players will resent you for making their steady accumulation of powerful and utterly unnoteworthy magic items as largely pointless; and this time, the campaign will not be balanced too much against the characters but too much in their favour, as even the greatest opponents

are rendered impotent in the face of magical arsenals of staggering power.

What follows is a brief discussion of the advantages and disadvantages inherent in the most common levels of magic item availability, along with some advice for crafting appropriate adventures and campaigns for each level of availability.

### Very Prolific

A world in which every knight has a magical sword and enchanted shield can be considered an exceptionally magic item rich campaign setting. Likewise a world where every merchant has a *gem of seeing* and a *helm of telepathy*. A very prolific magic item campaign is different from most other campaigns and from most fantasy literature in that magic, while still wondrous, is neither unexpected nor rare. In most very prolific magic item campaign worlds, magic is neither less nor more understood than electricity or natural gas, which is to say that while most people will not have the tools or the knowledge to harness it themselves, they will certainly know how to use it and are likely to do so on a regular basis. At the extreme end of the spectrum, a very prolific magic item world is one in which *flying carpet* traffic jams are common, where *crystal balls* are used as medieval telephones and where *wands of fireballs* are carried like guns in the magical sword belts of every city watchmen.

Campaigns where magic items are very prolific are understandably rare. The strain of keeping track of the party's magic items, the time spent crafting new and exciting items to place in treasure hoards, the effort involved in properly equipping both important and unimportant Non-Player Characters and the incredible difficulty in creating encounters and adventures which will challenge the party's capabilities, all these things combine to make very prolific magic item campaigns extraordinarily difficult to run. Should you choose to take this burden upon yourself, there are many important factors you must consider.

In an very prolific magic item campaign, there is a very real risk of items becoming completely disposable, with Players tossing aside or burning through their entire arsenal in the course of an adventure or two, in favour of playing with the new items they have seized or purchased. While this is not necessarily a bad thing, it does mean that magic items can quickly lose their lustre and uniqueness; who cares about the ancient lineage of the +5 *battleaxe*, when another one just like it is in the shop down the street? To quote an old



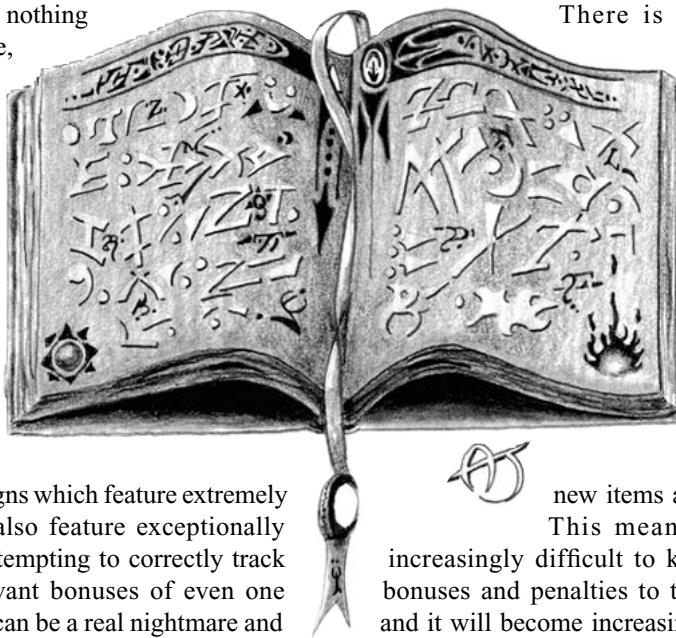
saying which I just invented, ‘in a thunderstorm, every raindrop looks pretty much the same’. If you are not careful, your Players will come to see every item as just another raindrop.

In a very magic rich campaign, there is also a real risk that the opponents you create will either be jokes, or incredible, unstoppable holy terrors. On the one hand, if you do not properly equip a Non-Player Character with magic items, he will be helpless in the face of the party’s arsenal and will be nothing more than a walking font of experience points, not even worthy of being considered a bump in the road. Conversely, if you are too generous and too exacting in your selection of magical gear, you can very easily create a death machine whose items allow him to counter all the heroes’ abilities and cut them down with ease. Neither kind of opponent will be very satisfying, for you or your Players. Players like to feel a sense of accomplishment and pushover villains do nothing to inspire that. Likewise, Players are smart enough to recognise when a Non-Player Character is a less plausible individual and more a mathematically-tuned Player Character killer, which is likely to foster a ‘Player versus Games Master’ mentality.

Though this is more a metagame issue, campaigns which feature extremely available magic items also feature exceptionally difficult accounting. Attempting to correctly track and record all the relevant bonuses of even one character’s magic items can be a real nightmare and a Games Master who takes it upon himself to keep track of every Player and Non-Player Character’s magical gear is asking for trouble. Should you choose to run a very prolific magic item game, you should encourage (read ‘force’) your Players to not only track their items on their sheet, but prepare for you an easily referenced list of their gear. Make the updating of this list a standard part of the conclusion of each game session and you will save yourself a lot of headaches. If you trust your Players not to abuse their knowledge, you can also save yourself some effort by asking them to create small groupings of items for your unimportant Non-Player Characters to use. Just ask them to put together lists of magical gear which they feel would be effective and which they might select for their own

characters given the chance, then use them to equip the opponents you throw against them.

