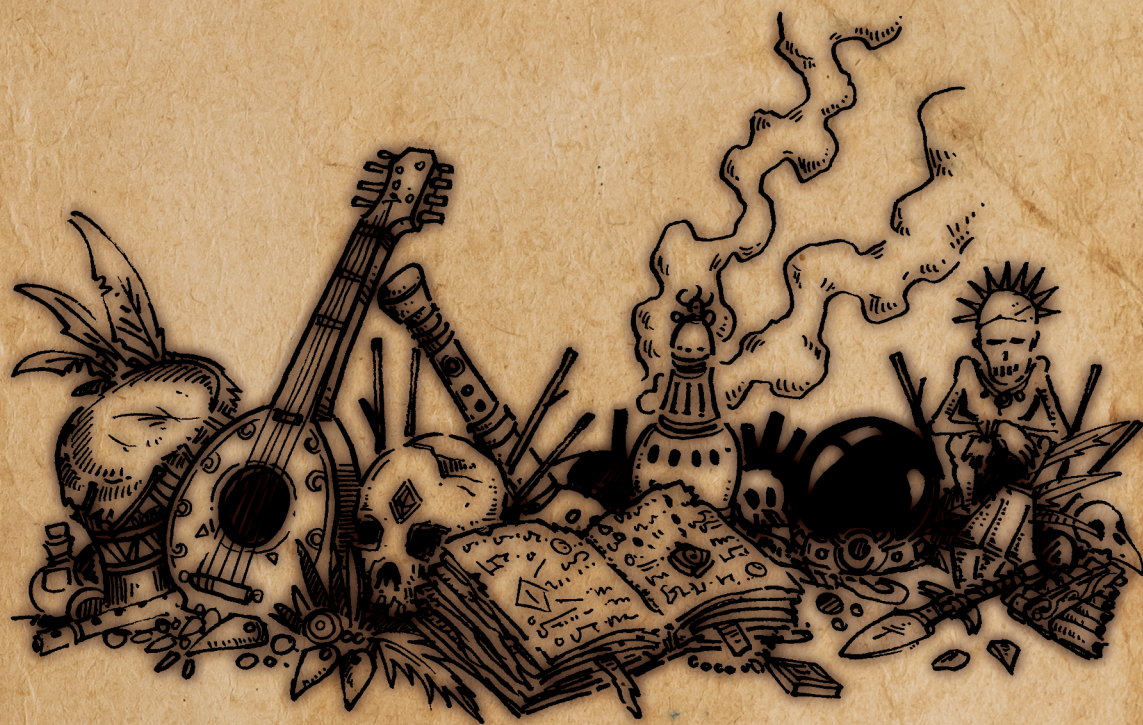


ENHANCED FOCUSES

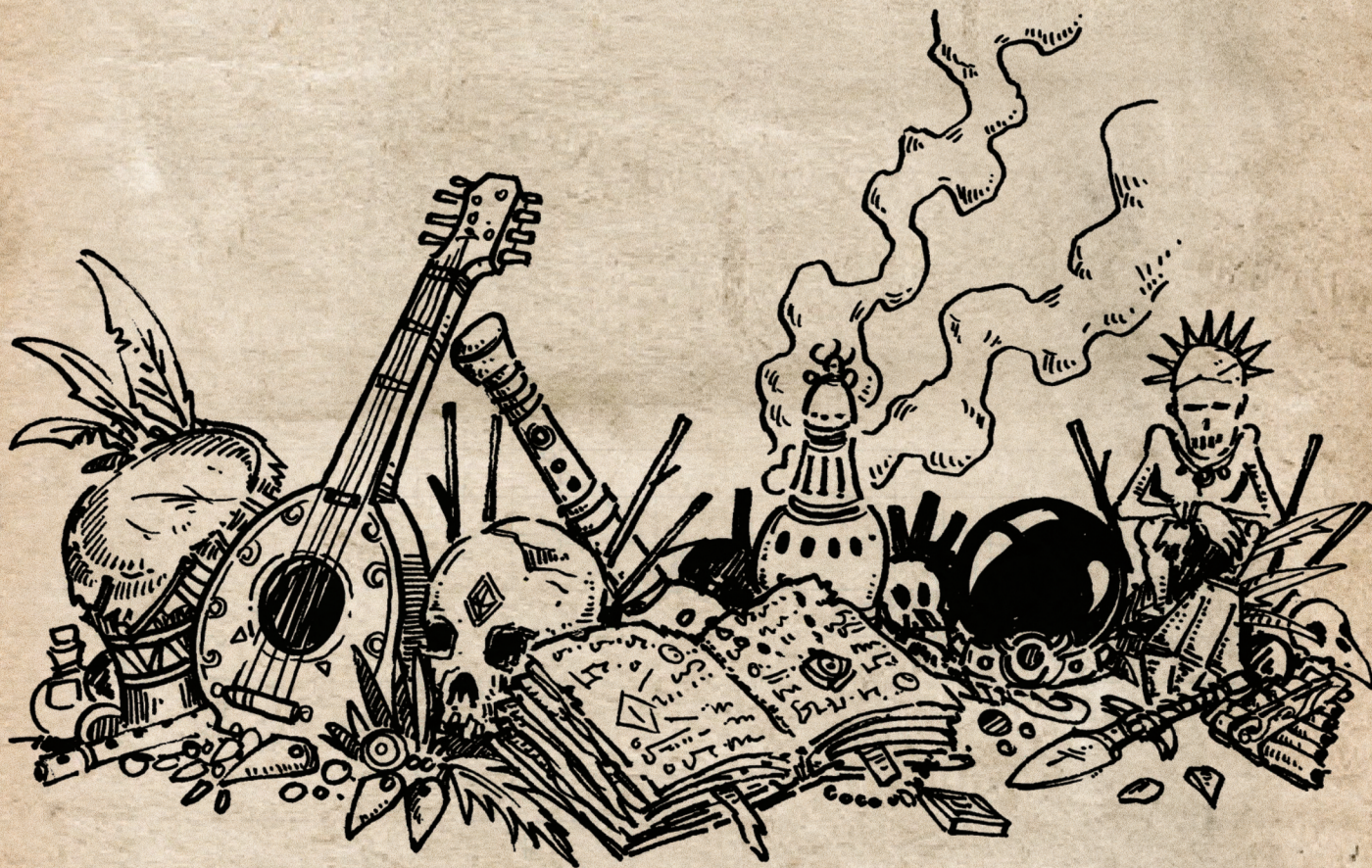
*Making Spellcasting Focuses more than a
footnote on your equipment list*

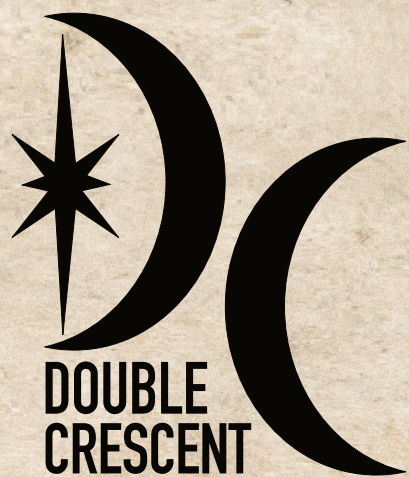


By TYSON VANOVERHILL



ENHANCED FOCUSES




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Enhanced Spellcasting Focuses



All characters use tools to express their abilities. Swords, daggers, greataxes, all can be enchanted or have mythic origins that amplify and complement class abilities. Caster classes have focuses that they channel their abilities through. However, these magical implements are purely mundane items. Whereas the Barbarian's Rage ability can be supplemented with a +1 or Vicious Weapon, other than the Wand of the War Mage, magic items that amplify or enhance a spellcaster's abilities a buried in lists of items that just replace the character's spellcasting, untethered from their abilities.

