

BALTEZAAR'S BOOK BUILDER

By Michael Martin

Supplement for creating books and libraries
for the world's greatest role-playing game



BALTEZAAR'S BOOK BUILDER

An ancient monastery. A mad wizard's tower. The archives of a powerful monarch. There are many situations when you'll need to either prep or provide on-the-fly details for books encountered during the course of a gaming session. This supplement gives you some easy-to-apply, easy-to-adapt tables and ideas to make them memorable and consistent with your campaign.

This resource is divided into two main sections:

- generating random library book by topic.
- generating details for individual books.

The first section is meant to help when you need assistance in generating random results for a search or browsing. The second set of tables helps provide distinctive, story-inspiring details to individual books, whether the book is located in a library or found individually.

Also included after the tables is a new monster for your libraries: the **arcane librarian**.

A final note: this supplement isn't meant intended for rigid adherence. The tables and choices here are meant to serve as inspiration or idea generators for your specific game and needs. All of these tables could easily be expanded upon or revised.

RANDOM BOOK SEARCH RESULTS

Use the following table for unguided searches in large collections of books. Example titles are provided, but you should adapt or replace them for your campaign and the specific situation. Roll d100 and use the results to determine what's found.

Category	d100 - Subtopics	Sample Titles
Architecture	1 Castles and Keeps	<i>Towers, Murder Holes, and Other Defenses</i>
	2 Cities and Villages	<i>Sacred Harmonics for Worship Spaces</i>
	3 Temples	<i>The Backbone Fortress of Dhonjen Barritt</i>
	4 Historical Architecture	<i>Lost Cities of the Old Ones</i>
Arts	5 Sculpture	<i>Diabolical Visions Rendered as Sketches</i>
	6 Painting	<i>Thaumaturgical Inks and Stains</i>
	7 Drawing	<i>Great Artists of Lost Xinjek</i>
	8 Crafts	<i>Fabrics for Magical Living</i>
	9 Clothing	<i>The Construction of Living Statues</i>
	10 Doodles and Sketches	<i>Seven League Boots & Other Arcane Footwear</i>
	11 Bestiary	<i>Jora's Folio of Encountered Aberrations</i>
Botany	12 Local Flora	<i>Winter Flowers and Their Many Properties</i>
	13 Exotic Flora	<i>The Art of Raising Flesh-Craving Flora</i>
	14 Carnivorous Flora	<i>An Expert's Guide to Thinking Like Trees</i>
	15 Sentient Flora	<i>The Singing Gardens of Vorikost</i>
	16 Rare/Legendary Flora	<i>Dungeon Mosses and Molds</i>

Category	d100 - Subtopics	Sample Titles	
History	17	Local History	<i>An Account of the Last Necromantic War</i>
	18	World History	<i>The Saga of Elvish and Its Related Tongues</i>
	19	Biography	<i>A Manual of Deep Rituals to Embrace Eldritch Enlightenment</i>
	20	Wars	<i>The Collected Tales of Lien Traep</i>
	21	Linguistics	<i>The Bloodline of the Howling Kings</i>
	22	Treaties and Agreements	<i>100 Highwaymen and Their High Crimes</i>
	23	Legends and Lore	<i>The Tonal Ambiguities of Gith Speech</i>
	24	Genealogies	<i>Peace Treaties Made and Broken</i>
	25	Collection of Prophecies	<i>The Life and Times of Xukuri Harrowhand</i>
Literature/Poetry	26	Criminals and Crime	
	27	Poetry	<i>Grunt and Gasp: A Book of Erotic Orcish Poetry</i>
	28	Children's Stories	<i>Granny Jezinka and Her Magic Cottage</i>
	29	Folktales	<i>The Princess and the Blighted Goblin</i>
	30	Fiction	<i>A Tale of Two Princes</i>
Magic	31	Myths and Legends	<i>The Fall of the Heavenly Host</i>
	32	Summoning	<i>Weaving Shadows and Bending Darkness</i>
	33	Enchantment	<i>The Encyclopedia of Spell Components</i>
	34	Evocation	<i>Codex of Yardiff Bey, Abjurer to Her Dark Majesty</i>
	35	Abjuration	<i>Tobin's Guide to Raising the Dead</i>
	36	Necromancy	<i>Now You See It: A Beginner's Guide to Illusions</i>
	37	Transmutation	<i>Slash and Spatter: The Magical Glories of Exsanguination</i>
	38	Illusion	<i>Shamanic Spells and Lore</i>
	39	Blood Magic	<i>Infusing Symbols with Deep Power</i>
	40	Runes, Glyphs, and Magical Writing	<i>Singing as Spellcasting</i>
	41	Magical Theory	<i>Outlawed Spells and Knowledge</i>
	42	Forbidden Lore	
	43	Spellbook	
Maps/Geography	44	World Maps	<i>Holdfasts, Keeps, & Dungeons: A Collection of Maps</i>
	45	Local Maps	<i>The Mountains of Qorim</i>
	46	City Maps	<i>A Chart of the City Beneath the City</i>
	47	Mythical Maps	<i>All the Rivers of the Sky</i>
	48	Political Maps	<i>Far Flung Islands and Lost Lands</i>
Mathematics	49	Oceanic Charts	
	50	Basic Math	<i>Treatises on Eternal Numbers</i>
	51	Equations of the Multiverse	<i>Dictionary of Equations for the Summoning of Ancient Beings</i>
	52	Geometries	<i>The Geometry of Hell</i>
	53	Algebra	<i>Formulae Divine and Eternal</i>
	54	Impossible Mathematics	

