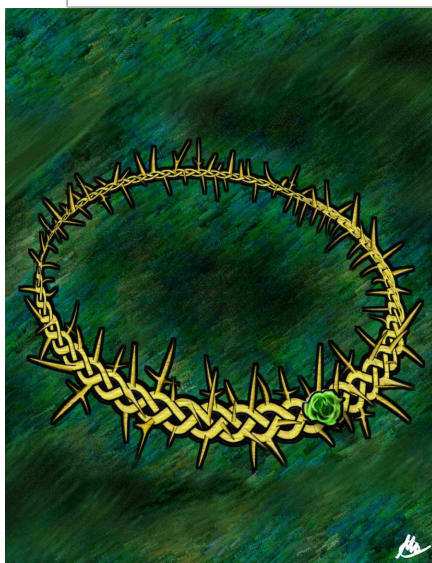


A player's guide to Legacy Items

By Mike Bourke, Michael K Tumey, and Johnn Four



Legacy Items are powerful arcane and spiritual objects that occupy a middle ground between relics and artifacts on the one hand, and 'ordinary' magic items on the other. Legacy Items begin their existence in a campaign as mundane pieces of equipment, and gradually rise in power as their owner grows in ability and prestige.

What is a Legacy Item?

Shared experiences leave a metaphysical fingerprint on the world. Some fingerprints are bound to the location of the events, and can be relived in dreams at those places. Others are bound to concepts, philosophies or personalities that resonate with those who experienced the events. This type

manifests as paranormal experiences or extraordinary bonuses in support of, or more frequently in opposition to, others who represent the concepts or philosophies.

A few strong imprints can coalesce within an ideal object relevant to the source of the imprint. This transforms it into a connection that binds the Legacy of the experience to the individual who wields the item. As the object manifests greater and greater power in the hands of the individual, it subtly shapes the personality and ambitions of the possessor until they come to embody and represent those who shared the original experience, becoming heir to their thoughts, dreams, aspirations greatness and, yes, their flaws.

When the heir passes on, the Legacy begins anew to bind itself to a new inheritor. Over time, the term Legacy comes to apply to the original imprint and the current bearer of that imprint. Such a Legacy might embody any philosophy or emotional state.

The Legacy of a group dedicated to peace might become less willing to engage in battle until all other avenues have been exhausted. If the group whose Legacy this is were betrayed by orcs, there might be an exception made in their case, where the item possessor will come to instinctively distrust the race and all its representatives, and will encourage acts of aggression and violence against them.

A Legacy can be simple, such as “Death to trolls”, or as complex as desired by the GM. However, it *always* represents the philosophy and ideology and traumas of some long-lost (and possibly forgotten) group whose beliefs were strong enough to survive the destruction or failure of that group, and which find themselves a new home in the Legacy Item.

How is a Legacy Item Created?

In technical terms, a Legacy Item is a masterwork item that, unbeknownst to the creator, serves as a symbolic representation of a past group or race. Expecting the item to become enchanted, both mage and craftsman are astonished when the enchantment fails to *take*.

The binding of Legacy to “Home” must be complete for the potential enchantment to be consumed and *bound* to the Legacy, making it appear as if the enchantment has failed. If the process of enchantment is initiated prior to this binding being complete, the capacity for the binding is consumed by the enchantment, and the

item becomes an ordinary magic item. This means there are few opportunities for Legacy Item creation, and even then they items are rarely recognized because this is *not* the only reason enchantments fail. If the enchantment is not performed correctly; if there is a hidden flaw in the item being enchanted; if there is any sort of disruption in the arcane or spiritual energies being infused in the item; if any of a dozen things go wrong, the enchantment will fail.

Sometimes, the process of the failed enchantment destroys the item. Other times the failure just mars it, leaving an ordinary and non-enchanted item. The enchantment might also become twisted and produce a cursed item. On rare occasions, the failure is the result of the intervention of an outside agency – producing a Legacy Item.

Most of the time, crafters and possessors discard Legacy Items as cursed or flawed. The items are never used long enough for others to recognize their true power and worth. And even when a Legacy Item’s powers and influence are known, they often become a closely held secret.

