



MANAGING EDITOR: James Introcaso

PRODUCTION AND PLAYTEST

DIRECTOR: Lars Bakke

EDITORS: Sadie Lowry, Hannah Rose

AUTHORS: Leon Barillaro, Carlos Cisco,

Sam Mannell

GRAPHIC DESIGN/LAYOUT: Jen Mc-Cleary

COVER ART: Sean Andrew Murray

TITLE LOGO: Nick De Spain

LEAD TESTER: Spencer Hibnick

INTERIOR ILLUSTRATIONS:

Wizard Stabbing Scrying Sensor: Grace Cheung

Wizard's Fancy Signature: Grace Cheung

Wizard Duel: Linda Lithén

Goldmongers Subclasses: Nick De Spain

Long Term Curses: Gustavo Rodrigues

MCDM IS:

Lars Bakke: Development & Production

Jerod Bennett: Technology

Grace Cheung: Art

Matt Colville: Writing & Design

Anna Coulter: Production & Operations

Nick De Spain: Art & Art Outsource Management

Jason Hasenauer: Art & Art Direction

James Introcaso: RPG Line Developer

PLAYTEST COORDINATORS:

Dig/Owen "Dig" Crary

GuardianRoborn/Nathan Clark

MayanakaSenshi/Michael Harsha

MeAndUnique/Shane Parker

Pesto Enthusiast/Spencer Hibnick

ScottCPrim/Scott Prim

SONSON/Alecson de Lima Junior

TemplarsBane/Nick Pierson

TheDeadlyFly/Harley Kewish

Vanacan/Taylor Lauer

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

I think about diamonds a lot—fantasy diamonds. In the real world, these engagement stones are worth a lot of cash, but in fifth edition, these rocks bring people back from the dead. I want to create a world where diamonds are mined to scarcity and hoarded by the wealthy. Adventurers plan and execute heists to steal the gems, maybe to help the oppressed or to sell on the black market, and eventually make an enemy of the diamond-mongering aristocracy, secretly led by a corrupt ancient gold dragon! Yes, the nobles have soldiers, diamond golems, and more to battle the heroes, but they also have enough wealth that they might simply be able to pay those greedy adventurers off. Will the characters sell out?

I think about this campaign idea because it honestly seems to me the way things would go in a world where diamonds are the key to resurrection (cynical as that worldview may be). It is human nature to cheat death at all costs. By drawing on that universal truth, we can create stories for our games that feel authentic and grounded in reality, even though we all know that diamonds can't actually revive the dead. To make an entire world, I took a single element of the game, and a small one—a spell component, and developed it further than the existing rule. I asked, “What happens if diamonds are a key part of performing miracles?”

In a high fantasy game with complex systems, there are thousands of questions that lead to incredible stories if you try to answer them with sincerity. If bards, clerics, druids, paladins, and rangers can all cast *lesser restoration*, how could disease ever be a problem? Dragons are super powerful and love treasure, so why wouldn't they get out of their caves more often and plunder, plunder, plunder? If wizardry

can be taught, do (possibly predatory) banks loan money to farmers so their kids can go to wizard college?

There are no wrong answers to these questions, but the most authentic responses often lead to the most interesting and relatable stories and creations. Maybe your next campaign world has magic-resistant diseases, active bandit dragons, and too many wizards and not enough farmers! Sounds like a fun place to play.

The three articles in this issue of *ARCADIA* take some big questions and follow them to interesting and authentic conclusions. Leon Barillaro mused, “If most curses can be easily removed by a 3rd-level spell, then eventually someone would make curses built to last. How do those work?” Carlos Cisco thought, “If some adventurers are only in it for the gold, then greed is one of their core values. How might that theme express itself in some subclasses?” And finally, Sam Mannell asked, “Since many wizards can travel the planes, what other spells might they see or be inspired to create?” Those simple thoughts brought you articles filled with new curses, subclasses, monsters, and spells.

I encourage you to do the same in your games. We have good fun making memes or laughing with friends about what might happen if you get some demon ichor in an open wound...but what **WOULD** happen? The questions may seem silly at times, but the assumptions can unlock awesome new stories.

Ex animo,
James Introcaso

LONG-TERM CURSES

SIX MAGICAL TORMENTS

by Leon Barillaro

In Villeneuve's *Beauty and the Beast*, a handsome flirty prince insults the wrong person with his womanizing ways. The witch relegates him to a life as a wretched beast, a curse that can only be broken if he can love and be loved in return. But before he has the chance to meet the charming Belle, a 5th-level cleric comes along and offers Beast a chance to return to normalcy—for a small fee, of course. Beast goes back to womanizing the very next day. He can afford it.

In fifth edition, the *remove curse* spell sucks away the delicious narrative potential that stories have been taking advantage of since the invention of stories. While this might be convenient from a mechanical perspective, there are ways to employ powerful curses at the table that a 3rd-level spell can't break.

This article provides rules for six long-term curses to add more narrative potential to your games. They can be employed as features of a backstory, narrative complications, story hooks for adventures, or consequences for characters and NPCs. *Remove curse* and similar spells can't get rid of these torments. Each curse lists the specific ways it must be broken.

GM TIP: PLAY, NOT PUNISHMENT

Curses are a consequence; they're typically cast as a result of a character's action. It's important to not wield these consequences as punishment for your *players*. Check in with them and make sure they're alright with these rules, as several of these curses remove agency from characters and can impact them in a big way.

CURSE OF THE BETRAYED

"Don't feel sorry for him; he'll be dead soon. Feel sorry for us, who have to carry that secret to the grave. We do this one thing, and we never speak of it again, you got that?"

The source of this curse is the powerful, festering ire born in the victim of an unexpected betrayal by a group they trusted. Under its poisonous sway, suspicion creeps into every crack and crevice of the group's relationship until they believe their only option is to destroy each other.

CASTING THE CURSE

The curse is cast when your act of betrayal ends in death. Murders, framings, and even pranks gone wrong can cause the soul of the victim to bind with the strong feelings of resentment and suspicion, casting a shadow over you and everyone involved.

EFFECTS OF THE CURSE

You and those affected slowly begin to distrust each other, although the changes are so subtle at first that it's difficult to recognize. At the beginning of every long rest, you must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or gain one of the following flaws (chosen or rolled for by the GM) until the curse is broken:

d10	Flaw
1	Given the choice between personal gain and the safety of even my closest loved ones, I will always choose personal gain.
2	The group would be nothing without me. I am its most important member and deserve to be treated as such.
3	Either you are always with me, or you are plotting against me.
4	It is better to root out the possibility of betrayal first and ask questions later—or never at all.
5	There are only two types of people who can keep secrets: me and the dead.
6	I know my companions are capable of terrible things; I've seen them do it before. Not me, though. I was pressured into it.
7	I question every word the group says to me, even if they're telling me the sky is blue.
8	The group can use even the smallest details of my life against me, so it's better to make things up rather than tell them the truth.
9	What we did was wrong. Really wrong. I'm the only one who feels any kind of remorse!
10	I'm not really a member of this group. Only when it suits me. And if we're in trouble, it definitely doesn't suit me.

Failing the saving throw by 5 or more also instills you with the unshakeable sense that your companions are plotting to murder you *that very night*. Depending on the flaws you have accrued through this curse, the response to this dread could look different. You may respond by running, confronting your companions, or flat-out attacking them, but you must do something to prevent what you believe is inevitable and murderous betrayal.

A spell such as *remove curse* or *greater restoration* removes one flaw and any feelings of dread about your friends murdering you, but you can still gain new flaws and feelings of dread from the curse until it is broken.

BREAKING THE CURSE

There are two ways to break the curse. The first is for everyone in the group to come clean, publicly, about what they have done and make amends with the injured party as best they can. The second is to be the last one standing as the curse takes its toll around you.