Along the same lines, when Games Mastering very prolific magic item worlds, you might wish to create standardised packages of magic items for your Non-Player Characters to use. After all, the fact that every member of the city watch has a magical sword and enchanted shield in no way forces you to create unique items for each and every one of them. Using standardised packages has two other benefits as well. First, it keeps your Players from cycling through new magic items as fast as they might otherwise, since they know that most opponents will carry some variation of the same gear their last opponent wielded. Second, it will make those Non-Player Characters with actual unique items more memorable, which should be the goal of any Games Master.



There is also the phenomenon of the magic item pick’n’mix. This ties into both the issue of accounting and the larger issue of magic item disposability. When magic items are very readily available, Players are likely to change their character’s roster of magic at the drop of a hat, buying, selling or winning in adventures

new items as they strike their fancy. This means that it will become increasingly difficult to keep track of the proper bonuses and penalties to their character’s abilities and it will become increasingly difficult to get them to care about other items, even those which you create specifically for them.

In a world where magic items are especially common, you should expect most spellcasting characters to forgo selecting Item Creation feats in favour of other, more useful choices. After all, why build yourself what you can buy on the open market or pluck from the hands of a cooling corpse? Since they will not need to make their own equipment, wizards will use their bonus feats to purchase metamagics, raising their power and versatility considerably. This should hold true for Non-Player Character spellcasters as well, which will serve to balance them against Player spellcasters, but may make life a little tougher for warriors.

In a very prolific magic item world, damage reduction which is overcome by magic becomes largely meaningless. Who cares that only a magical sword can hurt the demon when *everyone* has three or four magic swords to choose from? The same holds true for spell resistance, albeit to a lesser scale, since spellcasters will have easy access to items which boost their primary spellcasting ability score. Due to this, when running a very prolific magic item campaign world you are well advised to add additional requirements for piercing damage reduction and spell resistance. For example, in a standard campaign setting, a monster with damage reduction 10/magic and spell resistance 20 is a dangerous opponent. In order to make the same beast equally dangerous in an extremely prolific magic item world you have to provide it with damage reduction 10/magic and holy, for example, as well as boost its spell resistance to 22-25. Simply put, do not be afraid to increase your monster's defensive abilities, as the Players will undoubtedly be able to acquire the means to overcome them.

Characters in an extremely magic item rich world will have no reason to conserve their resources. As such, both Player Characters and Non-Player Characters are likely to burn through charged items with reckless abandon, seeking to overwhelm opponents with staggering firepower. This can quickly turn every battle into a festival of carnage. To plan for this, use opponents who are immune or resistant to at least some of the Players' magic and give them equipment which, while useful in most situations, proves to be sub-optimal against the characters. Or, you can take the opposite tack, allowing a few extremely lethal battles to occur, in hopes that the Players will come to see that fights which are naught but exercises in mutually assured destruction are not conducive to long term play.

In an extremely prolific magic item world, the ubiquitous nature of magical items realistically demands that market prices be far lower than those presented in *Core Rulebook II*. Depending on just how common magic items are in your world, prices should be anywhere from 50% of standard market price to as little as a mere 10% of market price. This does not mean, however, that you should use the reduced price when calculating just how much magic is appropriate for a character at each level. Instead, you should allow the Players to buy their character's magic items at reduced prices and force them to sell at reduced prices, but calculate the total value of items they should possess using the standard market values presented in *Core Rulebook II*.

In order to keep the Players' arsenal under control, it is recommended that you make heavy use of temporary magic items, both in equipping the Non-Player Characters who will face the party and in stocking treasure hoards. Since the party will have ready access to magic, this should not limit them in any real way but it will allow you to equip opponents with the power they need, without the fear of said equipment giving the Players too much of a permanent boost when they inevitably kill your creations and take their stuff.

Though the issues raised above may make the idea of a very prolific magic item campaign seem more trouble than it is worth, it can be a rewarding experience, both for you and for your Players. Very prolific magic item campaigns work best as freewheeling, anything goes larks, where you can all cut loose and indulge in a bit of power gaming. Magic item rich gaming is also wonderful for capturing the feeling of playing in a true Never-Never Land, or for adventuring in the mythic, golden age past of a more standardised campaign, in a time when the dwarves and elves were not fading and wizards crafted suns from a handful of pollen. Finally, magic item rich campaigns are just the thing for capturing the mood and style of most modern fantasy roleplaying video games, where every bandit has a *dagger of dragon slaying* and every store stocks a thousand scrolls of *magic missile* right next to the turnips.

### Prolific

In a campaign where magic items are prolific, characters are likely to come into possession of several magic items in the course of each adventure and are likely to face many opponents who have access to magic items of their own. The average magic prolific campaign is likely to have much in common with the standard campaign, though there are some fundamental differences which you must plan for.

First, your Players are likely to be more grasping. Like a kid in a candy store, they may find themselves both overexcited and overwhelmed and will likely respond by shouting 'Mine! Mine!' and grabbing at everything they see, at least in the short term. The best way to combat this is to provide them with opponents who can plausibly challenge them without need of magic weapons and tools. Monks are good for this, as are monsters like demons, devils, dragons and fey.

