ENCYCLOPAEDIA ARCANE

ABJURATION

SHIELDED BY SORCERY

August Hahn

Encyclopaedia Arcane Abjuration

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Mongoose Publishing

Introduction

Some attack. Some defend. Some are born for combat. Others become protectors. The art of war is as much about the shield as it is the sword. Magic is no different. For every *fireball*, there is *globe of invulnerability*. The practice of defensive magic in all its forms is categorised as abjuration, the school of protection. If a spell bolsters the body, shields the mind or defends the soul, it is most likely an abjuration spell. While this school is rarely thought of as the most powerful of magic, few mages would give up the protection offered by its many useful spells.

That said, it is also true that few mages would choose abjuration as a speciality. As one of the smallest school in terms of spells and effects, there are not many that consider the loss of other schools outweighs the dubious benefit of additional defences. For those few who walk the path of an abjurer, what is gained is well worth the cost.

Exploring the boundaries of what protection magic can provide grants an abjurer a longer, safer life than many of his brethren. As any abjurer can say with surety; there is no spell that cannot kill, no sword that will not strike true and no claw that will not tear flesh. When these things happen, only a well cast defence will ward off harm. Abjuration magic can form protective fields and negate hostile magic. It dismisses enemies and removes curses. Abjuration is the antithesis to every other school of magic. To study abjuration is to focus on what makes magic work and what can be done to counter it.

Not surprisingly, abjuration is a fairly simple art. Some of its more powerful spells have such an overriding effect that little variation is needed in many cases. The school boasts the ability to negate, return or simply block most other magic with only a handful of different spells. Armed with only a couple of abjurations, a mage can be well defended from hostile magic of any kind. Another abjuration spell or two renders him resistant to physical damage as well. The right spells at the right time can make a spellcaster quite impervious to the threat of violence, regardless of its form.

These defences are not just valuable to the abjurer himself. Those who travel with an abjuration specialist can usually count on also reaping the benefits of magical defence. Several of the spells an abjurer can cast will protect an area from harm or grant their effects to those the caster touches. If an abjurer negates an incoming spell before it can take effect, he has defended his entire party from the damage they would have taken. In this way, an abjurer can quickly become the most valuable member of any adventuring team.

Encyclopaedia Arcane

This is the 19th book in the Encyclopaedia Arcane series from Mongoose Publishing. Designed to be seamlessly slotted into any fantasy-based d20 game, these sourcebooks enhance and expand all arcane spellcasting classes, adding a whole new dimension to campaigns. Each book of the Encyclopaedia Arcane is not just intended for Games Masters to use in conjunction with their Non-Player Characters, however. Players themselves will find full details on how to use the magic systems with new or existing characters, greatly increasing the wealth of options they are presented with by the core rulebooks.

Abjuration – Shielded by Sorcery

As noted above, the primary flaw of the abjuration school is a lack of choices. There are not many spells to choose from for an abjurer and aside from direct protection, the school has very little flexibility. In this book, you will find special feats, character options, spells and suggestions for expanding an abjurer's repertoire. Devotees of abjuration need not be limited any longer.

So find a comfortable, well-defended place to curl up and peruse what lies within. Abjuration may be the shield of the magical world, but that does not mean the art cannot be used offensively. After all, shields can also bash…

Arrien watched another spell fizzle harmlessly out as it contacted his globe of protection. The spherical wall shimmered like a pearl around the group as they crouched behind a wall of stone and returned fire. Arrows cut through the air and struck home, felling dark-cowled mages as they tried and failed to bring down his defences. One wizard, smarter than the rest, threw a bolt of lightning into the masonry above him. The electricity split the stones easily and rained tons of rock down on them.

Fortunately, he was prepared for this. With a whisper of magic, a second sphere sprang into existence. This one scooped up the party and pulled them all together inside it. The broken stone shattered harmlessly all around them, piling up outside the sphere. When the dust settled, his charges were all intact. They were not happy, but they were not crushed either.

The most volatile among them, the elven archer named Kilierah fired off a shot in frustration. Arrien crouched low, ducking as the shaft ricocheted off the inside of the magical globe of force. Eventually, it slammed into Orggin Rockthane's wooden shield with a loud thud. The dwarf stared down at it and then up at him.

'Oh, this is wonderful. What the hell were you thinking? Now we are stuck in this stupid bubble. How are we supposed to take out these Cultists of Kreng now, Shieldbearer?'

Arrien sighed. He did not actually mind being addressed by his title, but he had a name too. 'It is Arrien, Lord Rockthane, and I would like it if you would remember that. Now, about this sphere.'

Before he could continue, Kilierah knocked another arrow and said tersely, 'Does it have an opening? One I can fire through?'

Arrien shook his head, a gesture that met with severe disfavour from the four people around him. Orggin rolled his eyes and muttered a curse, while the leader of this 'noble band' stood up and tried to adjust his armour while looking around. 'Then we are indeed trapped here, Shieldbearer?' His voice was mostly calm, but Arrien could see irritation building in Sir Yarrin's eyes. For a paladin, he had a very poor demeanour most of the time and an even shorter temper.

'No, sir. This sphere is completely under my control. I can simply dismiss it whenever I wish. I thought to give the avalanche time to settle before doing so, in case there was enough rock above to bury us completely. As there does not seem to be, I was about to do so.'

The exasperated looks around him convinced him to proceed with the dismissal. He looked around at the sides of the sphere and reconsidered. 'On second thought, might I suggest that you all come towards...'

A snarl from Gront, the half-orc healer of the group, brought him up short. With a black-mailed fist, the brutal priest slammed the sphere's inner wall and growled, 'No more talk. Drop the spell and let's get back to work. There are wizards out there who need to bleed!'

Arrien looked at the rocks outside, looked at the positions of his irate companions, and sighed again. 'If you are quite sure,' he said quietly. A glowering stare from Sir Yarrin was all the answer he required. With a quick gesture, he ended the spell and the magical sphere shattered into harmless motes of light.

When it did, the piles of shattered rock came crashing inward. Near the centre of the sphere's effect, he was untouched as the stone poured inward, but around him, the others were quickly buried. A yelp of pain rang out from the elf as she was pinned down by broken masonry and shoring timbers. The dwarf was nowhere to be seen. A plume of white feathers was all that remained of the paladin's visible armour. One angry ebon fist emerged from the stones.

They would dig themselves out, given time. He was certain of that. The gods did not favour him enough for them to be dead...

Abjuration – An Overview

As with anything that seems purely defensive, the school of abjuration is often thought to be weak. This could not be farther from the truth. Magic is a powerful force, capable of slaying a healthy warrior with a single word or laying waste to an entire city. Mundane defences are incapable of repelling just force. Only the spells of abjuration offer resistance to this might, which makes abjuration the equal and opposite of offensive magic. Power and effect are not always equally evident.

Mages with a speciality in abjuration are generally careful people with a mind for defensive tactics and a strong sense of responsibility. The role of guardian often engenders in them a sense of justice and caution. This sometimes develops to the point of abjurers being overbearing in defence of those they consider 'under their protection'. Their magic allows them to protect themselves and others from any hardship that might befall them, even extending that safety into areas most folk would never consider an avenue of attack. Abjurers can guard the mind and the soul, as well as the body. Because of this, they are often relegated to a support role in any dangerous situation.

This position, while an appropriate use of the abjurer's talents, is often underestimating the mage's value. An abjurer can fill many roles in an adventuring group, from disarming magical traps to serving as a rallying point of safety when hostilities mount. The area around an abjurer is often much safer during times of conflict than anywhere else, leading intelligent tacticians to use formations that keep him central to any action. This value does make an abjurer a tempting target for enemies, but his spells usually prevent easy capture or neutralisation.

Examining the spells at an abjurer's disposal quickly explains the true worth of such a specialist. From simple protective magic to swift and powerful negation of enemy spellcasters, an abjurer can be very effective in a variety of situations. Unfortunately, abjurers have a wholly undeserved reputation for being weak. It is an erroneous concept that a strong

defence can only come at the expense of offensive power. Little could be farther from the truth. Indeed, many abjurers do not cease their studies in the evocative arts at all, choosing instead to give up a more subtle field like conjuration or enchantment. It is an unwise opponent that considers an abjurer an easy target.

An important consideration when studying abjuration as a school of magic is to identify what it is capable of and how it operates. This is perhaps most easily

Thanks for the drink. Have a sit and I'll tell you what you want to know. Yeah, I'm a wizard, or at least I was. I suppose you'd have to actually cast magic from time to time to really be called one, now wouldn't you? I have been in this stinking pit of a tavern for weeks now without work, so I guess you could say I have the potential to be a wizard again, assuming someone paid me enough to buy components.

What? It ain't like that. I am plenty competent, but I just don't have what the usual groups coming in here want. They all look for the war mages, the combat-trained spell-throwers. It's like, 'If you can't hurl a lightning bolt, we don't need you.' Well, I do not have that kind of magic, so I lose out on the good jobs. Teeth and toenails, I lose out on all the jobs…

Take my advice, kid. You want glory? You want action? You want a steady income? Go back to your college and ask for some spells that go boom. Whatever you do, don't be like me. Don't be an abjurer.

done by comparing it to other schools and defining clearly what the school does *not* do. Many of the schools of magic have effects that seem to reflect abjuration, requiring close examination to find the subtle differences between their spells.

Calling a Shield a Shield

We will begin by noting the primary focus of nearly all abjuration spells; abjuration protects. The school does this through a number of effects, some physical and some purely conceptual. The physical traits

are easier to examine, so we will start with those. Abjuration can touch on several of the powers of other schools to accomplish its goal of defending its target. An abjuration spell can call forth magical force, even though most force-related magic belongs to the school of evocation.

Likewise, an abjurer delves into the transformative school of magic when working spells that make a target resistant to physical damage. Where the division lies in these examples is the end goal of the spell. While transformative spells might create stone-hard skin, only abjuration spells actually do so as their sole purpose. While evocation might invoke walls of pure force, only abjuration spells create force constructs to serve specifically as defences.

Even when abjuration intrudes directly on the provinces of other schools, it does so in its own fashion. Abjuration spells banish summoned creatures, a power that could arguably be considered conjuration in nature. The magic is abjuration, however, because it acts in protection of those the summoned creature might prove a threat to. Some abjuration spells are therefore proactive in providing

for its caster's safety, lending credence to the concept a strong offence being a defence all its own.

In its way, abjuration is a simple art to define and a difficult one to differentiate. It essentially uses the magic of the other schools to create its own form of effect. This 'borrowing' of power is not found in other schools, being wholly unique to abjuration. The school is not weaker for this synergy, especially as it does have one form of effect all its own; anti-magic.

The Death of Magic

Every form of magic that negates or suppresses magic belongs to the school of abjuration. Be it a field, a ray, a zone of effect or even a dispelling touch, if a spell can cancel another spell, it can be safely assumed as abjuration. This power grants the school a great deal of worth, allowing it to act as a control for any other spell, any other ability

'I am honoured that you would consider approaching me as a mentor, young one. You have excelled in your studies and those who have taught you speak very highly of your talents. I am certain you would make an excellent student. According to those I consulted on your progress, you show aptitude in every school of magic. I am impressed.

It is for that reason that I must advise you not to seek my tutelage. If you learn from me, your studies will surely stray from the path of at least one other school, perhaps more. What I have to teach is simply too complex to allow you time for the general learning you have had to date. If you focus on abjuration, I can promise you a long life, protection from harm and the ability to wield the best of every other school for the grandest purpose of all; defending those who cannot defend themselves. It is a selfless life, and one that may not be to your liking, but you have the gift. You could be a great abjurer.

What say you?

that relies on magic to operate. The various forms of anti-magic all have their own unique traits, but they all hold certain qualities in common.

Anti-magic comes in two basic forms, dispelling and continuous. Dispelling anti-magic ends spells on contact, though there may be a conflict in power that allows some magic to resist the negation effect. This form of anti-magic is most often directed and takes the common form of a ray or blast. Dispelling anti-magic can be thought of as focused anti-magic, lasting only a short period of time while having a pronounced effect on any spells it contacts while it exists.

Continuous anti-magic is usually a field and has a much longer duration than a dispelling anti-magic. Whereas dispelling anti-magic negates spells, a continuous field generally suppresses spells. If a spell with a lasting duration enters an anti-magical field, it ceases to have any effect. It remains extant, however, and resumes what is left of that duration once it leaves the field. There are exceptions to this rule, and full details for dealing with anti-magic can be found in *Core Rulebook I*. For the purposes of this text, we are primarily interested only in how integral anti-magic can be to the school of abjuration.

Regardless of the form anti-magic takes, abjurers will find the spells that utilise its power to be major assets. A fireball that does not survive long enough to explode is far better than one that tests the efficiency of the abjurer's elemental resistances. By careful application of anti-magic, a lot of smaller defensive spells become redundant. The most effective use of anti-magic may be the concept of counterspelling. This is examined at greater length in the next chapter, Shielded by Sorcery.

I want it down on record that I hate my life. When I joined the Shieldbearer's Guild, it was with the understanding that I would be working with a high class of clientele. I was to have choice assignments that would stretch my talents and give me a chance to excel in my field. I am a bodyguard and an escort, a mage and a scholar. I am a professional and I was assured I would be treated like one. My current assignment is like a field trip in the Hells. If the Cultists here do not kill these ungrateful bastards, I will!

From the journal of Shieldbrother Vendus, opened and examined after the 'Incident'

A Defence for All Seasons

The protection offered by abjuration has many useful forms and unlike some schools of magic, the spells of abjuration are often useful to others. Another benefit of most abjuration magic is its simplicity of design, with most of its spells having variable effects but one base spell. This allows an abjurer to tailor his defences to whatever the current situation requires. Not having to decide beforehand which type of element one wishes protection from is very helpful.

It is also a boon that abjuration magic is generally capable of being layered with other abjuration spells. The powers granted by most abjuration spells do not interfere with or negate each other, allowing a subject to be wreathed in protection magic against nearly any form of harm. With preparation time and access to the right spells, someone can become virtually invulnerable. Interspersed with a few spells from other schools, abjuration truly offers almost divine levels of defence.

As mentioned before, a shield is not purely a defensive tool. In the right hands or in the proper situation, an abjuration spell can inflict considerable damage. Even if the magic in question is incapable of doing direct harm, as most abjuration spells are, the time spent wasting attacks on a protected mage can prove to be an opponent's downfall. It is for this reason that abjurers are most effective when they pair with at least one other person. While the abjurer draws fire, his companions can deliver the blows needed to down an otherwise intractable foe. More on this tactic will also be discussed in the next chapter, Shielded by Sorcery.

With versatility, accessibility and general utility, abjuration shows itself to be a very balanced and well-rounded school. Given the potent forms of combat magic that exist, it would likely be folly for any wizard who considers himself likely to engage in combat to restrict himself from abjuration's spells. Having access to abjuration gives a wizard a defence for all seasons, so to speak. This is important, especially since no other school provides much by way of protection.

Of course, it is possible to use the magic of abjuration through the use of other wizards or magic items crafted to grant defensive spells. This option is discussed at length in the next chapter as well, as not being able to cast one's own protections can be problematic. Regardless of how a wizard uses abjuration spells, it is vital that he do so in some way. Either by spell or potion, scroll or self-casting, if a wizard seeks to shield himself at all, he either has this school as an option or he goes through a lot of bodyguards…

It should be noted for future generations' edification that the Ensorcelled Lord of glorious and peaceful Midannis was neither a wizard nor a sorcerer as many of the history texts of his era claimed. Despite the accurate reports of him striding across battlefields with little on save a tradition wolf-pelt Midannian kilt and the harnesses of his twin greatswords Il'dien and Il'danoth (translated from the Midthein tongue; Death and Damnation), he was not a spellcaster at all. Instead, he employed several of his empire's most powerful abjurers to keep him protected at all times.

The fabled Battle of Mistraven Mount, where the Ensorcelled Lord supposedly met his match in combat against the Duraghor general Keield, bears witness to the flaw in this approach. As sources from the few survivors of the battle tell it, one of the wizards in the Lord's employ was enamoured of the Midannian queen. His spells during the Battle of Mistraven Mount had little effect in countering Keield's brutal axe blows. If accounts are to be believed, the Lord fell to only three strikes, each one biting far deeper than they should have.

This unfortunately cannot be confirmed, as the wizard in question was executed for treason by the widowed queen before his statements could be recorded and the body of the Ensorcelled Lord was carried to the black lands of Duraghus and consumed as part of their barbaric rite of victory.

- A passage from Palandar's Lexicon of the Midannian Wars, Volume 3 of 37

Shielded by Sorcery

Abjuration, the school of defence and protection, is probably the single most maligned school in arcane magic. It has few flashy spells, rarely generates an active effect and is seldom used to defeat an opponent. It is generally thought of about as often as one ponders a shield. It is important, it provides a measurable effect, and it is helpful to continued well being, but no one really pays it much attention. In the face of a school like evocation, abjuration just does not seem that interesting.

Interesting or not, abjuration is a vital part of arcane magic. It is the wise wizard that keeps its importance in mind when selecting spells. As the dangers of adventuring grow greater, the need for better defence becomes greater as well. Eventually, such magic is absolutely essential to survival, especially as the stage of adventure moves to other planes and conditions that by their very nature become lethal to the abjurer and his companions.

That is an important lesson for abjurers to learn; not all threats come from a monster. Poisonous air, falling, other planes filled with never-ending fire, drowning; all of these things can be every bit as deadly as any creature one might face in combat. In fact, they can be deadlier because they cannot be directly combated. For threats like these, sometimes only magic provides any defence at all. An abjurer can quickly become a saviour to his companions a hundred times over, simply by using his magic effectively and remaining prepared at all times.

A prepared abjurer needs to keep several things in mind. He must be certain his spell selection is up to the rigors of the dangers ahead. He must keep a fair selection of spells outside his speciality handy to augment his defensive strengths with offensive capability. He must try to supplement his spells with appropriate magical items when available. He must be equipped to deal with the possibility of his magic proving ineffective. Lastly, he must pay close attention to the changing conditions of combat around him and adjust his strategies accordingly.

An abjurer, from his position of magically protected safety, can be a very efficient leader both in and out of combat.

Abjuration may be oft maligned, but just like a shield when it is needed, nothing else will do. The need for defensive magic cannot be denied and while few may think about it until they require it, abjuration enjoys the position of being indispensable and unique. No other school does what it does. Abjurers may not receive the accolades that invokers do, but they certainly deserve them.

What, you still here? I told you to get lost back to your college. No? Okay, fine. Pull up a stool and have a drink. Heck, buy us both one. I'll talk as long as your ale money holds out. Deal. I just don't know why you'd be interested in what a washed up abjurer has to say anyway. Still, suit yourself. I've got a hundred stories, all of them bad.

That's a good question, one I've been asking myself for years. Why did I become an abjurer? Of course, I know the answer, and it's a real dumb one. I did it for a girl. Isn't that always the way? Yeah, I did it for a girl. A lady warrior as a matter of fact, name of Neshala. Nesha was a prize, kid; she was a real beauty. Could fight, ride and drink with the best of them. I fell in love with her first day I met her. She with me too, or so I thought.

We was inseparable, Nesha and I. When it came time for me to choose a speciality, I jumped at abjuring like a beggar on a rat. I thought she'd love me more if I could keep her safe with magic while she rained down hell with that sword of hers. I guess I just wanted to make sure nothing ever happened to her, too.

So what did happen? We travelled together for a while and she went off with the first real mage we met. Damn transmuters. I hate all of them.

So Many Choices

There are hundreds of spells in *Core Rulebook I.* Even after losing one or more schools of magic, an abjurer has a lot to choose from and never has enough slots to take them with. That is endemic of being a wizard, unfortunately. You can never prepare all the spells you want, so you must limit your selections. For an abjurer, this is an especially difficult choice. With so many different dangers to choose from, deciding which defences to take is not an easy prospect.

There are a few useful guidelines. First, an abjurer needs to recognise the person in his adventuring party most likely to need defending. Almost always, the answer will be himself. Without armour to speak of, nimble reflexes to evade massive damage, or the ability to heal himself when wounded, a group's wizard is generally their weakest link in terms of physical vulnerability. Thus, an abjurer's first few spells should almost be a given; *mage armour* and *shield*. With these two spells active, an abjurer can conditionally have at least a 21 armour class, comparable to a heavily armoured fighter.

Once self-defence is accomplished, an abjurer can begin to address his companion's needs. While the conditions of an individual adventure may change priorities a bit, certain spells remain universally useful. *Endure* and *resist elements* are low-level spells that can prove invaluable when elemental damage forms become a threat. The real trick with them is determining which version of them to cast and who to cast them on. A wrong choice, after all, wastes a valuable spell slot.

The version can be deduced with careful reasoning, as noted later in this section. The who requires careful planning. Divine spellcasters can likely protect themselves with the same spells and rogues are not generally going to present themselves as targets if they can help it. The choice normally comes down to the warrior(s) in the group and the abjurer himself. This becomes a matter of preference, as an argument can be seen both ways. The fighters are more likely to be targets for such attacks, but the abjurer can take far less damage. Ultimately, either choice is valid.