GM TIP: PLAYING THE CURSES

The dramatic irony of knowing something your character does not may feel awkward at first, but it can create memorable experiences at the table. Have an out-of-character discussion about how this difference in knowledge manifests in your game. A GM might award inspiration for a character's action that feels perfectly natural to a character, but is self-destructive to the players who have the full picture.

CURSE OF CASSANDRA

"Why are you asking what's wrong with me? You wouldn't believe me if I told you."

An individual afflicted with the Curse of Cassandra receives a wonderful gift: the ability to see into the future. These prophetic visions typically warn of unfortunate events. The knowledge is invaluable. The catch? No one believes the cursed person's predictions. The burden of knowledge is often too great with no one to share it with, and the cursed one finds themself stranded and feckless against a maelstrom of misfortune.

CASTING THE CURSE

High-powered entities such as gods, demigods, celestials, and archfiends are capable of inflicting this curse, usually on a mortal who has defied or otherwise ignored them. Mortals who dabble too much in divination are another popular target. As their powers of prophecy grow, jealous entities see fit to curl the monkey's paw.

EFFECTS OF THE CURSE

At the end of the first long rest you take after you have been cursed, roll on the Prophecy Generation tables. The result is a warning of events to come. The roll uses this format:

[Subject] will [Prediction] in the next [1d6] days.

Roll a d6 from the Subject table. This is the victim of your curse. The Prediction table (d100) decides the misfortune that will befall them. The final d6 determines the window in which the curse manifests. For example, if your rolls are 2, 66, and 3, your curse would look like this: "A party member will be poisoned in the next 3 days."

Once you make your prophecy, you are cursed with the knowledge that it is doomed to come true unless you stop it. The GM places encounters in front of you that would make this poisoning scenario likely, and in this example, they have three in-game days to do it. For example, an NPC may invite you all to a grand feast where the food has been poisoned.

Other characters in your party won't heed your words of prophecy. They may be so confident about how *wrong* you are that they walk head-first into danger, disregarding your warning and gleefully enjoying the fancy meal. The GM should award inspiration to fellow characters who actively ignore your predictions and run headlong into risk.

If the prophecy is realized, you receive a new prophecy at the end of your next long rest.

PROPHECY GENERATION

Use the following tables to generate a prophecy.

SUBJECT

d6	Result
1	You
2	A party member
3	A non-player companion or retainer
4	A friendly NPC
5	A rival NPC
6	An enemy

PREDICTION

d100	Result
1-10	take damage from a melee weapon
11-20	take damage from a ranged weapon
21-30	take damage from a spell
31-40	offend someone powerful and dangerous
41-50	be captured and imprisoned
51-60	lose a bet or competition
61-70	be poisoned
71-80	lose a lot of money
81-90	totally embarrass themselves at a crucial moment
91-96	commit a crime
97-100	die

GM TIP: PLAYING SAFELY

If the stakes of the Prediction table are too high or too low for your game, change them. When playing with the Curse of Cassandra, players and GMs should set boundaries for what is and isn't acceptable to threaten with this curse during play.

BREAKING THE CURSE

The curse breaks when you prevent something you have prophesied from happening within the given time frame. This proves extraordinarily difficult when *no one believes you*.

CURSE OF THE LIVING DEAD

"Locked doors? Check. Drawn curtains? Check. Barricade made of living room furniture? Check and check. We're ready for bed."

There is a town where the bodies are not buried—they are destroyed, their bones sent floating down the river far away from home. No dead are allowed to remain, for when creatures die in this town, they rise as undead by midnight. There are no livestock or pets in town—even wild animals are shooed away. Still, townspeople lock their doors on the off chance something escapes their watchful eye.

CASTING THE CURSE

The death of a powerful necromancer or undead creature, such as a lich, creates a magical excess that seeps into the soil, creating a radius of magical effect large enough to cover a small town or village. The corpses of creatures that die in this area become **zombies** on the next midnight, regardless of where the bodies end up.

EFFECTS OF THE CURSE

Zombies rise precisely at midnight, though other undead may rise from bodies that are partially, but not completely, destroyed. Charred bones rise as **skeletons**. Severed limbs reanimate and attempt to put themselves back together, creating more **zombies** or, in the worst case, an unspeakable mess of spare limbs that uses the **flesh golem** stat block with the following changes:

- The creature's type is undead.
- The creature understands the languages its respective body parts knew in life but can't speak.

The creature gains the following trait:

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the creature to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of $5 +$ the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the creature drops to 1 hit point instead.

The GM can adjust this curse to create any undead of any challenge rating to fit the needs of their campaign.

ZOMBIE ANIMAL COMPANIONS

The love of a pet is eternal. Nothing exemplifies this sentiment more than animal companions and other pets that die and return as zombies under the curse of the living dead. Many have observed that upon their return, these creatures remember and still adore their companions from life. A zombie pet may even continue to travel with its companion after becoming undead. A zombie pet uses its same stat block with the following changes:

- The creature's type is undead.
- The creature understands the languages and commands it knew in life but can't speak.
- The creature is immune to poison damage and can't be poisoned.
- The creature's movement speed is reduced by 10 feet (to a minimum of 10 feet).
- The creature takes a -2 penalty to its Dexterity, Intelligence, and Wisdom scores.
- The creature gains a +2 bonus to its Constitution score, which also adjusts the creature's hit points accordingly.
- The creature gains the following trait:

Undead Revival. If the creature is reduced to 0 hit points and dies, it rises again at the next midnight. The creature reforms if it has been dismembered, so long as all of its body parts are within 5 feet of each other.

BREAKING THE CURSE

Because the necromancy magic has seeped into the soil, it is the soil that must be cleansed. The curse can be broken by planting, growing, and harvesting root vegetable seeds that have been submerged in holy water or blessed by a cleric or paladin. If no undead have risen by the time the crops are harvested, the curse breaks. This process can be sped up through the use of spells such as *druidcraft* or *plant growth*. Throughout its growth, the root vegetables actively absorb the necrotic energy from the soil, and thus at their cultivation may contain traces of the lich or other vile being that caused the corruption. It is strongly recommended you *do not eat these vegetables*, lest you become possessed by these forces yourself.

CURSE OF THE SORDINO

"If I can't play in this town, no one can!"

This curse was popularized by the famous bard Gino Naomi, known as the King of Keys for his skill with the piano. During his early travels, Gino asked to play in his hometown tavern and was refused. In his rage, Gino pushed his harpsichord into the nearby lake and cursed the entire town to never hear music again. His anger bound the curse to his now-submerged harpsichord.



CASTING THE CURSE

Anyone who uses an instrument as an arcane focus can cast this curse, so long as they have been shamed or scorned by another creature in the last 24 hours. They use their instrument focus as the source of the curse, playing one final song on it and imbuing it with malicious magical energy, which renders the instrument unplayable upon the final note. The caster must then find a new arcane focus. The curse's area of effect is large enough to encompass a small town or village that includes the creature or creatures that shamed the caster.

EFFECTS OF THE CURSE

This is a curse that does not allow music to exist. When a creature attempts to play music while in an area afflicted with this curse, the sound that comes out is muffled, cacophonous noise. Any ability check, such as a Charisma (Performance) check, made while attempting to play music automatically fails.

But not all music is performed. Laughter, voice inflection, the rhythmic repetition of words—all of these things have a music to them that the curse transforms into hideous, horrendous noise. A town affected by this curse has learned to speak in a dull monotone, lest their meaning be drowned out by the curse's influence. Because one must spend time focusing on not triggering the curse, Charisma checks made to communicate verbally with others in this area are made with disadvantage.

BREAKING THE CURSE

The curse lasts indefinitely or until someone destroys the focus. For this reason, most foci involved in this particular curse are well-hidden, well-guarded, or both.

CURSE OF THE WATCHERS

"It started as one little bird. Now there's a flock of them. Draw the curtain! I know they're watching me.... What are they waiting for?"