Legacy Items shape the user, making them the heir to everything that defined the particular group whose Legacy the item represents. Those who recognize this can use this shaping to their own benefit by inciting involuntarily reflex reactions from the Legacy and not from the wielder. As a result, wielders learn quickly to preserve the secret source of their enhanced abilities.

On rare occasions, a Legacy Item can be deliberately created by having such an idealized representation constructed at the exact location where a fingerprint resides, an echo of some great past evil or good. More frequently, though, happenstance and coincidence create them.

How Does a Character Acquire a Legacy Item?

Any non-enchanted masterwork item might actually be a Legacy Item. The only way to know is to use the item for a period, foregoing the advantages of using an enchanted item. If the wielder's personality, motives or objective harmonizes enough with the Legacy Item, it will begin to bind itself to him.

Without sufficient common ground in these areas for the item and the character to relate to one another, the item remains seemingly inert. In these cases, the item begins to influence the character subconsciously, raising doubts and creating confusion until the character opens up to new concepts, ideas and ideologies. The item then exploits this opening to mould the character into the being the Legacy needs him to be.

If this process proceeds too slowly, or if the character proves resistant, the item will attempt to influence those around the wielder in a subtle manner. While the wielder is subject to overt and cumulative effects, those around him find their reactions and inclinations become stronger or weaker, which puts the wielder into circumstances more appropriate for the Legacy Item's perspective.

It is usually in the Legacy Item's best interests for the character to survive, so it will not go too far in these manipulations. It is also in the item's best interests to avoid having its nature discovered by the wielder before the binding is complete, so it will be as subtle as possible.

It is also worth noting that a Legacy Item is not intelligent, though it may become so as the power of the Legacy grows. The effects

described above are more like instinctive prompts on the item's part, making the nature of the Legacy harder to discern.

Legacy Items in the hands of an unbound character

When initially wielding the item, a character gains no direct benefit. However, he will find that using the item feels 'right' in some indefinable manner, that it imbues him with a sense of confidence and certainty he will be a significant individual in the future with power and influence. He will feel his destiny being shaped by circumstance into something greater.

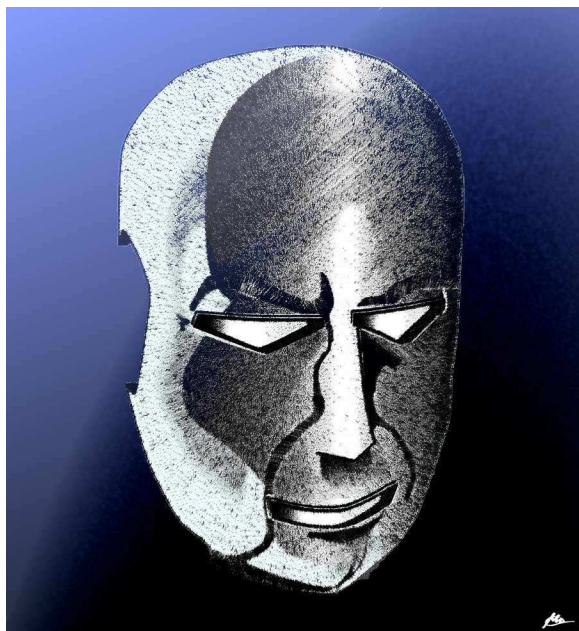
This confidence can manifest occasionally as a minor benefit to the character: a +1 initiative, +1 on a bluff or diplomatic skill check, +1 on a Fear save, +1 to hit, +1 to damage, and so on. These benefits manifest just on occasion, perhaps one time in ten, when possible. Each such manifestation counts as one *aiding* of the character – a total the player needs to track for reasons explained in the next section. When an aiding occurs, the character feels the item has made the difference between success or failure, or at least, made success easier to achieve.

When confronted with an opportunity to act in accordance with the Legacy when he would normally not do so, the character should make a Will save at DC 10 to resist instinctively following the influence of the item. This is true even if the character is normally immune to, or resistant to, mind-altering effects.

If the character is actively opposed to the philosophy and objectives of the Legacy, the Legacy Item will begin subtly interfering in the judgment and reactions of those around the character. These effects are more subtle, as described above, but are also harder to

resist as a result; surrounding characters are required to make Will saves at DC 15 to resist.

