

ALTERNATIVE SPELLBOOKS AND POTIONS

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ALTERNATIVE SPELLBOOKS

In the Tyr region, writing itself is forbidden, except by those of certain privileged castes - nobles, templars, and merchants - and unlawful possession of written material may be punishable by death. If a text is suspected of containing magical formulae, the consequences may be even more severe. If the spellcaster is not executed on the spot, they are usually subjected to

brutal interrogation, combining physical torture and psionic mind-probing in an effort to extract any information that might implicate other spellcasters - particularly when a connection to the Veiled Alliance is suspected.

In this context, traditional spellbooks - scrolls, codices, tablets, or bound parchments - have become unsuitable for use by anyone not directly protected by a sorcerer-monarch. Spellcasters must therefore turn to alternative forms to preserve their knowledge: tattoos, embroidered garments, engraved objects, cloths, blankets, staves, and the like. These “hidden spellbooks” allow for spell preparation without raising suspicion, but they require specialized skills both to create and to interpret.

Tattoo Spellbooks

Tattoos offer the advantage of always being on one's person and easily concealed.

- Each tattoo can contain up to 3 pages of standard spellbook content
- Inscription cost is 100 ceramic pieces (cp) per standard page
- The text can be written in micro-script: this doubles the capacity (up to 6 pages per tattoo) but requires a magnifying glass to read and doubles the cost (200 cp per page)
- The text can be encrypted to prevent recognition or deciphering by others (+100 cp per page)
- The text can be rendered invisible, only appearing for one hour after the application of a revealing oil (+150 cp per page)
- A spell of level N occupies N pages, as in any standard spellbook

- A character may bear up to 20 spell tattoos, shared with the limit for psionic and magical tattoos. For example, a character might wear two *Body Adjustment* psionic tattoos and up to 18 spell tattoos
- The bearer can move a tattoo to another location on their own body or transfer it to another living creature (willing or unconscious) as a standard action

Garment Spellbooks

Underground mages often use the fabric of their equipment to inscribe spells as embroidered motifs, coded stitches, or symbolic weaves. Keffiyehs, scarves, sashes, capes, and other practical cloth items provide discreet, flexible media that can be integrated into clothing without drawing attention.

- Each textile surface has a capacity depending on its usable size:
 - A spell-keffiyeh can hold up to 12 pages of standard embroidery.
 - A belt-scarf spellbook holds up to 6 pages of standard embroidery.
 - A spell-cape can hold 12 pages of standard embroidery.
- As with tattoos:
 - Inscription cost is 100 cp per standard page.
 - Micro-embroidery doubles the capacity, cost (200 cp per page), and inscription time. It also requires a magnifying glass and doubles the time needed to read.
 - Inscriptions can be encrypted (+100 cp per page) to prevent understanding if seized.

- Textiles can be fireproofed (+200 cp)

These textile spellbooks are vulnerable to wear, weather, and confiscation. Experienced mages build in redundancies, spreading their knowledge across multiple items - a common spell might appear on both a scarf and a cape.

Other objects - staves, tools, furniture, etc. - can be carved or engraved with spells, but they offer smaller surfaces and are less convenient to carry or use.

EXAMPLE LOADOUT - LEVEL 5 WANDERING MAGE

Jalen, a Tyrian-born preserver, travels by kank between Altaruk and Balic. He has distributed his spells across three different types of media to avoid losing everything at once.

Medium	Pages
Micro-script tattoos (5)	30
Coded keffiyeh	12
Belt-scarf	6
Total	48

Risk of Discovery - Search and Detection

When a character actively examines tattooed skin, embroidered garments, or decorated objects, they may make a Search check to detect the presence of hidden magical text or diagrams.

- Difficulty Class modifiers:
 - Base (magic integrated into a decorative or symbolic pattern): DC 15

- Micro-script or miniature embroidery: +2
- Encrypted or coded content: +5
- Magically or alchemically hidden (e.g., invisible ink or illusion): DC 25 minimum (requires activation or magic to become visible)

These DCs assume a careful, unimpeded search (sufficient lighting, reasonable time, full access to the item or area).

