

BARD COLLEGES

The way of a bard is gregarious. Bards seek each other out to swap songs and stories, boast of their accomplishments, and share their knowledge. Bards form loose associations, which they call colleges, to facilitate their gatherings and preserve their traditions.

COLLEGE OF THE FORBIDDEN PLAY

How can you describe that masterful stage play? Its compelling characters, its engrossing setting, and its enigmatic motifs wormed their way into your brain as soon as you read them. You only read an excerpt—little more than a fragmentary passage on decaying parchment—but its effect on you was none the lesser. For weeks afterward, you dreamed of the enigma at the center of the play, the dreaded King in Yellow, and strained your mind to imagine the play's conclusion and the secrets left untold in its earlier acts.

Soon you had resolved yourself: the play should be made complete. Donning a yellow mask and clutching tightly to your *carcosan page*, you took the first of many steps to join the College of the Forbidden Play. This college, very much a disparate troupe of actors, seeks to compile the play in its entirety and act out its scenes, no matter what horrors they might entail.

DRAMATIC FLAIR

Starting when you choose this college at 3rd level, you convince others with an actor's flourish. When you make an ability check to interact with another creature, you can spend a Bardic Inspiration die to make a Charisma (Performance) check as well. If this Performance check is beats the ability check's DC, you succeed as if the ability check was successful.

PALE MASQUE

By 3rd level, much like the Yellow King, you wear a mask that grants you intrinsic anonymity. Before you socially interact with a humanoid while wearing the mask, you can use your action to cloud its thoughts. The target creature makes a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failed save, the creature will not remember any details about you, nor will it remember any details of the conversation you have for the next minute. Once you use this ability, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

UNSETTLING IMITATION

Starting at 6th level, you can use your bonus action to adopt the demeanor of a creature you can see within 60 feet. Until the beginning of your next turn, you emulate that creature's actions, copying its motions and moving at the same moment.

Whenever the target moves, you can also move up to the same distance. If the target attacks, you can use your reaction to make one melee weapon attack. If the target casts a spell, you can use your reaction to cast a cantrip. A humanoid target has disadvantage on attack rolls against you, and you have advantage on saving throws against effects it causes.

INVERTED YELLOW SIGN

By 14th level, at long last, you have connected the tenuous threads of the Lost City of Carcosa, the enigmatic Yellow King, and his *yellow sign*. You can cast the spell *yellow*



sign as if it were a bard spell for you. This spell doesn't count against your spells known.

Additionally, you can invert this sign when you cast the spell, paradoxically impelling all who see it to become infatuated with you. When you do so, instead of the normal effects of the spell, each creature within 30 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, for the next minute, a creature can't willingly move further away from you and has disadvantage on attack rolls against you. A creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

NEW SPELL

The following spell is derived from forbidden knowledge and secrets lost to man.

YELLOW SIGN

3rd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You trace in the air the insidious symbol from Lost Carcosa, the yellow sign, where it hangs for a long moment in a sickening yellow light. Each creature you choose within 30 feet of the sign must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 6d6 psychic damage, or half as much on a successful save. Aberrations take no damage from this spell. The sign fades at the end of your turn.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the yellow sign lingers longer in the air. The duration of this spell increases by one round for each slot level above 3rd and requires that you maintain concentration on it. If this spell is active at the beginning of your turn, you can use your action to cause each creature within range to make another saving throw against it, taking damage as normal on a failed save.