If you see a rare and powerful magic item minding its own business in a dungeon, it's a good idea to leave it that way. Adventurers who disturb ancient artifacts risk incurring the ire of those who put them there. The Curse of the Watchers starts so subtly you'd barely notice it at first: a single raven perched in a surrounding tree, watching the one who possesses the stolen item. As time passes, more and more ravens arrive until they can no longer be ignored.

CASTING THE CURSE

The soul of a dead individual magically charges an item that was important to them in life, imbuing it with the curse. The item is typically a magic item, such as a weapon or wand. A creature becomes cursed with this effect as soon as they pick up the cursed object, and a single bird begins following them.

EFFECTS OF THE CURSE

Each time you attack with, cast a spell with, or use the cursed item, roll a d10 and add the resulting number of birds to the flock. If the result of the die is a 10, the flock also attacks. Use the swarm of cursed ravens stat block below, where the Flock Bonus (FB) is the number of ravens in your flock divided by 10, rounded up (e.g. 1 FB for 10 ravens, but 2 FB for 11 ravens). If you are still cursed after you have successfully fought off the flock, a new one begins to form upon your next use of the cursed item.



GM TIP: BUILDING SUSPENSE

This curse is all about presentation. Telling a player during a short rest, "You notice a crow watching you" might make them too suspicious too soon, especially if they've recently picked up a cursed item. Try incorporating the Watchers into your descriptions of scenes at first: a crow perching on a signpost at the fork in the road, or the branches of the forest teeming with black birds. As more and more birds arrive, it gets harder to ignore, and you can make a point to remark upon them.



SWARM OF CURSED RAVENS

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

ARMOR CLASS 12

BASE HIT POINTS 21 (6d8 - 6)

ADDITIONAL HIT POINTS 4 x FB

SPEED 10 ft., fly 50 ft.



STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

SKILLS Perception +5

DAMAGE RESISTANCES bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

CONDITION IMMUNITIES charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

SENSES passive Perception 15

LANGUAGES —

CHALLENGE 1/4 (50 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny raven. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Beaks. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* FB x 1d6 piercing damage, or half that if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

BREAKING THE CURSE

The easiest way to be rid of the curse is to get rid of the item in question. Passing it off to someone else passes on the curse, but returning it to its resting place suppresses the curse. However, once returned to its resting place, one can permanently rid the item of the curse with a simple ritual familiar to many scholars of necromancy:

Return to the final resting place of the cursed item's owner. Cast the *speak with dead* spell on the owner's corpse and negotiate with it by making a DC 20 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check. (You cannot intimidate the dead.) Per the rules of *speak with dead*, you may attempt this three times. On a success, the spirit agrees to pass on ownership of the item, and the curse is broken. On three consecutive failed saves, the vengeful spirit reanimates the body and attacks (use the ghoul stat block, or mummy or mummy lord at higher levels). Defeating this spirit breaks the curse permanently.

SLOW POLYMORPH

"Slime? That's new. Guess I can't go home anymore. I don't need mom seeing me like this."

The term “Slow Polymorph” was coined by the sorcerer who first suffered its effects. Magic taxonomists, however, argue the curse has very little in common with the transmutation spell it was named for. Slow Polymorph slowly transforms its victim into a terrifying bestial or fiendish monster over a period of time until they are completely unrecognizable.

CASTING THE CURSE

Slow Polymorph is the punishment of choice for powerful wizards or otherworldly beings who prefer an impending sense of dread over just turning somebody into a toad. It requires an hourglass and something from the target’s body: a lock of hair, a scrap of fingernail, or another such component. The ritual takes only 1 minute, wherein the caster binds the curse to the hourglass and then turns it over to reset the sand. As the sands slowly trickle down to the bottom, the cursed individual transforms.

EFFECTS OF THE CURSE

When you complete a long or short rest while cursed, you must make a DC 12 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, you take on a new feature from one of the features below. This decision can be up to the GM, you, or a discussion between both.

- **Four-armed.** You sprout an extra set of arms, with which you can hold one item, such as an arcane focus, light weapon, or shield. You can use a bonus action on your turn to make a melee attack with that light weapon, regardless of what action you take on that turn. The cost of armor for your new body is doubled.
- **Four-legged.** You sprout extra legs and become quadrupedal with a monster-shaped bottom and humanoid top. Your walking speed increases 10 feet, but the cost of clothing your new legs and feet is doubled.

VARIANT: SLOW BURN

This variant is for a more drawn-out curse experience. The accursed still makes a saving throw on the completion of a rest, but they only take a feature from the main list of options if they fail the saving throw by 5 or more. A creature who fails the saving throw by 4 or fewer experiences an appearance change that is largely cosmetic. Examples of cosmetic traits include:

- Change in eye color
- Forked tongue
- Hair, feather, or scale growth
- A new tail or a split existing tail
- Slimy skin
- Putrid smell
- Hoarse or deeper voice
- Sharpened teeth



- **Glowing Eyes.** Your eyes take on a brilliant magical glow. You gain darkvision out to a range of 60 feet, or double the range of your darkvision if you already have it. Your magical glowing eyes emit dim light within 5 feet, cutting through even magical darkness.
- **Horns.** You grow horns from your head, or your existing horns grow in size. When you move up to your speed on your turn, you can use your bonus action to make a melee attack with your horns. Strength is your ability for this unarmed strike, which deals 1d4 bludgeoning damage. Headgear made for humanoids no longer fits you, and you must spend an additional 20% on headgear for it to be tailored to your head.
- **Sharp Claws.** With the addition of claws, your unarmed strike now deals 1d4 slashing damage. However, whenever you make a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, or make an ability check using tools, roll 1d4 and subtract the number rolled from the check.
- **Acidic Sweat.** Your skin constantly oozes a mucus-y slime that lingers on surfaces you touch. The slime disintegrates organic material such as wood and plants if left in place for 1 hour, and deals 1d4 acid damage to creatures (except for you) who touch it. This includes creatures you hit with a melee weapon attack.
- **Tough Skin.** Your skin turns to bark or tough scales, giving you a +2 bonus to AC. Unfortunately, this new skin is difficult to move around in. Your Dexterity score is reduced by 2 while you are cursed.
- **Webbed Feet.** You gain a swimming speed equal to your walking speed. Footwear made for most humanoid feet no longer fits you, and you must spend an additional 20% on footwear for it to be tailored to your new feet.

Each time you gain a new feature, you must choose one you don't currently have. A single feature can be removed through the casting of the *remove curse* spell or similar magic, but you are still susceptible to future features until the curse itself is removed.

The more monstrous traits you select, the more likely people are inclined to believe you are a monster and be immediately afraid of or hostile toward you. A character with four arms, four legs, and glowing red eyes, for example, may be attacked on sight when they enter a town or city. The more monstrous you are, the more estranged from society you become.

Additionally, the more monster-like you become, the more monsters you attract. Whenever you roll initiative, there is a chance a nearby monstrosity senses your presence and considers it a threat. If you are the first or last person in the initiative order, a monster appears and joins the fray with the intent to attack you. Use the following chart to determine which monster arrives:

Challenge Rating	Potential Monsters
1/2–1	cockatrice, hippogriff, rust monster, worg
2–4	ankheg, basilisk, centaur, owlbear
5–6	bulette, chimera, medusa
7–10	guardian naga, hydra, spirit naga
11–15	behir, remorhaz, purple worm
16+	androsphinx
Extremely Cursed	tarrasque

BREAKING THE CURSE

The being who cast the curse can also lift it, but they typically refuse to do so unless the cursed one has made amends. The curse is bound to the hourglass that was used to cast it. Breaking the hourglass lifts the curse and deals 6d10 necrotic damage to the cursed one. Typically, the hourglasses are hidden or guarded with great care.

GOLDMONGER SUBCLASSES

THREE TREASURE-HOARDING SUBCLASSES

by Carlos Cisco

It gilds our most precious sites.

Dragons hoard it.

Adventurers risk life and limb to claim it.