Fiction is full of magical implements that enhance a spellcaster's potency. Elder Wands, Holy Relics, and Mythic Jewels don't just give them new powers, but amplify their existing power, setting them apart from their peers. This supplement provides examples to make a character's spellcasting focus not just a forgotten bit of starting equipment, but a prized possession. As well as guidelines for creating your own Enhanced Focuses and incorporating them into your games.

Introducing Enchanted Focuses

These items work best as quest rewards that thematically link with the quest giver. The DM should match the themes of the item to the NPC giving the item and the character receiving it. Giving an Enhanced Focus becomes a part of the character's story. Making it more precious to the player than just its power boost.

Or you have them used by antagonists. A *blasting wand* taken off the corpse of an archmage after a wizard duel or an *overwhelming censor* recovered from the fallen paladin that stole it will resonate with a player. The goal is to make your table's stories more memorable, and the perfect item which fits a character's story can do just that.

Starting Guidelines

While the listed focuses have a form included in their description, don't feel bound to them. And if you think an Arcane Focus works better as a Holy Symbol or Druidic Focus in your story, reskin it.

Using Spellcasting Focuses

To use an Enhanced Focus, the character incorporates the focus into preparing their spells for the day. Focuses only interact with your class abilities or spells that you cast. Spells or abilities from other magic items, cast by allies, or from an outside power don't gain the benefits of the Focus.

A Focus has to be held in at least one hand to be used and one focus can be used at a time. For spells that use somatic components, a character can use a Focus to make the necessary gestures. If a spell has a material component without an associated cost, you can cast it with a Focus instead. If has a material component that is consumed, you can hold the Focus in one hand, the material in the other, and still gain its benefits. Otherwise, the material component can be held in the same hand as the Focus.



Arcane Focuses

Al'mateer brushed embers from his robes, smearing blood in their place from a wound he didn't remember receiving. He stumbled forward through the dust and arcane remnants swirling in the air around him, his mind was filled with vengeance for his dead master. On the periphery of his vision, his allies dealt with the undead monstrosities his fallen foe had been controlling only seconds ago. Al'mateer left them to it as he breathed deeply with triumph on seeing the twisted corpse holding the staff of his dead master. He sneered, the assassin's foul minions falling around him, and freed the staff from the corpse's charred hands. "Kaerhal is avenged," he whispered as the corpse crumbled to dust.

Look at any artistic depiction of a wizard or arcane spellcaster and you inevitably see them holding some sort of magical implement: the evoker with flame bursting from their staff, a diviner staring deeply into a starry orb, a necromancer with a rune-covered crystal skull, a transmuter holding a locket with a powerful jewel. These items amplify the arcane power of its wielder, setting them apart, and enhancing their mastery of the art.

These iconic items can come in the following common forms:

Amulets are complex workings of precious metal and crystal that typically hang from a chain. They may also be worn as a brooch but to cast with them, they need to be held.

Blades are any implement incorporating a blade (ritual knives, daggers, swords, etc.) and crafted to channel arcane energies. They can also be used as a Dagger in combat.

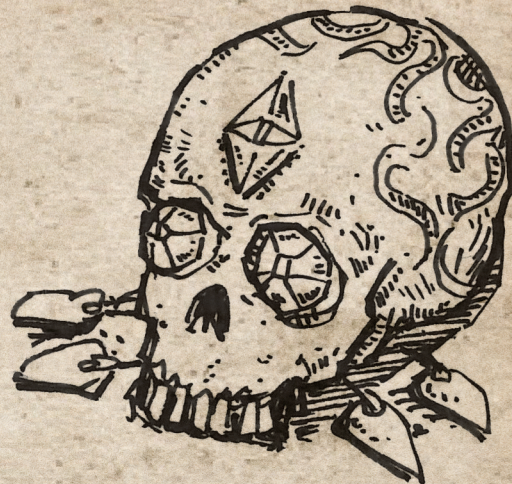
Crystals can be naturally formed or carefully shaped translucent minerals that focus the mind. Crystals that glow with arcane power are common tropes.

Orbs are transparent crystal or glass, often spherical. Thought, they can be shaped into lenses, disks, skulls, or other forms that can fit in a hand.

Staffs are long stout rods, similar to quarterstaves, with carvings and inlays that can be made of many arcane materials.

Tomes are enchanted books full of arcane formulas that enhance and channel your spells.

Wands are short rods, carefully balanced to rest in the hand to encourage precision of movement. Controlling arcane energies like an orchestra conductor.



Amulet of the Bulwark

Amulet, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This amulet is made up of braided and twisted bands of metal that seem to perpetually fold in on themselves. Abjuration spells that take an action to cast, can be cast as a bonus action. Abjuration spells that take a bonus action to cast can be cast as a reaction.

Blasting Wand

Wand, rarity varies (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This durable wand is made from ebony wood with brass fittings. Evocation spells cast with this wand have a bonus to spell attack & saving throw DC, as determined by the wand's rarity. +1 Rare, +2 Very Rare, +3 Legendary.

Biting Blade

Blade, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This blade has arcane symbols carved into jagged serrations along its edge. When a target is hit by, or fails a saving throw against a Necromancy spell, the target has disadvantage on its next saving throw against a spell you cast.

Codex of Casement

Tome, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This tome is full of paragon of fantastical creatures, the finest examples of their form. When conjuring creatures they gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Deliberative Staff

Staff, uncommon (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This staff is incredibly durable and solid. You have advantage on Concentration checks for spells you cast on yourself.

Distracting Prism

Crystal, uncommon

This many-faceted reflective crystal kaleidoscopes light in all directions. Foes within 30ft of an illusion you cast that they can see, have disadvantage on ability checks against you, but not your spells.

Elemental Staff

Staff, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This staff is covered with an elemental motif that matches one of the following damage types: Cold, Fire, Lightning, or Thunder. Evocation spells that are not cantrips and deal damage of the matching type deal one additional die of damage. If the spell rolls damage separately for each target, the extra damage only applies to one of those rolls.

Fortified Rod

Staff, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This rod has fantastical creatures wrought along its length. Conjured creatures have the maximum possible hit points per hit die.

Haze Crystal

Crystal, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This foggy crystal has glittering speckles that shine from within. Targets of enchantment spells who fail their saving throws have disadvantage on ability checks while under the effect of the spell.



Master Wand

Wand, rare (requires attunement by a sorcerer or wizard)

This wand is perfectly balanced, a triumph of skill and precision. Once per turn, add your casting ability modifier to the damage of a cantrip.

Philosopher's locket

Amulet, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

Within this golden amulet is an ever-changing jewel. You gain advantage on Concentration checks for transmutation spells you cast using this amulet.