While the Players become more grasping, they are also less attached to magical items in general and will be more likely to spend their time hunting down new, more exciting enchanted gadgets, which can spoil some



of the pleasure of placing unique items for them in adventures. To counter this, try giving items you wish for them to consider special unique and interesting histories, or memorable designs or quirks (using the chapter presented in this book); simply adding a history of dragon slaying and an ever-smoking, obsidian tip can transform a *+1 shortspear* into an item which your Players will want to keep for the length of a campaign.

Another issue which faces a Games Master who runs a magic item rich campaign is the easy escalation of power. If magic items are relatively easy to come by, Players will be able to fine tune their characters to a degree beyond what you find comfortable. While it is important that you allow Players the ability to create effective characters, it is not necessary for you to give in to their every whim. Force characters to earn their items and absolutely do not be afraid to hit them where it hurts; canny opponents will recognise which items give

a character his incredible power and they will not be afraid to sunder or steal them if it means the difference between victory and defeat, or life and death.

In a prolific magic item world, it is very likely that magic items will be sold on the open market, or at the very least, commonly traded amongst the privileged. While the prices will not necessarily be lower than those listed in *Core Rulebook II*, you should be prepared to let Players sell and buy items, at least to a limited degree.

A prolific magic item campaign should provide a balance of permanent and single use or charged items, with a slight preference towards temporary items. For the most part, you should reserve more permanent items for the higher levels of play, filling up the character's suggested gold piece value limit with one or two expensive, highly desirable items while leaving room for an ever-rotating assortment of more temporary items, such as elixirs, dusts and wands.

### Standard

This is the default level of magic item ability, at least according to the guidelines presented in *Core Rulebook II*. Since so much has already been said about gaming at this level of power, we will not spend too much time here. It would behoove you, however, to keep the issues raised by lowering or raising the availability of magic items in mind, since the issues raised there may bring to light concerns in your own game.

### Rare

In a campaign in which magic items are rare, several adventures, or even levels, might pass between the acquisition of each magical item, making each such item, no matter how humble or mighty, precious to both characters and Players. There are, of course, varying levels of rarity, from campaigns in which adventurers, kings, powerful monsters and mighty Non-Player Character spellcasters have standard levels of magic items while others are lucky to buy the occasional potion, to worlds in which the concept of even a high level adventurer carrying around more than two items each will be completely alien. Regardless of the degree of rarity, you should keep these issues in mind.

Rarity breeds greed. If the Players know there are only a handful of *gauntlets of ogre power* in the world, be prepared to watch them fall all over themselves to take them, by any means necessary, should they meet any Non-Player Character who owns a pair. On the good side, this allows you to use magical items as adventure



carrots, leading the Players and their characters eagerly from plot to plot. On the bad side, it can easily lead to the Players seeing the acquisition of magic items to be the only important part of any adventure; it can be disheartening when your Players completely ignore your carefully prepared plotlines in favour of chasing down the bard with the *ring of invisibility*.

Rarity breeds too much caution. As much as you want your Players to value their magic items, you also want them to use them. If a Player sees no reliable means of recharging his character's *wand of fireballs*, then he is not likely to use it, except under the most dire circumstances. This may be fine for you and may well fit your Games Mastering style, but do not forget that Players hunger for the opportunity to play with the toys they work so hard to earn. One way to encourage your Players to spend precious charges is to offer them assurances that they will be able to replace them in some fashion, perhaps by 'coincidentally' placing a similar item in a treasure hoard just as the character's is down to its last charges.

Along the same lines, be careful about destroying or stealing the items of your Player's characters, lest they despair of ever replacing them and lose their interest in the campaign. Likewise, be wary of equipping Non-Player Characters with items which your Players must, or at least should, destroy if they want to defeat them; if magic items are particularly rare, pragmatic Players will be hard pressed to destroy even the most evil items, at least if those items have special abilities they could use.

If you wish to make magic items as rare for the party as they are for the rest of the campaign world, then you must be careful in allowing access to Item Creation feats, lest the Players never feel the pinch of item rarity. It is recommended that you do not entirely refuse access to those feats, however. Instead, you should inform the Players ahead of time that they will have to seek out ancient tomes or cultivate relationships with powerful, knowledgeable spellcasters if they wish to learn the secrets of crafting magical items. You might also consider limiting the number of Item Creation feats a spellcasting character can select, so that no one character will be able to craft more than one or two categories of magical items.

You must be very careful when selecting monsters to face the adventuring party. In a campaign where magic items are rare for everyone, rival adventurers and monsters which can be harmed by exotic materials such as cold iron or adamantite should move to the

fore; since their damage resistance can be more easily overcome, they will prove to be less frustrating to a magic-poor adventuring band. Conversely, in a world where only the Players have normal access to magic, you should be careful about using humanoid opponents, lest they simply be torn apart by the hero's superior arsenal.