This same logic can apply to any party-defending spell the abjurer knows. Special care should be taken to choose the spells that do the most good for the greatest number of party members in the widest possible array of conditions. Specific spells, ones that only defend against a single facet of danger,

should be lower priority choices unless some indication exists that the limited threat has a chance of being present. *Dimensional anchor* is a fine spell, but if there has been no sign of creatures with abilities it would block, taking it is probably occupying a spell slot that could be spent on something more valuable.

An abjurer should never forget that when special situations do present themselves, they can take a short break and trade out prepared spells for others. This does not take a great deal of time and if the danger is not an immediate one, trading out spells provides versatility and allows an abjurer to carry

> *'I am pleased to see that you have decided to take up the study of abjuration. I know you will not be disappointed with your choice, despite the drawbacks of the field. You will live a longer, safer life with the magic of our school to protect you. I will teach you to wreathe yourself with constructions of magical force and how to ward off the elements. I will instruct you in countersigns and defences against those from other worlds. I will show you something even more valuable than this, however.'*
>
> *'I will show you how to endure the derision of those who mock our school. Just imagine that your opponent has hurled a fireball. You have a fire resistance spell cast. They do not. See? Their jibes do not sting so much now, do they?'*

general defensive spells without being completely out of touch with his more specific protections.

A prime example of this kind of spell is *remove curse*. It is a very useful spell, but it probably will not come into play often enough to warrant keeping it prepared. Waiting 15 minutes for the abjurer to trade out a spell for it is not likely to cause the cursed individual any greater discomfort, after all. The same holds true for many of the esoteric defences that abjuration provides. A good rule of thumb is, if the spell is not likely to be cast in combat or right before

combat, it probably does not need to be prepared in advance.

It should be mentioned that another way to keep lesser-used spells handy is to put them on scrolls and carry them around for use when the need arises. All abjurers can scribe scrolls and, at lower levels, the costs are virtually negligible. Only time is a significant factor and it can easily be spent between adventures or during downtimes during long trips provided the proper space and materials are available. By using scrolls, an abjurer can carry spells such as *arcane lock* and *fire trap* without having to keep them prepared.

Reaching Outside the Box

It is a common error amongst specialists to only choose spells from their school of magic. Abjurers cannot afford to do this, as their school is too limited in the scope and number of its spells to allow much of a selection after a certain point. Besides, while abjuration is the single greatest school for defence, there are useful spells in other schools that nicely fall into the same category. It is a sad note that the most useful simple defensive spell, *mage armour*, actually belongs to conjuration instead. Despite this, it is a must for all beginning abjurers and highly recommended.

As mentioned before, many threats do not come from opponents at all. Environmental dangers can pose as great a risk, if not worse, to those an abjurer is trying to protect. While abjuration magic is crucial to warding off these dangers, other schools also provide useful spells. *Water breathing* of the transmutation school, for example, offers an excellent defence against drowning. *Resilient sphere* and its *telekinetic* counterpart are both evocation spells, but they do provide a nearly invulnerable defence against physical attacks, magical assaults and environmental conditions.

Misdirection can sometimes prove more useful than direct defences. A blow that never lands does not have to be warded against after all. Illusion and abjuration can make a very effective pairing. A physically warded abjurer who is also under *blur* and *mirror image* makes for a very difficult and very annoying target to pin down. Needless to

say, *invisibility* can be the ultimate defence. If an opponent cannot see you, he likely cannot hurt you either.

Again, never underestimate the usefulness of scrolls. If an abjurer does not know a spell, he can still use it provided he can find a scroll of it and the spell does not come from one of his banned schools. Multiple copies of certain spells can be kept on the same scroll to keep weight down if encumbrance is a

> *I am convinced now that scrolls are the life's blood of a mage. Long after I would be exhausted of personal magic, my scrolls have kept me useful on these ridiculous expeditions we keep taking. While I would prefer to stay behind the safe walls of the college, my friends keep clamouring to explore the trackless miles of Deathshroud Canyon and the ruins that moulder amid its burning wastes. I keep trying to tell them that maybe there is a reason they call it 'Deathshroud' Canyon, but do they listen to me? No. So be it… At least when things finally go to the Hells, as I know they will, I'll have my teleportation scroll handy.*

factor, and certain items like a *handy haversack* can allow for easy, quick access and transport of dozens of scrolls without significantly affecting the burden placed on an abjurer. More is discussed on useful magic items later in this section and in the Magical Items chapter later.

Items of Power

Scrolls have been mentioned now as being very useful to abjurers. In addition, other charged items can be of great value. Wands of low-level spells like *resist elements* or *protection from chaos/evil/good/law* are not significantly more expensive to make than scrolls and offer their spells fifty times each. In this way, an abjurer could easily protect an entire group with *resist* spells as fast as he can use the wand without ever depleting his own slots.

Staffs are not as inexpensive, but have the advantage of holding numerous spells. These can be useful for grouping together related spells into a single item and have the added benefit of being able to cast spells of higher than 4th level. If cost and creation time are not a trouble, crafting a staff of standard abjuration spells can be a useful way to carry fifty charges of protective magic without having to occupy spell slots with the same spells. This can also be a handy way to store more obscure spells like *sequester* or *guards and wards*, making them available without

requiring an abjurer to spend the time it takes to trade them out.

Wondrous items can also be of great use to abjurers. Any item that duplicates a protective effect is one less spell the abjurer must prepare. Defensive items that cannot have their effects readily duplicated by a spell allow an abjurer to fill holes in his protections. Even weapons and armour can have hidden benefits. A *holy* dagger or quarterstaff certainly counts as a hated item for purposes of a *banishment* spell against an evil outsider, as would an outsider *bane* weapon. The value of an animated shield to any wizard should be obvious, especially since its armour bonus stacks with a *shield* spell.

One thing to watch out for is an over reliance on magical items. Things fall apart, and possessions can never be counted on because they can be so easily lost or broken. Most wands take only 10 hit points of damage from a single blow to break and can be Sundered while held. As such, no single item being carried by an abjurer should be critical to his effectiveness. While spell lists can be planned around equipment, an abjurer should never be left defenceless if his toys all go away. Versatility is one thing, but using magical items as a crutch should be avoided.

When Plans Go Awry

It is inevitable. Sooner or later, a plan is going to fail and all an abjurer's spells and abilities will be for naught. Or, conversely, everything will go exactly according to plan and the abjurer will have cast all his spells and done all the right things and the battle will proceed perfectly, leaving him with nothing further to do. Either way, the result is the same; the abjurer is left with no spells to cast that will be helpful and with nothing to contribute to the cause, as it were.

A single round spent doing nothing in combat is an opportunity wasted and can prove quite fatal. Even outside of combat, an abjurer cannot be defined by his magic alone. To truly be prepared for any given contingency, an abjurer must consider what he can do when his spells will no longer help. The answer is fairly simple; do whatever you can. Fire at enemies with a crossbow, carry healing potions and provide rescue for downed comrades, keep a watch out (with the help of your familiar) for new enemies, or move into combat and provide flanking bonuses for your allies.

In essence, be useful. Not everything an abjurer does has to be a spell. Carry a weapon even though as a wizard you are not very good with one. An 8th level wizard has the same base attack bonus and roughly the same hit points as a 4th level fighter and, with the generally decent Dexterity scores many wizards

It had started out as a gesture of peace. As upset as he had been with the lot of them earlier, Arrien had decided to try and smooth things over by setting up camp and making dinner. A decent cook, he prided himself on keeping in practice even during his time at the academy. He knew how to take dried rations, a little flour and water, and some herbs and make a great soup. It was to be his olive branch, a way of calming his own ruffled feathers and getting to know his charges a bit better.

That had been before Gront had spat his soup back into the fire and Kilierah had throw gods-know-that into the soup pot to 'make it not taste like cesspit stew'. That was before that dwarven menace Orggin had made such a show of swilling his ale and eating hardtack instead. Only Sir Yarrin had bothered to mention his efforts, and his reaction had been the worst yet.

'Since you're doing so little during the majority of this expedition, perhaps you can handle the cooking and camping for all of us while we are down here. It is menial work to be sure, but you seem to have a talent for it. Good job.'

As Arrien sat writing in his journal, he quietly seethed. He had tried to make peace with them, and they had shoved his olive branch into the stewpot and eaten it. So be it. This trip could not last forever after all. Soon, he would be home and all of this would be a distant, horrendous memory.

A New Trick for Gather Information: Tactical Assessment (Cha)

By studying troop movements, the lay of the land, and other details of a potential combat area, you can provide yourself and others with an advantage over less prepared opponents.

Check: Using this skill requires an uninterrupted half-hour and a clear view of the area to be fought in. If there are known potential opponents within 100 yards of the area, you must have an additional half hour to observe them and learn their behaviour patterns.

Once these conditions are met, you may make a check against a DC of 5 plus 5 for each major hazard or group of opponents (a solitary creature counts as a group). Major hazards would include traps, obstacles that would provide cover or concealment bonuses, or unusual ways into or out of the area (such as a balcony or underground passage).

A successful check provides a +1 circumstance bonus to all attack rolls, spell DCs from spells cast by the skill's recipients, spell damage rolls and saving throws for the next hour. This bonus is gained by you and one of your allies (or allied unit in a military situation) for each point of Charisma bonus you possess.

You lose this bonus completely as soon as a new hazard presents itself or an unobserved group of opponents enters the fray. If you wish, you may take a full-round action to re-roll the Tactical Assessment check (raising the DC to account for the new conditions) to regain the bonus. You must be able to communicate freely to your allies for them to regain the bonus.

Retry: Not until a new factor is present in the situation (some other group or hazard). You may introduce this factor yourself to gain the retry.

Special: Each additional hour spent studying the situation adds a +1 competence bonus to the skill check. If any new opponents or hazards enter the area being studied, this bonus is immediately negated until these new factors are removed somehow. You can only effectively study an area for eight hours each day. This competence bonus cannot grow higher than your Wisdom score in any case.

An Example of Gather Information: Tactical Assessment in Use: Gerran, a young abjurer, has been set to task again by his master. This time, it is to determine the best place for him and his friends to put a stop to a group of bullies in town. The bullies always keep watch over an alley between a pair of local temples. They aren't known to have any friends, so Gerran doesn't factor in any other groups getting involved.

He spends a half-hour looking over the alley from a nearby rooftop and then observes the bullies as they wander around picking fights. He sees how each of them fights and looks for potential cover in the alley. He sees a refuse barrel and an alcove along one wall. That makes for 2 hazards or a +10 to the skill check.. The single group of bullies adds an additional +5. That makes the final DC 20.

Gerran has a +2 Gather Information check and a Charisma of 14. This only adds +4 total to his skill check. He chooses, wisely, to study the area for as long as he can to gain a competence bonus. Since the factors are not likely to change, he studies it as long as he can. Gerran's youth and inexperience show in his 9 Wisdom score. Two days later (since he had to study the alley and the bullies for 8 hours one day and the extra hour on a second day), he can add +9 to the check as well. Gerran rolls an 8 and adds +13 total. The DC was a 20, so the resulting 21 makes it.

Gerran and two of his friends (for his +2 Charisma modifier) will be enjoying that +1 bonus while they remind those bullies that it is not wise to meddle in the affairs of wizards.

possess, can be quite effective at ranged combat. A crossbow bolt does more damage on average than a *magic missile* and can be fired every round.

Aside from combat, physical actions can play an important role in any situation. If an abjurer is down on spells or has nothing useful left to cast, he can run around the fighting and bolt the door to the room shut so reinforcements cannot join the enemy. A wizard is normally an educated individual and should use that intelligence to find things to contribute that do not involve magic. Maintaining mundane skills and tactics may seem like a waste of time, but an abjurer will be grateful he did so the first time an *antimagic field* robs him of the ability to do anything else.

Remaining Vigilant

Things change very fast. In combat, a single round's events can change the tide of battle completely. A critical hit, the sudden appearance of a new ally or enemy, or a failed saving throw can drastically alter a fight. Keeping an eye out for these changes, or better yet anticipating them in advance and planning for them, can be an excellent task for an abjurer to take on. His keen intelligence combined with his skills at defence and protection, make him uniquely suited for the role of tactician.

Some forms of watchfulness are simple. If the area an abjurer and his companions are exploring is covered with carvings of flame and fire, it might be a safe bet to assume that elemental protections against the same might be in order. Likewise, if his group has run afoul of hordes of small, fast creatures using repeated, massed, ranged attacks to pepper the party, he can deduce that *stoneskin* and *protection from arrows* will likely ward off any harm the diminutive terrors can cause. Sound reasoning can save an abjurer and his companions a great deal of hardship.

While it may be enough to remain alert and watchful for dangerous changes in the abjurer's surroundings, a more tangible benefit to such vigilance may be desired. Below, a suggested new use for the Gather Information skill can be found. This use, appropriate to the tactically minded, allows an abjurer (or anyone else who wishes to utilise the skill) to provide useful bonuses to his companions through his keen wits and careful planning.

In closing, an abjurer has the potential to be an invaluable member, perhaps even leader, of any group. His skills, his spells and his natural talents provide him with all the tools he needs to excel. Ultimately, an abjurer succeeds as long as everyone he has chosen to protect comes home safe. To be a great abjurer, he simply needs to remember that his magic makes him the perfect shield. And, when the going gets rough, he must remember how to bash.

A Shield By Any Other Name

While abjuration has a great deal of potential, its focus is fairly narrow. Abjuration is the magic of defence and protection, a distinction that does not leave much room for interpretation. It is little wonder then that abjurers find ways to specialise within their school as a matter of self-definition. When there is little variance in the school, its practitioners have to find individual ways to distinguish themselves.

The one truly offensive ability abjuration has, *banishment*, has given rise to the formation of prime mages; these abjurers focus their efforts to patrolling the Prime Material Plane, locating outsiders, and sending them back to their planes. Few extradimensional creatures can withstand the dismissive powers of a powerful abjurer for long, especially when its hold on the Prime exists only as a magical field the prime page can easily sever. The duties of a prime mage can be harsh, but they have developed the magic needed to carry them out very efficiently.

Spellshields focus on the other aspect of abjuration that could be considered offensive; they concentrate their abilities on the art of counterspelling. All wizards can counterspell, but spellshields have elevated the process to a true art form, handling multiple spells in the time a normal mage could counter one. It is very difficult to affect a prepared spellshield or anyone he is protecting with a spell. At the highest levels of their power, a spellshield can even turn hostile magic back on his attackers or absorb and reshape an enemy's spell into one of his own.

There are times when an abjurer has to concern himself with protecting large groups of people. An adventuring abjurer rarely has to defend more

than six or seven companions, but in times of war, dozens or hundreds may depend on his skills. For large-scale operations, no one can match the skills of an abjurer with the training of a siegebreaker. With the ability to stretch abjuration spells over large numbers of targets and specialised magic designed to protect entire areas from harm, a siegebreaker is an invaluable part of any defensive army.

Lastly, this section introduces the warden. Skilled in weaving wards of abjuration magic for a variety of purposes, a warden is never without a magical defence for any danger that comes along. A scalpel to the siegebreaker's greatsword, a warden specialises in small areas and single subjects. A protector in all senses, the warden's goal is to defend his focus, be it a place, a person, or an object, to the best of his abilities. Few can threaten something or someone directly watched over by a warden.

The Prime Mage

Things are out there, things from other worlds. The prime mage knows this. He can feel them when they get too close. He can sense their thoughts. He can feel their power. A prime mage is an abjurer with the power to detect, combat and banish outsiders from his home plane. He guards the Prime Material Plane from those who would come here to wreak havoc. He is a defender, a guardian, and a warrior on the front lines of his reality, armed with the magic of banishment and dismissal and gifted with the power and knowledge to use it.

Prime mages are not always good individuals. Some evil churches and extradimensional organisations also sponsor prime mages for the purpose of removing celestial threats before such scions of light can move against them and their nefarious schemes. These prime mages are considered a scourge by others of their kind, jackals who work for the very creatures their order was founded to fight. When good and evil prime mages clash, the results are generally explosive and very final.

The Order of the Prime, the organisation that usually finds and trains prime mages, is a primarily good group with some neutral leanings. While celestial presences are tolerated due to their usual focus of destroying evil outsiders, the Order would truly rather see all extradimensional activity cease on the Prime. Only by keeping the Prime Material Plane free of dimension influences, the higher powers in the Order insist, can it be made truly safe.

The Prime Mage

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Primal Touch	+1 level of existing class
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Bonus Feat, Rebuking Litany	+1 level of existing class
3	+2	+1	+1	+3	Outsider Lore +1	+1 level of existing class
4	+3	+1	+1	+4	Scent of the Demon	+1 level of existing class
5	+3	+1	+1	+4	Bonus Feat, Bane Focus	+1 level of existing class
6	+4	+2	+2	+5	Outsider Lore +2	+1 level of existing class
7	+5	+2	+2	+5	Banishing Touch	+1 level of existing class
8	+6	+2	+2	+6	Bonus Feat, Sight of the Demon	+1 level of existing class
9	+6	+3	+3	+6	Outsider Lore +3	+1 level of existing class
10	+7	+3	+3	+7	Aura of Absolute Prime	+1 level of existing class

Some rogue elements of the Order exist. Some are disenfranchised or seduced away from the Order by promises of riches and glory in the service of dark powers. Others find the intolerant leanings of the order not to their liking and strike out on their own to defend the Prime their own way. Still others discover their prime talents on their own and are self-trained, never even learning that the Order exists. The only constant that can be assigned to prime mages is their seemingly endless determination to combat extradimensional foes whenever they find them and banish outsiders from the Prime plane they call home.

Hit Dice: d4.

Requirements
To qualify to become a prime mage, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast 4th level arcane spells, one of which must be *dimensional anchor*. Cannot have conjuration as a banned school of arcane magic.

Feats: School Focus (abjuration) or Spell Focus (abjuration).
Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 8+, Knowledge (the planes) 10+, Spellcraft 8+.

Class Skills
The prime mage's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (alchemy) (Int), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Profession (Wis) and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill points at each level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features
All of the following are class features of the prime mage prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: Prime mages gain no proficiency in any weapon or armour. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble.

Spells per Day: A prime mage continues training in magic as a way of increasing his effectiveness against outsiders. Thus, when a new prime mage level is gained, the character also gains spells as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any additional benefits a character of that class would have received, only the new spells.

This essentially means that he adds the level of prime mage to the level of another spellcasting class the character already has and then determines spells per day and caster level accordingly. If the caster has more than one spellcasting class before he became a prime mage, he must decide to which class he adds each level of prime mage for the purposes of determining spells per day when he adds the new level.

Primal Touch: The first talent a prime mage develops is the ability to distinguish and attune to extradimensional objects and creatures by touch. A prime mage can automatically detect an outsider if he makes physical contact with one. He can also instantly tell whether a given object is from another plane or possesses powers related to the planes

(such as *outsider bane* weapons or an *amulet of the planes*). One uninterrupted minute of concentration while holding such an object acts as a full *analyse dweomer*.

If the prime mage can succeed in a melee touch attack in combat against an outsider, his Primal Touch grants him a +1 synergy bonus to the DCs of any spells he casts against that outsider for the next 10 rounds. This ability can be used as often as the prime mage wishes, subject to a successful touch attack each time.

Bonus Feat: The prime mage has learned a special skill for battling outsiders. He may choose a bonus feat from the following list, Skill Focus (knowledge (the planes)), Skill Focus (spellcraft), Spell Penetration, Dismissive Aura*, Harrowing Banishment*, Prime Sense*, Iron Will, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, or Combat Casting. The prime mage must meet all prerequisites for the selected feat.
Note: * = new feat in this book.

Rebuking Litany: By speaking words of abjurative power, the prime mage can use the strength of his will to drive away extradimensional and summoned creatures. He gains the ability to turn or rebuke outsiders as a cleric of his prime mage prestige class level. A prime mage may utter a Rebuking Litany once per day per point of Wisdom bonus he possesses, to a minimum of once per day.

A prime mage may not destroy outsiders using this ability, regardless of the amount of turning damage rolled or the Hit Dice of the creatures affected. No special result occurs if this ability generates enough damage to destroy said outsiders; they are merely turned or rebuked as normal.

Outsider Lore: The knowledge gained by the prime mage as he advanced in level begins to grant him a bonus when confronting them. A prime mage is considered to have outsiders as a favoured enemy, as per the ranger class ability of the same name. He begins with a +1 bonus, but this improves to +2 at 6th level and +3 at 9th.

Scent of the Demon: A prime mage can track his outsider prey anywhere they flee, using subtle dimensional clues and physical signs as clues. He gains the virtual feat Track, but it only allows him to track outsiders. If the prime mage already has Track as a feat, this power grants a +2 synergy bonus to its use when outsiders are involved.

In addition to the virtual feat, a prime mage gains his prestige class level as virtual Survival ranks when tracking a demon or when attempting to survive on another plane. His knowledge of planar lore grants this latter ability, though most prime mages would never wish to use it.