Range Lens

Orb, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This flattened sphere magnifies distant objects and doubles the range of spells. This does not apply to spells with a range of Self or Touch and does not change the area of the spell.

Slam Wand

Wand, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This wand is thicker with more of a heft to it than others. When a spell deals force damage, it also moves the target away from you 5ft in a line.

Terror Blade

Blade, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This dagger pulses with fell energies along its rune covered edge. If a target fails a saving throw against a Necromancy spell then that target is Frightened of you until the spell ends. If the duration is instantaneous, they are Frightened of you until the end of their next turn.

Undeath Tome

Tome, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This tome contains humanoid anatomical models, including detailed notes on how they could be improved. Undead you raise with this tome increase their maximum hit points by your proficiency modifier for each HD of the creature.

Druidic Focuses

Selvas carefully buried the dryad's seed at the top of the blasted hill. Bringing all her druid craft to bear, a small sprout peaked out of the loose dirt. Next to her, the scorched dryad gasped her last thanks, before shriveling to a spent husk, her spirit flowing into the charred earth. Selvas wept. She had been too late to save her mentor, but she hoped she had saved the glade. Faint touches tickled her bare legs and hands as grasses and vines burst from the soil, spreading like flowing water over the lifeless ground. Selvas stood in shock at the astounding growth. Flowers opened and the wind whipped pollen in streamers around the hill brushing the tears from her cheeks. A vine crept up Selvas's arm, binding itself to her, before raising a dirt-covered root ball and placing it in her hand. The wind whispered in her ear, "Thank you, my student. You are now the master; take my gift and go forth".

A druids' connection to nature means their spellcasting focuses are built from the natural world. These unique focuses can create opportunities for unusual hooks to bring them into your game.

Blades are implements incorporating a blade (ritual knives, daggers, sickle, etc.), made from bone, fang, or metals other than iron, and embellished with druidic runes.

Fetishes are bundles of bone, feathers, fur, teeth, and other natural materials, often kept on a necklace or cord. When a wielder Wild Shapes, they can choose to have the fetish resize to continue hanging from their neck, instead of disappearing into their new form or dropping to the ground.

Scepters are short lengths of wood that have been combined with other natural materials. Thicker and more durable than a wand, they can also be used as a club.

Sprigs are enchanted plants that need to be kept alive by the Druid to be of any use. A daily casting of Druidcraft or a DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check every day will keep it alive and maintain the enchantment.

Staffs are lengths of wood, typically similar to a Quarterstaff, that have been shaped and enchanted while the wood was still alive.

Charming Baton

Scepter, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

A glittering crystal is mounted at the end of this colorful rod. After dealing damage to a target with a melee weapon attack or a touch spell, the target has disadvantage on saving throws against your next spell that causes the Frightened or Charmed condition, or has an effect that compels their behavior.

Desiccating Hand

Fetish, very rare (requires attunement by a druid)

This desiccated hand is stuffed with mystical herbs and dangling from a cord. When a target fails the first Constitution saving throw of a spell, they instantly gain one level of Exhaustion.

Dryad Bough

Sprig, very rare (requires attunement by a druid)

When you Wild Shape, target one humanoid or beast within 30ft of you. That humanoid or beast must succeed a Wisdom saving throw or be Charmed. The Charmed target will attempt to protect you, even at cost to its own life. Each time the it takes damage, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on success.

Empowering Oak

Staff, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

Any creatures summoned whilst using this mighty oak staff will have the *enlarge* spell cast on them.

Hypnotic Bloom

Scepter, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This rod is made of multicolored branches is bound together with fungus. If a target fails a Wisdom saving throw against your spell, all subsequent saving throws against that spell have disadvantage until the spell ends.



Overwhelming Talisman

Fetish, very rare (requires attunement by a druid)

This carved stone is covered in distorted figures of creatures with features of abnormal sizes. So long as you are Wild Shaped, you are under the effect of the enlarge spell.

Shadow Totem

Fetish, very rare (requires attunement by a druid)

This bundle of blackbird feathers seems to absorb light around it. When you Wild Shape, the darkness spell is cast where you are standing. While in animal form you can see through magical darkness as if it was not there. In addition, you have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. These effects last as long as you maintain concentration and the darkness spell remains in effect.

Spreading Stave

Staff, rarity varies (requires attunement by a druid)

This staff is covered with carvings of growing and sprouting plants. Spells you cast with an Sphere or Cylinder area increase their radius by 5 ft if the staff is rare, 10ft if very rare, and doubles the radius if legendary.

Sprig of Rebirth

Sprig, rare (requires attunement by a druid)

A twist of flowers bloom at noon, die at sundown, and regrows each morning from this pot on a brooch. When you cast a spell that heals hit points, targets gain an additional 1d4 plus spell level in temporary hit points.

Stinging Vine

Sprig, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This vine, growing from a bundle of fangs, wraps itself around its bearer. When you cast a spell that make an area difficult terrain, creatures that enter the area or end its turn there it becomes Poisoned until it leaves. When a creature moves into or within the area it takes your casting ability modifier in poison damage every 5 feet it travels.

Focus Bundle

Fetish, uncommon (requires attunement by a druid)

This bundle of fur and claws gives you advantage on Concentration checks while in Wild Shape.



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Venom Fang

Scepter, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This black sapwood rod is inlaid with snake fangs. When casting a spell that requires a saving throw to end its effect, you can choose to give the targets the Poisoned condition. The condition ends when the spell does (creatures immune to poison are unaffected).

Vicious Thorn

Blade, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

Carved from a single huge claw this knife is inlaid with silver runes. Natural weapons of summoned creatures count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.

Wounding Fang

Blade, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

Engraved vines creep up the arc of this silver sickle. After dealing damage to a target with a melee weapon attack or a touch spell, the next spell you cast that deals damage to that target deals an additional die of damage.

Zephyr Bundle

Fetish, rare (requires attunement by a druid)

This bundle of feathers and rare spices flutters even when there is no wind. When you Wild Shape, you are briefly surrounded by silvery mist. You teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space that you can see and are transformed when you arrive.



Holy Symbol

The chanting continued as Tellean moved carefully through the antechamber. The fiends had killed Curate Kellerson and ransacked Avelglen Temple's reliquary. Now they intend to corrupt those holy vessels. He hefted his shield with the Dread Icon entrusted to him by Deacon Halensay. Tellean burst into the ritual chamber, companions at his heels. Shouting a prayer, radiant spirits surrounded him. The cultists and their summoned minions shrank in pain and terror from his holy might as he charged the dais.

Holy symbols are not just items in the shape of a divine figure, nor can symbol be made by just any woodcarver or jeweler. These powerful symbols have been consecrated to the service of a divine being to act as a conduit for their will. The personal holy symbols of renowned clerics and paladins or relics of divine champions can take on great powers, to be handed down as sacred treasures, or be sought after by infernal cultists hoping to corrupt their power to their dark ways. As a DM, feel free to change the names or forms of these items to make them fit into your setting and plotlines better. They should have a past and story that can tie their bearer into the item's history. As these are sacred relics, those entrusted with their protection and use will often be given titles to indicate their service. Titles named after the holy symbol with the appellation of cantor, bearer, protector, keeper, wielder, etc. are an added bonus. Ascendant Cantor, Dreadbearer, or Relic Keeper are some examples of titles a character can be given when entrusted with an Enhanced Holy Symbol.