Note that at this point in their journey together, the item's influence is not strong enough to force the character into an alignment violation. However, it can imbue a desire to find a way to achieve a certain objective within the character's alignment restrictions.



Binding a character to the Legacy

Ultimately, the time will come when the character makes some form of positive declaration of ownership or destiny relating to the item or the innate Legacy objectives.

In game mechanics, this occurs involuntarily when the item has aided the character a number of times equal to the character's Wisdom score.

The declaration signals that the process of binding the character to the Legacy that item contains, with the item serving as an intermediary, has commenced.

When the character sleeps, rests, or meditates, he will begin reliving key moments of the past that is represented by the Legacy within his dreams or reveries. When he awakens, he will have difficulty remembering specifics, no matter how much he tries.

Recollection is	Will save DC
Vague and general	10
An overall impression	12
Bereft of context	15
Fragmentary, incomplete	20
Random, irrelevant	22
Specific, relevant	25

Until the binding process is complete, the character can still give up the item and its Legacy, though he will usually resist doing so once the binding process has begun, perhaps to the point of violence.

At the same time, the influence of the Legacy over the character will continue to grow. This first manifests in areas about which the Legacy directly relates. For example, a revenge-obsessed Legacy of violence toward dark elves would only trigger in circumstances where a dark elf was directly involved, and the save DC to avoid the prompting of the Legacy rises from 15 to 20.

Legacy Items can influence either the possessor or those around him, but not both at the same time. The item is no longer capable of influencing those surrounding the wielder while it directs its energies towards achieving a binding between the character and the Legacy.

It will prompt the character to take a more active interest and involvement in the affairs of significance to the Legacy. Those who know the character well or observe him closely may realize he struggles with some inner battle or temptation; sometimes he wins, and sometimes he loses. They may note that he acquires an interest in subjects that were never part of his activities in the past, or spends a growing part of his time pursuing new hobbies or avocations.

Over time, the Legacy will influence the character in situations where its motivations are only indirectly related. At this point, the character may even blame those against whom the Legacy is directed for what he is experiencing.

Eventually, the Binding will be complete. **This is signaled when the character takes an action not previously within their personality, purely because of the influence of the Legacy Item. This action is in complete violation of his normal character, beliefs and alignment.**

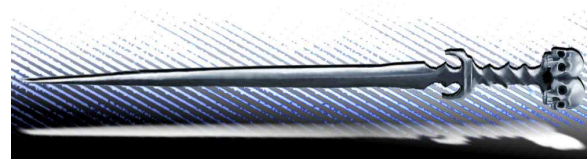
The speed with which this process proceeds depends (in game mechanics terms) on the power of the first significant ability granted by the Legacy Item. In Game mechanics, this is a number determined by the GM by means of a process described within *Assassin's Amulet*.

In the interim, while the process of binding the character to a legacy remains incomplete, he will gain the benefits of an initial minor power, known as the First Inheritance. This is simply one of the unreliable benefits described previously: +1 to initiative, +1 on bluff or diplomatic skill checks, +1 on fear saves, +1 to hit, +1 to damage. However, the character can now use this power whenever he uses the Legacy Item.

Binding the Legacy to the character

When the binding process is complete, the character becomes the guardian and last representative of the Legacy. While he remains in control of his actions and choices, he will be aware of the inclinations of the Legacy he represents and feel urgings to behave in accordance with the beliefs and attitudes he now embodies. He gains a substantial ability, referred to as the Second Inheritance.

From time to time thereafter, as he gains in character levels, he has the opportunity to unlock powers, known as Inheritances, within the Legacy Item. Should he succeed in doing so, these powers are his to call upon thereafter; should he fail to do so, the power will not be available until the character *next* succeeds in unlocking a power within the Legacy Item, acquiring in the process not only acquire the new ability he has just unlocked but also the power he failed to unlock previously. The greater the power, the more difficult the challenge of unlocking that power will be.



The Powers of a Legacy Item

Legacy Items have multiple powers, from minor to major, that they grant to the wielder. Initially, the wielder will not even be certain the item is granting a power, so unreliable are the benefits while the character is unbound to the item. When the binding process begins, the character gains access to a more reliable ability, appropriate to the nature of the Legacy that the Legacy Item represents. This advantage is known as the **First Inheritance**.