Finally, *Core Rulebook II's* guidelines for character wealth by level must be reconsidered when running a magic item poor campaign, at least if your Player's characters are held to the same standards as the rest of the campaign world. In lieu of simply flooding the characters with gold pieces instead of magic swords, you should either simply reduce the expected reward or replace it with other, less tangible prizes. The chief reason for doing so is this; in a campaign where characters do not earn magic items instead of gold, or cannot simply spend their jewels on magic items, enormous stacks of gold and jewels are meaningless, since nothing short of buying a small country will ever deplete their purses. *Core Rulebook II* presents some solid advice on offering alternative treasures to characters and it is advised that you take those suggestions to heart when running an item poor campaign.

In a rare magic item campaign, you should err on the side of providing Players with permanent magical items for their characters, rather than one use or temporary items. In addition, in a campaign where characters will not have greater access to magical gear than Non-Player Characters, you should also take care to provide items which can be improved over time, such as magical armours and weapons, or which serve a multitude of functions. Highly specialised items, when they appear, should either be exceptionally desirable, so that the Player does not feel slighted when he cannot use his item often, or given a chance to shine early; taking the time to place an encounter where a *helm of underwater action* can save the party into an adventure can spell the difference between a happy Player and a failed campaign.

### Very Rare

A campaign with this level of magic item availability is likely one which seeks to replicate the grittiest of fantasy novels, or even historical times (in which case 'very rare' is another way of saying 'none at all'). When creating a campaign of this sort, the first thing you must decide is how the scarcity of magic items effects your Players. Are they stuck in the same boat as the Non-Player Character masses, hearing only of magic items in story and legend? Can they, perhaps,





reasonably come into possession of a magic item, even if it is only a weak one and even if only at the climax of the campaign? Or are they the exception to the rule, with the fact that they either already have magic items, or will find them soon, the primary reason that they are adventurers in the first place?

In a world with very few magic items, those few items which do exist are likely to be world famous, their abilities and their previous owners detailed in dusty tomes and embellished around bardic fires and in the common rooms of village inns everywhere. It is equally likely that the world's few, precious items will be ancient in origin, crafted by gods or sorcerers long dead and that knowledge of magic item creation has passed out of the world – while it is not necessary that this be so, it does serve as a handy justification for why magical devices are so rare and is also in keeping with genre conventions. Since they are so well known and so precious, it is likely that most magic items will already be in the hands of other daring adventurers, in the treasuries of kings, or nestled in a place of honour in a dragon's treasure hold. The rest are most likely well hidden, laying in some forgotten dungeon where their masters fell, or in the laboratories of the spellcrafters who enchanted them, or perhaps in a god's most sacred grotto, waiting for the hand of a hero to grasp them once more. Undoubtedly, each and every known magic item will have a name and a history and you should be prepared and willing to create those histories, to reinforce in your Player's minds the precious, irreplaceable nature of each object.

In a world with few or no magic items, the characters will have to rely completely upon their own skills and innate abilities. While this can make for some exciting adventuring, it can also lead to many problems if you stick too closely to the core rule's assumptions.

In a world with little access to magic, even high level characters will find it difficult to reliably overcome the high end DC skill checks, since skill boosting items will no longer be available. While this is fine if you wish to keep feats of legendary skill truly legendary, it does mean that you should, when crafting traps or designing other encounters, adjust the DC totals downward if the character's success is essential to the adventure.

In a world with little access to magic, you will have to restrict access to the Item Creation feats. If you do not, or choose not to, there will be little stopping your Player's characters from simply crafting all the items they need, the rest of the campaign world be damned.

While careful use of the mythic system presented in this book will help you keep some measure of control over what the party can and cannot craft, it will not solve every problem. When running a campaign with very rare magic item availability, consider making the Item Creation feats equally rare. Perhaps only a single living being knows the Craft Staff feat, meaning the characters will have to find him and convince him to pass on his priceless secret before they can select the feat – make an ancient red dragon the sole possessor of such knowledge and you have the basis for a high level adventure. Or perhaps you might rule that any single being is only capable of ever learning one Item Creation feat, as such knowledge stretches the limits of what a mortal mind can bear. In this second case, you might make the Scribe Scroll feat the exception to the rule, unless you are willing to give wizard characters access to a different feat at 1<sup>st</sup> level.

Speaking of spellcasters, in a world with few or no magic items, they will be both considerably strengthened and considerably weakened, or at least forced to focus on specific expressions of magic. They will be strengthened because the paucity of magic items ensures that non-spellcasters will not have ready access to save-boosting items, essential when attempting to overcome higher level and Spell Focus-enhanced spell DCs. Conversely, they will be weakened because, at high levels, their inability to create or find rods, staves, wands, potions and scrolls will severely limit their spells per day; wizards will feel this pinch most keenly of all, since sorcerers can cast many more spells per day and druids, bards and clerics alike have access to many other useful class abilities. Further, the lack of magic items means that adventuring spellcasters will be forced to focus on those spells which either replicate magic items, such as *magic weapon*, or which provide crucial effects, such as healing magic. This will lead to less diversity and to your Players forgoing the selection of interesting but less versatile spells for their characters, in favour of those spells which they need to shore up the party's capabilities.