As with other Enhanced Focuses, holy symbols can have an effect on spells. But divine casters also have Channel Divinity, and as such, holy symbols can enhance this as well. These effects are added to a Channel Divinity's normal effects. The following are some consistent forms that holy symbols take:

Amulets are worn on a chain and held in a hand to cast and project divine power.

Censers are large metal containers on a chain that holds lit incense (1sp/day of incense). The bearer swings it from the chain while lit, creating a visible trail of smoky incense in its wake. If the bearer is proficient in Martial Weapons, it can also be used as a Mace; otherwise the censer is an improvised weapon.

Emblems are mounted on items that you hold or wear, such as shields, tabards and weapons. The item they are mounted on acts as a Spellcasting Focus, as well as their normal function.



Liturgical Texts are specialized holy texts on a specific topic of faith that when read, empower verbal spells. These texts can be used with spells that only have a verbal component.

Reliquaries are containers to be handled with care and reverence. These containers usually hold a preserved piece of body part belonging to a saint, champion, prophet or another revered figure of the faith.

Rods are symbols of divine office or favor. Made of a range of materials and embellished with thematic symbolism, they can be used as a Mace.

Ascendant Vesper

Liturgical Text, very rare (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

Reading from this inspirational text gives allies within the area of your Channel Divinity ability a bonus 1d4 to attack rolls, skill checks and saving throws for 1 minute.

Bolster Chain

Censer, rare (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

This chain with inscribed beads holding a small censer grants 1d8 plus your spellcasting modifier in temporary hit points to an ally when you cast a spell that targets a single ally.

Deathless Rites

Liturgical Text, rare (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

This tome contains prayers against the touch of death. When casting a touch spell on an ally or yourself, that spell can include the effects of the death ward spell that lasts for the duration of the spell, or 1 minute if the duration of the spell is Instantaneous.

Enervating Thurible

Censer, rare (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

This tarnished censer drips with terrible symbolism. When you use your Channel Divinity, foes within its area of effect gain one level of Exhaustion.

Guardian Burner

Censer, uncommon (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

This censer is covered in wrought figures holding shields. When lit it makes spells that target allies within 30 ft of you also grant a d4 to add to next their saving throw.

Hospitaler Periapt

Amulet, rare (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

This amulet holds a holy writ dedicating it's bearer to the restoration of the wounded. For 1 minute after using a Channel Divinity, spells you cast that restore hit points are treated as if they were cast 1 spell slot higher.

Icon of Dread

Emblem, rare (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

This icon glows faintly with a divine force bound within it. Channel Divinities and spells that require a saving throw cause the target to be Frightened on a failed saving throw for the duration of the Channel Divinity effect or spell.

Icon of the Grave

Emblem, uncommon (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

This wrought reaper figure calls the disturbed dead to their rest. Spells and Channel Divinity abilities that target an area and with specific effects for undead increase the spell area by 10ft.

Overwhelming Censor

Censer, legendary (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

When lit, this iron banded censor make foes within 30ft of you have disadvantage on their initial saving throw from your spells or channel divinity.

Redoubling Relic

Reliquary, rare (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

Holding this reliquary reinforces your connection to the divine. If a spell you cast does radiant damage, you may treat any 1 on a damage die as a 2.

Resounding Missal

Liturgical Text, rare (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

Reading from this text causes your foes to cower. Foes that fail their saving throw against your Channel Divinity are Deafened while under its effect.



Reliquary of Paragon's Femur

Reliquary, legendary (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

This casement contains a femur of a Paragon. Creatures of the type that matches the Paragon have disadvantage on saving throws against your Channel Divinity and spells.

Reliquary of Paragon's Finger bone

Reliquary, rare (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

This bound tabernacle contains a finger bone of a legendary paragon. Your spells and Channel Divinity with effects specific to Undead also apply to a creature type that corresponds to a paragon.

Reliquary of Paragon's Rib

Reliquary, very rare (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

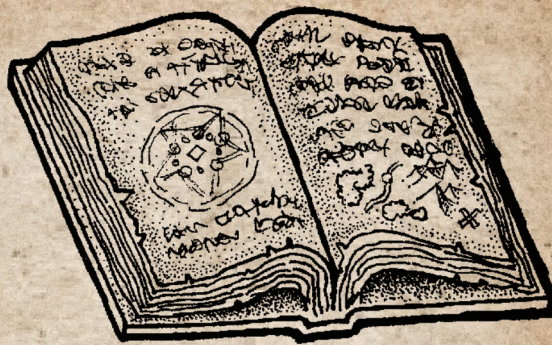
This small chest contains the rib of a Paragon. When dealing radiant or necrotic damage deal an additional die of damage to the creature type that corresponds with the Paragon the reliquary contains.

PARAGON RELIQUARIES

Paragons are not just notable figures in a faith. They are known for their dedication to defeating a specific evil. As such their remains carry their power against the foes from their lives.

The following is a sample list of Paragons and their specialized foes. Feel free to change the names to fit your setting. Or create a paragon that faced a creature type not listed here.

PARAGON	CREATURE TYPE
Omracis the Alienist	Aberrations
Emyel the Castigated	Celestials
Marlis the Contemplative	Elementals
Raudre the Stern	Fey
Heizrata the Righteous	Fiends
Gedreix the Protector	Monstrosity
Xhoqua the Blighted	Plant
Hel'Eya the Tombcalled	Undead



Rod of the Dawn

Rod, very rare (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

This gold, brass, and copper rod captures the glory of the dawning sun. When you use Channel Divinity while wielding this rod, the daylight spell is cast on this rod for 1 minute.

Scouring Rod

Rod, very rare (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

This thorn covered rod focuses your divine power to ravage your enemies. Foes that fail their saving throw against your Channel Divinity are Blinded while under its effects.

Solus Pall

Amulet, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This sunburst amulet flares to life when casting a spell on yourself. It casts the daylight spell with a radius of 10ft that lasts until the beginning of your next turn.

Upheaval Banner

Emblem, uncommon (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

This banner depicts an awesome scene of your god. Foes that fail their saving throw against your Channel Divinity are knocked Prone.

Writ of the grave

Liturgical Text, very rare (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

Reading from this scathing refutation of unlife while you cast a spell deals radiant damage. If the spell has a saving throw, undead have disadvantage on that saving throw. If the spell doesn't have a saving throw, it deals an additional die of radiant damage to undead.

Bardic Instruments

"Go ahead, play it." Oghamor reached out tentatively, gently lifting the Draaílier. In her huge hands, it seemed like a toy. She held its lacquered body reverently afraid to damage it with a careless touch. With a crack of her mentor's baton on her thigh, she snapped out of her reverie. "I carried it through three wars, you think you will break it with a firm grip?" her mentor groused. Oghamor grinned sheepishly, found her fingering, and turned the crank. A mournful tone filled the air, sending shivers down her spine as the feeling of power swelled within her.

Bards weave their magic in song and story. To assist them, they play instruments that act as a focus for their spellcasting. With enhanced instruments, they can augment it as well. Bards also have access to Bardic Inspiration, and enhanced instruments may add extend existing or add new effects. Uniquely, bards can play their instrument for spells with only verbal components.