Bane Focus: A prime mage of 5th level has learned how to surround any weapon he holds with magical energies that outsiders find extremely painful and disruptive. When the prime mage strikes an outsider with any melee weapon (including unarmed attacks if the prime mage possesses the Improved Unarmed Strike feat or its virtual equivalent), the attack is considered to have the *bane* special quality as listed in *Core Rulebook II*. This ability can be used an unlimited number of times a day and can be invoked or dismissed as free actions at will.

Banishing Touch: By concentrating for a full round, taking no action other than defending himself, a prime mage can draw on his abjuration magic to generate a *banishment* effect on his hands. This is treated as a touch attack, can be used once per day and counts as if the prime mage had three hated objects in his possession. No further objects can be used to augment the effectiveness of the Banishing Touch. For the purposes of this power, the prime mage's touch is considered *ghost touch* in regards to incorporeal outsiders.

Sight of the Demon: Once this level of ability is gained, a prime mage can spend a full round action viewing an outsider and instantly know its common species name, its alignment, its Hit Dice, its base Will save and its plane of origin. Longer periods of concentration do not provide more details, but there is no form of resistance that blocks the Sight. Even *nondetection* and similar abilities offer no protection against a prime mage wielding this power. Sight of the Demon can be used as often as desired.

Aura of Absolute Prime: At the height of a prime mage's power, abjuration magic constantly encircles him, protecting the area around his form with an unbreakable circle of energy that hedges out physical travel and many forms of special outsider abilities. This is treated as constant *magic circles against good*

and *evil*. These *circles* are always present unless dismissed as a standard action by the prime mage. They can be reinstated as a free action on the prime mage's turn and become active again immediately if the prime mage is rendered unconscious.

Within the radius of the Aura, a *dimensional anchor* effect also exists continuously. This effect does not prevent the prime mage from transporting himself magically; it simply prevents anyone else within his aura from doing so.

The Siegebreaker

War is a dangerous business and, on the whole, it is entirely different from small-scale combat. When an abjurer and his companions encounter threats while adventuring, these enemies are generally no more numerous than they are, or if they do come in larger numbers, are usually of inferior quality. War increases the odds considerably. The opposition tends to be comprised of masses of troops easily numbering into the hundred or thousands. When there are smaller groups present, they tend to be elite cadres of specialised individuals, trained to serve some role on the battlefield like spellcasting or tactical leadership.

A normal abjurer would be quickly overwhelmed by so many threats. A single flight of arrows from an archer unit would tear his *stoneskin* apart and pin him down by sheer force of numbers. Battlefield conditions call for different measures. This venue is the speciality of the siegebreaker, an abjurer trained to protect large numbers of soldiers and defend stationary points during times of war.

Normally trained to take on a defensive role, siegebreakers can also be called up to serve an attacking force. In this capacity, their task is to protect their forces long enough to break through an opposing army's lines and capture some strategic objective. With the kinds of defences a siegebreaker can provide, this task can be accomplished quite handily. Unless a rival force has powerful magic at their disposal, troops with the backing of a siegebreaker generally have an easy time achieving their goals.

The most impressive and difficult battles of a siegebreaker's career tend to be those involving an opposing siegebreaker serving the enemy. These battles take on a larger context with each one serving to counter the other, weaving their magic in a conflict that elevates them beyond the battlefield

The Siegebreaker

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Unit Focus (20)	+1 level of existing class
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Enlarge Mastery I	+1 level of existing class
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Extend Mastery I, Unit Focus (40)	+1 level of existing class
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Siegeshielding	+1 level of existing class
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Enlarge Mastery II, Unit Focus (60)	+1 level of existing class
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	Extend Mastery II	+1 level of existing class
7	+3	+2	+2	+5		+1 level of existing class
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	Siegespell Mastery	+1 level of existing class
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	Unit Focus (100)	+1 level of existing class
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	True Defender	+1 level of existing class

in a desperate struggle to best the other's skills and guide his troops to victory.

Hit Dice: d4.

Requirements

To qualify to become a siegebreaker, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast 3rd level arcane spells, three of which must be abjurations. The siegebreaker must be able to cast *shield* and cannot have transmutation or conjuration as banned schools of arcane magic.

Feats: Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell.

Skills: Gather Information 4+, Spellcraft 8+ .

Statistics: Wisdom 12+, Charisma 12+.

Class Skills

The siegebreaker's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Alchemy (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).
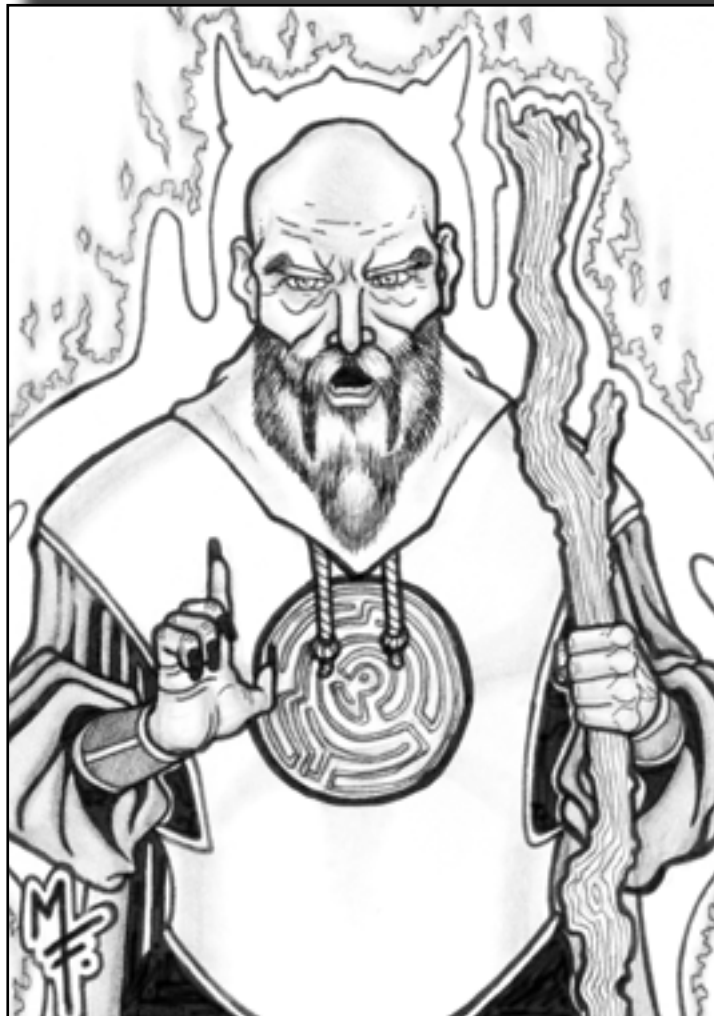
Skill points at each level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the siegebreaker prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: Siegebreakers gain no proficiency in any weapon or armour. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble.

Spells per Day: A siegebreaker continues training in magic and how to successfully implement magic on the battlefield. Thus, when a new siegebreaker level is gained, the character also gains spells as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any additional benefits a character of that class would have received, only the new spells.

This essentially means that he adds the level of siegebreaker to the level of another spellcasting class the character already has and then determines spells per day and caster level accordingly. If the caster has more than one spellcasting class before he became a siegebreaker, he must decide to which class he adds each level of siegebreaker for the purposes of determining spells per day when he adds the new level.

Unit Focus: One of the most impressive abilities available to a siegebreaker is the power to apply an abjuration spell to several targets at once, regardless of the spell's normal target limitations. At its base level of ability, Unit Focus allows a siegebreaker to cast an abjuration spell on 20 different people. For this power to apply, the subjects must be arranged

into groups no fewer than 5, each group's members must all bear identical equipment, each group must be of the same character class and level, and each group must remain within 10 feet of one other member of the group at all times. If a member strays outside this distance for any reason, the abjuration spell(s) cast on his group using this power are instantly dispelled. One spell can be applied to all 20 targets at once, regardless of how many groups that number is divided into.

A siegebreaker can use this ability a number of times each day equal to his prestige class level. All details and conditions of the abjuration spell in question remain as listed in the spell's description; this ability only changes the number and type of targets the spell can be cast on.

Enlarge Mastery: Once per day, the siegebreaker can use the Enlarge Spell metamagic feat on an abjuration spell he casts without any increase to the spell level. Doing so increases the spell's casting time to a full-round action unless its casting time was already greater than that. This power can be used in conjunction with any other siegebreaker class ability that involves spellcasting. The second level of this ability grants the ability to use it an extra time per day.

Extend Mastery: Once per day, the siegebreaker can use the Extend Spell metamagic feat on an abjuration spell he casts without any increase to the spell level. Doing so increases the spell's casting time to a full-round action unless its casting time was already greater than that. This power can be used in conjunction with any other siegebreaker class ability that involves spellcasting. The second level of this ability grants the ability to use it an extra time per day.

Siegeshielding: While a siegebreaker is in contact with any stationary construction with dimensions greater than 10 feet x 10 feet, he may add his prestige class level to that structure's hardness as a full-round action that requires concentration to maintain. Any condition that would require him to make a Concentration check spoils this ability for the remainder of the round, at which point he can resume using this power. While Siegeshielding, the siegebreaker must remain perfectly motionless.

Siegespell Mastery: At this level of ability, a siegebreaker can now use Extend Spell and Enlarge Spell at will without increasing the level of the spell being cast. This still increases the casting time of the spell and if both feats are used on the same spell, the spell's level does increase by one. Siegespell Mastery can be used in conjunction with any other siegebreaker class ability involving spellcasting.

True Defender: Master siegebreakers gain a number of different powers. First, regardless of the size of the army he is associated with, he can use Unit Focus to cast a single abjuration spell on every one of its units. This is considered a use of the ability, and it follows all of the same limitations Unit Focus normally does, save that it can affect vast numbers of troops.

Second, a 10th level siegebreaker can negate one spell cast within one mile by an opposing enemy unit if he witnesses it being cast. This negation is automatic, does not require a Spellcraft check, and is considered a free action that can be done even if the siegebreaker has already gone in the current round.

Third, any unit currently assigned to a siegebreaker benefits from any armour, morale, or deflection bonuses he enjoys. These do not stack with any such bonuses the unit may already have, but will supersede them if higher.

The Spellshield

Counterspelling is a vital part of any adventuring wizard's arsenal and none do it better than an abjurer. Some abjurers take counterspelling farther still, studying its nuances and techniques to develop faster, more efficient ways to combat hostile magic before it even has a chance to manifest. These focused abjurers are called spellshields and while their other wizardly skills become limited, they are the undisputed masters of counterspelling.

Spellshields take their role as unsurpassed counterspellers very seriously. Most adopt a defensive role for anyone they are with, keeping the depredations of enemy magic from harming anyone under their protection. Others actively seek encounters with other spellcasters to test and hone their abilities, even becoming aggressive in their desire to engage in magical duels. The majority find some middle ground between these two extremes. Magical protection can be a great draw

The Spellshield

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Spell Reflexes, Counterspell +1	+1 level of existing class
2	+1	+0	+3	+3	Free Dispel 1	+1 level of existing class
3	+1	+1	+3	+3	Spellrending 25%	+1 level of existing class
4	+2	+1	+4	+4	Counterspell +2	+1 level of existing class
5	+2	+1	+4	+4	Free Dispel 2	+1 level of existing class
6	+3	+2	+5	+5	Absorb Dweomer	+1 level of existing class
7	+3	+2	+5	+5	Spellrending 50%	+1 level of existing class
8	+4	+2	+6	+6	Free Dispel 3	+1 level of existing class
9	+4	+3	+6	+6	Counterspell +3	+1 level of existing class
10	+5	+3	+7	+7	True Countermastery	+1 level of existing class

for those looking to hire a wizard for his services.

This is the idea and charter behind the Shieldbearers, an organisation of abjurers banded together to offer their talents to those with both the coin and the need for magical defence. A fully-fledged guild with a well-documented membership roster, leadership hierarchy, political affiliations and law enforcement powers in some countries, the Shieldbearers are a force to be reckoned with. Just the sight of a Shieldbearer guild mage in his steel-grey robe emblazoned with its kite shield emblem across the back is enough to stop some assailants before a fight even ensues.

This reaction is a logical extension of the spellshield philosophy. 'The best defence is stopping a threat before it begins.'

Hit Dice: d4.

Requirements

To qualify to become a spellshield, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast 3rd level arcane spells, one of which must be *dispel magic*.

Feats: Improved Initiative, School Focus (abjuration).

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 5+, Spellcraft 8+.
Statistics: Dexterity 12+.

Class Skills

The spellshield's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Profession (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill points at each level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the spellshield prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: Spellshields gain no proficiency in any weapon or armour. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble.

Spells per Day: A spellshield continues training in magic even as he delves into more advanced methods of negating it. Thus, when a new spellshield level is gained, the character also gains spells as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any additional benefits a character of that class would have received, only the new spells.

This essentially means that he adds the level of spellshield to the level of another spellcasting class the character already has and then determines spells per day and caster level accordingly. If the caster has more than one spellcasting class before he became a spellshield, he must decide to which class he adds each level of spellshield for the purposes of determining spells per day when he adds the new level.

Spell Reflexes: The first lesson a spellshield learns is how to react quickly to an enemy's spell. Provided he has not already acted in the current round, he can abort his action in response to a cast spell in his line of sight and take a counterspell action against it. This ability has no limit to its uses per day, but can only be used once a round. This ability cannot be used if spellshield has already acted, only if he has an action left in the round he is in.

Counterspell: By their nature, spellshields are more successful that other wizards when they counterspell. When a spellshield uses a *dispel magic* or similar effect as part of a counterspelling attempt, he may add the bonus associated with this ability to the caster level check for doing so.

Free Dispel: Long hours of counter training have provided the spellshield with the ability to draw on the negation aspect of abjuration more frequently than he could before. This additional power grants him a free *dispel magic*, usable only when performing a counterspell action, when he reaches 2nd, 5th, and 8th level. The free *dispel magic* granted at 8th level allows the spellshield to add his full caster level, up to +20.

Spellrending: At 3rd level, even spells that a spellshield fails to counter are diminished somewhat by the attempt. If a spellshield fails to counter a spell, the target spell is reduced in effect and duration by 25% before any other saving throw or other defence is applied. At 7th level, this reduction increases to 50%.

Absorb Dweomer: Whenever a spellshield successfully counters another spell, he may make an opposed caster level check against the negated spell's originator. Spells from items use the caster level of the item for this check. If the spellshield succeeds by 10 or more, he may absorb the countered spell and use it to replace a previously cast spell from his slots. To absorb a spell, the spellshield must have cast a spell to replace of the same level or lower as the countered spell. A spellshield my attempt to use this power once per day for each level he holds in this prestige class.

True Countermastery: This level of mastery in the countering arts grants the spellshield two major abilities. Any hostile magic that passes with 10 feet of him in all directions suffers the same effects as Spellrending 50% automatically as innate counterspelling takes place against it subconsciously. Further Spellrending has no effect on these reduced spells.

The spellshield also gains the power to turn spells back on their casters. This is done in the same

manner as Absorb Dweomer, and requires one of its uses to attempt. If the caster level check succeeds by 10 or more, the spellshield can absorb it normally or, at his option, return it upon its caster as if that being were the spell's original target.

The Warden

Wards are a complex art form, walls and fields of magic designed as barriers against the forces of harm and intrusion. Many spells provide wards, but few spellcasters ever study them enough to gain a true appreciation for all that wards can do. More than just fields of magic, wards are a manifestation of abjurative will, formed by the mind and shaped through spellwork. Wardens understand this and use this understanding to master the art of wards.

Contrary to their name, wardens are not necessarily focused on containment or incarceration. They certainly have the ability to do so, but their talents allow for much more. A skilled warden can create walls of resistance that prevent the passage of a given thing, like fire or orcs. He can make that wall invisible, opaque, or any colour and shade in between. He can make passage through the wall possible one way or leave it impermeable from both sides. He can shape his wards into whatever pattern suits him, from simple shapes to complex designs.

Wardens craft wards in the same way that a weaver crafts a rug. The skills of a warden are not generally quick ones, but the protections he creates are second to none. Another benefit of a true warden's work is duration. Few defensive spells last as long as a ward crafted by an experienced warden, and none are as flexible in scope and design. What a warden lacks in speed, he makes up for in effect.

Hit Dice: d4.

The Warden

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Wardweaving I	+1 level of existing class
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Strands of Energy	+1 level of existing class
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	-	+1 level of existing class
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	Wardweaving II	+1 level of existing class
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Strands of Life	+1 level of existing class
6	+4	+5	+2	+5	-	+1 level of existing class
7	+5	+5	+2	+5	Wardweaving III	+1 level of existing class
8	+6	+6	+2	+6	Strands of Magic	+1 level of existing class
9	+6	+6	+3	+6	-	+1 level of existing class
10	+7	+7	+3	+7	Wardweaving IV	+1 level of existing class

Requirements

To qualify to become a warden, a character must fulfil all the following criteria.

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast 4th level arcane spells, any two of which must be abjuration and one of which must be a *wall* spell of some kind. Must not have evocation and/or conjuration as banned schools of arcane magic.

Feats: School Focus (abjuration), any three metamagic feats.

Skills: Knowledge (engineering or mathematics) 5+, Spellcraft 5+.

Class Skills

The warden's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Profession (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill points at each level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the warden prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: Wardens gain no proficiency in any weapon or armour. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand and Tumble.

Spells per Day: A warden continues training in magic as a means of augmenting his wards. Thus, when a new warden level is gained, the character also gains spells as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any additional benefits a character of that class would have received, only the new spells.

This essentially means that he adds the level of warden to the level of another spellcasting class the character already has and then determines spells per day and caster level accordingly. If the caster has more than one spellcasting class before he became a warden, he must decide to which class he adds

each level of warden for the purposes of determining spells per day when he adds the new level.

Wardweaving: The basis for all of a warden's abilities, Wardweaving allows him to create lines of force and fashion them together into patterns around himself or a given target. The patterns created can be any single colour, including transparent, and can range from invisible to opaque. This target can be an object, a creature or even an empty point in space. The pattern, or ward, can be any shape and may be hollow or solid as the warden wishes. The outside dimensions of the ward, regardless of its density or thickness, can be no greater than 1,000 cubic feet (a 10 ft. x 10 ft. cube) per level of warden prestige class. Wards can be immobile or be set to move with a creature. If they are not set to move, an enclosed creature must force its way as per below.

By itself, Wardweaving only grants the ability to create pure force constructions that range from a +0 cover bonus to armour class (barely noticeable and easy to pass through) to +7 (rigid barrier, capable of being breached only with effort). Anything inside the barrier receives this bonus. Anything outside the barrier that wishes to cross the barrier when it grants a +1 or better cover bonus must make a Strength check at a DC of 10 + the cover bonus of the ward. Failure only prevents entry for one round; the

following round, the would-be intruder may attempt the check again.

A warden can have one ward in creation at a time per level of this ability (one at 1st, 2 at 4th, 3 at 7th, and 4 at 10th), each one lasting indefinitely. Wards go down if the warden is killed or forcefully rendered unconscious, though they remain if he sleeps normally. A ward can be bashed down (Hardness: 10, Hit Points 10 per prestige level), but the warden automatically knows which ward has been destroyed and where, even if he is on another plane.

Strands of Energy: When a warden reaches 2nd level, he learns how to add energy to his wards. This can be chosen from fire, cold, electricity, acid, or sonic. If the warden has the ability to cast divine magic, the energy type can be holy (or unholy, depending on what kind of spontaneous casting he can perform) instead. At the warden's option, the damage type can be changed to subdual.

When a ward augmented with Strands of Energy is touched forcefully by an intruding creature, it suffers 1d6 points of the chosen energy type for each round or part of a round it makes contact. When the ward is made, the warden can attune any number of creatures present to it. This attunement allows them to ignore the energy damage, though the ward is still physical to them.

Strands of Life: The warden can now choose, when making a ward, to make it impassable to one creature type or subtype at his option. He can render a ward impervious to all humanoids, or just orcs, or just male orcs. Gender and breed are as specific as the warden can get when using this power. The ward can be set to allow free passage in one direction or be a full barrier on all sides. Treat this form of barrier as a *wall of force* that only applies to the chosen type of creature.

This ability can also be used to make the damage type chosen by Strands of Energy only affect one type or subtype of creature. The warden can even choose two energy types, one that affects anyone who touches the ward and a second one that affects the specific creature type.

Strands of Magic: Ward magic at its most complicated, the warden can now choose any spell he can cast and imbue it into one of his ward creations. He can set the chosen spell to go off when the ward is touched or allow its active effects to fill the entire area of his ward. If the chosen spell also has a barrier or wall effect, it is added to the ward's effects if they would stack. Damage amounts stack, even if they are the same type; i.e. a *wall of fire* would fill the entire ward with rushing flames and if the ward was set with Strands of Energy to inflict fire damage, a creature foolish enough to come through the ward would suffer both sets of effects.

At the warden's option, he can give up one or more wards to which he is entitled to imbue additional spells into a single ward. Trading one for one, this allows the warden to create a single ward with up to three active or hanging spells waiting to be triggered by contact. Also, with Strands of Life, each spell can be set to only occur against a certain type or subtype of creature.