Then there are those who take their appreciation for raw capital beyond the basic need to buy 50-foot rope coils and bags of ball bearings.

Gold.

While most adventurers unwittingly embrace rapacity every time they shake down the mayor for a few more coins for each gnoll ear, the Goldmongers' worship of the gold piece is absolute.

[Introduction in plain text](#)

What are Goldmongers? They are adventurers who, through divine guidance or primordial connection, find themselves at a nexus of power and material wealth. Tales of calculating merchant priests, divine mercenaries, and druids who draw their power from gems and gold traverse every corner of the realm. Greed does not generally make for good heroes...but it does make a good motivator. Whether they are defenders of the downtrodden or ambitious drifters, Goldmongers make close friends with avarice, whether to conquer or embrace it.

Those that walk these lucrative paths don't consider themselves baselessly greedy. They are cultured, ambitious, and dedicated to their ideals. Many monarchs rule by divine right, but Goldmongers know that the true divine power comes from deep vaults beneath the throne and, deeper still, from within the veins of the earth.

This article presents a new deity of deals, three new subclasses for Goldmonger characters, and an avaricious NPC to insert into your narrative.

AVARICE, AMBITION, AND ALTRUISM

Divine practitioners of magic rarely *choose* to serve avarice. Obviously, if you serve, say, a prominent five-headed dragon queen, the application is obvious. But for many worshippers, avarice often comes from misinterpretation of the texts or tennents. When prosperity preachers finally realize what they've wrought, they're far too comfortable with or have fully extolled greed as virtue.

Avarice commonly manifests in merchants or those that worship gods of trade, but it is hardly bound to com-

merce. Priests of the dead may insist on steep funeral costs, lest the fallen linger in this realm. A devout sailor may grip the oceans in terror, becoming a dread pirate lord upon discovering the riches gleaned off the backs of others—but their crew, their family, is the most well fed and paid on the high seas. A priest dedicated to a god of knowledge may hoard troves of texts until they pass, leaving a legendary library in their wake. There are even stories throughout the planes of a “Church of Greed”—a temple that worships no god in its pursuit of the divine, but rather the very concept of avarice itself.

Not every cleric of avarice is “evil,” or even “not very nice.” Voracity can lead to ambition, which, with the right tempering, can become a form of highly directed altruism. Imagine the gnome friar who bestows daily blessings of fortune to the local miners, who in turn bring a small tithe at the end of the profitable day. Or the dwarven forge cleric who offers to consult priests of plenty in fine gem work in a mutually profitable relationship. Even the odd dungeon-crashing adventurer can transform their passion for stray animal adoption into a fully funded shelter for wayward monsters.

There are many branching routes on the path of avarice, but those who walk it, whether by choice or circumstance, find that it is a difficult one to leave.

PTA’U, GOD OF DEALS

Neutral

Domains: Avarice, Knowledge, Order, Peace, War

Pta’u exists at the heart of all deals, trades, and negotiations. They are an arbiter and overseer of the Material Continuum that exists across and flows between the planes like a great river, from have to want and back again. While most see the great wheel keeping the universe together, worshipers of Pta’u believe that the Material Continuum is the true binding agent that keeps the planes in alignment. Devout believers say the greatest reward in the next life comes from navigating this one with entrepreneurial acumen and grace. Thus, commerce drives them as the believers find gaps and needs to fill. People are happy to see worshippers of Pta’u show up with exactly what they need, but often wonder how their pockets got so light by the time these divine merchants have moved on.

Depiction: Pta’u is often depicted as a hunched figure on a simple raft with an enormous pack strapped to their back. Jewels, coins, and finery spill from the near endless network of straps and pockets holding their bags together. Their traditional symbol is a simple copper coin, with a cut through the monarch’s visage, which is then covered in jewels.

Holy Day: Black Moon Day is a day of mourning for worshippers of Pta’u. It commemorates a day when all deals and contracts across the planes inexplicably failed. These seemingly disconnected events led to wars, famines, plagues, and death. To prevent this calamity from ever befalling the Material Continuum again, all worshippers of Pta’u must successfully complete a deal on Black Moon Day, no matter how small.

COMMANDMENTS OF PTA’U:

- Honor the contract. Complete the deal.
- Navigate the flow of the Material Continuum. Seek out want and turn it to have—then take it to the next want.
- Comport yourself with entrepreneurial acumen and grace in all things.

CLERIC: AVARICE DOMAIN

Coin Charlatans. Friars of Finance. Acolytes of Ambition. These pejoratives and others are flung at those clerics who discard religious platitudes and dogmatic structure for something more...distilled. Despite the slander and disdain, clerics of the Avarice Domain hold one truth above all else: the gods greedily withhold their power, only deeming those that would directly benefit them worthy of wielding it.

These clerics know they’re worthy. Ambition leads to profit. Profit leads to power. They aren’t evil misers, jealously guarding their jeweled temples—they know how to *use* that power. Goodly clerics who walk this path often find themselves at the epicenter of wealth, altruistically guiding it to where it will do the most good for everyone—including themselves. Avarice clerics are masters of battlefield control, bolstering the effectiveness of their collaborators.

EDITOR NOTE: AVARICE OF EDITIONS PAST

While researching this article, the author found that the third edition of the game had official rules for an Avarice domain. While many expected evil deities had this domain in their portfolios, several good and neutral deities also had Avarice as one of their domains. In other words, greed can be good!

—James

AVARICE DOMAIN FEATURES

Cleric Level	Feature
1st	Domain Spells, Prophet Motive
2nd	Channel Divinity: Object of Desire
6th	Divine Kleptocracy
8th	Potent Spellcasting
17th	Avatar of Excess

AVARICE DOMAIN SPELLS

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	<i>identify, shield of faith</i>
3rd	<i>enhance ability, magic weapon</i>
5th	<i>haste, protection from energy</i>
7th	<i>freedom of movement, stoneskin</i>
9th	<i>dispel evil and good, greater restoration</i>



PROPHET MOTIVE

Divine assistance is most efficient when it synergizes between the Avarice cleric and whomever they deem worthy or capable enough allies. After choosing this domain at 1st level, when you cast a domain spell on an object or another creature, you can replicate the effect on yourself or an object you are touching without the need for additional components. If the spell requires concentration and your concentration ends, the spell ends on both you and the other creature, or both objects.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

CHANNEL DIVINITY: OBJECT OF DESIRE

Starting at 2nd level, you can distract those who wish to do you harm by tapping into their material desires. When you are attacked by another creature within 30 feet of you who can see you, you can use your Channel Divinity as a reaction to project an illusion of whatever the creature desires most from your holy symbol. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or become stunned until the end of your next turn.

The player or GM can roll a d10 on the Object of Desire table to determine what the creature most desires, or the GM is free to invent a craving. Savvy clerics take note of what illusion appears, wielding the knowledge of a creature's desires against it should they cross paths again.

OBJECT OF DESIRE

d10	Desire
1	Their favorite childhood food or toy (Youth)
2	A beautiful lover (Lust or Love)
3	A legendary weapon (Power)
4	A colossal gemstone (Wealth)
5	Their lost child, sibling, or parent (Family)
6	The kingdom's crown (Status)
7	A specter of death (Death)
8	An ancient spellbook (Knowledge or Magic)
9	Someone who wronged them (Revenge)
10	An old friend (Companionship)

DIVINE KLEPTOCRACY

Starting at 6th level, you can take spells affecting others and twist them for your own use. When a creature you can see within 30 feet of you is targeted by a spell not cast by you that requires concentration, you can use your reaction to duplicate the spell's effect on yourself. If the spell ends for the other creature, the effect ends for you at the end of your next turn.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

POTENT SPELLCASTING

Starting at 8th level, you add your Wisdom modifier to the damage you deal with any cleric cantrip.