CONTINUING TO PLAY

Some effects may even last while you continue playing your enchanted instrument. Continuing to play an instrument entails:

- Casting a spell
- Concentrating on a spell
- Expend a Bardic Inspiration
- Using a bonus action to make a DC 12 Charisma (Performance) check.

Arcane Lute

Lute, very rare (requires attunement by a bard)

Covered in arcane sigils, this lute has a precise and unnerving sound. Spells cast with the Arcane Lute have a +2 to their save DC and you can expend a Bardic Inspiration to cast counterspell as a 3rd level spell.

Bedazzled Concertina

Mechanical, rare (requires attunement by a bard)

This pearlescent squeeze-box shines with a faint kaleidoscope of inner light, even in darkness. When you target a foe with a spell, if the spell hits or they fail their saving throw, they then glow with a bright light out to a 10ft radius and have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks as long as the spell lasts.



Discordant Pipes

Fluted, rare (requires attunement by a bard)

These pan pipes are covered in carved grapes and vines. When casting a spell that deals psychic damage, that spell is cast as if one level higher.

Echoing Drum

Drum, rare (requires attunement by a bard)

This deep bodied drum rumbles when hit. Spells that target multiple creatures can target one additional creature that is not already the target of the spell.

Fascinating Duduk

Woodwind, uncommon (requires attunement by a bard)

This Dudak is covered in reflective tiles that cause illusions cast with it to echo and shine. Foes who can see the illusion cast have disadvantage on Wisdom and Intelligence ability checks until the start of your next turn.

Fixating Lyre

Lyre, uncommon (requires attunement by a bard)

This lyre holds a note for far longer you would expect. When you give Bardic Inspiration, as long as you continue to play you have advantage on Concentration checks.

Ghastly Draailier

Daaillier, uncommon (requires attunement by a bard)

As this Draailer's disk spins against its strings, an ominous tone fills the air, the light shifts to an unsettling hue, and your illusions take on a terrible form. Foes within 30ft that see an illusion spell you cast must make a saving throw against your spellcasting DC or be Frightened by the illusion until the end of their next turn.

Gnomish Grindbox

Mechanical, rare (requires attunement by a bard)

This complex musical mechanism has dancing figures that move when the keys are played. When a foe fails their Intelligence (Investigation) check when interacting with one of your illusions, the illusion deals 1d4 psychic damage per level the spell cast. If the illusion is not of a thing that could do damage or is not moving in a way that could do damage if interacted with, the foe gets advantage in their subsequent Intelligence (Investigation) checks against it.

Hurricane Trumpet

Horn, uncommon (requires attunement by a bard)

This horn has wind motifs along its swirling pipes. Spells that deal thunder damage also knock the targets Prone on a successful hit or failed saving throw.

Piercing Pipes

Pipes, uncommon (requires attunement by a bard)

These paired flutes have a sharp tone and cruelly pointed body. When dealing psychic damage to a target, also deal damage equal to your spellcasting modifier.



Rally Drum

Drum, uncommon (requires attunement by a bard)

This martial drum has a sharp and carrying note from its taught drum head. When you give Bardic Inspiration to an ally, that ally also gains temporary hit points equal to the Bardic Inspiration die + your spell casting modifier.

Reinforcing Bugle

Horn, very rare (requires attunement by a bard)

This bugle has martial insignias carved into its bell and streamers hanging from its body. When you cast a spell on allies, they gain temporary hit points equal to the level the spell cast.

Spurned Shawm

Shawm, rare (requires attunement by a bard)

Waves in the silver body of the shawm give the impression of twisting and dancing figures. When casting a spell that, on a failed saving throw, gives the target the Charmed condition; a successful saving throw deals psychic damage equal to 1d4 plus your spell casting modifier.

Soothing Aulos

Pipes, very rare (requires attunement by a bard)

This deeps sonorous flute comforts those in pain. When you give Bardic Inspiration to anyone, healing spells you cast are cast as if they are one spell level higher whilst you continue to play.

Terror Drum

Drum, very rare (requires attunement by a bard)

This drum is decorated with the skulls of enemies. When a foe fails a saving throw against a spell you cast, as long as that foe can hear you playing, they subtract 1d4 from the number rolled on all subsequent attack rolls or saving throws.



Creating Focuses For Your Game

The goal of enhancing a Spellcasting Focus is to not just give a character an edge but to encourage them to develop their character along a theme. It shouldn't just be an expression of their character, but tie them into the larger world. How does this item fit into your setting? Why was it created, and by whom? Who had it last, and how will the character get it? To illustrate this, as you move through the guidelines I will walk you through creating the four focuses featured at the beginning of each chapter, the *Elemental Staff*, *Stinging Vine*, *Icon of Dread*, and *Ghastly Draailier*.

Jeff's Evocation Wizard, Al'mateer, has a flame motif. He favors fire spells and Jeff has worked fire and flames into his design.

Jennifer has been playing her Land Circle Druid, Selvas, as contemplative and strategic. She makes a point of interacting with the terrain in combat, relying heavily on *entangle* and *spike growth*.

Molly has been working to integrate her Oath of Vengeance Paladin, Tellean, into the local religious hierarchy and giving me many opportunities to present plot hooks. Unfortunately, she hasn't been using his Channel Divinity or spells very often, so an enhanced focus should encourage that.

Tom has been having his Valor Bard, Oghamor, use intimidation and illusions in clever ways to make up for her low level, and I want to reward that.

Deciding on Enhancements

Once you know what you want the item to express or encourage, determine what spells or class abilities you want your item to enhance and how that enhancement fits into your themes. Enhancements should extend specific class abilities or groups of spells. What spells and class abilities does your Enhanced Focus interact with? Does it enhance a specific school of magic, damage type, or other class of spell? Do those spells require a saving throw or a spell attack?

Then decide what you want the enhancement to do. How will you enhance these spells or abilities? The biggest risk in creating your own Enhanced Focus is power level. 5e is broken into tiers of play, each with a corresponding rarity of magic items. Tiers represent a significant boost in power beyond the normal growth between levels. While an item can make you more powerful than a comparable character in the same tier, it should never make you more powerful than a character of the next tier.

Now determine how your enhancement will trigger. Are there any unexpected spells that trigger your enhancement? Can you modify the conditions of the enhancement to limit what spells trigger it? Can you tie the enhancement to a class ability to control how much it is used?

For Bards, you can trigger enhancements with Bardic Inspiration to control how often they are used. Keep an eye on the power level as they have multiple Bardic Inspiration uses per long and short rest above fifth level.



Clerics and Paladins have Channel Divinity, but it can be used much less, one to three times a day. Powers that trigger with a Channel Divinity can be more powerful than those that modify spells because of this.

Adding conditions can be a potential pitfall as many of these conditions are quite powerful. Adding them to a Spell Focus should be limited to certain tiers.

Duration of an effect can also be a balancing factor. Long duration effects can last a whole combat, short duration effects a few rounds, and one round effects should last until the end of the target or caster's next turn. By decreasing or increasing the duration of an effect you can adjust what tier the item fits into.

If the item gives a general bonus, it needs to be an incidental bonus, or have a higher rarity where the bonus doesn't overshadow the character's abilities. Limiting when the item's power can be triggered can also lower the tier.