As the wielder and Legacy Item bond together, the character levels gained mark the passage of time as the bonding experience proceeds. When sufficient time has passed, the bonding is complete and the character gains the benefits of a power referred to as The Second Inheritance. The power level of the Second Inheritance determines the number of levels to be gained before the bonding is complete, and so on.

At the GM's discretion, the character may experience *flashes* of the Second Inheritance in advance of its being reliably available to the character, under circumstances especially appropriate to the Legacy. When such circumstances are present, the GM should roll a dX, where X is the number of levels remaining before the bonding is complete; on a roll of '1' the power may be called upon, once, and immediately.

Once bound to a Legacy, the character gains the opportunity to unlock additional Inheritances as he gains additional levels, presumably while representing the Legacy. There may be many such Inheritances of a minor nature, or few of more substantial power, or some combination of these two extremes.

Base Inheritance rankings

Inheritances are ranked on a scale of 2 to 6. Each increase in ranking indicates the Inheritance is more powerful – roughly doubling with each +1.

A table describing the ranking of specific powers is provided in *Assassin's Amulet*. The table offers usable examples but the list is not exhaustive. Powers and restrictions not listed are possible and acceptable, limited only to the GM's creativity.

Inheritance ranking modifiers

The base ranking of one or more Inheritances are then adjusted by applying Ranking Modifiers, which reflect how well the power(s) express the unique nature of their Legacy.

The GM determines the ranking appropriate to each Inheritance after listing the powers he wishes the Legacy Item to confer.

Total Legacy Ranking

The modified rankings of individual powers are then totaled to determine the Total Legacy Ranking. Most Legacy Items have a total of 16-20 total ranking; some, suitable only for an Epic Campaign, might have as many as 40 total ranks.

The greater the total, the more powerful the Legacy Item will become when the character has mastered the powers it offers.

Valuation of a Legacy Item

The table below shows the correct means of calculating the value of a Legacy Item.

Value Of A Legacy Item	Applicability
Value = 20,000gp x total ranking of revealed powers	Always
+50,000gp	if the total ranking of revealed powers is less than 16

A Legacy Item with 8 power ranks revealed has a value of 210,000gp—mostly for the abilities it is already known to confer, plus a lump sum reflecting the certainty that there are more to come.

Unlocking Powers

Until an Inheritance is unlocked, a power only exists as a potential—something the Legacy Item may grant in the future, but which it does not yet bestow. **The number of levels a character must gain to receive an opportunity to unlock the next Inheritance equals the modified power ranking of that Inheritance.**

For example, if the modified power ranking of the Fourth Inheritance is 3, the character must earn 3 levels before the character can attempt to unlock the Inheritance, starting from the point at which the character had his first opportunity to unlock the Third Inheritance. The character must use the Legacy Item as the primary item of its kind throughout these levels. If the Legacy Item is a sword, for example, it must be the character's primary melee weapon.

Players should not know how many levels they have to achieve before they get the opportunity to unlock a further inheritance. Nor should they be informed when they have unlocked the *last* Inheritance of an item.

Unlocking an Inheritance Power requires more than merely achieving the character levels specified. The possessor must also complete one or more tasks, skill checks or quests specified by the GM as the key to unlocking that power. These tests are known as an Unlocking Challenge. After the possessor succeeds at the Unlocking

Challenge, the power becomes unlocked and readily available to the character.

As soon as a character qualifies to attempt an Unlocking Challenge, the process of earning levels toward unlocking the next power begins.

Roleplaying requirements

Unlocking Challenges are required because they encourage players to roleplay the effects of the Legacy. Legacy Items are powerful, but the price of that power is an influence shaping the character's opinions, reactions and thoughts. This manifests in game mechanics as a roleplaying requirement.

The Legacy carried by a Legacy Item is as much a part of the personality of the wielder as any other. It need not be dominant, but it *must not* be secondary.

The GM and the player should agree on the nature of the personality effects of the Legacy when reaching the point where character can no longer discard the Legacy Item (unlocking the Second Inheritance).

