

SCRIPTORII



AN ARCAN E PLAYABLE RACE FOR D&D 5E

BY DAVID SOMERVILLE



SCRIPTORII

“SLAVE!” SNAPPED BENZOAR, “WHAT IS THE *Ninth Theorem of Binding? Quickly, before I lose my train of thought!*” The wizard was in a foul mood, as usual.

“The Ninth,” said the scriptorii from the doorway, “is that the strength of binding magic is inversely proportionate to the strength of what is bound.” The creature’s voice rustled like pages being turned. He was a strange sight, and often attracted comment by the wizard’s visitors—a humanoid form, a little over five feet tall, made not of flesh or stone, but of yellowing pages covered in spidery script. The invisible arcane force that bound his existence into being held the pages together, but where there were gaps, one could see that between the pages, there was only emptiness. The scriptorii often wondered if that empty space, the hollowness within, was where his soul dwelt—or if it was all in the ink that covered every inch of his form.

—David Somerville, *Song of the Scriptorii*

Born of the pages of books and the meddling of wizards, the scriptorii are a people created by love of lore and magical arrogance. Scriptorii are living tomes, held together by arcane forces. Originally invented by wizards to serve them in their magical practice, scriptorii have spread beyond the towers of mages into the world below. Their fierce intellect often carries with it an intense curiosity, and wherever there is a whisper of lost lore or a secret to be uncovered, one might find a scriptorii in search of it.

PAPER PEOPLE

Scriptorii are the spirits of books, with no internal mass. Rather, they appear to be a hollow space surrounded by pages pressed against invisible body. They range from under five feet to over six feet tall, but only weigh about 20-50 pounds. Scriptorii can have any build, but most incline towards a slender form. Being made of paper, they are usually the colors of parchment, though some, drawn from unusual texts, might be the color of dark brown leather or even the green of leaves. Some Scriptorii dress themselves in heavy robes, wrappings, and hoods, to avoid unwanted attention when moving through the world, but others are proud of their arcane nature and adorn themselves only with a small belt or satchel for practical needs.

BOUND SPIRITS, UNBOUND MINDS

When a wizard creates a scriptorii, he binds the spirit of a book into humanoid shape. There is much debate as to whether this is a kind of artificial, arcane soul, or whether books have something like a soul themselves that is called forth by the wizard. But regardless of their origin, the scriptorii are a brilliant people. Knowing every word of their core volume by heart, scriptorii are almost never content to let that be the limit of their knowledge. Instead, the scriptorii seek out learning wherever it may be found. Some seek to deepen their understanding of their original subject matter, while others pursue broader understanding of the world, traveling far and wide to learn as much as they can.

ARCANE SERVANTS

The scriptorii were originally designed by wizards to prove the idea that souls were not divine in origin, but arcane. Whether the existence of the Paper People truly proves this is still a matter of debate, but nevertheless, the scriptorii walk the earth and seem to think and feel and dream.

Most scriptorii are spirit-bound from existing books by wizards for a purpose, often acting as assistants in difficult spellwork, taking the place of laborious memorization. But accidents happen to ambitious wizards all the time, and some scriptorii walk free.

LIVING TOMES & ARTIFICIAL SOULS

Originally created as living reference manuals and assistants to wizards, many scriptorii will never be seen by others as anything more than summoned slaves. There are some who insist that scriptorii are not actually self-aware at all, merely an arcane performance. But others treat the scriptorii with compassion and respect, recognizing in them the spark of life and the desire to understand the world into which they never asked to be called.

BEYOND THE PAGE

Scriptorii who find themselves free from servitude to their arcane creators often travel in search of further knowledge. Many scriptorii hunger to add to their understanding of the world, being both young in consciousness and old in knowledge. Some scriptorii lock themselves in the libraries of great cities and universities, while others crack open long-forgotten toms in their pursuit of knowledge.

PERSONAL HISTORY

Although all scriptorii are called into being by magical means, they come from a variety of backgrounds. Choose from among these options, or write your own story.

Origin

d6 Your original book was...

- 1 A waterlogged tome from a bygone era.
- 2 A crisp new text fresh from the bookstore.
- 3 A ragged sheepskin scroll, crudely inked.
- 4 A private, handwritten volume by an obscure author.
- 5 A glossy publication full of news and opinions.
- 6 A half-burned book of nearly-forgotten secrets.