With the fire motif, a focus that adds more fire is the obvious choice. Looking through the Wizard spells that deal fire damage, adding a single die of damage averages to an additional 4-6 points of damage per spell which is not overwhelming in the second tier. The biggest boost in damage comes with *scorching ray*. Since it hits multiple targets, adding a die of damage to all the rolls would increase the damage by 50%. Limiting the additional die to one damage roll prevents this. Also, cantrips are an exception; increasing the die would increase the tier, so excluding them from this enhancement makes sense.

Jennifer has been using her area effect spells, interacting with the environment to great effect, and I want to encourage that. Also, she is in the 3rd tier, so foes are starting to have multiple attacks and many resistances. Adding a little extra damage and the Poisoned effect to her area spells would be a boost to their usefulness against stronger foes. Tying it to spells that cause difficult terrain also fits thematically, since *entangle* and *spike growth* are both plant related, while at the same time not adding the enhancement to all area spells. Other spells that create difficult terrain, like *sleet storm* and *earthquake*, might not make sense with Poison but refining our activation requirements to exclude them don't gain us much in the way of balance.

Talleen has been gaining some renown over the last few adventures and an enhancement

that reflects that reputation would be ideal. Driving his foes before him when casting spells and using Channel Divinity is easily achieved by adding the Frightened condition. I don't want to add a separate saving throw since it is best to have a single response to an effect. Including the Frightened condition on a spell that already has a saving throw allows for a saving throw to prevent or end the condition without a separate roll.

At Tier 1, you don't have a lot of tier appropriate enhancements to choose from. First, I want it to encourage Tom's use of illusions so it has to tie into illusion spells. Also since the focus will come from an army musician, the enhancement needs to be useful in mass combat. Clever placement of illusions with a one round Frightened condition provides opportunities for Tom to control the battlefield beyond Oghamor's current level without unbalancing combat too much.

Suggested Tiers for Enhancement

The following are some abilities divided into tiers where they are generally appropriate. Expanding or limiting what situations they can be used can change its appropriate tier:

TIER 1 - LEVELS 1-4, UNCOMMON

- Advantage on Concentration checks in specific situations
- Disadvantage on an ability check
- Enhance a summoned creature.
- Give a condition for a round: Charmed, Frightened, Poisoned, Restrained.
- Include some of the effects of a 1st level spell.
- Knock a creature Prone.
- Push a foe 5ft away from the caster.

TIER 2 - LEVELS 5-10, RARE

- +1 increase attack bonus and DC saving throws
- Cast a 1st or 2nd level utility spell.
- Enhance a summoned creature.
- Enhance healing by 5-10 hit points
- Gain advantage on specific Concentration checks
- Grant a d4 bonus for a long duration to a target.
- Grant 5-15 temporary hit points.
- Give a level of Exhaustion.
- Give a condition for a Combat: Charmed, Frightened, Poisoned, Restrained.
- Give a condition for a Round: Deafened, Incapacitated.
- Give Disadvantage on ability checks for a round.
- Increase damage done by 1-5 points

- Make spell area difficult terrain
- Push a foe 10ft away from the caster

TIER 3 - LEVELS 11-16, VERY RARE

- +2 increase attack bonus and DC saving throw
- Cast a 3rd level utility spell.
- Give a condition for a Combat: Deafened, Incapacitated.
- Give a condition for a Round: Blindness, Paralyzed.
- Include some of the effects of a 1st level spell.
- Increase the area or range of a spell or class ability.
- Make spell area hazardous terrain.
- Raise slot level of a spell by increasing a die of damage, increase targets or increase duration.

TIER 4 -LEVELS 17-20, LEGENDARY

- +3 increase attack bonus and DC saving throw.
- Change the action economy.
- Give a condition for a Combat: Blindness, Paralyzed.
- Give a condition for a Round: Stunned.
- Grants blanket advantage or disadvantage to a certain roll.

Giving a character an Enhanced Focus.

Once you have an idea what the focus will do, then you need to know where it came from. Was it created for the character, or was it for someone else and the character finds or is given it? What was it originally used for? If it wasn't created for the character, what is its history? Higher tier focuses are created for a specific individual or for a specific task, so they are more likely to have a specific history. Lower tier items are more common but that just means they will pass through more hands before the character gets them.

Once you have an idea of the history of the focus outline how it will come to the character. Don't detail it too specifically, use broad strokes as that will give you the most flexibility at the table. In the side bar are some starting plot hooks for getting an Enchanted Focus into character's hands and tying it into your plot or setting:

Al'mateer set out on his own after his old master, Kaerhal, was murdered. Jeff has been following plot hooks that could lead to the murderer. Introducing the murder and pointing out that they are wielding Kaerhal's staff will tie Al'matteer closely to my new story arc and incentivize Jeff. This focus could have been built by Kaerhal or passed to Kaerhal by another master, giving it a legacy of being wielded by master wizards.

SAMPLE HOOKS FOR INTRODUCING ENHANCED FOCUSES

Here are some starting suggestions for introducing Enhanced Focuses, and any item, to get your players invested.

1. It's gift from a mentor for proving the character's mastery. These should be in line with the specialties of the master and reflect their personality or philosophy.
2. The character inherits it from a deceased family member. This can reinforce character backgrounds and tie them into your plot.
3. Bestowed by an organization in recognition of the character's work. Such items should be in line with the philosophy or goals of the organization. Ideally, tied to a renowned member of the organization.
4. Recovered from a group or individual that stole it for their own purposes. These items would be more powerful than what would be normally entrusted to a character. Typically they are items of renown where corrupting them would bring power or favor. Or they are items whose purpose can be bent by dark intents.
5. Recovered from a group or individual that killed its previous owner. More powerful than what would be given to a character; definitely worth killing over. The character should care about the person killed for it.
6. Recovered from the tomb of the previous owner. The previous owner should be a remarkable or legendary hero (or villain) and the item should be tied to their legacy. Taking the item should entangle the character in the legacy of the previous owner, whether for good or ill.
7. Recovered from a vault protecting the item from being abused. If the item doesn't have a great power, it should be symbolically important to the organization that locked it away for protection.
8. Found in a horde of a creature that has no use for it or knowledge of its power. For this, you have free reign on determining what tragedy led to it entering the horde and why the creature continues to ignore it.
9. Held by a creature who knows the focus's worth and is holding it for ransom. This is a great opportunity to tie the item into the politics and factions of your setting.
10. Entrusted to the character to keep it safe. The person or organization that gives the item to the character is at risk of death or destruction.

Earlier, Selvas was able to befriend a Dryad and with some good roleplay and rolls, the Dryad became her mentor. But now as Selvas is reaching 11th level, Jennifer has been leaning on the Dryad too much. While I want to reward her for investing in an NPC and the setting, I need to take the NPC off the board for a bit. Having the focus be given to Selvas as the Dryad's last act will make it very personal.

I want to reward Molly's efforts, so Tellean being entrusted with an item of power by the priesthood to complete a dangerous task is a nice payoff. Also, it will be an excuse to give Tellean a title. Players love getting titles for their characters almost as much as they love getting treasure.

Tom has been leaning into Oghamor's soldier background, using her military rank to ingratiate her with the local veterans and the town guards. Introducing a retired army musician, to mentor Oghamor would make for an interesting NPC. Having them hand down a focus from their time in the army to her would be a good payoff for Tom's efforts.