Abjuration Feats

With the relatively passive nature of most abjurers, having skills and talents to enhance performance is a must. Even abjurers who take a more active role in adventuring, something they are perfectly capable of doing, can benefit from traits that improve what they already do so well. While beneficial spells and skills have already been discussed in previous chapters, feats can also play a vital role in maintaining an abjurer's edge without requiring skill points to raise or magic to fuel.

To gain the most benefit from a new feat, an abjurer must carefully examine the ones he already has, think about what he excels at, and keep in mind what goal he has for future development. It cannot be stressed enough how selective a mage must be when choosing feats. With so many metamagic and item creation feats to choose from, it is easy to use up what few feat slots become available over the course of a mage's career. It is much worse for sorcerers, but even wizards with their free feat every 5 levels will undoubtedly want far more than they can take.

That said, the feats presented here may provide viable alternatives to the few wizard oriented feats in *Core Rulebook I*. Aside from metamagic and item creation feats, there is precious little for a wizard to choose from that really affects his spellcasting abilities. Since so few abjuration spells directly affect another being, Spell Focus and Spell Penetration are not terribly useful for an abjurer. This section presents an alternative form of Spell Focus for abjurers called Defensive Focus. This feat improves the spells an abjurer casts without providing an offensive bonus he essentially cannot use.

Metamagic feats are as useful to an abjurer as they are to any mage. This section offers two new ones – Resilient Spell and Ablative Spell. The first makes a spell resistant to countering or dispelling. The second one increases the effectiveness and duration

'Perhaps you could make yourself a bit more helpful here, wizard!' The shout came from across the room, where Sir Yarrin and his group were engaging a monstrous spider with long blades for forelimbs. Arrien's discerning eye recognised it as a bebilith, a monstrous arachnid creature from the lower planes. He was ready to cast the spell that would send it back there, but no one was listening to him.

'As I mentioned when this fight began, sir, I need you all to fall back towards me before I can attempt to banish it. Now if you would kindly move closer, I am generating a magical field that will allow me a fair chance of success at doing so.' His tone was tired, as tired as he felt. This assignment was wearing on his nerves, so much so that even in the face of this terrifying demon, he scarcely felt concern for it.

'The day I take combat advice from a damn henchman,' snorted Gront, 'is the day I…' With one sweep of its massive foreclaws, the bebilith sheared straight through the half-orc's tower shield. Amid the rain of splintered wood and crackling bands of ruined magical steel, the entire party came running back towards him. The look of panic on their faces was priceless.

Swinging at their heels, the bebilith charged forward. When it came within the boundaries of his dismissive aura, Arrien cut loose with his banishment spell. Bright magic roiled around his hands and lashed forward into the huge beast. It writhed as the power of his spell tore apart the bebilith's presence on the Prime. With an angry, inhuman shriek, the thing faded from sight amid a silent explosion of dimensional energies.

Yarrin finished selflessly healing himself and stared past his direly wounded companions at Arrien. 'Why, wizard, did you not do that before? That shield is coming out of your pay!'

Arrien shrugged. At this point, he truly did not care. All he wanted was to go home, sleep for an entire day, have a nice meal alone and plot the torturous, painful deaths of each and every one of them....

Benefit: You innately possess a +4 armour bonus, the equivalent of a *mage armour* spell. This ability is a constant, supernatural ability and does not require you to be conscious to maintain. You may suspend this armour bonus as a standard action on your turn, but restoring it is a free action that can be done at any time. Any armour bonus derived from a spell, effect, or magical item that supplies an armour bonus supersedes this one, even if it is less than +4.

Ablative Spell (Metamagic)

Your spells can be greatly improved, at the cost of a gradual weakening throughout their duration.

Prerequisites: Any other metamagic feat.

Benefit: To qualify for this metamagic feat, a spell must have a fixed or variable duration greater than instantaneous. A spell prepared or cast with Ablative spell has its duration and effective caster level increased by half. All level dependent variables (except duration) are initially calculated using this increased value. After the period of duration increase has elapsed, the effects of the spell begin to deteriorate rapidly. Each round thereafter, the effective caster level drops by one. This cannot be reduced below 1, but the spell's effects are recalculated each time the level decreases. Once the spell reaches half of its original, unmodified duration, all numerical effects of the spell are decreased by 50%. This results in a progressively weaker spell until the spell's duration elapses.

As an example, an 11th level wizard with this feat casts *black tentacles*. Half of 11, rounded down, is 5, so the spell is cast as if by a 16th level caster. Duration is increased by half, so the spell lasts 16 hours and generates 1d4 + 16 tentacles at a range of 260 feet. After 5 hours, the duration increase ends and the spell begins to weaken. Each round thereafter, a tentacle disappears as the caster level drops by one. Long before five more hours pass (half of the original, unmodified duration), there is only a single tentacle.

An Ablative Spell uses up a spell slot 2 levels higher than the spell's actual level.

of a spell at the cost of it gradually weakening through its lifespan. These new feats are useful for an abjurer because the longer his spells last, the safer he and his companions can remain.

One of the few things an abjurer does do offensively with his school is banish extraplanar creatures. In this instance, the normal form of Spell Focus can be useful. To further enhance an abjurer with this kind of speciality, this section includes Dismissive Aura. This feat creates a field of energy around the abjurer that makes it difficult for an extradimensional creature to remain on the material plane. Combined with the penalties associated with Spell Focus (abjuration), such an abjurer is a staunch foe of outsiders and summoned beings.

Abjurative (General)

Your innate ability with abjuration magic guards you from harm constantly.

Prerequisites: School Focus (abjuration).

Companion Specialisation (General)

You can focus your spellcasting efforts on behalf of a single target.

Prerequisites: Defensive Focus, Wisdom 13+.

Benefit: As a free action on your turn each round, you may declare a target for your Companion Specialisation. This being must be someone you have previously cast an abjuration spell on and studied its effects on it for at least one uninterrupted hour. For this target to gain the benefits of this feat, it must be your own creature type or share a telepathic bond with you.

For a target that qualifies, this feat adds a +1 synergy bonus to the numerical values of any abjuration spell you cast on him, up to normal campaign maximums. This raises armour bonuses, cover bonuses, duration, and any other facet of an abjuration spell expressed numerically.

In addition, the target of your Companion Specialisation gains a +1 synergy bonus to all saving throws whenever you dedicate a full round action to this purpose. This bonus lasts as long as you concentrate in this fashion; an action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity but is instantly disrupted by any condition that would require a Concentration check. If you also possess Combat Casting, this ability cannot be disrupted.

Defensive Focus (General)

Your abjuration spells are more potent than normal.

Benefit: Since virtually all abjuration spells are protective in nature and do not affect unwilling targets, the normal Spell Focus feat hardly applies to it. Instead, this variant allows you to improve the protection offered by this school.

When you cast an abjuration spell that offers defence, that protection is improved by +1 and/or 2, depending on the type of bonus provided. The +1 improves bonuses expressed in pluses. The 2 improves numerical effect values that are not a 'plus' style bonus. This variant does NOT affect DCs for

saving throws caused by the few abjuration spells that can allow one.

For example, a *mage armour* spell cast by someone with this feat would gain a +5 Armour Class bonus. A *stoneskin* spell would grant a damage reduction of 12/+5. (The +5 bonus cannot improve to +6, as +5 is the highest that enchantment bonuses can go.)

Dismissive Aura (General)

You can generate a magical field of abjurative resonance that interferes with the energies that bind extradimensional creatures to the Prime Material Plane.

Prerequisites: Spell Focus (abjuration), Caster Level 7+.

Benefit: As a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity, you can call into existence an invisible field of energy in a 15-foot burst around yourself. This field detects as abjuration and is always considered to be a 'strong' source of magic. Any extradimensional creature that enters this field feels immediately uncomfortable and suffers a penalty to its Will saves equal to your Charisma modifier (to a minimum of +1) for as long as it remains.

In addition, this field automatically counts as an object hated or feared by any extradimensional creature within its boundaries for the purposes of a banishment spell. Dismissive Aura can be maintained for up to 1 minute per caster level at a time, does not require concentration, and the caster must wait at least one hour between uses.

Expert Counterspelling (General)

You have an innate talent for counterspelling. This allows you to use similar spells in your attempts.

Benefit: When attempting to counterspell, you may use any spell of the same school as the one you are attempting to negate, provided it is at least one level higher. You may also use a spell of the same level if it shares at least one designator (force, fire, mind affecting, etc.) other than school with the target spell. In addition, if you use a *dispel* of some kind in your

attempt, you gain a +2 to the caster level check required for success.

Flawless Timing (General)

You have the ability to time your actions to the exact moment when they will be most effective.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 15+.

Benefit: By giving up any move-equivalent action in a given round (including the free 5 foot step), you can generate a +2 timing bonus to any single action you choose to take. This can be an attack, a ranged spell, a skill check, or anything else that requires a roll.

Only the initial roll in a given action receives this bonus, not resulting rolls like damage or other checks (even checks that normally use all of the modifier to an initial roll, like the feat Cleave). A timing bonus stacks with any other kind of bonus except itself.

Special: Instead of benefiting from the timing bonus yourself, you may choose to make a Charisma check (Base DC 10 + circumstantial modifiers as the DM sees fit to assign) to apply a +1 timing bonus to another. You must be able to communicate clearly and the being you wish to give the bonus to must be able to act upon your advice.

Harrowing Banishment (General)

Extraplanar creatures that resist your attempts at banishment or dismissal take damage from doing so.

Prerequisites: Dismissive Aura, access to the conjuration school of magic.

Benefit: Whenever the target of any *banishment* or *dismissal* spell you cast or generate with a spell-like ability or magical item use successfully resists you through either a saving throw or Spell Resistance, it immediately suffers 1d4 points of damage per caster level of the effect in magical backlash. The creature may make a Fortitude save against a DC of 15 + your Charisma modifier to take half this damage. If the damage taken is greater than the creature's Constitution score, it is also *stunned* for one round.

Prime Sense (General)

You have become extremely well skilled in dealing with extradimensional creatures through the use of your abjuration magic.

Prerequisites: Dismissive Aura, access to the divination school of magic.

Benefit: You can detect extradimensional creatures automatically when they come within range of your Dismissive Aura, even if it is not active. Nondetection and similar effects are only effective at blocking this ability 50% of the time. If you do detect an extradimensional creature, you may

call your Dismissive Aura into existence as a free action instead of a standard action. Doing this will immediately alert the creature(s) detected to your presence and lets them know that you are the source of their discomfort.

This ability can also be used to detect extradimensional creatures at a greater distance, but doing so is a standard action that does not provoke an Attack of Opportunity. The range of this ability is 20 feet + 10 feet per caster level. You must have line of sight and line of effect on the creature to be detected, even if it is not currently visible. If you do detect the creature, any bonuses it might enjoy from concealment are immediately negated. Detecting a creature using this form of Prime Sense does not allow you to invoke your Dismissive Aura as a free action.

Resilient Spell (Metamagic)

You can cast a spell that is extremely difficult to counter or dispel.

The Spellguard, the personal protectors of the royalty of Midannis, were trained from birth for their positions. So superior were their skills and education that if records of the period are any indication, more was spent on each of the Spellguard than on an entire division of the Midannian regular army. Indeed, the exorbitant cost of maintaining the Spellguard was directly responsible for the near fall of the third house of Esrhon; this house is commonly referred to as the Pauper Kings of Midannis.

Regardless of their drawbacks, the Spellguard were apparently masters of their form. Not merely a decorative force, these bodyguards were each capable of the highest levels of spellcraft, possessing as much ability to counter and negate threatening spells as they were accomplished in eradicating such magic's source. It is a tribute to the Spellguard's formidable abilities that aside from a single incident in the late Midannian Empire involving a traitor in their ranks, no monarch or regent of Midannis was ever slain or seriously injured.

When a Spellguard was chosen to take the field during combat, his presence was always keenly felt by both sides of the conflict. For Midannian troops, he became a rallying point and figure of leadership. For the enemies of the empire, he became a nigh-unstoppable obstacle that demanded heavy resources be expended to counter. Again to the Spellguard's credit, no engagement fought while a Spellguard served on the Midannian side was ever lost in the history of the empire.

- A passage from Palandar's Lexicon of the Midannian Wars, Volume 2 of 37

Benefit: Any attempt to counterspell a Resilient Spell treats it as if it were cast 4 levels higher than it actually is. Even if the counterspelling attempt would automatically succeed, the spellcaster attempting to do so must make a caster level check to succeed. In this case, the +4 level increase does not apply. Dispelling a Resilient Spell after it takes effect also suffers the increased caster level, as the magic binding the spell effect together are very difficult to disrupt.

A Resilient Spell uses up a spell slot 1 level higher than the spell's actual level.

Spell Shielding (General)

When you are the direct target of a spell, you may attempt to counterspell it even if you have already acted.

Prerequisites: Improved Initiative, access to the abjuration school of magic.

Benefit: Whenever you are one of the targets of a spell, you may attempt to counterspell it as long as you meet all the other requirements for doing so. This is a free action, can take place on turns other than yours, and may happen as many times each round as you have points of Dexterity modifier (minimum of one). You must be an actual target of the spell in question, not merely within its area of effect.

This feat does not automatically provide the spell required to counterspell, nor does it make the Spellcraft check required to do so. All other mechanics of counterspelling remain the same; the Spell Shielding feat simply allows you to attempt it more often.

Superior Counterspelling (General)

Your skill at counterspelling is unparalleled, allowing to succeed where others would fail.

Prerequisites: Expert Counterspelling, Caster Level 9+.

Benefit: When you use *dispel magic* or a similar dispelling effect in a counterspell attempt, you automatically succeed even if the caster level check would indicate failure. If you succeed at the caster level check by 10 more than is needed, you do not lose the *dispel* used in the attempt. You can only retain *dispel* spells as many times per day as you have points of Charisma modifier.

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Abjuration Spells

With the wide-sweeping effects of its spells, abjuration would seem to be a complete school. The dangerous world of an adventuring wizard will quickly point out the errors in that reasoning. There are many threats to a mage's safety, only a few of which are addressed by the commonly available spells in *Core Rulebook I*. As life becomes more complicated, an abjurer may find himself wishing for spells that protect where others fail.

In these pages, that wish is granted. New threats call for new defences, and as new spells are created, the need for spells to counter them is created as well. Abjuration may be a reactive art by nature, but it does well by those reactions, constantly growing to protect against new threats. Just as shields have changed over the ages to deal with new and better weapons, so too must the school of shielding.

The point of these new spells is not to create an unassailable defence for a wizard, staving off all attacks and rendering an abjurer or his targets invulnerable. If this were possible with magic, it would likely have been developed and used by spellcasters to dominate the entire world under an impervious reign of mage tyranny. Assuming this is not your campaign world concept, a middle ground of potent but breachable defences must be maintained. That is the principle aim of this section; the spells here offer many new options, none of which are impossible to overcome if the need arises. Ultimately, this is desirable. After all, if you can cast a spell, so can your opponents.

Of course, the key to an abjuration being effective in combat lies in being attacked by another. The key turns both ways; if an opponent has a powerful abjuration spell active, especially one that damages attackers or inflicts some other negative consequence, the best way to counter this is to cease attacking. Even if the foe dismisses the spell from lack of use, it is still a used spell slot and one less resource available for your opponent. Careful thinking and

It is widely accepted that near the end of the Midannian Empire, their mastery of abjuration magic was greater than any other culture to grace our world before or since. So impervious were the defences of Midannian generals and war mages that nothing could challenge them. Even fantastic beasts such as dragons and giants fell before the might of their magic like so much wheat to a scythe. This, of course, marked the end of their reign.

This is not the contradiction it seems, especially considered in the light of the warlike history of Midannis. From its first year of inception, the empire of Midannis engaged in a war somewhere along its borders. This constant strife may have kept the empire from becoming more numerous or achieving more lasting landmarks to its passing, but the conflicts provided unflagging momentum for Midannis to grow. When Midannis grew so powerful that its scouts could no longer find new frontiers to challenge, that ceaseless drive failed them and the once-glorious empire crumbled. Not from conquest, but from want of it.

-A passage from Palandar's Lexicon of the Midannian Wars, Volume 37 of 37

choosing the battlefield and time that best suits you is an important tactic, especially for mages.

Abjuration Magic

The spells in this section keep the guidelines of the school as discussed in the **Overview** in mind. These new defensive spells usually have defined areas of effect, are generally sharable with others without requiring a different version of the spell, and they focus on negating harm or the potential for others to inflict such harm. Auras, fields and globes define most of the areas of effect, and many of these new spells, like *minor warding* or *creaturebane* have variable forms chosen at the time of casting.

Also as mentioned in the **Overview**, these spells are not all without offensive capability. *Repercussion* and its *greater* form are deadly spells, but only

function if the recipient is attacked while protected by the spell. Another spell, *shielding star*, defends the recipient directly while absorbing energy from each blocked attack. At any point during its duration, *shielding star* can be turned into a blast of force. None of these are exactly devastating battle spells, but they provide a weapon of finesse for a clever abjurer skilled in their use.

Three spell descriptors are reintroduced in this section; they have all appeared in previous Encyclopaedia Arcane volumes. Focused spells are castable by any mage but have an additional or greater effect if cast by a specialist of the spell's school. Prime spells are ones that work only on the caster's home plane. Anyone can learn a Prime spell if they otherwise qualify to do so, but cannot prepare or cast one unless they are on their home plane. Contingent spells can only be cast by a spellcaster with access to a secondary school of magic. This school access must be from the same spellcasting class that provides the contingent spell. Thus, a specialist wizard cannot cast a contingent spell if the second school it requires is one of the wizard's banned ones, even if he also has access to the second school because of a level of sorcerer. These definitions for the focused, contingent and prime spell descriptors supersede previous versions.

in effect. *Bloodbane* bolsters your blood and protects you from any alterations, changes or interference.

This makes you immune to *wounding* effects, negates poisons that inflict Constitution or Strength damage, and prevents you from being *polymorphed* into any form outside your own type. While in effect, you automatically stabilise if brought below zero hit points and you regenerate as if wearing the ring of the same name. Creatures that attack by draining or drinking your blood cannot do so effectively, inflicting only what hit point damage is normally associated with such an attack.

Material Component: A single drop of blood from an animal, beast, or humanoid with a 16 or higher Constitution.

Bloodbane
Abjuration (Contingent)
Level: Sor/Wiz 5
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: You or creature touched
Duration: 10 minutes per level
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates if unwilling
Spell Resistance: Yes

As a contingent spell, *bloodbane* requires that the caster have access to the necromantic school of magic from the same spellcasting class that provides the *bloodbane* spell slot.

When cast, *bloodbane* makes the circulatory system and fluids in the body glow faintly with a crimson light. This cannot normally be seen, though the recipient's eyes flicker red in dim light. Other than that, there is no visible effect of this spell while it is

Courage
Abjuration
Level: Sor/Wiz 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: You or 1 creature touched per 2 caster levels
Duration: 10 minutes

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes

The arcane version of similar divine spells, courage wards the mind against fear and emotional effects caused by outside sources. Any time within the duration of the spell that the protected recipient has to make a Will save versus such an effect, this spell lets the caster automatically make the save. Once courage operates once, it is negated for the recipient in question, though its effects do not end for others. This spell occurs automatically, regardless of the recipient's wishes, as long as the fear or emotion effect involved offers a will save.

Creaturebane

Abjuration (Force, Mind-Affecting)
Level: Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
Area: 30-ft.radius spherical emanation, centred on you
Duration: 2 rounds per level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

When cast, you must name a creature type as listed in *Core Rulebook III*. A shimmering dome springs up instantly, covering the ground at its base and filling the spell's area with a coloured light of your choice. No creature of the chosen type can come in or out of the dome, being both physically incapable and mentally repelled from doing so. Spell-like abilities or supernatural powers that would normally allow the creature to bypass a force effect can still be used, but the creature must make a will saving throw to do so. Otherwise, the attempted action fails. Only one will save is allowed, and failure prevents the creature in question from trying to bypass the ward again. Success allows the creature to bypass freely, the wall no longer in existence for it.

Material Component: A one-inch piece of turtle shell, soaking in a potion of fear. (This spell does not consume the potion when cast.)

Deathbane

Abjuration (Contingent)
Level: Sor/Wiz 6
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: Touch
Target: You or creature touched
Duration: Special
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes

As a contingent spell, *deathbane* requires that the caster have access to the necromantic school of magic from the same spellcasting class that provides the *deathbane* spell slot.

A powerful abjuration, this spell makes you immune to death effects and uses of negative energy an indeterminate amount of time. When cast, the spell has a number of 'charges' equal to your caster level. These last until used or until one hour per caster level has elapsed. Then, all remaining levels fade. While *deathbane* is active, each time you are affected by a death effect, energy drain, or negative energy use (such as the various *inflict* spells), the effect is negated and you lose 1 charge per point of Charisma bonus the attacking creature possesses (minimum of

one). A partially negated effect does half its damage. No reciprocal effect occurs to the creature negated; this spell merely protects you from its negative energy damage and/or death effects.