The GM should formulate background elements prior to this event to serve as the foundation for this influence, and use the binding period to give the player—and the character—fair warning *in-game* of what lies before them.

One of the major reasons for the binding period (during which the character is not committed to the Legacy) from a metagame perspective is to facilitate a considered decision in this matter.

The GM defines the Legacy and the powers it grants. The player determines how that Legacy will shape the character.

The GM must enforce these mutual decisions, and should review the actions and decisions of the character *each time a character levels up* to ensure the Legacy is being properly reflected in the character's behavior.

This does *not* grant the GM a veto over the choices of the player; however, it does require him to point out that failure to act appropriately will have consequences for the character, up to and including the possibility that the level just gained will not count toward unlocking the next Inheritance. In this respect, the Legacy is not unlike an alignment restriction or the code of behavior to which a paladin should adhere.

Unlocking a new Inheritance Power is akin to an end-of-year exam in the subject of "behavior appropriate to the Legacy." It is not enough to overcome whatever Unlocking Challenge the GM places before the character with a skill roll or a battle; the manner of the solution is as important as the answer itself.

Unlocking challenge difficulty

Assassin's Amulet contains a procedure for the GM to use in determining exactly how difficult a challenge the character must overcome in order to unlock an Inheritance. Unless it is important to the specific Legacy, there is no requirement for the character to solve the problem or defeat the challenge unassisted by other PCs.

In general, it is fair to say that the difficulties increase with successive Inheritances and with the power level of the Inheritance that the character is about to attempt to unlock.

The challenge should consist of a mini-adventure or subplot whose length and difficulty reflects these factors.

Depending on the player and his inclination and ability to contribute to the overall metaplot of the campaign, the GM may permit the player to assist in the design of this mini-adventure/side-quest/subplot, or may spring it on the character *blind*. It may form part of the ongoing plotlines within the campaign, or it may be a side-quest completely divorced from those plotlines.

GMs should bear in mind it is not enough for the character and his companions (if any) to overcome these purely mechanical challenges; the roleplay component is just as essential, and the design of the Unlocking Challenge should provide an opportunity for that roleplay.



Impact on characters

When discussing these notions with playtesters, the question was posed whether these challenges should be real events, with substantial impact on the lives and history of

the world and the affected characters, or whether they should take the form of dreams or illusions with no external effect.

Opinion on this question was divided. Some argued the training during the bonding stage had established a precedent, while others took the position that, since the Legacy and its powers were real, if metaphysical, so should the challenge be, and that enforcing some impact on the outside world of the character coming to represent the Legacy was appropriate.

While each GM is free to rule on this matter as he or she sees fit, a consensus eventually emerged in the aforementioned debate:

- Whenever possible, the GM should undertake to make the challenges real, with real impact on the game world.
- Where this is not possible, the Legacy will twist the perceptions of the possessor (but not his companions) to make events *seem* relevant. For example, making the population of a town appear to be bugbears, trolls or other race appropriate to trigger Legacy-derived behavior.
- If this is also not possible, only then should the challenge take place entirely within the confines of the character's mind. In this case, the GM should enlist the assistance of the other players at the table.

There is an important distinction between these options which deserves emphasizing. With the first two alternatives, there are genuine risks, and hence there should be genuine rewards and consequences, especially to the characters not wielding the Legacy Item. In the third case there is no risk—a character who is killed simply wakes

up from the dream—so there should be no rewards beyond the unlocking of the Inheritance or not.

That means the character should gain *no experience points* for success, just as he loses nothing in the event of failure; his sole reward is the activation of the next Inheritance, his sole punishment for failure the lack of activation of the same.

Furthermore, the GM can interpret the middle ground as imposing circumstances that make an encounter more difficult. If this is the case, he may offer additional rewards.



The Effects of a Legacy

Legacy Items are high-fantasy plot devices that have been designed to be sufficiently manageable and flexible to operate even in a low-fantasy world.

By virtue of the 'fingerprints' that significant actions impart onto the game world, they form a different type of connection between the campaign history and the contemporary gaming environment, a new set of plot threads the GM can weave into an existing tapestry.