Category	d100 - Subtopics	Sample Titles
Medicine	55 Anatomy (humanoid)	<i>The Various Corruptions of the Skin</i>
	56 Anatomy (animal)	<i>Draconian Biology and Anatomy</i>
	57 Diseases	<i>A Guidebook to Battlefield Surgery</i>
	58 Medicinal Plants	<i>Pestilences of the Far Realms</i>
	59 Diseases	<i>Humanoid Phrenology</i>
	60 Essays and Experiments	<i>Bone Powder and Blood Magic</i>
Music	61 Folk Songs	<i>The Ballad of Serith Malikshun & Other Tragedies</i>
	62 Survey of Musical Instruments	<i>Drums as Spellcasting Tools</i>
	63 Effect of Music on Creatures	<i>The Masked Operas of Sandor Choen</i>
	64 Composers and Musicians	<i>Cataclysmic Hymns and Dirges</i>
	65 Sheet Music	
Philosophy	66 Society and culture	<i>The Divine Right of Magocracies</i>
	67 Survey of world philosophies	<i>A Matrix of Belief and Choice</i>
	68 Logic and (Ir)rationality	<i>Elven Philosophy and Dwarven Rebuttals</i>
	69 Political Philosophy	<i>Ethical Summoning</i>
	70 Philosophy of Magic	<i>Self versus Society: the Struggle of Chaos and Law</i>
	71 Good and Evil, Law and Chaos	
Religion	72 Holy Scriptures	<i>Proverbs of the Snow Prophet</i>
	73 Unholy Scriptures	<i>Ascending Through the Stars of Heaven</i>
	74 Saints and Sinners	<i>Fifty Prayers for the Pious Rogue</i>
	75 Angels and Devils	<i>A Catalog of Infernal Worship Rites</i>
	76 Monotheism and Pantheons	<i>One God Is Not Enough</i>
	77 Extinct Religions	<i>Elysium or Gehenna: Where Does Your Soul Go?</i>
	78 The Afterlife	<i>Are Paladins Cultists?</i>
	79 Comparative Theology	<i>The Book of All Life and Light</i>
Science	80 Astronomy	<i>A Dwarvish Guide to Ales and Mead</i>
	81 Astrology	<i>Fulcrums and Weights in Warfare</i>
	82 Engineering	<i>When Stars Fall and Moons Burn</i>
	83 Meteorology	<i>Secret Uses of the Arch</i>
	84 Construction	<i>Midnight Skies and the Future of the World</i>
	85 Alchemy	<i>The Druid's Guide to Vortices and Thunder</i>
	86 Brewing	<i>To Stink or Not to Stink: Sewers and Cities</i>
Travel	87 Famous Voyages	<i>Eastern Fens and Their Guardian Hags</i>
	88 Journals of Explorers	<i>The Last Voyage of Wayland the Hammer</i>
	89 City Guides	<i>Travels Amongst the Shattered Peaks</i>
	90 Regional Guides and Notes	<i>A Visitor's Guide to Yon Talinn, City of Wonder</i>
War/Combat	91 Arms and Armor	<i>A Practical Guide to the Handheld Crossbow</i>
	92 Tactics and Strategy	<i>The Battle of Betrayer's Fate</i>
	93 Historical Battles	<i>Unarmed Combat Against Fanged Foes</i>