As a curious side effect, while deathbane is active, you suffer no adverse effects from Constitution loss from any source. You still lose the Constitution points and if the spell ends while you are at 0 Constitution, you still die but, during *deathbane's* duration, you do not lose hit points, Fortitude save bonuses, or suffer any other ill effect of losing Constitution.

Material Components: A Constitution effecting poison and any cure potion, combined and drunk as part of the spellcasting. Neither affects the caster in any way.

Elemental Bastion
Abjuration
Level: Sor/Wiz 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: You or creature touched
Duration: 1 hour per level of caster
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes
As *endure elements*, but with the exception of its duration and the variable nature of its effect. *Elemental bastion* allows you to choose the element to be *endured* at the time of casting. Otherwise, this functions exactly as the named spell.

Elemental bastion can be used to counter any first level spell that has a fire, sonic, acid, cold, or electrical designator.

Fortify Weapon/Armour
Abjuration (Force)
Level: Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: Touch
Target: Armour or weapon touched
Duration: 1 minute/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (object)

When cast on a weapon, this spell grants a hardness of 40 that cannot be bypassed by any non-magical

means. This field also allows the weapon to be used for Sunder attempts regardless of the defending weapon's bonus, though it adds no bonus to damage and does not actually make the weapon 'magical' for any other purpose.

When cast on armour, it gains a certain level of fortification as per the special armour quality of the same name. The level gained is based on caster level; light (7th-10th), medium (11th-14th), or heavy (15th up). Again, this does not actually enchant the armour, nor does it enhance the armour bonus provided by the target item.

Material component: A pinch of dragon scale dust (any colour) or a vial of rust from a destroyed iron golem.

Greater Repercussion
Abjuration
Level: Sor/Wiz 8
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round per level (d)
Saving Throw: Fortitude half
Spell Resistance: Yes

As *lesser repercussion*, but the damage returned is 150% of what is done to you. All other facets of this spell's effects (applicable attack types, Fortitude save for half damage, etc.) are unchanged. You can choose at the time of casting, as with the previous spell, to make your repercussion damage subdual, but this decision cannot be changed during the duration of the spell afterward.

Greater Shielding Star
Abjuration (Force)
Level: Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
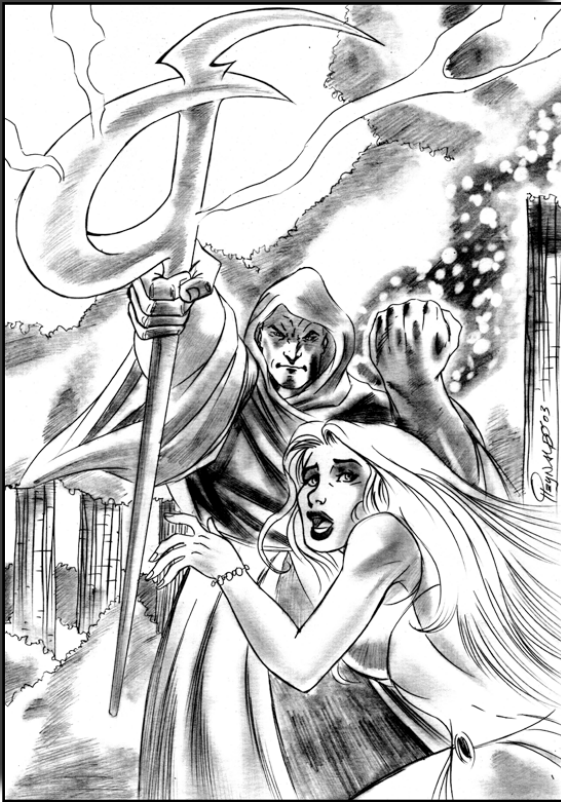**Duration:** 2 minutes per caster level
Saving Throw: None (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes

Similar to *shielding star*, save that the deflection bonus provided by the star is +4. If the *greater*

shielding star is directed against a foe that targets the caster with a ranged touch spell or ray attack, it can negate the spell or ray attack automatically. If the *greater shielding star* does this, its duration immediately ends.

Arcane Focus: A special masterwork buckler worth 1,200 gold pieces. As with *shielding star*, this buckler becomes the *star* and reappears when the spell ends.

Lesser Repercussion
Abjuration (Force)
Level: Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round per level (d)
Saving Throw: Fortitude half
Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell surrounds you in a billowing aura of force that covers you completely from head to toe. This aura glows, but does not provide sufficient illumination to act as a light source. While *lesser repercussion* is active, the wearer cannot make effective Hide checks against a target he does not have at least 50% cover from. The aura cannot be concealed through illusion or other means without negating its effects completely. While this spell is active, any melee weapon, touch, or unarmed attack that successfully hits you and does damage has 50% of that damage rebounded unerringly back on the attacker. A target who successfully evades *repercussion* damage through Spell Resistance does not end this spell prematurely and must check again each time this spell attempts to damage it.

The damage reflected back is a projection of magical force, does not reduce the damage you took initially, and only inflicts 50% of what you actually lost from the attack. It does not react to ranged attacks, and spells that do not require a melee touch attack and inflict damage are unaffected. Any other form of *repercussion* supersedes this spell; they do not stack even with their own versions. If you are protected by *lesser repercussion* and a new copy of the spell is cast on you, its duration becomes the new duration of your effect, its saving throw DC is used, and no other changes occur.

At the time of this spell's casting, you can choose for all of the damage it reflects to be subdual. Once this decision is made, it cannot be changed for the duration of the spell. If the spell is ended prematurely and cast again, a new decision can be made.

Material Component: 50 gold pieces worth of diamond dust, blown into the air as part of the casting.

Major Globe of Invulnerability
Abjuration
Level: Sor/Wiz 8
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 10 feet
Area: 10-ft. radius spherical emanation, centred on you
Duration: 2 rounds per level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

As *lesser globe of invulnerability*, except that it excludes 5th level spells from its radius of effect. Also, the globe now moves with you, assuming

you move no faster than a single move during a given round. Moving faster or using any sort of teleportation effect does not disrupt this spell, but it is left motionless at the origin point of such a move and remains there for the duration of its effect.

Minor Ward
Abjuration
Level: Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Very Close (5 ft. + 5 feet per 2 levels)
Area: Creature touched, 20-ft. wide wall, or 10-ft. radius spherical emanation centred on target
Duration: 1 minute per level
Saving Throw: Special, see text
Spell Resistance: Yes

Through an application of pure abjuration magic, you are able to create a ward against almost any single effect you can imagine. This ward takes the shape of an aura around a target creature (which can be yourself), a one-foot thick and twenty-foot wide wall of magical energy, or a sphere surrounding (and moving with, if necessary) a target creature or object. The ward can take any non-opaque appearance you desire, though it will never shed enough radiance to be useful as a light source.

This spell is limited in that it must be fairly specific. It can ward against a single descriptor of spell (fire, force, mind-affecting, etc.), a class of weapon damage (slashing, piercing, or bludgeoning), an exotic damage type (poison, disease, starvation, etc.), or a type of creature (humanoid, magical beast, dragon, etc.). The warded effect cannot pass through the spell's area, keeping anything protected by safe from harm.

When the *ward* makes contact with the thing it is attuned to prevent, you must make a caster level check against either the caster's level of the warded effect + 10, the DC of the exotic effect, the maximum non-critical damage the weapon can achieve in a single swing by its current wielder using its current attack mode + 5, or opposed by the creature's Will save. Success prevents the warded effect from penetrating. If you fail this check, the effect gets through but does not bring down the ward. If you roll a natural 1 on this level check, the ward

drops immediately and the effect that prompted it penetrates automatically.

Repercussion
Abjuration
Level: Sor/Wiz 5
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 round per level (d)
Saving Throw: Fortitude half
Spell Resistance: Yes

As lesser repercussion, but the damage returned is 100% of what is done to you. All other facets of this spell's effects (applicable attack types, Fortitude save for half damage, etc.) are unchanged. You can choose at the time of casting, as with the previous spell, to make your repercussion damage subdual, but this decision cannot be changed during the duration of the spell afterward.

Sensebane
Abjuration (Contingent)
Level: Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: You and/or creatures touched, up to 1 target per 2 caster levels
Duration: 1 minute per level or until dispelled
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

As a contingent spell, *sensebane* requires that the caster have access to the illusion school of magic from the same spellcasting class that provides the *sensebane* spell slot.

Those protected by *sensebane* become *invisible* as per the 2nd level illusion spell of the same name, but this magic works by protecting the targets from detection due to senses of any sort. The warded beings cannot be seen, felt, smelled, tasted or heard. In addition, special senses such as Scent or Tremorsense are unable to detect the warded creatures accurately, giving the detecting being only a general sense of something present nearby. This is not enough warning to foil sneak attacks or

allow accurate targeting however, though it may spoil surprise round possibilities at the Games Master's option.

Any action that would disrupt invisibility disrupts *sensebane*. Unlike invisibility, this spell fades out, remaining in effect for everyone protected by it until the end of the round it was disrupted in. When sensebane fades out, it ceases functioning for everyone protected by that casting of the spell, not just the one that disrupted it.

Material Component: An eye, a tongue, an earlobe, a nose, and a fingertip or claw. Each of these must come from the same type of creature and are all consumed in the casting.

Shielding Star
Abjuration (Force)
Level: Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 2 rounds per level (d)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

I am not certain that I like this new spell. I have cast it twice now, both in extreme circumstances. Both times, the sheer rush of high invulnerability has kept me in the fray far longer that I normally wish to remain. It has made me reckless and that is a sure path to death. I have prided myself for years on my good caution, but this spell, pulled from the remains of an ancient tomb, threatens to turn me into that most dreaded of creatures – an adventurer.

Similar to a *shield* spell, *shielding star* creates a glowing star-shaped field of force to encircle and protect you. The star has to be directed against a single target's attacks, much like the dodge feat. Against any attack made by that target, the caster gets a +4 deflection bonus to AC. The star can circle around you and thus blocks the target's attacks regardless of what direction they come from.

This spell has an offensive side as well. Each attack made by the target opponent that does not hit is assumed to be blocked by the star. Each blocked attack adds one d6 to its pool of stored energy. At any point during the star's duration, you may unleash the star's pool of energy in a force ray attack against the target opponent as a free action. The star can hold up to 1d6 per caster level and, once used to attack, the spell ends immediately.

Because of the small size of the star's effect and its focused attention on a single target, it stacks with shield whenever they overlap between you and the target.

Arcane Focus: Any masterwork buckler, which becomes the star until the end of its duration.

Sovereign Self
Abjuration (Prime)
Level: Sor/Wiz 6
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
Target: You
Duration: 1 hour
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

By imbuing yourself with abjurative energies, you render your body nearly immune to physical harm

for the duration of this spell. You gain +6/30 damage reduction, complete invulnerability to normal weapons of any kind, 15 points of *resist energy* to all five basic types and you take half damage from all force effects. You cannot be poisoned, diseased, or polymorphed while *sovereign self* is in effect. You do not need to eat, breathe or sleep. Your statistics cannot be affected for good or ill, returning to their base values regardless of their current status. You do not suffer subdual damage, nor are you subject to pain effects of any sort. Your wounds do not bleed and you can fight and act freely beyond 0 hit points. At -10 hit points, you cease to be able to physically function and fall prone. If this spell ends while you are at -10 hit points or less, you die.

Sovereign self's only true weakness is its all-inclusive nature. You cannot benefit from any transmutation spell effect, including *teleport* and *teleport, greater* or healing magic of any sort. Any other abjuration magic, including items made with abjuration (such as *bracers of armour*) ceases to function for you during *sovereign self's* duration.

There are two spells that will stack with sovereign self despite the limitations listed above. *Transformation* and your own personally cast *mage armour* will function on you while this spell is in effect. If *transformation* is cast on you while you are affected by *sovereign self*, both spells become linked in duration. Both spells last as long as the *sovereign self*, and if one is dispelled, both are negated.

Material Component: A vial of blood from a tarrasque or great wyrm dragon of any type.

Sovereign Shield
Abjuration (Prime)
Level: Sor/Wiz 5
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: You or creature touched
Duration: 1 minute per level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes

As *shield*, but *sovereign shield* protects in all directions simultaneously. It also absorbs all force designator spells and effects directed at you and dissipates them harmlessly, though it does not disrupt force effects already in place. *Magic missiles* directed at you extend the duration by one minute per magic missile spell, to a maximum of double its original duration.

Sovereign shield also cushions impact damage, reducing by half any damage taken from falling, crushing traps, or other massive blunt trauma. The Games Master is the final arbiter on what qualifies for this reduction, but in general it does not include bludgeoning melee or ranged attacks from other creatures regardless of their size or severity.

Material Component: A single scale from a tarrasque or great wyrm dragon of any type.

Sovereign Strike
Abjuration (Prime)
Level: Sor/Wiz 9
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: One weapon or ranged attack spell
Duration: 1 round or next attack
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

In many ways a form of anti-abjuration, *sovereign strike* wreathes a single melee weapon, ranged weapon, or spell emanation requiring an attack roll with powerful energies, causing it to flare intensely with unchecked magical forces. This aura allows the weapon or emanation to strike true regardless of protective spells and/or effect that might prevent its success. This single blow hits automatically, is the only attack that can be made that round by the wielder of the target weapon, and is automatically a critical if one is possible or effective against the creature struck.

Once the attack hits, its damage and effects are resolved normally and applied to the target, who receives no saving throw against any part of the attack that would normally allow one or any benefit from abjuration spells and effects upon its person. For the purposes of *sovereign strike* and the affected attack, the opponent essentially has an unmissable Armour Class and bears no special defences of any kind. Even absolute immunity due to subtype or race is no protection, allowing *sovereign strike* to

inflict fire damage from a *flaming burst* longsword on a red dragon.

The opponent struck by an attack enhanced through this spell does not actually lose any of its Armour Class or defences; they are just suspended for the attack in question. All other attacks, even those that occur simultaneously with the *sovereign strike*, interact normally with the creature.

Material Component: A tooth or claw from a tarrasque or great wyrm dragon of any type.

Spellbane
Abjuration (Contingent)
Level: Sor/Wiz 8
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: You and/or creature touched
Duration: 1 hour (d)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

As a contingent spell, *spellbane* requires that the caster have access to the chosen warded school of magic from the same spellcasting class that provides the *spellbane* spell slot.

The recipient of this spell becomes completely and totally immune to one school of magic and its effects. This protection extends to up to 250 pounds worth of creatures and any equipment (within reason, Games Master's discretion) in physical contact with the recipient. This immunity cannot be breached in any way by less than divine level effects and *spellbane* cannot be targeted by any form of dispelling magic. In effect, the body of the recipient is treated as an anti-magical area with respect to the chosen school.

Material Component: An iron needle, a 10 gp gemstone of any sort, and a lead coin.

Superior Dispel Magic
Abjuration
Level: Sor/Wiz 9
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
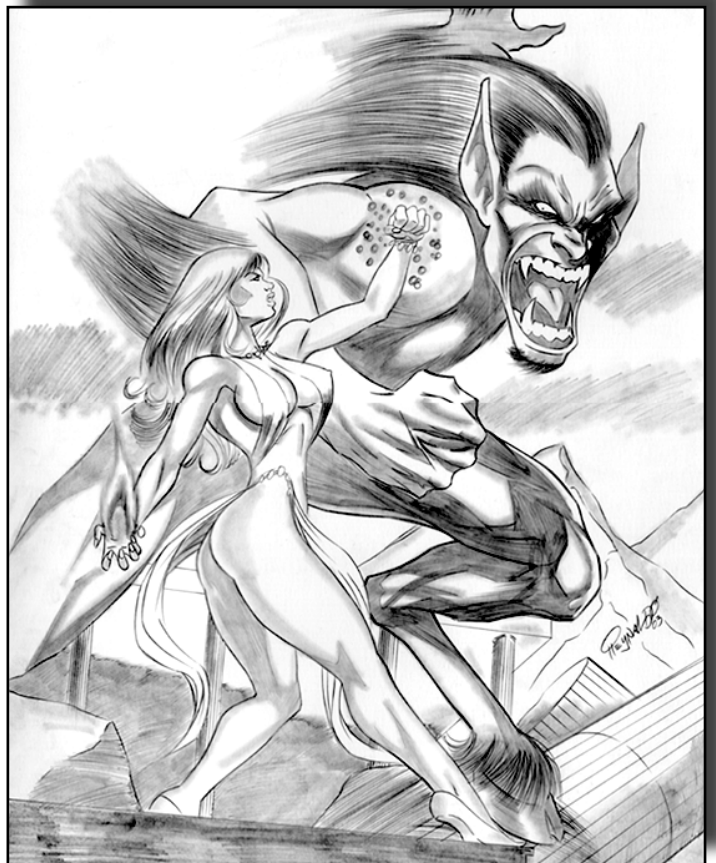
Target or Area: One spellcaster, creature, or object; or 30-ft. radius burst
Duration: 1 hour (d)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

As *dispel magic*, except that there is no maximum bonus on the caster level check made for this spell, if any. Additionally, superior *dispel magic* has a chance to remove any form of magical effect or condition, even ones *dispel magic* cannot, subject to a caster level check against the effect's creator.

Thoughtbane
Abjuration
Level: Sor/Wiz 1
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: You and/or creature touched
Duration: 1 hour (d)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

The protected creature is protected from mind reading, *detect thoughts* spells, and any form of psionic or mental attack. This defence is not absolute, but it does allow the recipient to make a Will saving throw against any attempted intrusion, even if the mental effect does not normally allow one. Success negates the attempted contact or attack. This consumes the *thoughtbane* if the effect negated was actually psionic or did not normally allow a Will save.

Material Component: A 10 gold piece value amethyst and an infusion of willow bark.

Touch of Transference
Abjuration
Level: Sor/Wiz 7
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: Special, see text
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell allows you to grant any or all of the abjuration spells currently operating on your person with another creature by touch. This must be a melee touch attack if done in combat, but is otherwise considered automatic if circumstances allow. The touch cannot transfer any spell of higher than 6th level, does not circumvent the rules for stacking spells and cannot transfer a spell to an invalid target. (Note that for the purposes of this spell, an abjuration spell with a Target of 'You' does not invalidate transferral.) The exchange happens instantaneously upon touch, with the target creature gaining the desired spells with the balance of their duration and effects.

If a transferred abjuration spell has an ablative nature, like *protection from energy* or *stoneskin*, this spell refreshes its values for the new target. Thus, a transferred stoneskin with only 14 points of absorption left regains its full potential of 10 points per caster level for the new recipient. To calculate level dependent variables like this, the abjuration spell is treated as being cast the *touch's* caster level.

Once transferred, the abjuration spells in question cannot be transferred again, nor can they be dismissed by the recipient or the caster any longer.

True Bane
Abjuration
Level: Sor/Wiz 9
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: Varies
Target: Varies
Duration: Varies
Saving Throw: Varies
Spell Resistance: Varies

The highest form of the *bane* spells, *true bane* can duplicate the effects of 9 levels of lesser *bane* spells chosen at the time of its casting. These nine levels can be divided up in any way among the 8 *bane* spells and all nine need not be used. All DCs or level dependent variables of the duplicate spells use the level of *true bane* instead. This spell is a special exception to the number of spells that can be cast in a single round, as the multiple *banes* generated only count as a single spell.

For example, a wizard could cast *true bane* and generate the effects of *bloodbane* and two different *weaponbanes* (against slashing and piercing weapons respectively). All of these effects occur as soon as the true bane's casting time ends. The duration for each effect equals the duration of the duplicated spell.

Arcane Focus: A spellbook valued at 2,000 gp in materials value, containing a complete set of the nine bane spells. Each one must be penned in ink made from your blood. Thus, these foci cannot be used by anyone but you.

Wardbane
Abjuration
Level: Sor/Wiz 7
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 round
Range: Touch
Target: You or creature touched
Duration: 5 minutes per level
Saving Throw: No
Spell Resistance: Yes

The creature protected by this spell is defended against the effect of magical wards, literally being invisible to them for its duration. While under the effects of *wardbane*, you can handle items protected by hanging magic like *glyphs* and *symbols*, *fire trap*, *explosive runes*, or other warding spells. You can safely pass through any area protected by a magical trap and may freely ignore the effects of any spell with the word 'ward', 'wards' or 'warding' in its name. (The Games Master is free to disallow this in the case of spells that may have the word in its name but does not qualify as warding magic in his opinion.) Your familiar is also protected only if it is in physical contact with you, but you cannot extend the protection to other creatures.

Material Component: A leather glove once worn by a rogue while successfully disarming a magical trap.

Weaponbane
Abjuration
Level: Sor/Wiz 7
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: You or creature touched
Duration: 1 minute per level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes

When you cast this spell, you must choose a type of weapon damage (slashing, piercing, or bludgeoning). You, or the creature to you bestow this spell upon, enjoy utter immunity to attacks from physical weapons of the chosen type. *Brilliant energy* bypasses this defence, and the immunity is only to the weapon itself. Bonus damage from any source, such as high Strength, magical enchantments, or feats, still gets through. This damage is considered subdual, regardless of its original source.