GMs can use Legacy dreams as a conduit to additional game world background, revealing past events and campaign briefing material as it becomes relevant. This offers an advantage for roleplaying by sheltering players from the omniscient awareness of the past conferred from a more substantial historical overview, while presenting the information to them when it becomes important.

Furthermore, the existence of Legacy Items implies a connection and cohesion to past events and primal conflicts that can serve as motivation and a source of plotlines, a metaphysical backdrop of which contemporary events are a modern consequence. They not only imply high-fantasy cosmic conflict, but they can place it at arm's length from the campaign, permitting the GM to enjoy the best of both worlds.

The effects and implications of a Legacy Item extend far beyond the immediate consequences upon the campaign. They can provide a vehicle for a wider narrative, enriching the campaign and making possible stories that would otherwise be beyond reach.

Contemplate a vast historical conflict between two ideologically opposed forces such as Good and Evil, Order and Chaos, or even Centralized Authority versus Liberty and Independence.

For convenience, we will abbreviate all such conflicts as Left versus Right. These two forces, Left and Right, fought a war-to-end-all-wars in the distant past, with no clear winner. The extreme adherents of both causes battled each other to the point of annihilation. However, the Legacies of these ideologies lives on, forming a central spark that drives the evolution of the societies that have arisen from the ashes. This shapes those

cultures, drawing those more sympathetic to one side than the other into alliances and coalitions, until two factions once again emerge, one the embodiment of Left, and the other of Right, each wielding their respective Legacy Items. Then once again, the two sides will clash in the latest incarnation of their never-ending conflict, seeking to resolve the irresolvable, until both are again destroyed, and the cycle starts anew.

The clash between these two forces is high-fantasy. However, any other point in this cycle of never-ending conflict can serve as a background template for mid- or low-level campaigns possessing the scope of the high-fantasy concept without the baggage.

This is but one of many ways Legacy Items can connect past with present to enrich a campaign. Any philosophy, ideology or point of collective identification, if held strongly enough, can perpetuate itself beyond its history into a contemporary game era by using a Legacy Item as a vehicle.

On a character

Legacy Items provide a method for character development in-game beyond encounters. The impact of the Legacy on the character — from a bias to an abiding influence that must be constantly battled to a complete consumption of the original personality — offers a choice to the player, in consultation with the GM.

No matter how limited the change, every character possessing a Legacy Item should be marked in some way by the burden. He will see that which no living eyes have apprehended, hear sounds from an age long past, experience events from long before his time.

These might have little relevance to the contemporary era or be directly relevant.

They might reinforce character flaws or teach wisdom, or both. At best, a Legacy Item should be a mixed blessing.

There is always a downside, some price to pay, for possession of such a powerful object. The character is the focus for incomprehensible and implacable forces from a different time who sees the world in absolute terms; the character should feel the impact of these circumstances.

On game balance

It has often been suggested amongst the Author's players that wizards trade low-level effectiveness for greater power at higher levels, while other character classes either gain most of the power early, or at the least, progress in a more orderly fashion. It follows that since Legacy Items act to reduce the short-term advantage of magic items to a character in exchange for more power in the longer term, they shift game balance a little closer to the progression of the wizard.

The greater the total number of Inheritance Levels of potential powers within the Legacy Item, the longer the period of deferral and the more substantial the eventual benefit.

It follows that GMs should be wary of Legacy Items in the hands of wizards, who might be so compromised at lower levels that they cannot survive to come into their full power, and who may overwhelm the campaign if they ever do so. Careful selection of Inheritances can mitigate this risk, and might even counter it by providing wizards additional security in the areas of greatest weakness at lower levels.

Underestimated inheritance value

The procedure outlined in *Assassin's Amulet* provides a broad basis for the selection of Inheritances and valuing the power they

provide relative to each other. The procedure is not infallible, so GMs should use their own judgment both in advance (and in consideration of the encounters players are likely to encounter in the future) and in hindsight to reassess the value of each inheritance power.

If a power has been undervalued, the GM can and should compensate by deliberately over-valuing the next Inheritance Power. While the initial description of the Legacy Item provides a road map, it should not be taken as gospel (and should not be revealed to the player). Rather, the planned powers conferred by the Legacy Item should be an evolution of intent throughout the campaign.