AVATAR OF EXCESS

At 17th level, your ability to benefit yourself while empowering others becomes second nature. When you use Prophet Motive to replicate a spell's effect, you can choose to have that spell not require concentration.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

DRUID: CIRCLE OF THE GILDED

When legends tell of archdruids protecting the land, they speak of antlers, gnarled oak staffs, and swarms of birds. This is, of course, by design. Circle of the Gilded druids protect places much more valuable, fraught, dangerous... and best kept secret.

Filled with precious gems and ores, these sites would be strip-mined by covetous tyrants to fuel their generations-long war efforts. By inlaying the metals and gems into their very bodies, druids of the Circle of the Gilded tap into the ancient, primordial powers contained within these minerals to defend this lifeblood of the earth. Their zeal is often mistaken for greed, but the druids valiantly guard a resource often considered more valuable than humanoid life.

CIRCLE OF THE GILDED FEATURES

Druid Level	Feature
2nd	Elemental Extremis, Gilded Transference
6th	Core Value
10th	Pineal Precious
14th	Prismatic Form

ELEMENTAL EXTREMIS

At 2nd level, you've learned to incorporate gems into your arm or hand, allowing you to unlock elemental powers to enhance your attacks. When you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can activate the gem, dealing an additional 1d6 damage of the type associated with the gem (see Elemental Gem table below). You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

In addition, you can expend a use of your Wild Shape feature as a bonus action to charge this gem. For the next 10 minutes, your attacks deal an additional 2d6 damage of the gem's associated type.

The damage die dealt by these features increases when you reach certain levels in this class. The die becomes a d8 at 6th level, a d10 at 10th level, and a d12 at 14th level.

You can only benefit from one gem being incorporated in your arm or hand at a time. When you gain a druid level, you can change out the gem to a new gem; however, in the process, the old gem is lost.



ELEMENTAL GEM

Gem	Damage Type
Amber	Lightning
Citrine	Acid
Diamond	Thunder
Emerald	Poison
Ruby	Fire
Sapphire	Cold

FINDING, EMBEDDING, AND REPLACING GEMS

The Circle of the Gilded's rules about finding and embedding gems into your body are intentionally worded so that a druid with this subclass doesn't need to spend time finding and incorporating the gems they want to use into their body. The rules take pressure off the GM to provide specific gems so that a player can use their character's features. A druid also doesn't need to buy these gems. This is similar to the way a wizard adds two spells to their spellbook whenever they gain a level for free, or how a ranger meets an animal companion after entering a specific subclass. Those two spells cost no time or money, and the ranger pays nothing and spends no time on the initial recruitment of their beast friend. The same goes for the druid.

You might decide your druid slowly incorporates their gems into their body overtime, performs a ritual while resting, or undergoes a surgical procedure. These gems might be family heirlooms you inherit, stones grown in a magic garden, or treasures you found during downtime between adventures. Work with your GM to determine the narrative.

Similarly, swapping out one gem for another doesn't require the GM to reward the druid with the new stone they want to use.

GILDED TRANSFERENCE

Also at 2nd level, when you cast a spell that deals acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, or thunder damage, you can use your reaction to change the damage type to a damage type associated with one of your incorporated gems.

Starting at 6th level, you learn to control and elementally transmute spells cast on you. If a spell targeting you deals acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, or thunder damage, you can use your reaction to change the damage type to a damage type associated with one of your incorporated gems.

You can use these reactions a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of once), and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

CORE VALUE

At 6th level, you can take a gem and at least 50 gp worth of gold or platinum and incorporate it into your torso. While wearing light or no armor, you gain a +1 bonus to AC. In addition, you gain resistance to the damage type associated with the gem in your core (as shown on the Elemental Gem table).

As a bonus action, you can expend a use of Wild Shape to charge this gem for 10 minutes. While the gem is charged, a creature that hits you with a melee attack takes 1d8 damage of the type associated with the gem. The damage increases to 1d10 at 10th level, and 1d12 at 14th level.

You can only benefit from one gem being incorporated in your torso at a time. Whenever you gain a druid level, you can change out the gem to a new gem; however, in the process, the old gem is lost.

PINEAL PRECIOUS

At 10th level, you have mastered the primal forces within gems—you can incorporate one into your head. As an action, you can make a ranged spell attack against a creature within 120 feet of you that you can see. On a hit, the attack deals damage equal to 4d8 plus your Wisdom modifier of the gem's associate type (as shown on the Elemental Gem table). You can make this attack a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

You can only benefit from one gem being incorporated in your head at a time. Whenever you gain a druid level, you can change out the gem to a new gem; however, in the process, the old gem is lost.

EYE GEMS

Most Circle of the Gilded druids incorporate their final gem as a “third eye,” but a more dedicated few will replace one of their existing eyes, an existing horn (for tieflings), or some other creative incorporation. Dragonborn may incorporate gems amidst their scales. However, gems must be fully incorporated—a unity between druid and gem.

PRISMATIC FORM

At 14th level, your connection with the primordial elemental forces behind gems and precious metals is absolute. As an action, you can draw on this connection, activating all your gems' powers in tandem. For the next 10 minutes, you gain a +2 bonus to AC, immunity to the damage types of all your incorporated gems (as shown on the Elemental Gem table), and you deal an additional 3d6 damage when you make a successful weapon attack. The additional damage's type is a damage type associated with one of your gems, chosen when you activate this feature. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

PALADIN: OATH OF ACQUISITIONS

Most paladins are chiefly concerned with doing good. A rare few pursue darker paths. But those who take the Oath of Acquisitions don't fall into either camp. They have the power to help people...but why would they, if they aren't going to be adequately compensated? They're called heroes, demanded to throw themselves in harm's way, but when it comes time for hazard pay? They're told their service should be payment enough. But in a dragon-eat-dragon world, these heroes for hire need every tool at their disposal, be it sword or spell, to ensure that invoice gets paid on time.

These notorious charmers wield a strong portfolio of enchantment magic to move the needle on and off the battlefield. Be it a heated negotiation over the price of a potion or a pitched battle with a soon-to-be-overly-friendly giant, it's hard to deny these silver-tongued devils when they turn on the charm.

Perhaps you entered into an infernal contract forcing you to collect on debtors. Or that merchant you guarded a few years back made a lot of good points about knowing your worth. Maybe you just took the guidance from your god of traders a *little* too far. However you came to take this oath, you always aim to come out on top—and woe to those who break a contract with you.

TENETS OF ACQUISITIONS

Those who take the Oath of Acquisitions are fearsome negotiators, mercenary in attitude, and stand only for themselves...and those filling their coffers... and those overseeing their debts.

The More Perilous the Path, the Greater the Payout. Always go the extra mile—so it's easier to squeeze a little extra out of your employer.

Circumstance Plus Instinct Equals Profit. Those who can smell war on the wind are the first to profit from it. Watch the trends, read the bones, and make sure you're the first one with the solution to the problem.

A Deal is a Deal is a Deal. Your word is your bond. If you make a deal, you stick to the letter of it. However, if the other party didn't read the contract thoroughly, it's not really your problem.

OATH OF ACQUISITIONS FEATURES

Paladin Level	Feature
3rd	Oath Spells, Channel Divinity
7th	Aura of Opportunity
15th	The Bigger the Smile, the Sharper the Sword
20th	Greed is Good

OATH SPELLS

You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed in the Oath of Acquisitions Spells table.

OATH OF ACQUISITIONS SPELLS TABLE

Paladin Level	Spells
3rd	<i>charm person, disguise self</i>
5th	<i>attract metal¹, suggestion</i>
9th	<i>hypnotic pattern, fear</i>
13th	<i>confusion, compulsion</i>
17th	<i>dominate person, geas</i>

CHANNEL DIVINITY

When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options.

Peace is Good Business. You can use your Channel Divinity as a bonus action to gain the upper hand in negotiations. For the next 10 minutes, you have advantage on all Charisma checks made to negotiate business with other creatures.