Types of Focus

The form the implement takes should be informed by what abilities the item enhances or adds, and how it will look when used. Certain forms imply certain powers, spells, or schools. Here are some guidelines on focus forms and what abilities corresponds thematically with them. As always, these are guidelines, not rules. What form fits the character should be used instead, style is important. The only hard and fast rule about the form spellcasting focuses take is that they should be held in at least one hand when being used.

Arcane Focuses

Amulet. *Abjuration, Divination, Enchantment*
A wizard holding out an amulet to defend or staring into it to gain insight is an iconic image. Spells that defend, used in reactions, or give insight go well with this form of focus.

Blade. *Necromancy, Transmutation*
This form of focus implies direct damage, dealing it, or enhancing it.

Crystal. *Enchantment, Illusion*
The refraction and reflection in carved and natural crystals enhance spells that deceive or influence foes.

Orb. *Divination, Illusion, Conjunction*
The hooded figure hunched over a clear orb,

glowing with arcane power, to gaze into the world beyond senses, or create form from the formless is an classic image.

Staff. *Abjuration, Evocation, Universal*

What is a wizard without their staff? Shooting jets of arcane fire to creating magical shields to smacking a foe with it, staffs have been a staple of fantasy fiction and games. It feels more solid and weighty than the other focuses, and the way it enhances spells should reflect that.

Tome. *Necromancy, Conjunction, Universal*

These tomes of forbidden knowledge or arcane secrets are full of formula and sigils that enhance or extend your magic. The image of a spellcaster with an open tome in hand with the pages flapping while they cast has become common in animation and film.

Wand. *Evocation, Transmutation, Universal*

Wands have always had a place in the wizard's arsenal; the precise movement creating wondrous effects fill the imaginings of wizard characters.

Staffs and wands both evoke the image of a spellcaster spraying arcane fire. But the image of Al'mateer with his feet planted, staff held firmly in two hands glowing with arcane light, about to deal massive damage to a foe is really evocative and fits the theme of this focus.

Druidic Focuses

Blade. These one-handed light simple blades have a range of ritual purpose and are usable in combat. They work well with direct damage effects, enhancing them or taking advantage of them to give more effects.

Fetish. Boons granted by the elements and spirits of the world are contained in these intricately shaped figures. Fetishes imply effects that invoke the elements, spirits, or only target the caster.

Scepters. Working as a pointing tool, spells that have a single target go well with this implement.

Sprig. Sprigs amplify effects that relate to life. They tie well with plants and healing.

Staff. Druidic staffs are symbols of rank, tie to the natural world, and the local environment. While they are a good general implement, they resonate best with spells that target areas, plants, or animals.

This item adds poison to terrain effects and comes from a fey creature associated with plants, so a Fetish, Sprig, or Staff would work. But the two spells that will be cast most commonly with this focus are *entangle* and *spike growth*, due to their low levels. The living winding plant motif of a sprig works well as coming from a Dryad and ties thematically to the spells.

Holy Symbols

Amulet. The image of the cleric or paladin holding their amulet high and driving off fell creatures is one of the most iconic. Where wizard amulets protect and shield, amulets bearing holy symbols project and direct divine power.

Censer. Censers are swung to spread their incense smoke around the wielder. This enhances spells and abilities with a touch range where you can wave the smoke over the target, or that cover the area close to the caster.

Emblem. Since emblems are mounted on weapons and shields they don't take a hand, so their effects are similar to amulets but lower in power. They modify or add abilities to a spell.

Liturgical Text. This specialized holy text empowers verbal spells when read. The image of the evangelical preacher shouting castigations and exhalations is a powerful one. Liturgical texts should enhance spells that bolster allies or undermine enemies.

Reliquary. These focuses should be rarer and much more tied to the story or world than other holy symbols. They should be specific in their power and expand the scope of Channel Divinity, or change spells generally.

Rod. Symbol of divine office or favor, rods tend to amplify abilities that command foes, directly target them, or that cover an area surrounding the caster.

With the Frightened effect emanating from its bearer, this is an item for the thick of combat. While a Rod might make sense thematically, an Emblem, with its ability to be mounted Tellan's weapon or shield, makes far more sense for a warrior of the faith.

Bardic Instruments

Instruments have far more variety of forms than any of the other spellcasting focuses. However, they can be grouped into rough categories. The following categories are not rigid, in no way prescriptive, and some instruments may fall into multiple categories:

Fluted. Fluted instruments have a higher, more piercing tone, attacking the mind of targets. Psychic damage or other mental disruptions are thematically appropriate for these instruments.

Reed. Woodwinds with reeds tend to have a more resonant tone than fluted instruments. The snake charmer entrancing a creature is a common trope. These items should sooth and entrance foes.

Brass. Brass instruments have reach and an invigorating sound. The bugler sounding reveille or charge bolsters allies and create blast effects of sound or wind.

Stringed. The precision of fingering and patterns make stringed instruments excellent for generalized enhancement of spellcasting.

Percussion. Percussion instruments, like brass, are associated with combat and warfare. They bolster allies and undermine enemies, carrying effects further over the din of battle.

Mechanical. These mechanical marvels use bellows, cranks, and gears to create sounds that are impossible for a single player to produce with a single instrument. As such, they amaze, astound, and bewilder foes with illusions and clever deceptions.

The fear effect would go well with a fluted or percussion instrument, but the illusions go better with Mechanical. On top of that stringed instruments imply precise and thoughtful casting. The Hurdy-Gurdy, a stringed instrument with a cranking mechanism, can make a deep ominous tone that carries, as well as be tapped for a percussive sound. But the name is not that magical, ominous, or intimidating. However, the Dutch version, the Draailier, has a much more ominous name.



Tying It All Together

Once you have the themes you want your focus to reinforce, what spells or abilities it enhances, how it enhances them, and what type of focus it is, it is time to tie it all together. An evocative name should describe not only what the focuses do but imply its themes and how it ties into the setting. The previous steps should give you plenty of inspiration to draw from for naming the focus. And with that, all you have to do is introduce it.

Elemental Staff

Staff, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This staff is covered with an elemental motif that matches one of the following damage types: Cold, Fire, Lighting, or Thunder. Evocation spells that are not cantrips and deal damage of the matching type deal one additional die of damage. If the spell rolls damage separately for each target, the extra damage only applies to one of those rolls.

When Al'mateer encounters Kaerhal's murderer he will recognize the staff from his training. I will create an encounter where Al'mateer engages in a one on one duel with the murderer while the rest of the party deals with minions. If the party interferes, the murderer will escape until they get the hint that this needs to be a wizard duel. I'll toss in some dialogue to that effect; I want Al'mateer getting the Elemental Staff to be a personal triumph after more than a little frustration.



Stinging Vine

Sprig, very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)

This vine, growing from a bundle of fangs, wraps itself around its bearer. When you cast a spell that make an area difficult terrain, creatures that enter the area or end its turn there it becomes Poisoned until it leaves. When a creature moves into or within the area it takes your casting ability modifier in poison damage every 5 feet it travels.