Too many legacies

GMs should beware of overpopulating a campaign with Legacy Items. These should be *rare* items. One, or at worst one matched set, in an adventuring party is sufficient; more can unbalance the campaign. If players without Legacy Items become dissatisfied, it is a sure sign the GM has not sufficiently highlighted the penalties and downsides of having such an item.

The ideal balance makes the choice of accepting a Legacy Item difficult due to its matching good and bad elements.

Legacy sets

One notion sure to occur to GMs is the potential of Legacy Sets—matched items intended to join or work together to create a whole greater than the sum of their parts. For example, a suit of mail, shield, helm and sword, all of which embody a portion of a Legacy.

In theory, there is nothing wrong with this, since the process of designing a Legacy Item balances disadvantage with advantage. A

character coming into possession of such a set sacrifices even more early advantage for even more eventual power.

But game balance can be precarious. Too much of a good thing can easily overwhelm a campaign. It follows that unless a GM is sure of where he is going with the construction of such sets, it is better to embrace the rule of thumb offered in *Too many legacies*, above.

Not everyone leaves a legacy

It follows from the rarity of Legacy Items that most groups do not leave a Legacy. No one knows the exact combination of obsession and circumstance that create one. Some have even speculated that an epic magic of unprecedented ability has propagated through time from the distant future (since there is no evidence such a spell has been cast in the past). Perhaps he tried to ensure the survival of a specific Legacy, and was indirectly responsible for the creation of all the others as a side effect.

Severing a Bonding

Severing a bond is not normally possible; at the time of the Second Inheritance, the character accepts the burden of the bonding of his own free will, after ample warning. Nevertheless, it might become possible under special circumstances.

Should a character wish to be unbound, each Inheritance from most recently Unlocked to First Inheritance must be removed using either a Wish or Miracle spell. Stat or XP losses associated with these spells *cannot be borne by the bonded character*. The bond itself can then be broken with a Remove Curse or Remove Blessing.

Should the character *not* wish the bonding to be unbound, he will gain the full benefits of saving throws, spell resistance, etc, in overcoming any attempt to unbind him forcibly. Further, his WIS bonus adds to his benefit on any such roll (or as a penalty to those attempting to overcome any resistance).

Consequences Of Severing A Bonding

The character can never again wield the item without risking the full and total Reinstatement of the bond and Inheritances, as described below.

Severing a bonding will not reverse any physical or psychological effects on the character, but may diminish them.

If he had lost the ability to see green, he is forever colorblind; if he suffered the delusion he was a gifted singer, he will still break into song at the drop of a hat. Nor can the character ever bond with a different Legacy Item unless it is part of a matched set of such items, which would trigger reinstatement of the original bond.

Reinstatement of a severed Bond

At the moment a character begins severing their bonding, divide his total XP by 100 (round up) and record the total on the character sheet. If the character ever wields the item again, convert the experience he earns while doing so into a percentage of the result. He must make a d% roll against this total. If he rolls the target number or lower, the bonding and Inheritance are restored exactly as they were, though any character levels gained in between do not count toward the next Inheritance.

For example, a 12th level character with 69,272xp bonds to a Legacy Item. His party members stage an intervention, each

sacrificing 5,000xp to have three Inheritances removed and the bond broken. $69272 / 100 = 692$ xp. If the character subsequently takes up the item again, and earns 220 xp wielding it, he has a $220/692 = 31\%$ chance of the bond being restored. (If the character earns more than 692 xp, this chance is 100%.)

Reshaping a bonding

It may be possible to *reshape* a bond, removing some undesirable side effects and replacing them with a less-severe version. I recommend this require an epic spell if the campaign has such; if not, the precise mechanism for doing so is left to you.

There are a number of restrictions to any such reshaping:

- The side effect must not yet have been inflicted upon the character
- The caster must know exactly what the undesirable side-effect will be (this may require considerable arcane research, scrying, and the like)
- The subject must be willing or ignorant of the process
- The caster must expend a minimum xp of $1000 \times$ the total rating of Inheritances received to achieve each shaping. This expenditure may be in a lump sum or in smaller amounts spread over time at your discretion.