War is Good Business. When you cast an enchantment spell on a creature that requires a saving throw, you can use your Channel Divinity to make the target more susceptible to your magic by imposing disadvantage on its saving throw. Additionally, if the spell has a duration of 1 hour or less, its duration is doubled.

¹ Attract metal can be found in "Ten Spells You Need in 5e" by Celeste Conowitch in [ARCADIA 3](#). You can swap this spell for zone of truth if you don't have ARCADIA 3.

AURA OF OPPORTUNITY

Starting at 7th level, you emanate an aura that commands attention while you're not incapacitated. Creatures of your choice within 10 feet of you make attacks against creatures other than you with disadvantage.

When you reach 18th level in this class, the range of this aura increases to 30 feet.

THE BIGGER THE SMILE, THE SHARPER THE SWORD

Starting at 15th level, you can make new "friends" feel the sting of betrayal. Once per turn, when you hit a creature charmed by you or an ally within 30 feet of you with an attack, the creature has vulnerability to that attack's damage.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

GREED IS GOOD

At 20th level, you can manifest as an avatar of opulence and excess. Your skin and clothing take on a gold or platinum sheen, and coins spill from you as you walk, disappearing after they hit the ground.

During the transformation, you gain the following features for 1 hour:

- You have advantage on all Charisma checks and saving throws.
- Creatures that hit you with a weapon attack must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or become charmed by you until the end of your next turn.
- You can use the Bigger the Smile, the Sharper the Sword feature any number of times on a turn without expending uses.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.



GOLDMONGER RETAINERS

Retainers first appeared in *Strongholds & Followers* as unique NPC followers who pledge their service to player characters. These less-experienced adventurers are easy-to-run secondary characters controlled by players. Below are three retainer stat blocks for Goldmonger NPCs.

The full rules for retainers are explained on pages 69–73 of *Strongholds & Followers*.

ACOLYTE OF AMBITION

ARMOR Medium (AC 15)

PRIMARY ABILITY: Wisdom

SAVES: Wisdom

SKILLS: Insight, Religion

SIGNATURE ATTACK: *Ranged Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

3rd-Level (3/Day) Prophet Motive: The acolyte casts *shield of faith* on another creature. The effect is replicated on the acolyte for the duration.

5th-Level (2/Day, Reaction) Stunning Acquisition: When another creature targets the acolyte with an attack, the acolyte can cause the attacker to make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target is stunned until the end of the acolyte's next turn.

7th-Level (1/Day) Rapid Synergy: The acolyte casts *haste* on another creature. The effect is replicated on the acolyte for the duration.

CITRINE PROTECTOR²

ARMOR Medium (AC 15)

PRIMARY ABILITY: Wisdom

SAVES: Intelligence, Wisdom

SKILLS: History, Nature

SIGNATURE ATTACK: *Melee Weapon Attack*: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

3rd-Level (3/Day, Bonus Action) Citrine Strike: The protector bathes their weapon in elemental energy. The next time they hit with their signature attack, they deal an additional 1d8 acid damage.

5th-Level (1/Day) Acid Rain: The protector casts *call lightning*, dealing acid damage instead of lightning damage.

7th-Level (3/Day, Bonus Action) Citrine Core: The protector gains a +1 bonus to AC and resistance to acid damage for 1 minute. In addition, when this feature is active and a creature within 30 feet of the protector hits the protector with a weapon attack, the protector can use their reaction to deal 2d8 acid damage to the attacker.

² This retainer could easily be modified to another element by using any of the corresponding gems in the Elemental Gem table.

FREE LANCER

ARMOR Heavy (AC 17)

PRIMARY ABILITY: Strength, Charisma

SAVES: Strength, Wisdom, Charisma

SKILLS: Insight, Religion

SIGNATURE ATTACK: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) piercing damage.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

3rd-Level (3/Day, Reaction) Smiling Blade: When the lancer hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, the lancer can cause the target to make a Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is charmed by the lancer until the end of the lancer's next turn.

5th-Level (2/Day) Sting of Betrayal: When the lancer deals damage to a creature currently charmed by them or an ally within 30 feet of the lancer, they deal an additional 2d8 psychic damage.

7th-Level (1/Day, Bonus Action) Aura of Opportunity: When lancer activates this aura, it lasts for 1 minute. When an enemy within 10 feet of the lancer targets a creature that is not the lancer with an attack, the enemy makes the attack roll with disadvantage. In addition, when an enemy within 10 feet of the lancer hits the lancer with an attack, the lancer can use their reaction to force the creature to make a Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is charmed by the lancer until the end of the lancer's next turn.

NPC: GARIN NAJIS

To say that Garin Najis was born with a silver spoon in his mouth would be an understatement—start with platinum, and then change spoons for every bite. After a life of opulence, he should want for nothing, yet all he does is want. His path of avarice started early and only deepened.

Born to wealthy nobles who owned several emerald mines, there was never a moment in his upbringing where he felt lack or need. He bragged about how he walked around with uncut gems in his pockets in his days at the academy. When he came of age and his parents decided to teach him how to manage the mines, he was initially horrified. They exploited their miners for little pay and forced them to work in dangerous conditions under strict contracts that prevented departure. Everything suddenly clicked into place for Garin. As it dawned on him that this exploitation was the reason for his wealth...he embraced it.

But unlike his parents, whose zeal for hard capital was secular, Garin looked at his inheritance and saw it as his divine duty to Pta'u to expand, grow, and consume. He would never be satisfied. He convinced his workers that their labor in his service was a path to the divine. Their hard work, sweat, and tears would lead to countless rewards in the next life... and countless rewards in this life for Garin.

A prosperity preacher of the highest order, Garin keeps a close counsel of powerful, mercenary-minded adventurers and commands a loyal following of brainwashed cult-like laborers who literally die to hand him a freshly mined gem. Garin can be found most often managing his various enterprises, but as of late he has felt the itch of adventure and has taken to traveling in search of more resources (both material and humanoid) to exploit.

Garin never faces down an enemy without a well-prepared battlefield or plenty of minions. His primary strategy is to keep as much cannon fodder between him and his foes while simultaneously bolstering his legions and himself. He makes good use of his Prophet Motive feature to keep buffs on his allies and himself while using spells like *guardian of faith* and *spirit guardians* to control the battlefield to his liking. He is a coward at heart and will leave his minions to die if he sees the tides turning against him.

GARIN NAJIS

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

ARMOR CLASS 17 (+1 breastplate)

HIT POINTS 120 (16d8 + 48)

SPEED 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)

SAVING THROWS Wis +8, Cha +5

SKILLS History +3, Intimidation +5, Insight +8, Religion +3

SENSES passive Perception 15

LANGUAGES Celestial, Common, Dwarvish, Goblin

CHALLENGE 7 (2,900 XP)

Prophet Motive (5/Day). When Garin casts certain spells on another creature, he can replicate the effect on himself. If the spell ends, the effect ends on him as well.

Spellcasting. Garin is a 13th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, spare the dying, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *bane, divine favor, identify,*, shield of faith**

2nd level (3 slots): *enhance ability,*, magic weapon,*, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *haste,*, protection from energy,*, spirit guardians*

4th level (2 slots): *freedom of movement,*, guardian of faith, stoneskin**

5th level (2 slots): *dispel evil and good,*, geas, greater restoration**

6th level (1 slot): *harm*

7th level (1 slot): *planeshift*

*Prophet Motive spell

ACTIONS

+1 Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. **Hit:** 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Object of Desire (2/Day). When another creature within 30 feet of Garin targets him with an attack, he can hold up his holy symbol and manifest the object the attacker desires most. The attacker must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target is stunned for 1 minute. A stunned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Divine Kleptocracy (1/Day). When a creature Garin can see within 30 feet of him is targeted by a spell that requires concentration, Garin can duplicate the spell's effect on himself. If the spell ends for the other creature, the effect ends for him at the end of his next turn.