Because the chosen weapon type does not penetrate this defence itself, any special effects carried by the weapon fail to affect you if they are dependent on inflicting real damage. Thus, *wounding* does not apply on strikes from the chosen weapon, poisons are not transferred and critical threats from the chosen weapon type cannot confirm. The Games Master is free to allow or disallow other effects on a case-by-case basis.

Material Component: A piece of a metal shield and a drop of honing oil.

Word of Warding I
Abjuration (Focused)
Level: Sor/Wiz 1
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 action (see text)
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: Target spell
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

This is a special form of castable counterspell, useful because it works to counter any spell of its own level or lower. *Word of warding* can be defaulted to as a spellcasting action in any round you have not yet acted in. It can also simply be used as the spell spent during a standard counterspelling action. Outside of a counterspell context, this spell has no real effect and does nothing visible if cast normally.

Word of warding, if defaulted to, is the only action the caster can take in the given round. This action is treated as spellcasting and provokes an Attack of

Opportunity. Counterspelling with *word of warding* is treated exactly like using the spell *dispel magic* to do so with one important difference. When rolling the caster level check, you gain a bonus equal to your Charisma modifier.

Focused Effect: If you are an abjuration specialist, a successful counterspelling attempt inflicts your caster level in subdual damage to the originator of the countered spell.

Word of Warding II
Abjuration (Focused)
Level: Sor/Wiz 2
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: Target spell
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

As *word of warding*, save that it acts to counter spells of 2nd level or lower.

Word of Warding III
Abjuration (Focused)
Level: Sor/Wiz 3
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: Target spell
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

As *word of warding*, save that it acts to counter spells of 3rd level or lower.

Word of Warding IV
Abjuration (Focused)
Level: Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Target: Target spell
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

As *word of warding*, save that it acts to counter spells of 4th level or lower and has an improved range as noted above. Also, counterspelling with this spell acts as *greater dispelling*.

Word of Warding V
Abjuration (Focused)
Level: Sor/Wiz 5
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Target: Target spell
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

As *word of warding*, save that it acts to counter spells of 5th level or lower and has an improved range as noted above. Also, counterspelling with this spell acts as *greater dispelling*.

Word of Warding VI
Abjuration (Focused)
Level: Sor/Wiz 6
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Target: Target spell
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

As *word of warding*, save that it acts to counter spells of 6th level or lower and has an improved range as noted above. Also, counterspelling with this spell acts as *greater dispelling*.

Word of Warding VII
Abjuration (Focused)
Level: Sor/Wiz 7
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Target: Target spell
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

As *word of warding*, save that it acts to counter spells of 7th level or lower and has an improved range as

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Target: Target spell
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

As *word of warding*, save that it acts to counter spells of 8th level or lower and has an improved range as noted above. Also, counterspelling with this spell acts as *superior dispel magic*.

Word of Warding IX
Abjuration (Focused)
Level: Sor/Wiz 9
Components: V
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Target: Target spell
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

As *word of warding*, save that it acts to counter spells of 9th level or lower and has an improved range as noted above. Also, counterspelling with this spell acts as *superior dispel magic*.

noted above. Also, counterspelling with this spell acts as *superior dispel magic*.

Word of Warding VIII
Abjuration (Focused)
Level: Sor/Wiz 8
Components: V

Four days down here with his charges felt like an eternity. Arrien found himself closer each day to simply teleporting home and leaving them to their fate. Only duty, a sense of commitment to the Shieldbearer's Code and his pride kept him here. As he glared across the firelight at their sleeping forms, he momentarily contemplated flaming the lot, but dismissed it quickly as a poor idea. With his luck, one or two of them would survive and as fools were wont to do, escape to report the murders. Still, some small part of him found the thought of them burning very appealing.

He needed sleep. Arrien was exhausted and he knew it. He would be sleeping even now, but the lot of them decided to give him first watch. Over his weary protests, they had all bedded down after making him set up camp. He was not used to this kind of heavy physical labour and he intended to lodge a formal protest against their treatment as soon as he made it make to civilisation.

Assuming, of course, any of them made it out of this festering hole. He hated underground travel, especially through ancient ruins still crawling with the undead remains of former inhabitants. He had signed on for overland travel only, but then this group's great lummox of a leader just 'happened' to see this cave mouth off the trail. Given that Sir Yarrin could not find a chamberpot with both hands and a lantern, he was fairly certain he had been set up.

Oh yes, there would be a report. A great, sprawling, massive report big enough to choke the lot of them with. The thought of it made him smile as he watched them while they slept…

Magical Items

Looking through the magical items in *Core Rulebook II* shows a remarkable trend towards items with abjurative powers. From armour properties to magic bracers, protective rings, and other defensive items, there is a vast selection of abjuration items to choose from. Together with transmutation and evocation, abjuration seems a very popular school for enchanting.

It makes good sense, of course. Abjuration's single most limiting factor is the short duration many of its spells suffer from. By putting these brief but potent spells into an item, a wearer can benefit from such magic indefinitely. Even if the items are charged, they offer protection in a more convenient, need-oriented form. The simplest and most popular of these is probably *bracers of armour*, a form of wearable *mage armour* spell that can actually surpass the original magic. (Astute readers will note that *mage armour* is a conjuration spell, not abjuration. The principle of defence remains the same, however.)

Abjuration items, while wonderful and incredibly useful, do have their drawbacks. While *bracers of armour* are in every way superior to mundane armour, a wearer who finds himself in an anti-magic area suddenly only has some nifty, oversized bracelets between him and attacks. The first time a person wreathed in protective magic gets *disjoined*, he will learn the agony of having all one's defensive eggs in one easily overturned basket. Reliance on magic can be fatal, especially if you do not have a back up plan for what to do when the magic goes away.

The items in this section make good use of abjuration's strengths, protecting their users in a variety of ways. Some, like the *prismatic lenses*, defend the wearer from light and pattern related attacks, using very straightforward defensive magic. Others are more active, requiring direct use to be effective. Items like the *spellshatter gauntlet* or the *rod of countering* fall into this category. Regardless of their uses or abilities, abjurative items are invaluable tools for anyone who wishes to survive the rigours of an adventuring lifestyle.

They are even more valuable to abjurers in specific. Any item that casts abjuration spells frees up the need for an abjurer to prepare that spell each day. He can then take other spells, allowing him to better tailor his spell selection around the powers granted by the item. This improves the general quality of his defences and leaves him better able to defend himself and those who depend on him for support. Thus, any abjuration item becomes very valuable.

A good example of this effect is the *bastion star*, an enchanted gem that casts several different defensive spells and regains them through exposure to starlight. An abjurer with the *bastion star* can prepare more exotic defensive spells, as the *star* can cast most of his basic ones for him. Conversely, the *circlet of denial* provides *banishment, dismissal, forbiddance* and *repulsion* as supernatural abilities for the wearer. As such, the abjurer can prepare basic defences in place of these less common spells.

Armbands of Resilience

These items always come in pairs; both must be worn to gain any benefit from their magic. Crafted from adamantine, *armbands of resilience* are generally unadorned, save for a circular inscription of magical runes along both rims. When worn, they render the wearer immune to Constitution damage of any sort, stunning effects, daze effects and death by massive damage. The wearer suffers normal damage from coup de grace attempts, but cannot be slain outright by them as the *armbands of resilience* automatically allow him to succeed at the required Fortitude save for survival.

If the wearer is taken to -1 or fewer hit points but not slain outright, he automatically stabilises and regenerates 1 hit point per round until he returns to 1 hit point. The *armbands* do not heal further than this, but there is no limit to the number of times per day they can bring back a wearer from negative hit points. If the wearer is ever brought to -10 hit points, the magic of the *armbands* cannot save him.

Caster Level: 5th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Items, *endurance, cure minor wounds* or *vampiric touch,* 5+ ranks in Heal*; Market Price:* 33,500 gp.

The cultists had them pinned down again. Arrien was in the lead, warding off the black-cowled wizard's attempts to rain down fiery destruction on the group. Rod in one hand, he was drawing heavily on its magic to disperse each blazing spell as it came rushing towards him. Back against the corner of the room, Sir Yarrin shouted orders at him. He was blithely ignoring the paladin, who had long since proven himself to be a complete idiot.

'Mind the right flank! Those wizards are casting fire spells! We need protection from flame now! Surely you have that magic, don't you? Come back here! We aren't paying you to just stand there!'

Arrien winced as a flight of fireballs came hurtling in from the array of enemy mages in the gallery. If Yarrin and his team would be useful and actually engage these wizards, he would not be pinned down like he was now. If he moved an inch or did anything other than counter their spells, one of them would get through his defence and roast them all. With a silent command to the rod, he held it aloft and let it drain magic from him to generate a field of negation. The fireballs sizzled harmless off it and vanished.

Then, with a hissing crack, the rod shuddered in his grasp and cracked down its length. The jeweled eyes of the dragons on its ends flared brightly, then shattered and burned out. The cultists of Kreng, seeing this, came rushing forward with glittering daggers at the ready. Behind him, he heard the charge of booted feet approaching quickly. Now they were ready to fight?!?

Arrien opened a small hole in the dimensions and reappeared on the far side of the room. He stared down at his shattered rod, a gift from his first Master. From here, he could see the fight. Yarrin and the others were making short work of the cultists now that they were out of spells. At least he had done his job. Exhausting the enemy was a valid service and one he could feel proud of, even if it had come at a terrible price.

'Hey, Shieldbearer!' came the shrieking voice of Kilierah over the din of slaughter. 'You going to be useful or just stand there like a slack-jaw all day?'

With a curse of frustration, he cast a fireball of his own in her direction. She was surrounded by cultists, so it would not likely hit her. She was agile, so she would probably dodge. Either way worked for him…

Bastion Star

A fist-sized crystal orb, usually made of smoky quartz or obsidian, the *bastion star* is a powerful tool in the hands of an arcane spellcaster. When used, the *star* pulses with a flickering inner light. The *bastion star* possesses the following powers, each usable as a standard action; *mage armour (1 charge), shield (1 charge), protection from chaos/evil/law/good (1 charge), protection from arrows (2 charges), resist elements (2 charges),* and *nondetection (3 charges).* The *star* holds 10 charges, recovering them instantly each night at midnight if exposed to starlight at that time.

One special quality of the spells cast by the *bastion star* is that even spells not normally allowed to target others (such as *shield*) can be bestowed to them by touching the *star* to the target when the spell is invoked.

Caster Level: 5th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Items, *mage armour, shield, protection from chaos/evil/law/good, protection from arrows, resist elements, nondetection, mnemonic enhancer,* creator must have School Focus (abjuration)*; Market Price:* 54,500 gp.

Bracers of True Defense

Generally created as reinforced protective devices for the forearms, these well-crafted bracers are almost always made of metal and leather. They seldom bear gemstones or fancy decorations, eschewing such finery for solid, sturdy construction. These act as *bracers of armour* of varying quality combined with a constant *resist elements* spell. This *resist* covers all five element types and protects the wearer from the first 5 points of each type taken each round. In addition, *bracers of true defence* add half of their armour bonus (rounded down, minimum of +1) to all saving throws as a resistance bonus.

Creating *bracers of true defence* is a difficult, very costly undertaking. Each time a creator attempts to make these items, there is a 10% chance per point of armour bonus that the bracers are faulty, acting only as normal *bracers of armour*. Doubling the crafting time necessary reduces this chance by half. In any case, the full creation cost of *bracers of true defence* must be paid each time, even if the results are a 'failure'.

Caster Level: 7th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Items, *mage armour, resist elements, resistance,* creator's class level must be twice that of the armour bonus provided by the bracers*; Market Price:* 5,000 gp (+1), 9,000 gp (+2), 15,000 gp (+3), 25,000 gp (+4), 36,000 gp (+5), 47,000 gp (+6), 64,000 gp (+7), 79,000 gp (+8), 95,000 gp (+9), or 104,000 gp (+10); Weight 1 lb.

Circlet of Denial

Normally created by conclaves of priests and mages dedicated to protecting the world from the dangers of extradimensional creatures, these circlets are only rarely seen outside of their service. Seldom appearing as random treasure, each circlet has a story behind it as each one was crafted for a specific member of these conclaves. If found without a wearer, the *circlet of denial* has likely been separated from that owner by force.

Circlets of denial are usually iron and silver bands, braided in a knot work pattern and decorated with opals and rubies. Holy symbols to good or protective deities are often found engraved on them, though *circlets of denial* cannot normally be used as a focus for divine spells. Instead, once per day each as a supernatural ability, the circlet grants *forbiddance,*

dismissal, banishment and *repulsion*. In addition, the wearer gains a Spell Resistance of 21 against the spell-like abilities of extradimensional or summoned creatures.

Caster Level: 13th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Items, *forbiddance, repulsion, banishment, dismissal, holy aura* or *unholy aura; Market Price:* 64,000 gp.

Hellcowl

A deep hood and shoulder covering made of the same material as a *hellmantle*, the *hellcowl* is made to augment and focus the latter's powers. Without a *hellmantle*, the *hellcowl* exhibits no powers at all. When worn together, the *hellcowl* improves the armour bonus granted by the *hellmantle's* constant *mage armour* spell to +6. Also, the wearer enjoys a +2 profane (or sacred, depending on the construction) bonus to all saves. The Will save required for outsiders to physically attack the wearer increases by 2, making the base DC 17.

Lastly, all spells cast by the wearer against extradimensional creatures gain a +1 inherent bonus to saving throw DCs. This bonus stacks with the conditional +1 to abjuration spells offered by the *hellmantle*, granting a total of a +2 inherent bonus to the DCs for abjuration magic.

Caster Level: 11th, *Prerequisites*: Craft Wondrous Item*, resistance, sanctuary, protection from good (or evil),* Market Price: 26,000 gp.

Hellmantle

Usually wrought of demon hide and woven through with dark metal filaments, this sleeveless robe is a potent protective device of particular use to those who fight extradimensional creatures, especially those from the lower planes. The robe is always warm to the touch, even in freezing temperatures, and imparts this comfortable warmth to its wearer.

When worn by a spellcaster, the *hellmantle* casts as constant *mage armour*. It grants a continual *resist fire* and *resist cold* (10 points per round each). All abjuration spells cast by the wearer against extradimensional creatures gain a +1 inherent bonus to their save DCs, while any spells or spell-like abilities cast by such creatures against the wearer suffer a -1 inherent penalty to DCs.

Outsiders must succeed at a Will saving throw (DC 15) to physically attack the wearer. This save must be made each round, regardless of previous success. This protection is gained even if the wearer is not a spellcaster. If the wearer is a spellcaster, the Will save DC becomes 17. If the wearer is also an abjuration specialist, he can add his Charisma modifier to the save DC (minimum of +1, for a minimum Will saving throw DC of 18).

Caster Level: 7th, *Prerequisites*: Craft Wondrous Item, *mage armour, resist elements, sanctuary, protection from chaos/evil/law/good (any);* Market Price: 62,500 gp.

Potion of Retribution

Usually brewed as a milky, honey-tasting draught, a *potion of retribution* empowers the drinker to return some of the damage he suffers to his attackers. Each round for 1d4+1 rounds after he drinks the potion, the imbiber gains a touch attack he can use as one of his attacks for the round. The damage for this touch attack is equal to half the total damage he has suffered between the last touch attack and the current one. For the first touch attack, it does half the damage the drinker has taken since quaffing the potion. This damage potential is not cumulative and is lost if not taken each round.

The target for this touch attack receives a Fortitude save for half damage. This damage is considered a force effect, can affect objects, and must be directed at one of the drinker's enemies that has successfully struck and harmed him in the current combat.

Caster Level: 5th, *Prerequisites:* Brew Potion, *lesser repercussion**; Market Price: 900 gp.

Prismatic Lenses

These small cusps seem to be carved from pure diamond. Their tiny facets glimmer with multi-coloured auras that seem to shed their own faint light. In bright light, they are truly dazzling to behold. When worn, this effect surrounds the wearer's eyes, making him appear to have living rainbows for irises. The wearer of *prismatic lenses* cannot be dazzled and he is immune to any spell of 3rd level or lower with the pattern designator (*colour spray, hypnotic pattern,* etc.).

Caster Level: 5th, *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *dispel magic, colour spray*; Market Price: 9,000 gp.

Purespell Periapt

When worn, this rune-inscribed jewel generates a magical field around the wearer. The colour of this aura matches the colour of the gem; these *periapts* are usually made from emeralds, sapphires, or amethysts. The magical field negates the effects of any metamagic feats passing into or out of its 5-foot radius. The wearer of the *periapt* does not

These wounds are some of the strangest things I have had to deal with since coming to the front lines. Many of the afflicted soldiers here suffer from the kinds of injuries I was trained to deal with. Cuts and punctures are common enough. But these wounds, the ones on the men who held back the skirmisher charge from last night's raid, are very different. After the initial volley of crossbows and combat spells, the barbarians still standing began touching our troops. A strange magic sent many of our men flying back from these touches, bones liquefied and flesh torn in bizarre circular patterns.

I have been healing the wounded for hours now. My strength is almost spent, but I wanted to note the odd wounds in case one of my superiors had some idea what foul magic could do this to a man. I will ask in the morning, assuming the savages do not attack again. We killed or drove off hundreds of them last night, and our watch commander does not believe they'll try another raid today.

- Piece of a burned book recovered by soldiers from the ruins of Kaulgurg Keep

have to be the spell's original target. Any spell that passes through its field has its metamagic feat, if any, negated. If a metamagic-augmented spell has part of its area of effect occupied by the field of this item, the metamagic feats are only ignored by those within the field.

This does cancel any metamagic feats the wearer tries to use, but it also provides an unbeatable defence against the enhancements of others. Note that the protection of this item is constant. The wearer may not choose to permit certain feats while negating others. All metamagic feats cease to function while the *periapt* is worn. If taken off, the created field ends immediately.

Caster Level: 9th, *Prerequisites*: Craft Wondrous Item*, dispel magic,* any three metamagic feats*;* Market Price: 9,000 gp.

Rod of Countering

A potent tool for counterspelling, a *rod of countering* appears to be a silver rod about two feet long with roaring dragons carved into both ends. Gems, usually onyx on one end, diamond on the other, are inset for the eyes of the dragons. When held firmly in one hand and commanded as a free action, the *rod* activates. For as long as the bearer takes no other action or movement, the *rod of countering* automatically allows him to counterspell each and every spell he witnesses being cast and can identify with a Spellcraft check. The *rod* powers each counterspell with a spell of equivalent level from the bearer; this spell does not have to be the same as the countered spell. Instead, the rod takes a random spell of the equivalent level.

As long as the bearer has appropriate spells to fuel the counterspelling attempts, they automatically succeed and there is no limit to the number of counterspells the bearer can perform in a given round this way. If the bearer runs out of spells of the appropriate level and still wishes to counterspell, he may sacrifice a higher level slot to do so. This is dangerous, however, as it can overload the *rod* and destroy it.

Each time the bearer uses the *rod* to counter a spell using a spell of a higher level slot, the *rod of countering* must make a Fortitude save against a DC 10 + level of spell slot being expended. This save must be made each time such a counterspell is attempted. If the save fails, the counterspelling still occurs but the *rod* shatters and it ruined immediately thereafter.

A spellcaster must take great care when using a *rod of countering*. The ability it grants its bearer to counter hostile magic is impressive, but more than a few rounds of heavy use will quickly deplete a mage of his spell slots. This can leave the mage woefully drained and vulnerable. If used infrequently, however, a *rod of countering* can be a very impressive part of a spellcaster's arsenal.

Caster Level: 17th, Prerequisites: Craft Rod, superior dispel magic*, any feat involving counterspelling or the Spellcraft skill; Market Price: 90,000 gp.

Spellshatter Gauntlet

A full gauntlet of cold iron, this piece of armour is so incredibly intricate in design that it almost does not detract at all from the wearer's ability to cast spells. While it does invoke a 5% arcane spell failure chance, the benefits of wearing the *spellshatter gauntlet* more than make up for this

drawback. Anyone wearing one of these can use its primary power; spell catching. Once per round, the wearer can attempt to 'catch' any spell with him as its primary target.

This action takes the place of any standard or partial actions the wearer might be able to take in a given round, but once it is declared the wearer can catch a single spell no matter when it occurs before his next turn. Catching a spell requires that the wearer make a touch attack against an armour class of 10 + the caster's Charisma Modifier + the level of the spell. If the spell is successfully caught, it is negated completely, 'shattering' in a harmless explosion of light and sound.

If the wearer is a spellcaster, the *spellshatter gauntlet* does not have to negate the spell he catches. Instead, as his next standard action, he can throw the spell back at its original caster. The spell's level variable effects become based on the wearer's level or the original caster, whichever is lower.

As a side effect of its powers, the wearer of the *spellshatter gauntlet* gains a +2 circumstance bonus to all counterspelling checks and level checks made when casting *dispel magic* for any reason. Any spell countered or dispelled while wearing the *gauntlet* shatters as described above.

Minor Artifact

The Tower Arcane

A unique, five-foot tall tower shield, this massive bulwark is rimmed in mithril and made of a single piece of seamless darkwood. A mithril boss in the upper centre of the shield bears a design of a tower surrounded by a starburst. Glowing runes encircle the boss, indicating the powerful magic that lies within its martial frame. Far lighter than it appears, the *tower arcane* only weighs 10 pounds and is virtually effortless to carry and use.