Category	d100 - Subtopics	Sample Titles	
Zoology	94	Dragons and Related Beasts	<i>Dragon Blood and Manticore Brains: How Magical Creatures Work</i>
	95	Marine Animals	<i>Life Among the Ogres</i>
	96	Avian Creatures	<i>Monstrosities of the Sands</i>
	97	Giants and Ogres	<i>The Mating Rituals of Flumphs</i>
	98	Creatures of the Underdark	<i>Warm Blood, Sharp Teeth: Mammals that Hunt</i>
	99	Mammals	<i>Animal or Monster? Telling Them Apart</i>
	100	Comparative Biology	

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GENERATING INDIVIDUAL BOOK DETAILS

To randomly determine details about a found book, roll 1d4, 1d6, 1d8, 1d10, and 1d12 for the following tables. Because how often do you get to do *that* for a result?

You're free, of course, to just choose the options you prefer, mixing and matching as your cold, cruel DM heart desires. Also, these tables can obviously be expanded or revised based on your specific campaign and preferences. They're intended to help and inspire, not be a rigid or closed set of qualities.

PRIMARY DETAILS

d4 Book Size

1	Small
2	Medium
3	Large
4	Folio

d6 Binding Type

1	Hide, animal or monster*
2	Skin, humanoid*
3	Wooden
4	Metal*
5	Loose leaf, folder
6	Parchment, scroll case

d8 Text Details

1	Common, scrawled and messy
2	Elven and common, tidy
3	Dwarvish, with diagrams
4	Abyssal, in letters that smolder
5	Celestial, letters that pulse with light
6	Halfling, doodles of flowers and woodland creatures in margins
7	Common, angular and orderly
8	Ancient hieroglyphs (DC 25 History to decipher/translate)

d10 Book Condition

1	Dusty but otherwise good
2	Slightly worn and weathered
3	Very good condition
4	Water damaged, hard to read
5	Tattered and warm to the touch
6	Pristine and chill to the touch
7	Torn and missing pages, food and drink stains
8	Worn, fair condition
9	Crumbly and falling apart
10	Oily to the touch but otherwise good

d12 Book Type

1-7	Mundane
7-10	Mundane, with oddity*
11	Magical**
12	Magical**, with oddity*

*See next page for additional options.

**See the *Dungeon Masters Guide* for magical books.

ANCILLARY DETAILS

d10 Animal or Monster Hide

- 1 Leather (cow)
- 2 Leather (deer, elk, reindeer)
- 3 Reptile (snake, alligator, lizard)
- 4 Dragonscale
- 5 Yeti pelt
- 6 Tiger pelt
- 7 Unicorn hide
- 8 Fiend skin
- 9 Axe beak
- 10 Ettercap

d10 Humanoid Hide

- 1 Human
- 2 Orc
- 3 Gnome
- 4 Goblin
- 5 Elf
- 6 Giant
- 7 Gnoll
- 8 Dwarf
- 9 Halfling
- 10 Goliath

d8 Metal

- 1 Iron
- 2 Gold
- 3 Steel
- 4 Silver
- 5 Platinum
- 6 Copper
- 7 Tin
- 8 Bronze

d20 Book Oddity

- 1 Pressed flowers in the middle of the book; each bloom is different and when exposed to light, regrows stem and opens petals.
- 2 Every fourth page is dog-eared and marked with a dot of ink that seems to pulse when pages flipped quickly.
- 3 Indecipherable notes in the margins, punctuated with stars in red ink; each star has a unique face and expression.
- 4 When opened, the book instantly teleports to the shelf from which it was removed.
- 5 An iron hasp (DC 20) locks the book.
- 6 The text of the book appears in the native language of whomever holds it, including misspellings and grammatical mistakes that creature usually makes when writing.
- 7 Every word on every page is severely misspelled.
- 8 The book smells so badly that any living creature attempting to read it must make a DC 15 Constitution save or be poisoned for as long as they remain within 15 ft. of the book.
- 9 Simple line drawings of dog/fish hybrids fill the margins of the book.
- 10 Endnotes are written in a cipher only known by druids of the Circle of the Moon.
- 11 A crudely-drawn map showing a golden lamp amid ruins is hidden in the binding; DC 15 Investigation check to find.
- 12 Only every third page is legible because of exposure, damage, and insane scribbling.
- 13 Snide, critical commentary litters the pages, written in Dwarvish.
- 14 All uses of gendered pronouns are underlined, often more than once.
- 15 The book is tied closed with purple glittery string.
- 16 A recipe for flumph stew is stuck in the beginning of the book.
- 17 1d12 notes fall out of the book when opened; they relate a raging love affair from steamy beginning to tragic end.
- 18 The book is written in a heretofore unknown dialect of Gnomish.
- 19 The cover of the book is scored, as if stabbed by a dagger, and smells like cat piss.
- 20 Pages require a DC 15 strength check to turn.