ALABASTER'S ALMANAC

by Sam Mannell

Esteemed and dedicated fellows of the Art,

I hope this installment of the Almanac finds you well. For those joining us for the first time, congratulations! You have been selected as an arcane practitioner who not only shows a talent for the craft, but also displays restraint, humility, and, most importantly, kindness—traits I typically find in short supply among arcanists.

As usual, the experienced mage may wish to jump ahead to the catalogue in order to skip my waffling. For those who are new, I will be brief.

While not an apprenticeship, this Almanac does come with the simple condition that you do not do anything overly stupid with your abilities, and ignoring this rule will see you regrettably struck from my mailing list, and placed in my other list, where the company is far less pleasant. I leave it for you to worry about the specifics involved here.

This season I find myself adrift in the Astral Plane. It is a strange and somber place, where one has ample time for self-reflection. Thus there is no theme to the spells I have chosen to share with you today—they are simply ones that have taken my fancy as I pass the time on my quiet sojourn. I hope they ignite your imagination, as they do mine.

Until next time.

[Letter in Plain Text](#)

Faithfully,
Alabaster

SPELL CATALOGUE

BARD SPELLS

1st Level

Wielding (transmutation)

2nd level

Compelling Propulsion (transmutation)

6th level

Gaze of Venom (evocation)

DRUID SPELLS

6th Level

Alabaster's Adaptation for the World Below
(transmutation)

Gaze of Venom (evocation)

SORCERER SPELLS

1st Level

Alabaster's Adjacent Acquisition (conjuration)
Wielding (transmutation)

2nd Level

Compelling Propulsion (transmutation)
Shadowslip (transmutation)

3rd Level

Scryspike (abjuration)

6th Level

Gaze of Venom (evocation)

WARLOCK SPELLS

1st Level

Wielding (transmutation)

2nd Level

Compelling Propulsion (transmutation)
Shadowslip (transmutation)

3rd Level

Animate Echoes (divination)
Scryspike (abjuration)

6th Level

Gaze of Venom (evocation)

WIZARD SPELLS

1st Level

Alabaster's Adjacent Acquisition (conjuration)
Wielding (transmutation)

2nd Level

Compelling Propulsion (transmutation)
Shadowslip (transmutation)

3rd Level

Animate Echoes (divination)
Scryspike (abjuration)

6th Level

Alabaster's Adaptation for the World Below
(transmutation)
Gaze of Venom (evocation)

9th Level

Realize Image (conjuration)

ALABASTER'S ADAPTATION FOR THE WORLD BELOW

I have made numerous adaptation spells, each for a different locale, but this one is the newest and so—I hope—the most reliable! Heading to the World Below to find a purple worm nest or trade with deep gnomes? Be sure to prepare accordingly!

ALABASTER'S ADAPTATION (WORLD BELOW)

6th-level transmutation (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (rare mushrooms and algae worth a total of 500 gp, which the spell consumes)

Duration: 8 hours

Classes: Druid, wizard

You adapt the physiology of a willing creature you touch to the dangers of the World Below, altering the creature so they can traverse the plane more safely. The spell reprograms nerves, grows a lining of lead in the skull, changes body chemistry, and more. It can also create up to three cosmetic changes determined by the caster, such as pointed ears, plaid skin, or sharp teeth. For the duration, the creature gains the following benefits:

- The creature gains darkvision out to a range of 120 feet and tremorsense to a range of 60 feet.
- The creature has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) and Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

- The creature gains immunity to poison damage and the poisoned condition, and resistance to psychic damage.
- The creature gains a climbing speed equal to its walking speed and can move up, down, and across vertical surfaces and upside down along ceilings, while leaving its hands free.
- The creature can sweat acid. As an action, the creature can expend a Hit Die by rolling it, (and doesn't add its Constitution modifier). The creature takes acid damage equal to the result, and any other creatures or nonmagical objects touching it take twice that amount of acid damage. The acid evaporates after this damage is dealt. This acid instantly destroys any web it touches, such as those created by the *web* spell. In addition, the acid corrodes any nonmagical armor worn by the creature, which takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10. However, the creature can produce this acid selectively on its body, i.e., only around its wrists and ankles. Another creature or object only takes acid damage if they are in contact with where the creature produces the acid.

ALABASTER'S ADJACENT ACQUISITION

One of my first spells, and I believe still one of my best. Originally devised as a method to retrieve tea from my study without getting up, I've found that *adjacent acquisition* is more useful than it has any right to be. Things I have used this spell to retrieve include an enchanted tiara, a kobold egg, a half-digested book, and a stray fingerbone.

ALABASTER'S ADJACENT ACQUISITION¹

1st-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

Classes: Sorcerer, wizard

One Tiny object within range teleports directly into your hand, even if that object is carried or worn by another creature. If you can't see the object, there is a 50% chance that you conjure a different object within range

by mistake, chosen by the GM. The spell is not without a sense of irony.

If you attempt to conjure an object that is physically connected to another object—such as a cog within a complex machine or the deadlock off a door—there is only a 5% chance that the spell is able to break the object free of its surroundings and successfully conjure it.

¹If you're using the Avarice domain or Oath of Acquisitions from "Goldmonger Subclasses" in this issue, this spell makes a great addition to their spell lists as well.

ANIMATE ECHOES

Time is a funny thing. Actions carried out in the mundane world have a tendency to echo in strange ways—do something interesting enough and it stamps a sort of signature on reality. Traces of it remain. Indelible, but invisible.

Animate echoes can reveal these traces, allowing us to gaze directly upon an after-image of past events, as though they were still happening around us.

ANIMATE ECHOES

3rd-level divination (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a pocket watch worth at least 100 gp, which the spell consumes)

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Classes: Warlock, wizard

You reach through time and reveal the echoes of the past, which appear as hazy figures flickering in a radius around you. These figures reflect the passage and actions of other creatures who have been in the area before you. When you cast the spell, you choose how big the affected area is, up to a radius of 60 feet, and this area moves with you.

While concentrating on the spell, you can view any events that occurred within the past 24 hours. You can fast-forward, freeze, reverse, or slow down the echoes as you please. Other creatures can see the echoes exactly as you can while this spell is active.

These echoes are blurry and indistinct—they may indicate the general shape and size of different creatures, but do not reveal specific details, such as faces or clothes. Echoes are silent, incorporeal, and have no smell or taste.

COMPELLING PROPULSION

I think many wizards could stand to spend a little more time around people. That said, personal space is important, and the wizarding life certainly includes moments in which you'd rather have a little bit more of it.

This spell is a (relatively) safe way to ensure that others give you a wider berth than they were perhaps planning to. Once mastered, the effects can be quite spectacular.

COMPELLING PROPULSION

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when a creature enters a space within 5 feet of you

Range: 5 feet

Components: S

Duration: Instantaneous

Classes: Bard, sorcerer, warlock, wizard

When another creature enters a space with 5 feet of you, you can unleash a blast of arcane force. The triggering creature must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the target is pushed 20 feet away from you and falls prone. On a success, the creature is pushed half as far, and doesn't fall prone.

Fragile, nonmagical objects in the target's path—such as a window or wooden chair—are destroyed. If the target hits an object that is magical or not fragile—such as an *immovable rod* or a stone wall—the creature stops moving and takes 1d10 bludgeoning damage per 10 feet of movement left over, as the spell's magic repeatedly hammers the target against the object. If the creature hits another creature, both creatures take this damage and fall prone.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the distance a creature is pushed increases by 10 feet for each slot level above 2nd.

GAZE OF VENOM

I learned this one from an Ixian sorcerer. He didn't speak Common but got his point across just fine.

GAZE OF VENOM

6th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Classes: Bard, druid, sorcerer, warlock, wizard

For the duration, your eyes become pools of harsh yellow light. When a creature that can see your eyes starts its turn within 60 feet of you, you can force it to make a Constitution saving throw as long as you can see the creature and aren't incapacitated. On a failure, the target takes 4d8 poison damage and 4d8 psychic damage, and is poisoned until the start of its next turn. While poi-

soned in this way, the creature is slowed and can't move more than 10 feet on a turn.