Binder

d6 You were spirit-bound by...

- 1 A low-level wizard seeking fame and glory.
- 2 A powerful spellcaster requiring an assistant for difficult spellwork.
- 3 A teacher at a magic academy, as a lesson demonstration.
- 4 A magic shop that specializes in binding scriptorii for the wealthy and powerful, to whom you were sold.
- 5 Another scriptorii.
- 6 You don't know—you simply came into consciousness with no explanation.

Cause

d6 You are free to adventure because...

- 1 You escaped your original spirit-binder, and they are still seeking you.
- 2 You were spirit-bound for a specific purpose, and when that purpose was completed, you were discarded like rubbish.
- 3 You worked hard and paid for your own freedom with your own gold.
- 4 Your previous master died, and nobody came along to claim you.
- 5 You displeased your previous masters, and they cast you out.
- 6 Your previous master encouraged you to seek your own fortune.

SCRIPTORII NAMES

Most scriptorii keep the titles of their original books, with more familiar nicknames for everyday use.

Titles: *Framington's Guide to Agriculture, Myths & Legends of the Far Realms, The Art and Science of Siege Warfare, Halflings: A History, Anatomy for Beginners, Viktor's Arsenal of Barbed Witticisms.*

Familiar Names: Frame, Myth, Siege, Half, Nat, Viktor.

SCRIPTORII TRAITS

Your scriptorii character has a number of qualities in common with other scriptorii.

Ability Score Increase. Your Intelligence score increases by 2.

Age. Scriptorii count their ages both by their original publication date and by when they were spirit-bound. So a Scriptorii might say that they are “sixty and four,” meaning their original book was published 60 years ago, and they were bound 4 years ago.

Alignment. Scriptorii can be any alignment, depending on their core volume.

Size. Scriptorii average about 5 feet tall, but only weigh between 25–50 pounds, since they are made of paper held together by arcane force. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and two other languages of your choice.

Flammable. When you take fire damage, you must make a Dexterity saving throw. The DC equals 10 or half the damage you take, whichever number is higher. On a failure, you catch fire and take an extra 1d6 fire damage at the end of each of your turns as long as you are on fire. You can use your action to put out the fire.

Paper Person. As a spirit-bound book, you don't eat, drink, or breathe. You also have resistance to poison damage and have advantage on saves against the poisoned condition. You do not sleep, but must periodically spend 4 hours checking over your pages, copying and repairing damaged passages. While doing so, you are conscious and alert, but focused, and have disadvantage to Perception checks to notice approaching danger. After repairing yourself, you gain the same benefit that a human does from 8 hours of sleep. Magic that would put a humanoid to sleep instead renders you paralyzed instead of unconscious for the effect's normal duration.

Made of Words. Scriptorii don't search out hidden knowledge from idle curiosity. Since you are formed of paper and magic, you can attune to a *spell scroll* as a magic item. When you attune to the scroll, it becomes part of your form and is consumed, and cannot be reused if you unattune to it. You may then cast the spell from that scroll once, regaining the ability to do so after you finish a long rest. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for this spell, and the DC of saving throws is 8 + your Intelligence modifier + your proficiency modifier. At 1st level you may attune to a *spell scroll* containing a cantrip. This benefit increases to a 1st level spell at 6th level, 2nd at 11th level, and 3rd at 16th level.

Subrace. You are the bound spirit of a book or library devoted to a certain topic. Choose one of these subraces as the heart of your scriptorii.

VOLUME OF DISCIPLINE

Your core text is a book of mastering the body through the mind, endowing you with great control over your physical form.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 1.

Proficiencies. You have proficiency in your choice of the Sleight of Hand or Stealth skill. You are also proficient with two martial weapons of your choice.

Martial Insight. Your understanding of the body makes you a deadly foe. When you make a weapon attack, you can give yourself a bonus to the attack and damage roll equal to your Intelligence modifier. After you do so, you can't use this trait again until you finish a short or long rest.

VOLUME OF ERUDITION

Your core text is a book of great scholarly prowess and deep research, giving you comprehensive mastery over your chosen subject matter.

