

MONSTROUS MENAGERIE A BOOKSHELF OF MONSTERS

MONSTROUS
Menagerie
presents new
and fantastic creatures with
which Game Masters of all levels
of experience can populate their
campaign worlds. The creatures
found within these pages may
be beneficent or malign, horrific
or wondrous, but all are sure
to astound your players. With
this article, you can add some
erudite clout to your game with
diverse creatures united by the
theme of books, writing, and
knowledge.



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BIBLIOGNOST

A dusty pile of books suddenly rearranges itself to form a human-like figure, its head a single open tome. Its pages crinkle into the facsimile of a face and eye your actions warily.

Ghosts of Bibliophiles Past. Bibliognosts are the spirits of dead librarians, booksellers, teachers, sages, arcanists, and other intellectuals whose love of the written word was so great that it prevented them from departing to the afterlife. After departing the mortal coil, the souls of such individuals transmigrate into their favorite books. The bibliognost's "body" is composed of several dozen volumes that, when roused from dormancy, shift themselves into a vaguely humanoid form. These undead creatures haunt places where its beloved books are stored, such libraries, wizards' studies, and scriptoria, acting as their self-appointed overseers and protectors. The learning it has absorbed over the years is unique in many regards, but most of the time a bibliognost is too pedantic and thoughtless to share it with others. However, it can be singularly courteous and welcoming to visitors that can match its erudition or love of books.

Undead Nature. A bibliognost doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Living Spellbooks as Treasure

Whether a defeated living spellbook (*q.v.*) is in good enough shape to be used as treasure is entirely up to the GM. PC wizards will probably want to peruse it after the victory, and it would be unfair to deprive them of this joy. The contents of a living spellbook are highly variable and dependent on the individual wizard they belonged to; as a rule of thumb, it contains all of the spells noted in the statistics block, as well as 2d4 extra spells of each level from 1 to 5, and 1d4 extra spells of levels 6 to 7.

Open Game Content

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Bibliognost

Medium undead, neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)

Speed fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	22 (+6)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +6, Int +10, Cha +4

Skills Arcana +14, History +14, Nature +14, Perception +7, Religion +14

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 17

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Languages any five; telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

False Appearance. While the bibliognost remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a large pile of books.

Immutable Form. The bibliognost is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Innate Spellcasting. The bibliognost's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 18). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *mage hand*

3/day each: *animate objects*, *telekinesis*

Inscrutable. The bibliognost is immune to any effect that would sense its emotions or read its thoughts, as well as any divination spell that it refuses. Wisdom (Insight) checks made to ascertain the bibliognost's intentions or sincerity have disadvantage.

Magic Resistance. The bibliognost has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.



ACTIONS

Multiattack. The bibliognost makes a slam attack and uses mind thrust.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Mind Thrust. A bibliognost focuses its mind on a creature within 60 feet. The target must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, it is magically haunted with visions and takes 27 (6d8) psychic damage, or half as much on a success.

Mental Assault (Recharge 5–6). The bibliognost magically assaults the minds of creatures in a 30-foot cone, overloading them with knowledge. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw or take 36 (8d8) psychic damage and gain one level of exhaustion. On a successful save, a creature takes half damage and is not exhausted.

DJEHUTY

This otherworldly creature has the body of an athletic human and the head of an ibis. It wears rich priestly vestments and brandishes a long scepter topped with a holy symbol. The creature's stern face is nonetheless filled with heavenly calm and wisdom.

Avatars of Learning. Djehutys are celestial beings in the service of deities of knowledge, learning, wisdom, mysticism, divination, arcane magic, and similar domains. They are sent to the mortal realm to impart greater understanding and enlightenment to those deemed worthy by the gods. A djehuty's presence awakens other creatures to a higher level of awareness, inspires them to look for unusual answers to old lingering questions, and fills their mind with new ideas. Djehutys also appear when great repositories of writing or talented intellectuals are menaced with destruction, acting as their protectors. Nothing draws the ire of these normally tranquil beings more than brazen ignorance, aggressive stupidity, and destruction of knowledge and its adepts.

Djehuty

Medium celestial, lawful good

Armor Class 16

Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +6

Skills Arcana +8, History +8, Nature +8, Perception +6, Religion +8

Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Damage Resistances radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities force, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed

Languages all, telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Aura of Enlightenment. All creatures of the djehuty's choosing within 30 feet of it gain advantage on Intelligence- and Wisdom-based ability checks and saving throws.

Blessing of Prudence. The djehuty's AC includes its Wisdom bonus.

Innate Spellcasting. The djehuty's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *comprehend languages, detect evil and good, detect magic, detect thoughts*

3/day each: *bless, clairvoyance, enhance ability, protection from good and evil, tongues, zone of truth*

1/day each: *commune, divination, legend lore*

ACTIONS

Scepter. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage if used with both hands, and 5 (2d4) force damage. This weapon attack is magical.