For example, if a character has received four Inheritances with a total rating of 11 between them, each shaping costs 11,000 xp and can only blunt **one** future effect of the Legacy.

Analyzing, encountering and destroying a legacy

Legacy Items are artifacts for the purposes of Mordenkainen's Disjunction and similar spells. They **are** magic items with reference to Detect Magic and similar spells. Only powers that have been Unlocked, plus the next Inheritance to be unlocked, can be analyzed using Identify and similar spells.

That makes them difficult to destroy. Only unbound Legacy Items can be destroyed and it is an epic task akin to the destruction of the One Ring. The safer course is to lock the item up somewhere, place guardians and traps around it (self-sustaining ones if possible) and then try to eliminate all knowledge of where it is hidden—to create a dungeon, in other words. One could even create more such depositaries with **no** exceptional treasures and scatter them around, just to make it harder for anyone searching for the Legacy Item to pick out the right one.

Nevertheless, the majority of Legacy Items encountered in a game should be encountered in the hands of an NPC. **Never** permit a PC a Legacy Item during character creation without careful thought by the referee.

Naming Legacy Items

Legacy Items generally take the format "The XXXX of NNNN." In general, Legacy Items are named for one of six sources:

- The craftsman responsible
- The first, most famous or most infamous wielder
- The name given to the item by the first wielder
- The source of the Legacy, if that can be identified
- The location in which the Legacy was discovered or recovered
- The location in which the Legacy was first instrumental in dramatically changing the course of events

GMs are encouraged to retain the general format of the names given to Legacy Items because it conveys a Legacy Item's uniqueness. Variations on the source of "NNNN" also work, and the choice made should reflect the history of the item. Every Legacy Item should have a backstory.



Literary References

Many references inspire the framework for Legacy Items, notably:

- The One Ring in *Lord Of The Rings*
- The Orb Of Aldur in *The Belgariad*
- The principles of different aspects of magic in *Master Of The Five Magics*
- The armor of Ashen-Shugar in *Magician*

Glossary Of Terms

Legacy Item: A powerful arcane or spiritual object that occupies a middle ground between artifact and ordinary magic item.

Legacy: A metamagical imprint embedded in an item that comes to dominate possessors over time to recreate the events or circumstances of the imprint. This process might be an end in itself or might be a means to continue striving for a particular goal. History then repeats itself, adding another chapter to the Legacy for its next wielder.

Binding: A permanent magical attachment between possessor and Legacy Item that begins when the item has aided the character a number of times equal to the character's Wisdom score. (Also referred to as bound, bond and bonded.)

Binding Period: The time between the moment a Legacy Item begins to exert influence over the possessor, though he has not yet committed to an item's Legacy, and the unlocking of the first Legacy Power, when that commitment takes place.

GM and player use the binding period to

discuss ramifications to character and campaign before a player agrees to attempt to unlock the item's First Inheritance through an Unlocking Challenge.

Unlocking Challenge: One or more skill checks, tasks or quests attempted to gain permanent access to a Legacy Item's inheritance. An Unlocking Challenge is required for each Inheritance of an item. The difficulty of an Unlocking Challenge is determined using the Inheritance Ranking and the Inheritance Number.

Inheritance: General term for a single ability or power, or a group of such abilities, conferred at one point in time, by a Legacy Item. This term may also be used to refer to the psychological, intellectual, social or physical effect that accompanies such abilities.

Total Legacy Ranking: The total of all an item's Modified Inheritance Rankings, used to determine campaign impact, campaign balance and overall strength of a Legacy Item.

First Inheritance: The first power or ability a wielder can unlock in a Legacy Item. Followed by Second Inheritance, Third Inheritance, and so on. Each inheritance requires passing an Unlocking Challenge. The numeric form of these terms (1st, 2nd, etc.) is also known as the **Inheritance Number**.

Inheritance Ranking: A measure of how powerful a particular Legacy Item Inheritance is.

Base Inheritance Ranking: The initial power ranking of an Inheritance before any modifiers are applied; varies from 2 to 6.

Modified Inheritance Ranking: The final figure used in calculating an Inheritance's power after factoring in all applicable modifiers. Used when calculating a Legacy Item's Total Legacy Ranking. Varies from 0 to 6.



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