High powered monsters will be beyond the adventuring party's capabilities. While the expanded rules regarding damage reduction help somewhat to alleviate the need for magical weapons, they do not fully address the issue. High challenge rating monsters often have hit points in the mid-three digit range, meaning characters, even the strongest ones, will be hard pressed to harm them with weapons which do not offer substantial magical boosts, both in terms of flat bonuses to hit and damage and in terms of extra damage gained from unique special abilities such as *keen*, *thundering* and the *vorpals*.

enhancement. Spellcasters, too, will find it much harder to defeat powerful enemies, as spell resistance levels are calculated with the assumption that statistic boosting items are present in the campaign.

Character wealth will also be of primary concern. Without expensive magic items counting towards the character's gold totals, you will either have to reduce their reward, or provide them with some other form of compensation. Gifting characters with property and titles is an excellent way to offer compensation and should prove sufficient reward for even the most acquisitive Player – though a fiefdom and a duke's title does not give the immediate mechanical gratification that a cloak which boosts Charisma or a *vorpal sword* does, the long term gratification of lording over hundreds of peasants and knights will prove just as satisfying.

As you can see, there are a number of questions which you must have answers for if you intended to run a campaign where magic items are extremely rare. That said, there are some advantages to doing so. First of all, the lack of magic items means you have less bookkeeping to worry about, as well as making it easier for you to plan for, and challenge, the capabilities of high level characters. Second, it makes certain types of adventures more feasible, as mysteries will not so easily be spoiled by *hats of divination*, *crystal balls* and the like, and high level adventures which involve overland travel will become, if not entirely likely, at least more feasible than they will be in worlds where every other adventurer has a *flying carpet* or *ring of teleportation*. Finally, in a world without magic items, Players will be forced to rely more on their wits and cleverness to defeat powerful opponents, which is very much in the spirit of sword and sorcery adventure.

In a world where magic items are extremely rare, permanent magic items should be the rule, rather than the exception. Be prepared for Players to ruthlessly hoard those items they own and carefully ration the spell charges in their staves, rods and wands. Be extremely careful about sundering, *disenchanting* or even stealing



the party's magical equipment; you risk having them react poorly, both in and out of character.

## INTEGRATING THE MYTHIC SYSTEM

The Mythic System is intended to expand the options you and your Players have when creating magic items and like any such system, it brings with it new rules and a special flavour which must be reconciled with the needs of your campaign. The Mythic System is designed to be integrated into your campaign as painlessly as possible but there are still issues you must consider when implementing it in your campaign.

The rules of the Mythic System assume that your campaign world has a significant number of magical creatures and beasts of legend. Without a significant presence of magical monsters, it will be difficult for those who wish to take a part in the creation of their own items to gather the materials they need. There are ways around this, however. The easiest solution is to encourage Players of spellcasting characters to use the standard rules for magic item creation as provided in *Core Rulebook II* when they wish to enchant items for which they already possess the prerequisite feats and spells. Another solution is to restrict use of the Mythic System to the creation of more powerful magic items, or to simply rule that the Mythic System can only be used with your approval. Since the Mythic System is based around the idea of adventuring and the performance of heroic deeds, this is an easy and logical rule to implement. It is also an effective time saving measure as well, since it can be time consuming and



campaign plotline disrupting to have characters chase off on even short adventures every time they want to create *potion of water breathing*.

The Mythic System is also built around the assumption that the divinities of your campaign world take at least an occasional interest in the doings of its heroes and adventurers. If the deities of your campaign world are less like the meddlesome Greek gods and closer to the aloof divinities of other cultures, then you will have to take steps to either remove the divine favour options from the System entirely or to modify them so that they better fit with your campaign world. As above, the easiest way to do this is to restrict the divine favour rules for use with the creation of particularly powerful objects, specifically those which involve the use of divine magic in some fashion. You might also choose to specifically restrict the divine favour options to the creation of divine objects. Expanding upon this, you may rule that only worshipers of a specific deity can call upon his favour for the creation of items and even then only if they are attempting to create a magical wonder which will serve the divinity in some direct fashion, or operating under the specific mandate of a high ranking member of the divinity's clergy.

You might also wish to restrict the use of the Mythic System to members of specific races. The obvious choices should you choose to do this are elves and dwarves, as the ancient histories of both races lend themselves well to the flavour of the Mythic System. Of the traditionally Non-Player Character races, dragons, giants and other ancient and powerful beings are well suited to the themes and mechanics of the Mythic System. This will truly matter only if you intend for Players to either attempt to stop such a being from gathering the materials necessary to enchant a powerful item, or you intend to allow the Players to work in concert with them to create magical items. Conversely, you might wish to restrict the Mythic System to use by members of the 'younger' races, such as humans and halflings (whose nomadic culture is an excellent match for the far-ranging, adventurous feel of this system) or to the more barbaric cultures, such as orcs and half-orcs, since the idea of forging magical tools from components gathered by spilling blood and seizing the reins of destiny is as barbaric as it gets. Should you choose to restrict the Mythic System to specific races you must then decide if members of other races can, with the help of a spellcaster from one of the allowed races, take advantage of the System, or if they are denied its use entirely. Should you choose the latter, it is advised that you rule that those races which can

use the Mythic System must use it and cannot use the standard method of item creation.

The Mythic System is easily integrated into low magic worlds and, in fact, may prove to be the best system for use in such campaigns, as the extra effort required to create items will serve as a natural limiter for the proliferation of items. In a low magic world, you should beware of allowing both the Mythic System and the standard methods of magic items creation and it is advised that you allow one or the other, but not both, to be used.