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 1.

Proficiencies. You gain proficiency with two of the following skills of your choice: Arcana, History, Investigation, Nature, and Religion.

Subject Expertise. Choose one creature type or environment. You have advantage on all Intelligence checks pertaining to your chosen creature or environment.

Arcane Lore. You know one cantrip of your choice from the wizard spell list. Intelligence is your spellcasting ability for it.

VOLUME OF PHILOSOPHY

Your core text is a book of profound thoughts and introspection, giving you great insight into the reality of situations.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Proficiencies. Choose one skill proficiency from Animal Handling, Insight, Medicine, Perception, or Survival.

Stoic. When you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, you stay conscious and keep a number of hit points equal to your Wisdom modifier. You may not use this feature again until after a long rest.

Master of Paradox. You are capable of making profound observations about the nature of the universe, flummoxing friends and enemies alike. As an action, you may state a paradox, and any creature who hears and understands you must make a Wisdom saving throw. The DC for this saving throw equals 8 + your Intelligence modifier + your proficiency bonus. On a failed save, a creature is stunned until the end of its next turn. You may not use this ability again until after a long rest.

VOLUME OF LITERATURE

Your core text is a work of masterful fiction, full of high drama, human truths, pathos, sudden reversals, empathy, pain and loss, giving you uncommon insight into other people.

Ability Score Increase. Your Charisma score increases by 1.

Proficiencies. Choose one skill proficiency from Deception, Intimidation, Performance, or Persuasion.

Spoil the Ending. You use your knowledge of stories to encourage your allies and deflate your enemies, telling of how similar attempts have succeeded or failed in the past. As an action, you can impose advantage or disadvantage on a creature's next ability check or attack roll, provided it can hear and understand you. You may use this feature a number of times equal to your Intelligence modifier (minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

VOLUME OF DARKNESS

Your core text is a book of evil secrets and forbidden lore, giving you a dangerous grasp of things both terrifying and unforgivable.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 1.

Extra Language. You can speak, read, write, and understand either Abyssal or Infernal.

Dread Inscription. Your pages are covered with dark and terrible symbols. You gain proficiency in the Intimidation skill.

Terrible Knowledge. You have advantage on Intelligence checks made to recall information about evil creatures.

Draining Darkness. You recite terrible words from your volume that you yourself barely comprehend. When you finish a long rest, you may prepare a number of cantrips from the warlock spell list equal to your Intelligence modifier (minimum 1). You may cast these cantrips, using Intelligence as your casting ability. After casting these cantrips a number of times equal to your Intelligence modifier, you may not use this trait again until after a long rest. This benefit increases to 1st level spells at 4th level, 2nd at 8th level, 3rd at 12th level, and 4th at 20th level. After casting a spell, for each spell level cast, take 1 level of exhaustion. Cantrips count as 1st level spells for this feature. All levels of exhaustion are cumulative.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, WIZARDS OF THE COAST, FORGOTTEN REALMS, THE DRAGON AMPERSAND, PLAYER'S HANDBOOK, MONSTER MANUAL, DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE, D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE, ALL OTHER WIZARDS OF THE COAST PRODUCT NAMES, AND THEIR RESPECTIVE LOGOS ARE TRADEMARKS OF WIZARDS OF THE COAST IN THE USA AND OTHER COUNTRIES. ALL CHARACTERS AND THEIR DISTINCTIVE LIKENESSES ARE PROPERTY OF WIZARDS OF THE COAST. THIS MATERIAL IS PROTECTED UNDER THE COPYRIGHT LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. ANY REPRODUCTION OR UNAUTHORIZED USE OF THE MATERIAL OR ARTWORK CONTAINED HEREIN IS PROHIBITED WITHOUT THE EXPRESS WRITTEN PERMISSION OF WIZARDS OF THE COAST.

©2016 WIZARDS OF THE COAST LLC, PO BOX 707, RENTON, WA 98057-0707, USA. MANUFACTURED BY HASBRO SA, RUE EMILE-BOÉCHAT 31, 2800 DELÉMONT, CH. REPRESENTED BY HASBRO EUROPE, 4 THE SQUARE, STOCKLEY PARK, UXBRIDGE, MIDDLESEX, UB11 1ET, UK.