

the player a tough choice: Should he cast the scroll during an adventure where it might be useful? Should he save it until he can take the time to research the spell for his spell books?

When the characters overcome a hostile mage, the first concern of the wizards will be for his spell book. Where is it? What spells does it have in it? Even a nonmagical item like a spell book becomes very important. Knowing their value, NPC wizards will go to great pains to protect their own spell books, hiding them carefully, locking them in trapped chests, and scattering magical traps throughout the pages.

### Spell Books

A wizard's most important treasure is his spell book. Because it is so important, you and the players need to know some basics about it: What exactly is a spell book? How many pages does it have? What is it made of?

#### All Sizes and Shapes

There is no standard size or shape for a spell book. A player character can't walk into a wizard's lab or study and instantly spot the spell book because it is the biggest, longest, fattest, squarest, roundest, or thinnest book there. Neither can he measure all the books to find the one that conforms to the dimensions of a spell book. The spell book's size and shape is determined largely by the culture of the wizard who owns it.

Consider, for example, the book you are reading right now. How would one of the DMG's pages have appeared in other times and places? In medieval Europe, this page would most likely have been ten or more hand-lettered sheets of parchment, perhaps embellished with illuminations and painted scenes. In Ancient China, this page would have been several hand-printed pages on colored paper and bound with red lacings. The Egyptians would have used a rolled scroll of papyrus, with several required to make a book. Even more cumbersome, the ancient Babylonians would have used clay tablets marked in cuneiform and dried. American Indians would have written it on leaves of birch bark or painted it on a cured buffalo hide.

Writing and written works have changed greatly through the centuries of Earth history. A fantasy game world is no different. Spell books should come in a variety of shapes and forms—whatever seems best for the campaign.

A spell book may be a heavy tome, bound in leather with crisp parchment pages. It may be a collection of papyrus scrolls tied with red silk strings. It may be a pile of clay tablets marked in cuneiform. It may be a

cheap-looking folio printed on linen rag paper. It may even be thin sheets of embossed gold between covers made from the hide of a naga.

If you don't want to create a unique spell book for your campaign world, here's one standard you can fall back on: Compare them to bulky coffee-table books of today or large, hefty dictionaries. (Even if you do create unique spell books, this standard should give you some idea of the appropriate size and bulk.)

Often a wizard's complete set of spell books occupies several shelves of his library, especially when the character reaches the highest levels. At this point, it is no longer practical for the character to carry all of his spell books with him when he travels. Therefore, many wizards opt to make traveling spell books.

The traveling spell book is a more selective, more portable version of the character's complete spell books (although there is little that can be done to make clay tablets portable). In the traveling spell book, the wizard places only those spells he feels he is likely to need while traveling.

There is no limitation on which spells can be included, but a traveling spell book has a limited number of pages. Thus, a high-level wizard may need several traveling spell books to contain all the spells he feels are necessary!

#### Spell Book Preparation

The books themselves require few special materials, but the workmanship must be exact, flawless. Even the slightest mistake in copying a spell ruins it. This is not work for a common scribe or copyist.

Compounding the problem, the bizarre formulas and diagrams found in a spell book can't be reproduced by normal medieval printing methods. Spell book work must be done slowly and laboriously by hand. The standard amount of time required to prepare a spell book is 1 to 2 days of work per spell level of the spell being entered.

Occasionally, prepared spell books can be found for sale, but few wizards choose to trust the success or failure of their magical efforts to the work of others. Rare is the wizard who doesn't prepare his own spell books.

Materials used in a spell book must be of the highest quality. No wizard wants to run the risk of dampness causing his ink to run, a blot on the parchment causing a spell to be misinterpreted, bookworms making a feast of page 6, the wind blowing a loose page away, or a spilled retort turning the whole book into a sodden mass.

Careful treatment, common sense, and quality materials are essential to prevent

these disasters. Strong bindings or cases are used to protect the interiors. Clear sheets are needed to record the spells. The best bold inks and the sharpest pens must be used for writing. Aromatic compounds are recommended to deter bookworms and moths, while other preparations should be used to protect against mold, mildew and dry rot. All this costs money.

#### Spell Book Cost

The one thing all spell books have in common is their cost. Books are never cheap, and a wizard's spell books are even more expensive than most.

For the materials and their preparation, the wizard must pay 50 gp per page. Traveling spell books, which are even more compact, cost 100 gp per page.

#### How Many Pages in a Spell Book?

Each spell requires a number of pages equal to its level plus 0-5 (1d6-1) additional pages. The actual number of pages a spell takes differs for each wizard. Even if two or more wizards are recording the same spell, the number of pages varies, since there are differences in handwriting and notations.

Furthermore, no spell book can have more than 100 pages, no ordinary nonmagical scroll more than 25, and no traveling spell book more than 50. Thus, at best, a spell book filled with 9th-level spells could only hold 11 spells (99 pages), allowing only one blank page to hold a magical protection (such as *firetrap*). All too likely, this spell book would be filled well before 11 spells had been entered.

For convenience in creating NPC spell books, the maximum and minimum number of spells for each level and type of spell book is given on Table 30. The table presumes that all the spells within a book are of the same level (which may or may not be the case, especially for traveling books).

Furthermore, although a spell book can never have more than its maximum at a given spell level, there is no requirement that the book be filled even up to its minimum number. The ranges given on the following table presume the spell book is filled as efficiently as possible with spells, leaving little or no room for protective devices.

