

WEB ENHANCEMENT

THE WISDOM OF THE ANCIENTS

Can you save an innocent scholar from those who would use his knowledge for evil?

When passing through a major city, you're approached by the envoy of a powerful church. The adept tells you of a great sage, Khor'yn. For years Khor'yn had been trying to decipher long-forgotten rituals of the church — spells of tremendous power. Now the sage has disappeared, and the adept fears that he has been kidnapped. The church will pay a considerable sum if you find the sage and deliver him safely to the high priests. Can you locate the missing scholar and free him from his prison? And what will you do when Khor'yn reveals that the church that sent you has its own sinister plans for him? If you decide to turn against the church, you may have to deal with the *other* bounty hunters sent after you!

THE SILENT PRISONER

What secrets are locked in the head of a crippled prisoner?

Doppelgangers are mercenary creatures, often selling their services to the highest bidder. But what do they do when they aren't working as spies or impersonating princes? When you stop at a roadside inn, you discover that it's actually a nest of "off-duty" doppelgangers. You manage to escape, but in the process you make a strange discovery. The shapeshifters were keeping a prisoner in the inn. This man has been blinded, his tongue and hands have been removed, and his face has been horribly disfigured; he cannot speak, write, or see. Why are the doppelgangers keeping him alive? Are they holding him for someone else, or do they have a greater agenda of their own? Who is he, and what terrible secrets are locked in his brain? The answers may be more dangerous than the doppelgangers themselves.

BINDING

One notable spell not mentioned elsewhere in this section is *binding*. A *binding* spell can hold a victim

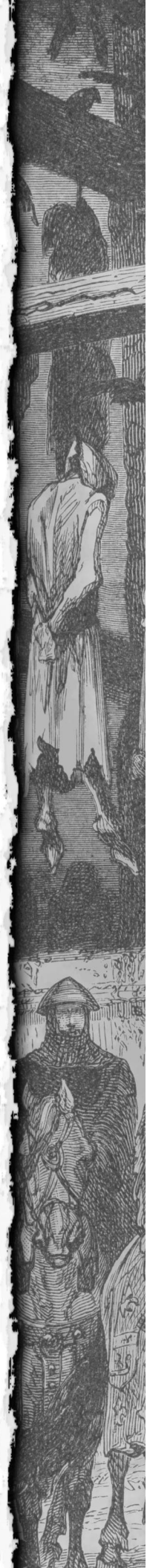
entrapped for years — but because of the many different forms it can take, it's not especially suited to any one particular style of prison. A fortress of justice could certainly have a hidden vault containing prisoners held in *bound slumber*. On the other hand, if you have the power to trap an enemy in *bound slumber*, you could just lock your prisoner in a closet; she's not going anywhere. The question is whether you have to worry about other people breaking *in* to rescue her.

ADVENTURES IN PUNISHMENT

In an ideal world, you won't have your hands cut off or spend years in a prison. But there are still many interesting ways by which a criminal past can be tied into an adventure. Being trapped in the "inescapable prison" of an evil nation can make for a very interesting adventure; having to find a way to break out without access to your usual equipment and spellbooks can be a difficult challenge. Alternately, you could play out an entire mini-campaign within a fortress prison. Perhaps you and your friends are prisoners of war; you have one week to plan and execute a massive prison break in order to support a military offensive. Can you rally the other prisoners and overcome the guards using only your wits and diplomatic skills?

There are many other ways that punishments can drive the direction of an adventure. If you're excommunicated by your church, you'll have to find a way to atone for your actions — and if your punishment wasn't deserved, you'll have to fight the corruption within the church hierarchy.

Scourge is another spell that can give you a clear goal; when you fall victim to a vile curse, you'll have to find out who your enemy is and what you have to do to lift the spell. Or perhaps you return to your home village, and no one remembers who you are — clearly *steal the painful memory* has been used, but for what reason? And why did the townsfolk go along with it?





Another possibility is to add a criminal past as part of your character's background. Are you an exile from your ancestral homeland? Have you been branded for a crime you didn't commit? Such a flaw can add an interesting level of depth to your character. Why were you exiled, and from where? Were you a criminal, and if so have you truly seen the error of your ways? Or are you a political renegade — maybe an elder son exiled by your jealous brother, who sought to usurp the throne of your father? Thinking about these questions can give you new material for roleplaying, and can provide your GM with lots of plot hooks she can work into future adventures.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

Punishment can influence the direction of a story even if *you* aren't the one being punished. Here are a few story ideas to consider — more ways in which the forces of justice could have an influence on your future.

THE SCOURGE OF AGES

Can you reassemble a lost artifact in time to save a cursed prince?

Lady Blue is said to be an avatar of the goddess of trickery. When the young Prince of Corland mocked her power, she placed him under a powerful curse: with each day that passes, the prince ages one year.

The royal physicians believe that he has only one month to live. Lady Blue has said that the curse will be lifted if the Spiral Codex is reassembled — but the pages of the Codex were scattered and hidden centuries ago. The kingdom is depending on you — can you locate the hidden pages in time to save the prince? And even if you do, what powers may be unleashed if the dark book is restored? There was a reason it was destroyed, after all!

TEARS OF STONE

When you're sent to rescue a petrified spy, what else will you find in his prison of stone?

The sorcerers of Torhyn rule their domain with a fist formed of magic and steel. Rumors abound that the magi are preparing for war, and the Duke of Fellvale recently sent a number of spies to investigate the realm of magic. Only one spy escaped; she believes that one of her comrades made a critical discovery, but he was captured and imprisoned in a stone garden (see Chapter Nine). Now the duke has turned to you for assistance. Can you find a way to break into the prison vault and locate the petrified spy? And if you're successful, what else will you find in the vault? What ancient heroes or legendary mystics are trapped in the garden, passing the centuries in the prison of stone? Releasing these stone sentinels may be the key to breaking the power of the sorcerer-kings.

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