

Tome of Naming

by loottheroom - Wednesday, April 25, 2018

<http://loottheroom.uk/tome-of-naming/>

It's book week on Loot The Room, in which I'm taking this month's RPG blog carnival theme of **journals, grimoires, and spell-books** and spreading it out across multiple posts. Yesterday I posted a [book title generator](#) that I hope you're enjoying. Today I promised to post some spells from *Ironstride's Compendium of Jinxes and Hexes*, but I still have some work to do on them before they're ready. So I'm swapping that post out for Thursday's post - which is now today's post. This post.

I'm also going to have to delay tomorrow's DMs Guild roundup. I'm not skipping it - that would be a stupid thing for me to do, frankly - but I simply haven't had the time to read everything I need to read. You can expect that next Wednesday, May 2nd. The upside of this is that that gives me a whole 5 days of April DMs Guild releases between now and then that I'll be able to consider for this month's roundup, rather than potentially including them in May when they've already been out for a month.

Anyway...

One of my favourite supplements from 3rd edition D&D is 2006's [Tome of Magic: Pact, Shadow, and Truename Magic](#) (not to be confused with the AD&D [Tome of Magic](#)). In particular I really enjoyed the Truename section of that book, and I've been looking for an excuse to update some of that material to 5th edition.

The magic and power of names is a staple of both fantasy fiction and real-world mythology. The concept of 'truenames' and their power can be found in Egyptian and Greek myths, traditional European fairy tales like *Rumpelstiltskin*, English folklore (*boggarts*, anyone?), and all sorts of other tales and beliefs from around the world. In more modern times this kind of magic appears in works like Ursula K. Le Guin's *Earthsea* series, Glen Cook's *Black Company* series, Pat Rothfuss' *Kingkiller Chronicles*, and many, many more.

Back in the '90s I had a particular hatred for Vancian magic for reasons that elude me now, and I spent a lot of time trying to rework AD&D's magic system to more resemble the magic of *Earthsea*. I was never very successful in that endeavour - partially because I was a kid and didn't really know what I was doing, and partially because reworking a game's entire system of magic is an enormous undertaking. So I was delighted when the 3rd edition *Tome of Magic* came out and contained a whole system of truename magic.

I'm not about to try to convert that entire section of that book here. Instead, I'm picking out some of my favourite parts of it and putting them into a neat little package that you can drop into your games if you feel like introducing a little bit of truename magic into your worlds. This is a much less detailed and robust system than that found in the *Tome of Magic*, but I hope it will be of some use to you.

Below you'll find a new feat to allow characters to use truename magic, four 1st level utterances

converted from the *Tome of Magic*, and a magic item you can use to introduce truenaming to your games. If there's interest I'll definitely convert some higher level utterances (especially as the feat provides rules for learning higher level utterances), but that's beyond the scope of a blog post. If I do convert more of this material it will probably form the basis of a DMs Guild release, purely to stay away from any accusations of copyright infringement.

Introducing...

Whisperwind's Introductory Treatise on the Nature and Implementation of Truenames

Or

Whisperwind's Manual of Naming

Whisperwind's Manual of Naming

Wondrous item, very rare

This book contains extensive writings on the theory of truename magic, as well as exercises and instructions for how to put these theories into practice. If you spend 48 hours over a period of 6 days or fewer studying the book's contents and practicing its guidelines, your primary spellcasting ability increases by 1 and you learn the Truename Training feat. If you lack the ability to cast spells, reading the manual has no effect. Once the manual has been used in this way it loses its magic, but regains it in a century.

Feat: Truename Training

Prerequisite: The ability to cast at least one spell

You have discovered the secret power of truenames, and learned to utilise Truename spell components. In addition you have learned a number of utterances that allow you to utilise this power. These utterances are written in a naming book, which you must read from while speaking an utterance.

When you choose this feat, you acquire a naming book holding two 1st-level utterances of your choice. These utterances do not count towards the normal number of spells that you know, but speaking them uses one of your spell slots of a level equivalent to the level of the utterance being spoken.

If you come across an utterance in written form, or learn it through some other means, you might be able to add it to your naming book. The utterance's level must be no higher than half your level (rounded up). The process of copying the utterance into your naming book takes 2 hours per

level of the utterance, and costs 50 gp per level. The cost represents the fine inks you need to record the utterance in a form that will not deteriorate through time and handling, and the materials you expend attempting to accurately record the utterance before moving it into your naming book permanently.

Truename Utterances

Utterances are the magical tools of the truenamer. Those not versed in truename magic often refer to utterances as spells, since to the uninitiated there is not a vast difference between watching a spellcaster at work versus witnessing a namer speak an utterance.

In game terms utterances function similarly to spells, but they include a new spell component: Truename (T). Only characters with the Truename Training feat know how to use Truename components. Truename components are a form of Verbal component that involve speaking a number of truenames (for creatures, objects, elements, etc.) in very specific combinations. Sometimes these utterances are spoken as part of a longer verbal component in casting, meaning that an utterance may require both a Verbal and a Truename component.

Truename components must be spoken aloud. Truenamers who cannot speak - whether because of magical silence, or for some other reason - cannot successfully speak an utterance, though some very powerful Truenamers claim to be able to speak utterances mentally rather than physically.

1st Level Utterances

Beckon Person

1st-level truenaming

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 ft.

Components: V,S,T

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You weave together the truenames for “approach” and “closer” into a spell that forces the subject to move towards you.

Choose a humanoid that you can see within range. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or spend at least 10 feet of its movement moving closer to you if able. The target can take its Action as normal, but cannot do anything that would cause it to end its turn further away from you than it began. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the effect

ends on the target.

At Higher Levels. When you speak this utterance using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can target one additional humanoid for each slot level above 2nd.

Fortify Armour

Casting Time: 10 minutes (ritual)

Range: Touch

Components: T, S, M (a small square of chain mail)

Duration: 1 hour

You strengthen the essence of a piece of armour, fortifying it against extraordinarily strong attacks. When you speak this utterance while touching a piece of armour, the target armour gives its wearer protection against critical hits. When an attacker strikes the wearer with a critical hit, the attacker must roll a second attack roll. The AC for this roll is equal to your spellcasting DC. If the second attack fails, the first attack still hits its target but does not deal extra damage or trigger any effects that would result from a critical hit. If the second attack succeeds, the utterance has no effect and the critical hit proceeds as normal.

Inertia Surge

1st-level truenaming

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V,S,T

Duration: 1 round

You touch a willing creature and speak its truename, granting it the ability to act normally regardless of magical effects that impede movement. For the duration the target is treated as if it were affected by a *freedom of movement* spell.

Defensive/Offensive Edge

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 ft.

Components: S/T/M (

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You speak the truename of a willing creature within range, granting it an increased awareness of threats and enemies in the vicinity. For the duration the target has a +2 bonus to their AC.

When speaking the Offensive version of this utterance, you instead cloud the mind and reactions of a creature within range. The creature makes a Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the target has a -2 penalty to their AC. A creature affected in this way can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

At Higher Levels. When you speak this utterance using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can target one additional creature for each slot level above 2nd.

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