Conversely, the Mythic System can easily be overshadowed in an extremely high magic campaign, since no one will want to go through the effort of gathering roc eggs to craft a set of *wings of flying* if they can simply teleport down to Ye Olde Mage's Guild and buy a pair off the rack. Should you wish to use the Mythic System in such a campaign, it is highly recommended that you implement it only when the Players wish to create items of real power, such as a *staff of power*, or a *+5 vorpal sword*.

## THE MYTHIC SYSTEM AS THE BASIS OF ADVENTURES AND CAMPAIGNS

The hunt for a particularly rare or difficult to procure component makes for a compelling adventure hook and one which is thematically in line with the conventions of both sword and sorcery and standard fantasy fiction. Should you choose to run an adventure which is (in essence) a component hunt, keep the following things in mind:

The Player who wishes to create the item for his character has a vested interest in the adventure; the rest of his fellow Players do not. This means it will be important for you, as the Games Master, to give the other Players reasons to be enthusiastic, lest the adventure bog down the flow of the campaign. If the component is suitably rare, or if the creature it comes from suitably deadly, then you will stimulate the interest of those Players who enjoy gaming for the opportunity to overcome difficult challenges. For example, a component quest adventure which requires the heroes to solve multiple lethal puzzles and overcome a rampaging beholder will appeal to Players who enjoy puzzles and combat. Players who game to participate in the creation of a story, meanwhile, can be drawn into

the component hunt if you tie the successful creation of the magic item into the successful conclusion of the campaign; story focused Players will, for example, willingly and enthusiastically participate in the search for a dragon's fang, if you make it clear to them that only by finding one and forging it into a powerful, holy sword can they slay the demon lord who threatens all that is good in the world.

When you choose to run a component quest adventure, it is critical that you base it around an item which *must* be found, rather than one which can be used if you cannot find something else. It is, quite literally, the kiss of death for a component quest adventure if your Players discover they can circumvent all the trouble simply by casting a spell which they already know. For this reason, component adventures work best when they are themed around the creation of a powerful magic item, one which you could justifiably rule absolutely requires the harvesting of a rare, possibly unique component. So, for this reason, you should not theme a component quest adventure around the creation of a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, since your Players will, rightly, either just cast the spell themselves or commission a local cleric to do it for them. Beyond that, if they must face death and worse each time they want to brew a healing draught, they will, probably both loudly and vehemently, wonder why it is that anyone would ever bother to do it.

Beware of every adventure becoming, by default, a component harvest. Should you find that the Players are chopping up every monster they fight into its component bits and then scooping them into jars, or if they begin to break off chunks of every strange looking piece of tree, rock and lichen they find, or if you notice a marked increase in their fervent prayers to their deity of choice (or of the moment), then it is a safe bet that your Players are component harvesting. While you may not have a problem with it, it can slow the game down, since your Players will spend so much of their time bookkeeping and asking you 'does this look useful?' to which the usual answer is 'could be'. In addition, rampant component harvesting can also spoil the flavour of the Mythic System, reducing it to a game of 'raid the wizard's pantry', or a dangerous quest into the castle basement. It is relatively easy to discourage component harvest, fortunately. The easiest way to do it is to remind the Players that the components they harvest can, and will, rot long before they will see use. In addition, you are well within your rights to rule that, without taking special precautions, the majority of the usable parts of the creatures they slay will be rendered unusable by the ruthless application of sword and spell.

If all else fails, you can simply rule that the components required to enchant an item can only be harvested after crafting is begun, as intent and desire play heavily into determining the outcome of a magical crafting.

The hunt for a particularly rare component can also serve as the basis for an entire campaign. The desperate search for the final ingredient to reconstruct the magical sceptre which will banish the demon hordes, the quest to retrieve the roc's fiery pinions for the *Headdress of the Golden Empress*, the twelve great tasks which must be completed before the forge god will bless the *Anvil of a Thousand Heroes*, all of these are examples of component based quests. Games Mastering an entire campaign based around a component search requires that you pay even closer attention to the issues raised above, lest the game abort itself before it is begun. That said, there is much fun to be had in such a game, as the hunt can lead the characters across the length and breadth of your campaign world, keeping the adventures fresh and exciting.



*'We have seen it through to the end, my brother.'* Rogerio hefted his mug in his right hand and, wincing, flexed the shattered remnants of his left. Their fellow drinkers and revellers – sycophantic revellers one and all – were all dropped and spent. Only the hulking barbarian and the bard-that-was remained awake in the inn, surrounded by the broken furniture and empty flagons that spoke of a truly great celebration now ended.

*'As I knew we would.'*

*'Really? Did you now?'*

*Thorvald nodded and belching loudly, absently wiped froth from his mouth, spilling yet more beer down his ceremonial tunic. It had previously been a beautiful garment, gifted by the noble House of Armoricus itself for Thorvald's sterling service to the Father of All Winters.*

*Rogerio smiled, ruefully. 'Yes. Yes, I quite believe you did.'* Rogerio shook his head. *'And people say I'm the overconfident one. Of course,'* he said, draining the remnants of his cup *'they're right in that.'*

*'You've told the toad of our deed?'* Thorvald belched again.