- Circumstantial bonuses to Search (these bonuses are cumulative and apply regardless of encryption, as long as the material is written or symbolic in nature):
 - +2 if the character has at least 5 ranks in Spellcraft (familiarity with magical writing structures)
 - +2 if the character has at least 5 ranks in Decipher Script (able to recognize encoded or stylized text)
 - +5 if the tattoo is partially hidden or the garment is wrapped or folded
 - If the search is not attentive, apply a –10 penalty for distance (more than 1 ft. but under 5 ft.) and an additional –10 if the search takes less than a full round
 - For a thorough search, assume 1 full round per 10 tattoos or per item to be examined

ALTERNATIVE POTIONS

In Dark Sun, traditional potions have been replaced by potion fruits - enchanted fruits that contain a single magical effect. However, their form,

transport, and consumption differ significantly from how potions function in more conventional settings. It seems far less natural to grab a fruit and chew it mid-combat than it is to uncork a vial or break a prepared object.

The alternatives presented here retain the usability logic of standard potions while integrating seamlessly into Dark Sun's aesthetics and harsh atmosphere. This is not about reintroducing glass vials, but rather about using other forms plausible for such a world: clay amulets worn around the neck, magic-charged stones crushed in the hand, or dried pastes that can be swallowed without elaborate manipulation. Activation remains quick - a standard action, or even a move action if the item is readily accessible.

Overall, these variants diversify the magical equivalents of potions. They offer players more immersive ways to interact with magic without breaking the material consistency or the wary, rugged ambiance characteristic of Dark Sun. They also add flavor to exploration: in ancient ruins, it is far more believable to find a dried balm in a sealed pot, a stone still pulsing with energy, or an intact amulet, than an unshattered vial or a still-fresh fruit. These ancient magical consumables help preserve the functionality of relics in abandoned places without disrupting environmental logic or the presumed antiquity of such ruins.

Types of Alternative Potions

● Balms, Creams, and Ointments

Applied directly to the skin. Stored in small containers made of leather, wood, or bone, these can be used as swiftly as a potion: the

character simply dabs a dose with a fingertip and applies it to the lips, a wound, or another targeted area.

- **Enchanted Fruit Pastes**

Quickly swallowed. Often shaped into small blocks, they are easy to carry, preserve well, and do not attract unwanted attention.

- **Infused Stones**

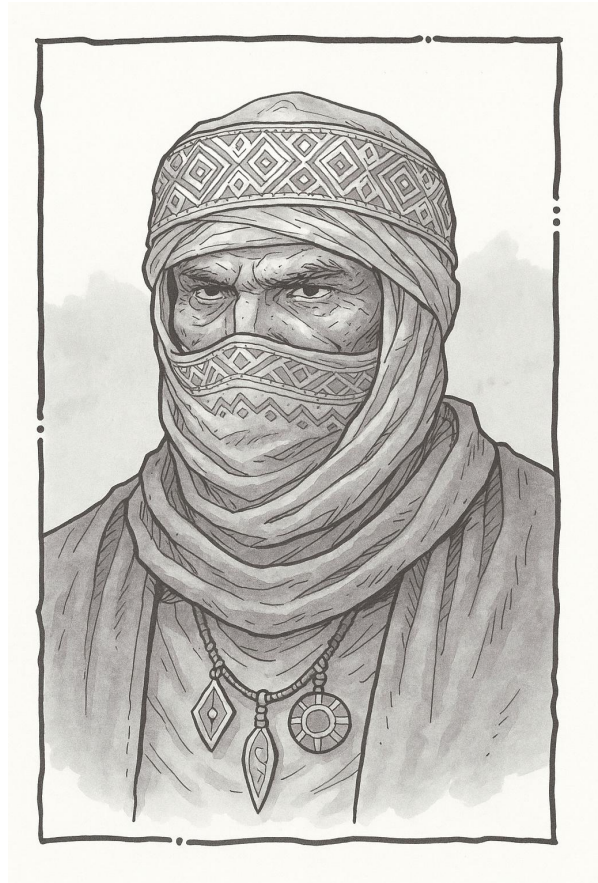
Activated by being crushed in the hand. The released magic instantly reduces them to dust. These single-use, innocuous-looking items are highly prized for their discretion.

- **Breakable Amulets**

Often made of clay, these function similarly to infused stones - the magical effect is triggered by intentionally shattering them. They may be sewn into garments, worn as talismans, or kept in a pouch.

- **Ephemeral Magic Tattoos**

These temporary tattoos inscribe an activatable effect on the skin. They follow the same rules as psionic tattoos but replicate magical effects of potions. Each is single-use, vanishes upon activation, and counts against the character's tattoo limit. The total number of magical, psionic, and spellbook tattoos combined cannot exceed 20 per individual, regardless of type.



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