Selvas can have a prophetic dream of fire and the Dryad dying to get them there but be too late. As for the encounter, it will be a horde of some sort that is trying to extract the Dryad's power for a dark purpose. With the Dryad dying there needs to be hope for rebirth. To get Jennifer thinking along the lines of regrowing the glade, I'll emphasize not just the Dryad's death, but what the destruction of the glade means for the creatures the Dryad protected. As a final act the Dryad will sprout a seed and any attempt she makes to regrow the glade will work and reveal the sprig.

Ghastly Draailier

Daaillier, uncommon (requires attunement by a bard)

As this Draailier's disk spins against its strings, an ominous tone fills the air, the light shifts to an unsettling tone, and your illusions take on a terrible form. Foes within 30ft that see an illusion spell you cast must make a saving throw against your spellcasting DC or be Frightened by the illusion until the end of their next turn.

Draailiers are a fairly complex mechanism that would need a developed economy with specialized craftspeople to build one for the battlefield. So it was constructed for the legions of the recently fallen empire. It could even still have markings of it's original legion, giving me a hook for an NPC to recognize it and make assumptions about the character. Since then, it has been handed around eventually ending up in the hands of a retired army musician from one of the breakaway kingdoms. Oghamor has gained the trust of the local veterans and took on the "banner bearer" role for the town guards, bolstering them during a recent combats. So it would make sense that handing it down would "carry on the legacy."



Icon of Dread

Emblem, rare (requires attunement by a cleric or paladin)

This icon glows faintly with a divine force bound within it. Channel Divinities and spells that require a saving throw cause the target to be Frightened on a failed saving throw for the duration of the Channel Divinity effect or spell.

While killing NPC's a character cares about to trigger their vengeance is an old trope, when used sparingly it works well. Tellan is an Order of Vengeance Paladin, so giving him something to avenge soon after Molly chooses his Order makes sense story wise. The Icon of Dread makes sense thematically as it will make his holy fury have a mechanical effect. As well it will encourage Molly to use his spells and Channel Divinity more often. Having him entrusted with a valuable relic and entitling him, "Warden Tellan the Dreadbearer", is a good reward for her roleplay efforts and would become a memorable part of her character even without the enhancement.



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Undeath Tome 3
Upheaval Banner 8
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Vicious Thorn 5
Wounding Fang 5
Writ of the grave 8
Zephyr Bundle 5

Focuses by Rarity

Uncommon

Deliberative Staff 3
Distracting Prism 3
Fascinating Duduk 9
Fixating Lyre 9
Focus Bundle 5
Ghastly Draailier 10
Hurricane Trumpet 10
Icon of the Grave 7
Piercing Pipes 10
Rally Drum 10
Upheaval Banner 8

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Gnomish Grindbox 10
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Redoubling Relic 7
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Resounding Missal 7
Slam Wand 3
Sprig of Rebirth 5
Spurned Shawm 10
Undeath Tome 3
Venom Fang 5
Vicious Thorn 5
Wounding Fang 5
Zephyr Bundle 5

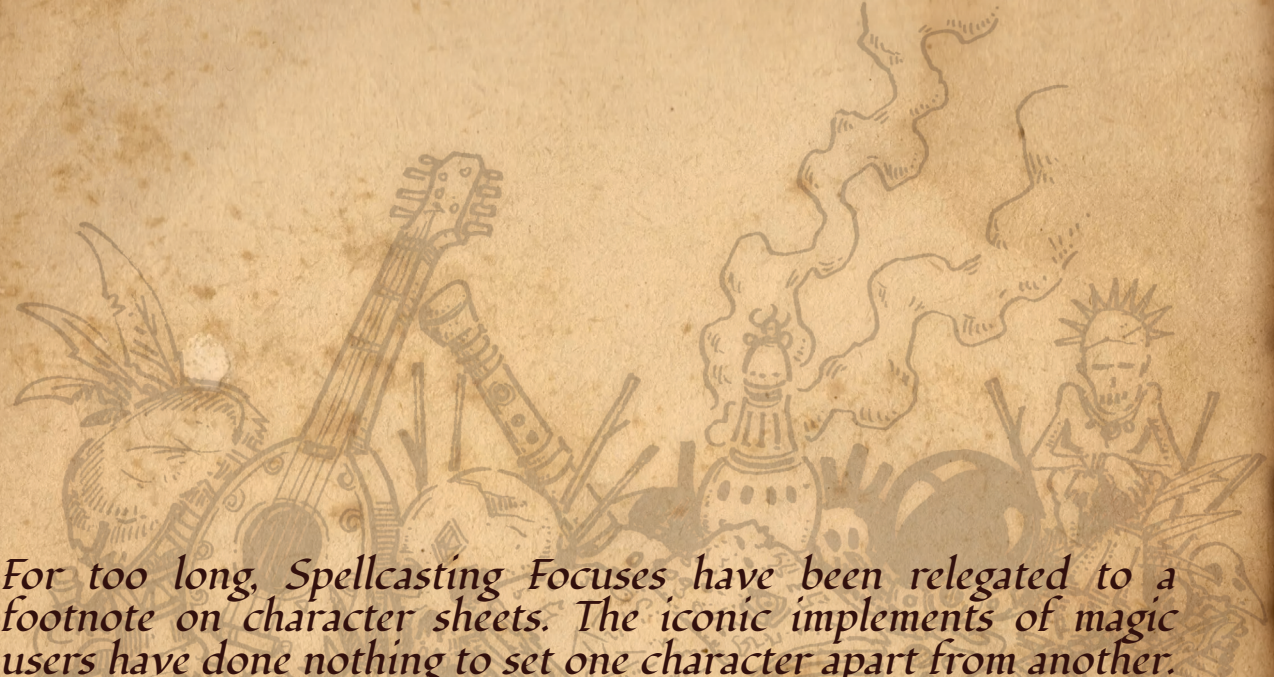
Very Rare

Arcane Lute 9
Ascendant Vesper 6
Biting Blade 2
Blasting Wand 2
Charming Baton 4
Dessicating Hand 4
Dryad Bough 4

Fortified Rod 3
Haze Crystal 3
Hypnotic Bloom 4
Master Wand 3
Overwhelming Talisman 5
Range Lense 3
Reinforcing Bugle 10
Reliquary of Paragon's Rib 8
Rod of Dawn 8
Scouring Rod 8
Shadow Totem 5
Solus Pall 8
Soothing Aulos 10
Spreading Staff 5
Stinging Vine 5
Terror Blade 3
Terror Drum 10
Writ of the Grave 8

Legendary

Blasting Wand 2
Overwhelming Censer 7
Reliquary of Paragon's Femur 8

A faint, sepia-toned illustration in the background depicts various magical items and figures. On the left, a figure with a large feathered headdress is shown. In the center, there's a large, ornate staff or wand. To the right, a figure with a sunburst or spiky headpiece is visible. The overall style is reminiscent of traditional fantasy art.

For too long, Spellcasting Focuses have been relegated to a footnote on character sheets. The iconic implements of magic users have done nothing to set one character apart from another. Sure, magic staves and wands give a caster more spells, but are no different in the hands of a master or an initiate. Enhanced Focuses increase a spell caster's magical powers, in the same way a flaming longsword does for the fighter.

This 20 page supplement provides 71 arcane focuses, druid focuses, holy symbols, and bardic instruments to boost your casting prowess. Plus 5 pages for DMs on using Enhanced Focuses as plot hooks, investing your players in their characters' and the campaign's story.



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