*'No need. Word preceded us. We, my friend, are infamous.'* Rogerio leapt onto the table, staggered over the remnants of the venison and fell heavily, scattering bits of potato and bread everywhere. *'Or, at any rate,'* he said, poking his finger at Thorvald, *'more infamous than we already were.'*

*Thorvald nodded and pounded the table with a fist. 'Good. Then he will help us?'*

*'No need for that either.'* Rogerio said. *'Don't you hear it, my friend? The Father of Winters is creeping around in my head and whispering secrets.'*

*'I hear nothing. '*

*Rogerio grinned, the broken ruins of his teeth still glittering, white as snow. 'Not even an echo? On a still day, you can hear the sound of a rabbit's fart across a flat plain! I'd think even the deaf could hear a god stomping around in your head.'*

*'I say again that I cannot.'* Thorvald was suddenly serious. *'Do you think something is wrong with me?'*

*'Undoubtedly. Would you like a list?'* Rogerio sat up and swung his legs down over the side of the table, scattering tawdry trinkets – gifts from doxies, mostly – and discarded food around himself. *'Seriously though, my brother,'* he said, rummaging through his pockets for his pipe, *'I know you have the spark inside you now, just as I do. I sense it, if you do not. On the morrow, we will fire those sparks and our weapons will sing with the power of endless winter.'*

*'Aye, they will.'* The big, rough-bearded man cracked his knuckles and leant back, nearly toppling the rude bench he was perched on. Frowning his beetled brow, he shoved a comatose partygoer onto the stone floor. *The girl landed in a heap, hiccuping lightly in her sleep.*

*'Now,'* Rogerio said, throwing himself down onto the bench next to Thorvald, *'we'd best see what we can do to scare up some more beer. Tomorrow we will participate in the making of a miracle. And I make it a policy to never participate in such events sober.'*

# DESIGNER'S NOTES

Whenever you start a new book, you have, or at least should have, some idea of what you want to accomplish in your writing. The problem with this book was not coming up with the idea of what I wanted to accomplish but narrowing down the number of ideas. 'Write a book about magic items for us' – may as well ask me to 'write a book about stuff'. A book about magic items can take just about any form and in the years since the release of d20 fantasy gaming, a book in just about every one of those forms has been released. There are books which are simply lists of new magical gear, there are books which provide detailed histories for artefacts, there are books of magical tomes and books of new magical properties and everything else under the stars. Is there room for anything new? Is it even possible to really present something new about magic items?

Well, I certainly hope so.

I guess if I can find any fault with the current rules for magic items, it is that there is still a little too much dependence on specific combinations of feats and spells, taking some of the wonder out of magic item creation. On the face of it, this is not really a fault, since mechanics work best when they are presented in a fairly straightforward manner. The problem comes when those mechanics render the eventual flavour of the campaign mechanical as well. That is the problem I see with *Core Rulebook II's* rules for magic; the need for specific combinations of spells eliminates some of the mythic element to crafting magical objects. That is why I created the Mythic System for this book. It is not a comprehensive rewrite of the existing magic system - it does not have to be, since the default rules are both useful and effective. Instead, it is a spice, a new layer of paint, a curtain if you will, which both works to make the system prettier and make the raw mechanics of creating magic items less obvious. I think the system works well and I hope you will agree.

The rest of the book was written with the same goals in mind. The new options for intelligent magic items expand your creative horizons when making such items, so that you can make an intelligent item of almost any sort. The new prestige classes are intended

to really build on the idea of magic items as an integral part of an adventurer's capabilities, an idea which the core rules are already built around. The magic item quirks should work to make each item you create more unique and to bring d20 magic items more in line with their legendary and fictional inspirations.

## Thanks

I will start this off the same way I always do, by thanking my wife and children, who keep me sane and humble, at least when they are not driving me crazy and telling me how wonderful my writing is (every writer needs at least one groupie).

I also want to thank the guys at Mongoose for giving me a chance to write this book and for giving me money for doing it. Hooray!

I would like to sing the praises of the fine folk who wrote the core rules for creating magic items. It is nice to finally have an actual set of rules, so that my wizards can make neat stuff, instead of always having to search around for the neat stuff created who-knows-how by ancient spellcasters.

Finally, I would like to thank all the writers, mythmakers and dreamers whose inspiration and imagination provided the framework upon which this work and every other book ever written about fantasy gaming is built. Thank you all.