Any being protected by this *+5 tower shield of heavy fortification* also benefits from a permanent *spell turning* effect. Like the cover from a *shield* spell, this *spell turning* protects the bearer from half the battlefield at a time. The orientation of this defence can be changed on the bearer's turn as a free action. Unlike the spell, the *turning* always achieves a high enough effect to turn an incoming spell. Against spells that cannot be turned, like spells with area effects that overlap him, the bearer gains SR 25 as long as he has the *tower arcane* equipped. Lastly, the bearer can invoke an *anti-magic field* that lasts as long as he wills it to. This *field*, amazingly, does not affect the weight of the shield, though all of its other properties are suspended until the *field* ends.

Forged and fashioned in an ancient age, the *tower arcane* serves its purpose now as well as it did then. Made to combat the encroachment of powerful wizardry, the *tower* has served with distinction on hundreds of battlefields and girded its bearers through countless conflicts. Violence follows the *tower arcane*, from powerful empires who desire the shield for their own wars to wizards who wish the accursed thing destroyed. In all its long history, nothing has ever marred its surface, much less damaged it. Thus, the *tower arcane* remains an invulnerable threat to spellcasters everywhere.

Major Artifact

An examination of the Spellguard, using what little remains of their lore, reveals one of the secrets to their success. Early in the formation of the elite group, artificers in the employ of the Crown created fantastic gauntlets of enspelled iron for the Guard to wear. These gauntlets were amazing constructions, as light as they were strong, and possessed of a powerful enchantment; the gauntlets could catch and hold a spell, allowing the Spellguard to intercept magical attacks and turn them back on their casters.

The process of creating these wondrous gauntlets is lost to us now, though the occasional functional specimen is found amid the ruins of Midannis. These items are nigh priceless, as much for their historical value as their practical applications. As an example of their usefulness, let us turn to the fifth War of Pacification and examine in detail…

- A passage from Palandar's Lexicon of the Midannian Wars, Volume 19 of 37

The Art of Oathwarding

The school of abjuration is all about one concept; protection. From simple, straightforward spells like *shield* and *protection from arrows* to magic that indirectly protects the spellcaster like *hold portal* and *dimensional anchor*, this school features effects that keep enemies at bay in many different ways. The idea of indirect protection is the key to placing many spells in the abjuration school that would seem to be representative of other kinds of magic. *Explosive runes* generate a very evocation effect, but their focus in defending a book or written surface make it abjuration instead.

This spell selection can make the school seem a little eclectic, but there are forms of abjuration that directly reflect the protective nature of this arcane speciality. Stepping outside the normal rote of spells and preparation, this abjuration magic is called oathwarding. Oathwarding is the art of channelling energy in the form of a binding oath to the powers of magic itself, either deities or more unfathomable beings that exist outside the normal cosmology of a world, into protecting the spellcaster, albeit at a serious cost.

An oathwarder must be an arcane spellcaster with a speciality in abjuration (at the Games Master's option, the School Focus (abjuration) feat will suffice) or a divine spellcaster with the Protection domain. To use the power of oathwarding, a qualified caster must be able to cast the spell *protection from energy*, either as a learned spell as a sorcerer, a scribed spell in the spellbook of a wizard, or the clerical version of the same magic. There is a long road to walk for prospective oathwarders before its power becomes available to them, but the risks, and there are many, are insignificant compared to the benefits of the art. Skilled oathwarders are sought after specialists, their ability to protect themselves and others from virtually any harmful effect making them valuable allies or implacable foes.

Becoming an Oathwarder

The first challenge on the path of the oathwarder is discovering the art itself. This can be introduced into a campaign in any number of ways, from a discovered tome such as the *Libram Aegis*, an ancient work by one of the first abjurers to discover the power, to veiled offers of teaching by demonic entities looking to trade the art to skilled spellcasters in exchange for fealty and future favours. The possibilities are endless, but learning about oathwarding can and should be an adventure in itself.

Once a spellcaster is on the right path, he must spend one full year studying the lore of oathwarding and practising abjuration magic constantly. The exact details of the journey of discovery will vary from campaign to campaign, but the year should be filled with plenty of opportunities to use abjuration magic in the face of real danger. Oathwarding is not a passive art, nor is it designed for use in times of peace. Oathwarders deal with death, danger and the kinds of violent threats that others may have a hard time dealing with. This makes the path of oathwarding a difficult one to walk, but those who persevere will be all the better for it.

Games Masters will want to tailor the year of discovery to fit their campaign and to a lesser extent the personality and abilities of the prospective oathwarder. Some suggestions for what to work into the campaign during the year of oathwarding research are:

† Tracking down and securing rare tomes of the oathwarding art, most of which are in the collections of powerful spellcasters who are loath to share their power. These books may also be in ancient ruins, in guarded libraries dedicated to gods of protection, or in the hoards of dragons and other deadly, covetous creatures.

† Learning at least one abjuration spell of every level for every type of magic the character is capable of casting should be a must. This can make things difficult for sorcerers trying to become oathwarders, especially if they are also multiclassed bards or fighting classes with spellcasting capability, but oathwarding is an art that requires dedication.

† To develop proficiency in abjuration magic, the potential oathwarder can be required to use each form of the *protection from elements* spell in real combat against appropriate attack forms. It is permissible for the spellcaster to seek out combat for this purpose, but his opponent(s) must be real and actually seeking to do physical harm. Using *protection from elements (acid)* in a battle against encountered ankhegs would be acceptable, but a spellcaster summoning a fire mephit and ordering it to attack him would probably not be.

† A sacrifice of at least 25,000 gp worth of protective items made with abjuration spells. If this part of the path is used, it should also become a requirement each time the oathwarder wishes to learn a new *warding pact*, as described below.

† A sacrifice of numerous different creatures, each with special defensive powers as determined by the Games Master. While some of these may be easy to arrange (such as monsters with a carapace, monsters with a deflection bonus, etc.) and most can be evil, at least one should be difficult to arrange for characters of good alignment (a nymph for the deflection bonus, perhaps). As with the magical items, this path to oathwarding should require new and different sacrifices for each new *pact* learned.

At the end of the year, the spellcaster must initiate himself into the mysteries of oathwarding or have an existing oathwarder perform the initiation ritual. This 24-hour rite is a difficult and painful exposure to the powers of pure magic that inexorably marks the soul of the person receiving the initiation. The process takes 5,000 experience points and drains a permanent point of Constitution from the recipient, though having a mentor guide the rite allows the experience points to be shared evenly between them. The Constitution loss cannot be avoided or reversed without the recipient losing their attunement to oathwarding magic, but the ability score can be later increased by other means.

Other requirements, such as sacrifices or special ritual preparations, can be incorporated into the initiation rite as desired by the Games Master. Enough embellishments can turn the ritual into an adventure of its own, with the potential oathwarder having to gather the right components and make certain that the proper powers are supplicated before the attunement can be accomplished. In addition, the oathwarder's mentor may not even be a mortal creature, instead being a god, celestial or infernal guide or other kind of otherworldly patron.

The Powers of an Oathwarder

Once a potential oathwarder becomes attuned to the power of the art, there are a few fundamental changes that occur in his physical and spiritual being. In the same method as a template, the following alterations occur to the oathwarder immediately upon completion of the initiation ritual:

† +1 natural armour bonus. This bonus does not stack with other forms of natural armour unless the oathwarder, by virtue of his race or another template, already possesses the feature. Thus, and only then, does this bonus stack.

† +1 deflection bonus to Armour Class. This bonus does not stack with any other deflection bonus unless the oathwarder, by virtue of his race or another template, already possesses the feature. Thus, and only then, does this bonus stack.

† +1 resistance bonus to all saving throws. This bonus does not stack with any other resistance bonus unless the oathwarder, by virtue of his race or another template, already possesses the feature. Thus, and only then, does this bonus stack.

† Damage Reduction 5/magic. This bonus does not stack with other forms of Damage Reduction, but does exist in addition to them, allowing the oathwarder to potentially resist damage from a source that would bypass their other protection.

† Immunity to any one spell from any single spell list the oathwarder has access to. The spell must be one the oathwarder is personally capable of casting. A 5th level oathwarder sorcerer, for example, could choose to become completely immune to the effects of the *fireball* spell, but only if he actually knows *fireball*. The side effect of this immunity is the inability to ever cast that spell, even from a magical item, again. The

oathwarder can ignore this prohibition and cast the spell, but the immunity is instantly lost and cannot be regained.

† Spell Resistance equal to 5 plus the oathwarder's highest caster level. An oathwarder 5th level sorcerer/3rd level cleric would possess a Spell Resistance of 10 (sorcerer level), not 13 (sorcerer plus cleric level).

These powers are innate and require no conscious thought on the part of the oathwarder. They are effectively a side benefit of the power of protective magic flowing through the caster's soul and remain active even if the character is insubstantial, polymorphed, or spiritually possessing another creature's body. These bonuses cannot be dispelled, but they all fail if the oathwarder is in any kind of anti-magical field. Fortunately, they are instantly renewed when the oathwarder leaves the field. The oathwarder can suppress these bonuses, either singly or as many of them as desired, as a free action. They can be regained as a free action as well, but these bonuses cannot be dismissed and regained during the same round.

For all the benefits granted to an oathwarder by means of the attunement, they are not the art's greatest gift. In addition to the automatic defences gained at initiation, an oathwarder qualifies to enter into *warding pacts*, special spells that can only be cast by oathwarders. These provide a special form of protection against specific kinds of effects, protection that goes far beyond the normal defensive spells of the abjuration school.

Warding Pacts

The true power of an oathwarder is in the forging of *warding pacts*, magically binding oaths that provides a recipient (who does not have to be the oathwarder himself) with absolute protection from a specific kind of effect in return for a promise and a price. The price is paid in experience points and a gold piece value of ritual supplies, but the promise is usually the most difficult and expensive part of the *pact* to pay. While anyone can pay the gold piece price of a *pact*, the recipient is always responsible for the experience cost.

There are three types of *pact* – creature, weapon and spell. Each one determines the kind of ward the *pact* can create, and sets the base price in both cost and counterpromise as noted below. Within each of these categories, there are specific *pacts*. An oathwarder must learn each one individually; a *pact* is a jealously guarded secret and gained through either hard work and research or received from old tomes or extraplanar entities. *Pacts*, once learned, can be performed as often as desired provided the recipients pay the price for each one and the oathwarder is of the appropriate level to enact them.

There is no limit to the number of *pacts* a given oathwarder can know, but since learning a *warding pact* comes with its own cost, an oathwarder can literally barter away his soul by seeking too much knowledge at the expense of his own development. Unlike magical item creation, the experience point cost involved in both learning and benefiting from a *warding pact* can take a character below the minimum number of points required to maintain his current level and cost that level just as if it had been lost to an *energy drain* spell or negative energy effect.

A *warding pact* takes one hour to cast, whether the recipient is the caster or not, and all materials paid for by the cost of the spell are consumed completely. A *warding pact* lasts indefinitely, but ends immediately if the counterpromise inherent in its casting is broken in any way. In all situations where the breaking of a counterpromise is in question, it is usually safe for the Games Master to assume that it has been. Oathwarding is a dangerous and fickle magic at times.

† **Creature Pacts:** These *warding pacts* protect a recipient from the physical attacks, extraordinary abilities and supernatural powers of a specific creature. A creature pact does not prevent the proscribed type of creature from using weapons, spells and spell-like abilities against the protected recipient. Creature pacts are normally learned from divine or extraplanar entities concerned with the type of creature the pact wards against. An innate flaw in all creature pacts prevents a being from ever having a group or universal pact that protects him from its own creature type (humanoid, dragon, magical beast, etc.).
† **Types of Pact**
† *Individual:* The recipient is warded against a specific, named creature. This can be an

individual dragon, an orc warlord, or a specific wizard. These pacts are difficult to get, because each one is a separate ritual and must be learned specifically for the banned creature in question.

- † **Minimum Oathwarder Caster Level**: 5th.
- † **Cost to Learn:** 25 experience points and 100 gold pieces per hit die or character level of the banned subject.
- † **Cost to Cast:** 50 experience points and 50 gold pieces per hit die or character level of the banned subject, paid by the recipient of the spell.
- † **Counterpromise:** The recipient can never willingly or unwillingly cause the subject of the spell any physical (hit point) injury in any way. This even includes accidental attacks or area-effect damage.
- † **Breaking Penalty:** The banned creature receives a permanent +1 morale bonus to all attacks and damage rolls when targeting the recipient with ranged, unarmed and melee attacks.

† *Group:* The recipient is warded against a species of creature, such as elves or red dragons. This kind of oath is a powerful

barrier of the same fashion as an individual creature ward and can provide a character with a potent form of protection, though it comes at a great cost. Each species of creature is its own ward and must be learned separately. Alternately, this type of ward can protect against a sub-type, like insubstantial or fire.

- † **Minimum Oathwarder Caster Level:** 10th.
- † **Cost to Learn:** 50 experience points and 200 gold pieces per hit die or character level of an average adult member of the banned species.
- † **Cost to Cast:** 100 experience points and 500 gold pieces per hit die or character level of an average adult member of the banned species, paid by the recipient of the spell.
- † **Counterpromise:** The recipient can never willingly or unwillingly cause any member of the subject species of the spell any physical (hit point) injury in any way. This even includes accidental attacks or area-effect damage, even if the target is polymorphed and the recipient does not know its true species.
- † **Breaking Penalty:** The entire banned species receives a permanent +1 morale bonus to all attacks and damage rolls when targeting the recipient with ranged, unarmed and melee attacks.

† *Universal***:** The recipient is warded against an entire creature type. Wards like this, each one of which must be learned for a given type, are incredibly comprehensive, barring contact or attack like an individual *pact*. Few people can afford the expensive sacrifices and mystic components required for this type of ward, but those who can rest secure in its power for as long as it lasts.

- † **Minimum Oathwarder Caster Level:** 15th.
- † **Cost to Learn:** 1,000 experience points and 10,000 gold pieces per specific creature type; each type is its own *pact*.
- † **Cost to Cast:** 2,500 experience points and 25,000 gold pieces, all of which must be paid by the recipient of the spell.
- † **Counterpromise:** The recipient can never willingly or unwillingly cause any member of the subject creature type of

the spell any physical (hit point) injury in any way. This even includes accidental attacks or area-effect damage, even if the target is polymorphed and the recipient does not know its true species.

† **Breaking Penalty:** The entire banned creature type receives a permanent +1 morale bonus to all attacks and damage rolls when targeting the recipient with ranged, unarmed and melee attacks. In addition, any member of the creature type who comes within 100 feet of the oathbreaker can detect his presence and general location. This detection does not immediately make them hostile, but it does cause a -1 circumstance penalty to reaction checks.

† **Weapon Pacts:** *Warding pacts* can be taken against weapons as well, personifying them as their own kind of entity and barring them from inflicting any kind of harm against the warded character. If a weapon can generate effects other than damage, such as tripping, these effects are also warded against, and weapons of the banned type cannot be used to successfully Sunder or Disarm the ward recipient. These weapon pacts are generally taught by deities concerned with specific kinds of weapons, the War domain, or the crafting and/or enchantment of weapons and armour.

† **Types of Pact**

 † *Individual:* The recipient names a specific weapon, such as a paladin's named *holy avenger* or an artefact axe and becomes immune to anything that weapon can do. If the weapon has spell powers, this ward prevents it from targeting him with them, though they can still catch the recipient in their powers' areas of effect (if any).

 † **Minimum Oathwarder Caster Level**: 5th.

 † **Cost to Learn:** 10 experience points and 50 gold pieces per caster level of the banned weapon's enchantment. Non-magical weapons cost 50 experience points and 250 gold pieces to learn the specific *warding pact* against it.

 † **Cost to Cast:** 25 experience points and 100 gold pieces per caster level of the banned weapon's enchantment. Non-magical weapons cost 100 experience points and 500 gold pieces to cast the specific *warding pact* against it.

 † **Counterpromise:** The recipient can never break or disenchant, even temporarily, a weapon of the same kind (longsword, battle axe, etc.) as the banned weapon.

 † **Breaking Penalty:** The oathbreaker is always considered flatfooted whenever he is attacked by the proscribed weapon, even if he possesses a class feature that normally prevent such a situation.

† *Group:* The recipient names a class of weapon, such as longswords, lances or longbows, and becomes immune to anything that class of weapon can do. If the weapon has spell powers, this ward does not prevent a weapon of that class from targeting him with them. That level of protection only comes from an individual *warding pact*.

 † **Minimum Oathwarder Caster Level**: 9th.

 † **Cost to Learn:** 250 experience points and 1,000 gold pieces per class of weapon. Non-magical and magical weapons of the same class are protected against by the same instance of this pact, though each class has a separate pact associated with it.

 † **Cost to Cast:** 1,000 experience points and 5,000 gold pieces per class of banned weapon. In addition, a +1 or better weapon of the same class as the pact in question must be sacrificed during casting; this sacrifice does not count as a 'broken' weapon for purposes of the counterpromise listed below.

 † **Counterpromise:** The recipient can never break or disenchant, even temporarily, a weapon of the same class the pact protects from. In addition, the protected recipient may never slay a creature with 10 ranks or more in Craft (weaponsmithing).

 † **Breaking Penalty:** The oathbreaker, when struck successfully by a weapon of the class that the pact protected him from, is always threatened with a critical, though a second attack roll to confirm must still be made as normal.

† *Universal:* The recipient names a type of weapon damage (piercing, bludgeoning or slashing) and becomes immune to any

weapon that inflicts that kind of damage. If the weapon in question has spell powers, this ward does not prevent it from targeting him with them. That level of protection only comes from an individual *warding pact*.

- † **Minimum Oathwarder Caster Level**: 13th.
- † **Cost to Learn:** 1,000 experience points and 5,000 gold pieces per damage type. Non-magical and magical weapons of the same damage type are protected against by the same instance of this pact, though each damage type has a separate pact associated with it.
- † **Cost to Cast:** 2,000 experience points and 10,000 gold pieces per class of banned weapon. In addition, three +1 or better weapons of the same damage types as the pact in question must be sacrificed during casting; these sacrifices do not count as a 'broken' weapon for purposes of the counterpromise listed below.
- † **Counterpromise:** The recipient can never use a weapon to inflict damage of the same type as the pact. In this instance, the attempt to inflict damage is sufficient to break the pact, so even if an attack does not penetrate a target's Damage Reduction, it counts as a broken promise and incurs the penalty below.
- † **Breaking Penalty:** The oathbreaker can never benefit from Damage Reduction when attacked by a weapon whose damage type matches the broken pact and all such attacks inflict maximum damage on any successful hit.

- † **Spell Pacts:** Much like the weapon *warding pacts*, these make the recipient proof against magic in its various forms. A creature protected by a spell pact can stand in the heart of a raging *meteor swarm* and not even feel its heat. Spell pacts, because they use magic to stave off the effects of magic, are expensive in both soul energy and components to create, but they can be the most powerful protection any oathwarder can forge.
  - † **Types of Pact**
    - † *Individual:* This level of pact chooses a single divine or arcane spell and shields the recipient from its effects at an absolute

level. This pact is sovereign against the spell in question, effectively offering unbeatable Spell Resistance against it, regardless of its source. Even spells cast by divine beings cannot affect an oathwarded creature. A loophole in this kind of ward allows a recipient to still be affected by a spell if it is cast using *limited wish, miracle,* or *wish*.

- † **Minimum Oathwarder Caster Level**: The oathwarder must have a caster level sufficient to cast the warded spell, but does not require access to the spell list in question.
- † **Cost to Learn:** 500 experience points and 1,000 gold pieces per level of spell. These costs are doubled if the spell list is not one the oathwarder has access to through class levels (a cleric oathwarder creating a *warding pact* against an arcane spell, for example).
- † **Cost to Cast:** 1,000 experience points and 2,000 gold pieces per level of spell. These costs are not doubled if the oathwarder has no access to the spell list of the spell being warded against, but they are doubled if the recipient is especially vulnerable to the spell in question (i.e. a fire subtype recipient being made immune to *ice storm)*.
- † **Counterpromise:** The recipient can never cast the subject spell or actively use a magical item of any kind to generate the spell. The same loophole as mentioned above allows the recipient to use those spells to simulate the spell, but no other exception exists.
- † **Breaking Penalty:** The oathbreaker can never successfully save against the spell he was once protected from. The oathbreaker regains the ability to cast the spell in question or use magical items to do so, but the spell in question will always be at half its correct caster level for all variable or dependent effects.
- † *Group:* A group spell pact protects the recipient from one chosen descriptor of spell, with the possible choices being listed in the *Core Rulebook I* (such as acid, evil, light, or water). This pact is sovereign against the spells using this descriptor, effectively offering unbeatable

Spell Resistance against it, regardless of its source. Even spells of the chosen descriptor cast by divine beings cannot affect an oathwarded creature. A loophole in this kind of ward allows a recipient to still be affected by a given spell if it cast using a *limited wish, miracle,* or *wish.*

† **Minimum Oathwarder Caster Level**: 11th.