A creature that isn't surprised can avert its gaze to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see you until the start of its next turn, when it can choose to avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at you in the meantime, you can force it to immediately make the save.

If you see your eyes in a reflective surface (such as a mirror, polished breastplate, or the surface of a lake) within 60 feet of you, you are affected by your own gaze and must succeed on the saving throw or suffer the effects of the spell.

REALIZE IMAGE

All magic is dangerous and should be treated as such, but some spells affect your life more than others if you let them.

This is one such spell.

I stumbled across it many years ago, etched into a shimmering pane of glass, locked deep in the catacombs beneath a castle that had been razed to the ground. I never did discover what had happened to the place, but I think I can make an educated guess in hindsight.

This spell makes illusions real. Not forever, mind you, but I can think of few things more dangerous than the imagination of an intrepid wizard imposing itself on reality, even if only temporarily.

REALIZE IMAGE

9th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S, M (a diamond looking glass worth at least 750 gp, which is consumed by the spell)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

Classes: Wizard

One image you can see within range created by an illusion spell and that you know is illusory becomes real for the duration. The illusion must fit within 1 cubic mile of space. If the illusion spell that created the image ends

before *realize image* does, the image persists for the duration of *realize image*.

Magical items made real by the spell don't have their magical properties, as the creation of magical items is a delicate (and often obscure) craft.

If the illusion is a creature, it uses the statistics of an appropriate creature created or chosen by the GM. Creatures created by *realize image* act surprised by their own existence, have no allegiances, and are controlled by the GM. Sentient creatures created by this spell have personalities and memories, but the GM decides what they are.

SCRYSPIKE

There is nothing quite like the neck-prickling sensation of a scrying sensor watching over you. While magic exists to detect scrying—and even to prevent it in the first place—the scryed-upon ultimately has few options. Detecting a scrying sensor has little value; you do not learn who is watching you or why, only that you are not alone.

Hence I found this spell of particular interest. While fairly vindictive, it provides a nimble mage with the option to strike down a scrying sensor if they can see it. Breaking the connection is extremely disorientating for your unwelcome observer, and makes for rather effective deterrence. Furthermore, even though this spell was first designed to sever magical connections, it severs a creature's synapses pretty well too, making it a dangerous ace to keep up your sleeve.



SCRYSPIKE

3rd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: S

Duration: Instantaneous

Classes: Sorcerer, warlock, wizard

You create a shimmering dagger of force in your hand, which possesses the ability to attack magical sensors, such as those created by the *scrying* and *clairvoyance* spells.

When you cast the spell, you make one melee or ranged spell attack with the dagger, after which the dagger disappears. On a hit, the target takes 5d10 psychic damage.

You can also make this attack against a magical sensor you can see within range, which has AC 10. On a hit, the sensor is destroyed and the spell creating it immediately ends. The creature that created the destroyed sensor automatically takes maximum damage from *scrysphere*.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d10 for each slot level above 3rd.

SHADOWSLIP

A most useful spell for espionage, allowing the caster to become their own shadow and slide under doors or along walls. I prefer to turn into a fly myself, but not everyone has access to on-demand *shapechange*. Perks of being an archmage.

SHADOWSLIP

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (any cloak or cape)

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Classes: Sorcerer, warlock, wizard

You and your equipment vanish and melt into darkness, but your shadow remains on the ground with your consciousness in it. While shadowslipping, you gain a +10 bonus to Dexterity (Stealth) checks, you have advantage on Dexterity saving throws, your AC becomes 20, you have 1 hit point, and you gain a climbing speed equal to your walking speed. You must be touching a surface at all times.

While shadowslipping, you can't speak aloud or manipulate objects, and any objects you were carrying or holding can't be dropped, used, or otherwise interacted with.

You can't attack or cast spells. You can pass through small holes, narrow openings, and even mere cracks, and you treat liquids as if they were solid surfaces.

You can end the spell and revert to your normal form as an action, appearing where your shadow was. If there's not enough room for your normal form to appear, you take 1d10 force damage, and are shunted to the nearest available space.

If you drop to 0 hit points while shadowslipping you instantly revert back to your normal form, ignoring any excess damage, and appearing where your shadow was destroyed. If your shadow is destroyed while shadowslipping, you don't regain your shadow until the next dawn, and you have disadvantage on death saving throws until your shadow returns.

When you revert back to your normal form, you return to the number of hit points you had before you transformed.

WIELDING

I personally have no great love for swords, but in my career I've found it impossible to get away from them. Magical, mundane, lost, shattered, or sacred; they always seem to be in my way. Eventually—wizard or not—you need to pick one of the damn things up.

This spell provides an elegant workaround for the wielding of hand-held weapons, and can even emulate a reasonable level of skill with them. It also comes with a few nice loopholes for disarming enemies and managing cursed items.

WIELDING

1st-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 5 feet

Components: V, S, M (several small loops of brass wire, wound tightly around the fingers)

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Classes: Bard, sorcerer, warlock, wizard

You point at a weapon sized for a Medium or smaller creature that you can see within 5 feet of you, and it springs into the air to float at your fingertips. If the weapon requires two hands to wield, you must have both hands free to cast this spell. While wielding a weapon in this way, you can use it as though you had proficiency with it, and you can use your spellcasting ability, instead of Strength or Dexterity, for the weapon's attack and damage rolls.

Only one weapon can be wielded by the spell at a time, and you need at least one free hand in order to maintain the spell, or two free hands for a two-handed weapon.

If you point at a weapon held by another creature when you cast this spell, that creature must make a Dexterity

saving throw; a creature can choose to fail this saving throw if it wishes. On a success, the creature keeps its hold on the weapon and the spell ends.

If a creature wishes to grab a weapon from the spell's grasp, it must be within 5 feet of you and have a free hand. A creature can use its action to make a Strength (Athletics) check opposed by an ability check using your spellcasting ability modifier and proficiency bonus. If the creature wins the contest, it snatches the weapon from your fingertips.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher on a magic weapon that requires attunement, you are also considered attuned to the weapon and benefit from any features it has, so long as you have available attunement slots and meet all prerequisites for attunement. When the spell ends, your attunement to the weapon also ends, even if the item holds a curse that would normally prevent this.

Additionally, when you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, you can target weapons sized for Large creatures. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th level or higher, you can target weapons sized for Huge creatures.





LEON BARILLARO is a game and narrative designer working in tabletop, video games, and immersive theater. Their work can also be found in places like the DMs Guild (*The Uncaged Anthology*, *Bard-Core Brawlers*, *Hair of the Dog*), EN Publishing (Level Up: Advanced 5th Edition), and Fantastic Lairs (Campaign Seed: Prerequisite Forces). You can find Leon on twitter ([@barilleon](https://twitter.com/@barilleon)) or at his website: barilleon.com.



CARLOS CISCO is a television writer that has recently dipped his toe into narrative design. He's written for *East Los High* and *Star Trek: Discovery*. He's been featured in collections on the DMs Guild like the *Eat the Rich* and the *Princess Project* Anthologies, among a few others. He's also written material for the #iHunt 80's zine and has more than a couple TTRPG adaptation projects in development for TV/Film. Keep an eye on him via Twitter ([@carlos_cisco](https://twitter.com/@carlos_cisco)) for the latest.



SAM MANNELL is a writer and designer based in Tāmaki Makaurau, Aotearoa, a distant place known to some as Auckland, New Zealand. When not running or playing games, Sam is writing, making coffee, drinking club mate, or eating Thai food. He aspires to publish books, and if many of them happen to be roleplaying games, so be it.

You can find more of Sam's work in MCDM's *Kingdoms & Warfare*, and you can be made aware of his location and movements by keeping an eye on crypticparlour.com or following him on Twitter [@crypticparlour](https://twitter.com/@crypticparlour).

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