**Patrick Younts**



# RULES SUMMARY

## List of Quirks

### Minor Quirks

Animal Call  
 Buttons Loosen  
 Everclean  
 Extremities Swell  
 Font of Youth  
 Frost/Flame  
 Hair Growth  
 Light  
 Phantom Smell  
 Phantom Sound  
 Rainbow Aura  
 Sands of Time  
 Shadow Vagabond  
 Shivers  
 Skin Tint  
 Sneeze/Cough  
 Spectral Aura  
 Static Electricity  
 Voice Alters  
 Void Eyes  
 Warm/Cool  
 Warts/Scales/Etc

### Major Positive Quirks

Eager  
 Environment Bonus  
 Eternal  
 Faceless  
 Fury  
 Hardy  
 Impressive  
 Inconspicuous  
 Light  
 Loyal  
 Lucky  
 Nightsinger/Daysinger  
 Pristine  
 Resistant  
 Savage  
 Warmth/Chill  
 Wise

### Major Negative Quirks

Aged  
 Blunted  
 Clumsy  
 Dangerous  
 Disfiguring  
 Draining  
 Faceless  
 Fickle  
 Hair Loss  
 Hatred  
 Loud  
 Reluctant  
 Siren  
 Unlucky  
 Unreliable

### New Weapon Abilities

Special Ability	Base Price Modifier
Acidic	+1 bonus
Acid Flare	+2 bonus
Cunning	+1 bonus
Destructive	+1 bonus
Explosive	+2 bonus
Hammering	+1 bonus
Heaven's Wrath	+2 bonus
Hell's Fury	+2 bonus
Honourable	+1 bonus
Howling Fury	+2 bonus
Idiocy	+2 bonus
Overpowering	+2 bonus
Resonating	+1 bonus
Ruinous	+2 bonus
Shredding	+1 bonus
True Death	+3 bonus
Virulent	+2 bonus

**New Armour and Shield Abilities**

Special Ability	Base Price Modifier
Boosting	+2 bonus
Frightening	+3,700 gp
Frightening, Improved	+15,000 gp
Frightening, Greater	+33,750 gp
Kinetic	+2 bonus
Nimble	+3,700 gp
Nimble, Improved	+15,000 gp
Nimble, Greater	+33,750 gp
Refracting	+3 bonus
Spring Heel	+3,700 gp
Spring Heel, Improved	+15,000 gp
Spring Heel, Greater	+33,750 gp



**New Feats**

General Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Awaken Magical Properties	Cha 13+	Automatically detect magical items
Bonded Armour, Shield or Weapon	Iron Will	Bonded magical armament gains further enhancements
Bonded Ring, Rod, Staff or Wand	Iron Will	Bonded magical item gains further enhancements
Great Resistance	Iron Will, Wis 15+	+2 bonus to resist magic item effects and DR 2/nonmagical
Increased Effectiveness	Spellcraft 8 ranks, any Item Creation feat, ability to cast arcane or divine spells	Use your caster level rather than an item's to determine save DCs and beating SR
Item Aptitude	Cha 15+	Use Magic Device becomes a class skill and gains a +2 bonus
Soul Armour, Shield or Weapon	Bonded Armour, Shield or Weapon	Bonded magical armament becomes further enhanced by your dedicated link
Item Creation Feats	Prerequisites	Benefit
Borrow Strength	Any Item Creation feat, Int or Wis 17+	Use another's energy to fuel item creation
Greater Capacity	Craft Rod, Craft Staff or Craft Wand	Created magical items contain 75 rather than 50 charges
Improved Item Creation	Any two Item Creation feats	Created magical items cost 1/50 <sup>th</sup> XP to make, rather than 1/25 <sup>th</sup> XP
Reforge Item	Int 15+, at least one of Craft Magic Arms and Armour, Craft Rod, Craft Staff, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item or Forge Ring	Restore even badly damaged or drained magical items or even artefacts
Speedy Crafting	Dex 13+, at least one of Craft Magic Arms and Armour, Craft Rod, Craft Staff, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item or Forge Ring	Only spend 1 day crafting a magic item per 2,000 gp of the base price
Strange Affinity	Craft Wondrous Item	Create magic items oddly aligned with their body placement





# LICENCE

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ENCYCLOPAEDIA  
ARCANE

# MAGIC ITEM CREATION

## Forging Legendary Power

Magic items are a staple of fantasy in any form, evoking images of great deeds done, of dragons, of heroism and of terrible villainy. The true power of magic items comes not from their ability to work miracles, but from their ability to evoke wonder in all of us.

Who does not remember the first time they, at the successful conclusion of a hard-fought adventure, lifted a new sword and pulled it, glittering and smoking in the dim light, from its bejewelled sheath? Who does not recall with fondness the first time they pointed a staff, uttered a few cryptic phrases and caused the world to erupt in fire? And who does not feel a sudden thrill each and every time a simple *detect magic* spell wreathes the treasure in cold, blue possibility?

*Encyclopaedia Arcane: Magic Item Creation* is dedicated to the expansion and exploration of all the possibilities of magic items. Within these pages there are new powers, new feats and even a few new prestige classes, all focused on the use and creation of magic items. There are rules for expanding the role of intelligent magic items and for placing unique qualities and drawbacks in your magic items. Most importantly, there is a new creation system, the Mythic System; creating a flaming sword is less a matter of knowing how to cast *burning hands* than it is knowing where to go to pluck a tail feather from a phoenix. With the Mythic System, your swordsmen and rogues will be able to take a more direct hand in constructing what will be their most prized possessions, giving them a greater sense of ownership and accomplishment.

No two magic items will ever be the same again.

### Inside You Will Find:

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| New Prestige Classes                | Expanded Intelligent Item Creation      |
| Magic Item Quirks                   | New Weapon, Shield and Armour abilities |
| The Mythic Item Creation System     | Breakdowns of Magic Campaign types      |
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