† **Cost to Learn:** 5,000 experience points and 10,000 gold pieces per descriptor, with each one requiring a different pact. These costs are doubled if the descriptors are mind affecting, fire, cold, acid, electricity, sonic, or force.

† **Cost to Cast:** 10,000 experience points and 25,000 gold pieces. These costs are doubled if the descriptors are mind affecting, fire, cold, acid, electricity, sonic, or force.

† **Counterpromise:** The recipient can never cast a spell using the descriptor mentioned, though this conscription does not apply to magical items (except for scrolls, which are prohibited from use).

† **Breaking Penalty:** The oathbreaker always takes full damage or effect from a spell with the chosen descriptor. In addition, if the spell requires an attack roll of any kind, it automatically hits and gets a standard confirmation attack roll to see if it confirms as a critical hit.

† *Universal:* Possibly the most powerful form of oathwarding, this *warding pact* chooses an entire school of magic and makes the recipient immune to its spells. A recipient of an universal spell ward against divination can never be *detected* or *scried* by any source, while an oathmaker with protection from evocation can stand in the middle of a flurry of combat spells and take no damage at all.

† **Minimum Oathwarder Caster Level**: 17th.

† **Cost to Learn:** 10,000 experience points and 50,000 gold pieces per school, with each one requiring a different pact. These costs are doubled if the oathwarder cannot normally cast spells from the school in question (as is the case with specialist wizards).

† **Cost to Cast:** 10,000 experience points and 100,000 gold pieces. These costs are doubled if the school is evocation or transmutation. This doubling practically ensures that the recipient loses at least one experience level for accepting the oath, but its protection is extremely potent in scope.

† **Counterpromise:** The recipient can never cast a spell from the school in question, though this restriction does not apply to magical items (except for scrolls, which are prohibited from use). In addition, the recipient can never inflict harm (as in hit point damage, even non-lethal) or kill a specialist wizard of the warded school or a cleric with the Magic domain.

† **Breaking Penalty:** The oathbreaker forfeits any form of Spell Resistance he might have had against spells of the given school and always fails saving throws against spells cast by specialists of that school and clerics with the Magic domain.

A recipient can benefit from any number of oaths at the same time, though the restrictions of multiple *warding pacts* can be quite binding as they add up and limit the options of an oathmaker. The same oath can even be made multiple times if it has a different focus each time, such as two or more weapon *pacts*. If an oathmaker breaks his oath, a number of months must pass equal to the experience point cost of the oath divided by 1,000 (to a minimum of one month) before he can benefit from another oath of that type.

He watched as the smoke rose towards the rune-covered ceiling of his ritual chamber. The magical sigils glowed softly each time the smoke billowed over them, drinking in the incense and increasing their power a hundred fold. The air began to ripple as the barriers between the worlds grew thin. He was standing in the centre of an inlaid circle of protection, the only thing between him and the corruptive influence of the Burning Hell he was trying to reach.

It was not long before all of the smoke rushed, all at once, through the mouth of a grinning stone demonic face carved into the south wall of the room. The stone face's eyes began to burn with an incandescent crimson flame. The magus felt a powerful presence in the mask, its attention focused directly upon him. He had been in the presence of his infernal master several times, but the entity's power never ceased to amaze him. Someday, he told himself, he would have all that power and more. Until then, he would play the role of the meek supplicant. Someday, though…

'What is your desire?' His dark master's voice sent a shudder of fear and longing up his spine.

Knowing how little patience the Masked One possessed, he got right to the point. 'My king, simpering fool that he is, fears an attack by the orc tribes that live in our northern mountains. Lately, the tribes have united under a single banner and, in time, they will try to press south into our lands. I…'

The shadowy, inhumanly sibilant voice echoed through the chamber again. 'The king wants a way to protect himself from the orcs and has commanded you for an oath that will protect him and his heirs.'

The magus flinched. No one commanded him, or at least, no one would for long. Still, the Masked One was correct as always. 'Yes, lord. He has asked that I secure a new pact and so I come to you.'

An hour later, the pact was set to parchment, written in the blood of an orcish warrior brought to the chamber and sacrificed for the power in his soul. The magus weakly clutched his new prize and bowed to his lord, feeling the strain of channelling infernal wisdom through his soul. It was always a draining experience, but every time he did it, he felt one step closer to true power. Someday…

After the wizard left the room, the attention of the Masked One left the palace and moved across the kingdom to the northernmost mountains. There, in a tent of human flesh, the tribe's shaman was deep in meditation, the scent of burning human blood filling his porcine nostrils. This shaman had just learned the arts of oathwarding calling out to the Masked One in his guise as the Eye of Blood, a spirit of orcish savagery.

The infernal power had a feeling the orc would be very interested to hear what he had to say.

Help For Games Masters

The majority of this book has been a treatise on how to increase the effectiveness of abjurers and submissions of powerful new spells and items that focus on protection. While this is wonderful fare for players, it does make the job of Games Master a bit more difficult. If the players are better defended, it stands to reason that the same threats will not pose as much of a challenge for them. Without conflict, roleplaying games lose much of their appeal.

Of course, a Games Master could simply increase the strength and numbers of all the creatures and obstacles in his campaign, but that might not be the best option. If the world's response to players becoming better able to defend themselves is simply to make things harder on them, the impetus to grow and develop is quickly lost. If there is no reward for being better skills, why improve those skills in the first place?

Clearly, more creative answers are called for. Powerful abjuration magic can be nearly as disruptive to a game as powerful combat magic, since if the obstacles set by the Games Master pose no threat, they are as easily bypassed as if the obstacles themselves were blown apart with over-potent evocations. No challenge is still no challenge, no matter how clever players arrive at that outcome. But if simply raising the bar is not enough, then what is?

Four possibilities come to mind. As a Games Master, you can place limits on abjurations magic and what it can accomplish in your campaign setting. Alternatively, you can introduce items and spells in your game that limit or ignore some abjurations, creating more potent threats without drastically increasing the creatures that bear such things. You can shift the focus of a campaign to accommodate abjuration magic as a powerful force, centring entire empires and social structures around the concept.

Lastly, you can do away with much of the difficulty that arises from powerful abjurations by creating challenges and plot lines that have nothing to do with combat or magic altogether.

Ultimately, you may find that a little of each of these may be what your game calls for, or you may find your own solution to these problems. In any case, incorporating some or all of these ideas may add elements to your campaign that were not there before. As with any Games Master advice, if an idea enriches your world and makes it a more detailed, involving place to adventure it, it was worth whatever work was required to implement it.

Tightening the Reins

Your players have gone mad. Every morning, they yawn, stretch, have breakfast and cast every long lasting abjuration spell in the book. Whenever the slightest hint of combat occurs, they pull back and let fly with so much defensive magic, they could be detected by an apprentice in another country. Encounters are not a challenge any longer because what few creatures can hit them don't do enough damage to seriously threaten them before getting annihilated. At this point, you are so fed up with their 'lather, rinse, repeat' approach to magic and combat that you are about to grab something really heavy and make the players calculate *their* Armour Classes.

First thing, calm down. Second thing, determine the real problem. Here, the trouble is that abjuration magic is easy to cast and cover all of the party's major weaknesses. You can get past both of these with a little creativity, but you do not want to go overboard. You may be tempted to simply do away with abjuration magic (or just some of its spells) altogether, but do not go that far. Few things can drive players away from a game like an unfair judge, and saying, 'Well, *shield* doesn't work like that any more,' borders on extremely unfair.

Try something subtler. Many powerful abjurations require gemstones of one sort or another to cast. If your player characters are burning through these gems quickly, it is a fair bet other groups are too. Thus, the components may become in short supply. You are well within your rights to state that transmuted gems created by *polymorph* spells do not qualify as spell components, which means rare

stays rare. *Stoneskin* becomes much harder to cast when there is no diamond dust to be had. By limiting the supply of gems (and by the same token, other components due to overuse) before cutting them off altogether, players may get wise to what is coming and cut back on their spellcasting.

Another form of magical reduction lies in the abjuration school itself. Antimagic should not be ignored as a useful tool of campaign balance. Dire wolves are no huge threat to a party of magically protected, spell wielding adventurers, but give the dire wolves collars that radiate an *antimagic field* and let the fun begin. This is not overkill; it is a natural reaction in a world where abjuration has become so pre-eminent. If evil organisations and those who would be villains have to go to these lengths to operate, they will. As long as you do not let it ever get to the point of sharks with *wands of searing light* on their heads, you should be all right.

One last suggestion on limiting abjuration, do not make everything common knowledge. If the players want the lore in this book or any special spell or item for that matter, make them work for it. Let them find examples of a low level spell as a potion, as the last few charges in a wand. Finding a warden to teach the party's abjurer his lore should be an adventure or group of adventures just to achieve. Lost lore hidden in ancient ruins may be a cliché, but if the cliché fits, run with it. Anything earned is intrinsically more valuable than something just given away.

Slinging Silver Bullets

Abjuration can get out of control, allowing for near invulnerability at the cost of a few spells. Like anything invulnerable, there must (or at least should) be a weak point. Abjuration should have some chink in its defences. If it does not, there is no reason why, long before the clever, capable player characters were even born, some other group of clever, capable individuals did not take over the entire world. Without weaknesses, abjuration would an absolute power and, if this were true, there would be little point in playing the game at all. Every session would end in a stalemate between the invincible player characters and their invulnerable foes, defensive magic blazing on both sides.

So if abjuration magic must have weaknesses, what are they? That's a question you have to answer for yourself in the context of your own campaign world. A few suggestions have already been made; antimagic, rare components and difficulty to obtain can all be considered weaknesses of the school. What we are looking for here, however, are weaknesses in the magic itself. These weaknesses can be two-fold, object driven and tactics driven. Both are valid, in different ways.

Object driven weaknesses are like silver and lycanthropes. In the case of abjuration, you create some substance or creature that can ignore certain types of magic. Like the hinds of ancient Greece, your special creatures will quickly become feared for their power to claw and bite player characters straight through their defensive spells. If you create a special substance, arrows tipped in it will cut short overblown egos hiding behind *walls of force* and *protection from arrows*. Just keep in mind that just like the Grecian hinds, your creatures may be hunted into extinction by terrified mages and if you make something that cuts through protections, expect it to wind up in the character's hands eventually.

Tactics driven weaknesses are based on opponents becoming wise to the defensive tricks of the player characters and planning accordingly. When facing the characters, certain spells and items are used to try and circumvent the abjurations protecting them. *Greater magic weapon* can boost a weapon to +5, allowing it to strike through *stoneskin* easily and because of the rarity of such attacks, few individuals ever bother to defend against sonic attacks. By tailoring combats to find the gaps in the character's abjurative armour, their opponents can direly exploit those weaknesses. Of course, this will only result in the survivors covering those gaps in the future, but the challenge has returned to the game.

Used cautiously and in controlled circumstances, these can put a lot of the fun back into a stalled game. Just be certain not to make every encounter one that ignored the player characters' defences. Let the build up be gradual, with a few intelligent groups making the tactical transition at first or a single nemesis armed with your special weapon. Let the characters get used to the idea that not everything they meet is going to be an easy kill. Once they know they are vulnerable, you will have gained control of your game again.

Abjuration as a World Power

Let us suppose that the point made earlier about a group of clever, capable characters taking over the world *does not* sound like a bad idea. Abjuration could easily help forge an empire, especially in an area where none of the indigenous threats would be able to combat it effectively. In the wilds of a campaign world, rich with resources and filled with mundane threats that would pose no difficulty to an abjurer and his companions, conquest is just waiting to occur. The concept of a civilisation founded on magic is not a new one, but one primarily centred on abjuration might make for a nice change of pace.

In such an empire, the emphasis would be on defence. Fortresses, high walls and magical armour would be common, while powerful offensive magic and weapons might be a lower priority. In such a society, the emphasis might be on building, protecting and maintaining traditions and the status quo. If the empire ever became warlike, it would probably be in response to a threat to those values. Such wars are likely to be brief, with the enemy blunting its attacks on the abjuring empire's defence and exhausting itself. The empire would then either launch a counter offensive against the weakened opponent or, more likely, simply subsume them into itself through treaty and interbreeding.

Of course, nothing prevents an abjurative empire from also maintaining a powerful military machine. In fact, in its goal of absolute defence, the empire might be moved to conquer as much territory as possible. Only when all the threats to the empire are gone can there be assured peace, after all. In such a society, wars might be commonplace and even widely accepted as a necessary evil for the good of the realm. This kind of empire could be just or cruel, civilised or despotic. More likely, it will be somewhere in the middle of both, kind to its citizens and terrible to its enemies.

The value of such a society as a game factor depends on how a Games Master wishes to use it. The empire might be a thing of the past, providing ruins and ancient abjuration lore for player characters to find during adventures. The empire could be a current plot concern, with characters stuck in the middle of its political intrigues and military actions. Games Masters could even do both, with an ancient empire beginning to resurface. Characters might be approached for their knowledge, recruited to join the new regime, or run afoul of it and make a powerful new enemy. In any case, abjuration has ceased to be a problem and become a campaign theme.

Leaving the Arena

Of course, the best way to defeat a powerful shield may be to not strike it at all. There are innumerable plots and campaign events that do not have to involve combat at all. All the defensive magic in the world is for naught if the primary challenge facing an abjurer is a trade negotiation or having to dance with a foreign ambassador in front of his king and the entire court. Even when combat is involved, if the situation is one that involves innocents caught in the crossfire, being personally invincible may not be enough to achieve success.

The power of abjuration is not terribly important when the player characters are faced with situations that require less fighting, not more. A party of adventurers may be able to hack their way through anything, but if they are faced with a delegation from a neighbouring country as their opposition, slaying them with impunity may be the exact wrong thing to do. When the consequences of their actions come back to haunt them, such as the families of the slain delegation pushing their leaders to declare war on the character's homeland, they may quickly learn that combat is not always the answer.

Designer's Notes

I have a confession to make. When I mentioned in the Introduction that abjuration was a much-maligned school that did not garner much respect from players and Games Masters, I was including myself in that number. I honestly had never given much thought to the school other than calculating how high I could get my character's armour class and the like. It just never occurred to me that it could be a very useful school of magic outside of its immediate defensive nature.

I am a convert now. Abjuration magic truly is a powerful and vibrant form of magic. I have learned so much while writing this book, lessons that my players are not necessarily so grateful for. I have learned how effective counterspelling can be. I have seen how dangerous the occasional *dispel magic* thrown at player characters can turn out. I have learned how to stack defences on an opponent, leaving the player characters in my game desperate for a way to defeat him. It has been a true learning experience, one that is certainly not over yet.

On the player side of things, I have picked up a few clues as well. What works for a Non-Player Character works doubly well when you are actually playing. While I am a firm believer that roleplaying is more important than fighting, it can be fun to roleplay a tactician and skilled combat spellcaster once in a while. In that case, this book has been an eye-opener. I am looking forward to taking these new skills to conventions and roleplaying tournaments now with a character that can implement them. It should be a real treat to show how a prepared wizard can truly dominate a combat scenario.

Outside of a character context, writing *Encyclopaedia Arcane – Abjuration* has taught me something else too. I have learned not to take anything in the game for granted. Everything has a part, an important part, to play in a balanced, well-run campaign. Even a seemingly limited school of magic like abjuration can actually be extremely detailed if you examine it closely. Nothing in the game should be taken for granted or dismissed. You are only denying yourself its potential if you do.

That said, it is true that as *Core Rulebook I* lines it out, abjuration is not very well explored. It is easy to miss the possibilities of the school when all you see is a single paragraph describing the school and a handful of very simple spells for each arcane level. There is a great deal to the school of abjuration, but it is hardly touched on initially. Anyone just starting the game would be hard-pressed to see everything abjuration has to offer.

That is where this book comes in, and that is why I have been glad to write it. A sourcebook works best when it offers new material while staying within the basic framework set up by the game itself. That's what *Encyclopaedia Arcane – Abjuration* does; it adds depth and potential while remaining true to the school's basic tenets. It has been an interesting challenge, balancing the need to keep this material true to abjuration while expanding the school into new, unexplored areas.

Ultimately, you have to judge whether I have succeeded in that respect. If what has been presented here suits your gaming style, I hope you will use and enjoy it. If it does not, I at least hope it has made you consider just what your style is and why this does not work for it. If you have been moved to examine your campaign world at all, I still consider this book a success. Anything that improves your game and the enjoyment it brings others is a good thing, no matter how it is achieved.

So the next time your character or Non-Player Character throws up some magical defences and prepares for battle, I hope you will spare a moment to consider the school that brought them to you. Whether you cast *word of warding* or a simple *shield* spell, abjuration makes it happen. And, if you cast the right spells, you might just live long enough to keep it happening…

August Hahn

The adept stepped out of the room, a look of mixed sorrow and fear in his eyes. Before he could leave the doorway, he ran into the High Shieldmaster and stopped abruptly. 'Oh! Forgive me, Master. I must not have been watching where…'

The elder wizard dismissed the accident with a wave. 'How is he today?' The sombre look in the High Shieldmaster's eyes expressed his deep concern. 'It has been several days now. Has there been any improvement at all?'

The adept shook his head. As much as he wished to provide his Guild Master with some hopeful news, there was nothing to tell. His patient was still incommunicative, what few words he could utter were a jumble of invectives and curses the likes of which the adept's young, sheltered ears were unprepared to hear. It was like a madness had overcome the Shieldbearer within the room, one that magic was at a loss to cure. 'Nay, Master. His fever has broken and his wounds are healed, but his ravings continue. I am sorry.'

The Guild Master put a hand on the boy's shoulder and guided him away from the door. 'No need to be sorry, lad. You've done well with him. Now run along and get some rest. You have done enough for one day.' He watched the young apprentice leave quickly, worry creasing his brow all the while. He had been honest; the youth had done all anyone could do, but there did not seem to be any helping the poor man in that room. Touching the door with his staff, he pushed it open and peered inside.

There, on a comfortable bed of oak and woven cushions, the Shieldbearer laid staring at the ceiling. The High Shieldmaster stepped in quietly and closed the door behind him. If the patient within heard his approach, his face gave no indication. The man's eyes were open, but they did not see to register anything. Whatever the Shieldbearer was seeing, it was not of this time or place.

For a long while, the Master simply sat beside the bed and watched his patient. The occasional word could be heard as a whisper from the man's lips, but it was never intelligible. Every spell had been tried to restore the man's faculties, but this was not a magical effect. No vile spell or curse had done this. Whatever had broken the Shieldbearer's mind, it was beyond the power of magic to repair.

Hours passed before a tap at the door brought the Shieldmaster back to the present. He looked up and said, 'Come.' Neither his voice nor the sound of the other entering the room made the patient react at all. A Shieldbearer stepped into the room with a small bundle, bowing to the Master immediately.

'Sir, the inspection of the items found at the scene of the 'incident' with the… bodies… is completed. Our Loremaster wanted you to see this immediately.' With that, the Shieldbearer opened the parcel and withdraw a book with a scorched cover. The broken shaft of an arrow was still visible, protruding from the first half of the tome. The Guild elder took a look at the book before taking it, then began to leaf through its pages. Behind him, the Shieldbearer left without another word.

Sitting there, beside the broken, muttering figure in the bed, the High Shieldmaster started to read what was left of the book. It was a journal, apparently the diary of the poor soul himself. He had to struggle with some parts of the text, obscured by fire or blood as they were, but the message within began to piece itself together quite clearly.

It was some time later when a ranking Shield Lord came to relieve him and call him down for dinner. The Lord found him sitting in the dark, his fingers drumming on the ashen cover of the journal. After lighting a candle, the Shield Lord turned to his Master and saw deep sorrow in the Guild Master's eyes.

'Master? Are you all right? You should not still be here with this madman, sir.'

The High Shieldmaster nodded and stood up, taking the book with him. 'Yes, my son. I am all right. Look after our brother here, please. After what he has been through, madness must be a comfort.' With that, the elderly man left the room and walked down the hall alone. In the morning, he vowed, he would see the acceptance guidelines for new clients completely reworked…

LICENSES

ENCYCLOPAEDIA ARCANE

ABJURATION

SHIELDED BY SORCERY

As with anything that seems purely defensive, the school of abjuration is often thought to be weak. This could not be further from the truth. Magic is a powerful force, capable of slaying a healthy warrior with a single word or laying waste to an entire city. Mundane defences are incapable of repelling just force. Only the spells of abjuration offer resistance to this might, which makes abjuration the equal and opposite of offensive magic. Power and effect are not always equally evident.

Mages with a speciality in abjuration are generally careful people with a mind for defensive tactics and a strong sense of responsibility. The role of guardian often engenders in them a sense of justice and caution. This sometimes develops to the point of abjurers being overbearing in defence of those they consider 'under their protection'. Their magic allows them to protect themselves and others from any hardship that might befall them, even extending that safety into areas most folk would never consider an avenue of attack. Abjurers can guard the mind and the soul, as well as the body.

Inside You Will Find:

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Designer's Notes

FOR GAMES MASTERS AND PLAYERS ALIKE

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