ARCANE LIBRARIAN

Drawn by large collections of books—perhaps created by them—arcane librarians are encountered where tomes of any sort are collected and kept in one place.

Quiet Guides and Guardians. Arcane librarians exist to maintain and preserve books. They cheerfully help anyone seeking knowledge, so long as the seekers do not harm any book or the library.

Holders of Deep Knowledge. These beings know many, many things (but always knowledge that is contained in a book in their library). They use this deep knowledge to protect their domains to enforce quiet and order. They warn violators of the quiet once before employing action, but anyone who harms a book will suffer their wrath immediately.

Specialists in Lore. Larger collections of books sometimes have multiple librarians, each specializing in one or a handful of topics. Some have alternate abilities that reflect these specialties. A librarian with great knowledge of biology, for instance, may have abilities or spells that directly affect another creature's body and/or shape.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the librarian can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects; it can't use the same lair action two rounds in a row:

- **Sphere of Silence.** The librarian creates a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on itself. No sound can be created within or pass through the sphere. Any creature or object entirely inside the sphere is immune to thunder damage, and creatures are deafened while entirely inside it. Only the librarian can cast spells inside the sphere.
- **Summon Book Creatures.** The librarian summons aid in the form of lair-related creatures: 2 book wyrms*, 2 animated books*, 2 assistants (treat as **darkling**; death flash becomes death boom, inflicting deafness instead of blindness), or another arcane librarian.
- **Hide in the Stacks.** The librarian can attempt to hide in its lair (ducking around a corner, stepping into another room or corridor, etc.), including up to 10 ft. of movement, without incurring an attack in reaction, even if it can be seen.

*See *homebrew monsters at D&D Beyond*.

ARCANE LIBRARIAN

Medium humanoid (any race), any lawful alignment

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 65 (12d8)

Speed 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws DEX+6, INT+7, WIS+7,

Skills Arcana +7, History +7, Investigation +7, Perception +7, Stealth +7

Damage Vulnerabilities Acid, fire, lightning

Damage Resistances Cold, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities Psychic

Condition Immunities Deafened, poisoned

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 17

Languages Understands all languages; speaks and reads common and three others

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Wordless Casting. The librarian does not need sound to cast spells, even if the spell requires a verbal component. Librarians may activate magic items without sound, even if they require a spoken command word.

Magic Resistance. A librarian has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spellcasting. The librarian is an 8th level spellcaster. Spell-casting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks).

The librarian regains its expended spell slots when it finishes a short or long rest. It knows the following spells:

Cantrips (at will): *control flames, mending, message, thunderclap*
1st-4th level (5 4th level slots): *blindness/deafness, confusion, counterspell, dispel magic, fabricate, hold person, locate object, sleep, thunderwave, wrathful smite*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The disciple makes two attacks with its quill pen, or uses its word of knowledge and makes one attack with its quill pen. The librarian uses Intelligence for attack and damage bonuses.

Quill Pen. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4+4) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) poison damage. Any creature hit must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for one minute.

Word of Knowledge (2/day): The librarian utters a word or phrase drawn from its vast knowledge of the universe. All creatures of its choosing within 10 ft. must make a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or be stunned for one minute. Stunned creatures may make a saving throw at the end of each of their turns; success means they have shaken off the impact of the blast of knowledge. The librarian cannot use this ability if its Sphere of Silence lair action is in effect.

REACTIONS

Frightening Shush. If the librarian suffers damage, it may use its reaction to utter a mighty SSSHHH! at one attacker. If the target is within 15 ft. of the librarian, the creature must make a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or be frightened of the librarian for one minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a successful roll. If a creature's saving throw or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the librarian's shush for the next 24 hours.

FURTHER READING

If you're looking for more content for adventuring in a fantasy library, I highly recommend **The Stygian Library**, available on the DMsguild site. That product, and others, served as inspiration for this one.

<https://www.dmsguild.com/product/257113/The-Stygian-Library>

LEGAL STUFF

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THANKS

A number of people acted as beta readers/reviewers for this supplement: Handy Haversack, and members of the Dayton Dungeons and Dragons Facebook group: Adam S., Jennifer M. B., and Joshua P. I'm deeply appreciative for their time and feedback.