Gaze of Scrutiny. The djehuty fixes its gaze on a creature it can see within 30 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or take 10 (3d6) radiant damage.

LIVING SPELLBOOK

An ancient volume hovers in the air, its pages turning on their own volition and glowing with magical sigils.

Sentient Wizardly Tomes. The origins of the living spellbook are as mysterious and varied as the art of magic itself. Sometimes, upon death, an archmage’s spirit merges with the spellbook and gives it a semblance of life; sometimes, it animates due to a transmutation spell gone awry; sometimes, it does so as a result of a meticulously prepared arcane ritual.

Freed and Bound by Magic. The living spellbook takes after its owner in many ways, mimicking his or her personality, speech patterns, mannerisms, and alignment. Some living spellbooks accidentally come into being as twisted mockeries of their wizard owners, murdering them and adopting their identity. Despite having free wills, they feel bound to their places of creation (usually a wizard’s study) and rarely venture far away from them, even if they have rebelled against their masters.

Constructed Nature. A living spellbook doesn’t require air, food, drink, or sleep. The magic that animates the living spellbook is dispelled when it drops to 0 hit points, at which point it becomes a regular, inanimate spellbook once again.

Living Spellbook

Tiny construct, any alignment

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 72 (16d4 + 32)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (–2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	7 (–2)

Saving Throws Str +2, Dex +6, Con +6

Skills Arcana +9, History +9

Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 13

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder

Damage Immunities force, poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Languages any five, telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Antimagic Susceptibility. The living spellbook is incapacitated while in the area of an antimagic field. Unlike other animated objects, it is not adversely affected by dispel magic.

Eschew Materials. The living spellbook requires no material components for spellcasting.

False Appearance. While the living spellbook remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a normal book.

Immutable Form. The living spellbook is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. The living spellbook has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spellcasting. The living spellbook is a 13th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). The living spellbook has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, mage hand, mending, minor illusion, poison spray*

1st level (4 slots): *magic missile, ray of sickness, shield, thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *mirror image, misty step, scorching ray*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, hypnotic pattern*

4th level (3 slots): *banishment, black tentacles, polymorph*

5th level (2 slots): *animate objects, cone of cold*

6th level (1 slot): *disintegrate*

7th level (1 slot): *arcane sword*

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

TITIVULLUS

What seemed to be an elderly book peddler turns into a 4-foot tall creature with scaly green skin, sharp claws, small horns, and an impish grin. It is hunched by a heavy bundle of massive tomes.

Diabolical Distractors. Titivulli are low-ranked devils charged with distracting writers and copyists of sacred texts, stealing or corrupting pious writings, and spreading heretical manuscripts that lead the weaker-willed into temptation. The mere presence of a titivullus makes one error-prone, forgetful, and unfocused, and thus easier to sway from the path of righteousness. It lurks around places of learning and slowly taints the writing produced and contained in such locales.

Smugglers of Blasphemous Writings. A titivullus always carries around a heavy bundle of magical books of writing containing hidden sacrilegious messages and infernal curses. It often masquerades as a child, a hunched old man or woman, or a Small humanoid, peddling its writings (or even giving them away for free) to further the agenda of Hell. Cowardly but cruel, the titivullus fights viciously when unmasked, using its innate spellcasting abilities to strike from hiding and engage in misdirection.

Titivullus

Small fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 58 (13d6 + 13)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +3

Skills Arcana +6, Deception +6, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Languages Common, Infernal, any two others; telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Aura of Distraction. All non-evil creatures within 30 feet of the titivullus have disadvantage on Intelligence- and Wisdom-based ability checks and saving throws, as well as disadvantage on Constitution saving throws made to maintain concentration.

Book Bundle. The titivullus' bundle normally contains thirteen books. It magically replenishes the supply after finishing a long rest, and its books burn to cinders when it dies.

Cursed Books. A book, scroll, or other piece of writing from the titivullus' bundle that is in the possession of another creature creates an aura of distraction within 30 feet of the object. It does not radiate magic and loses its power when the titivullus dies. A dispel magic spell cast on the object also ends the effect.

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the titivullus' darkvision.

Innate Spellcasting. The titivullus spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The ink devil can cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *arcanist's magic aura*, *comprehend languages*, *detect magic*, *alter self*, *illusory script*, *invisibility*

3/day each: *dissonant whispers*, *misty step*

1/day each: *glyph of warding*, *major image*, *tongues*

Magic Resistance. The titivullus has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. A titivullus makes two melee or ranged attacks in any combination.

Zapping Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage and 9 (2d8) lightning damage, and the target can't take reactions until the start of its next turn.

Book Toss. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage and 10 (3d6) fire damage.

REACTIONS

Misdirection. The titivullus distracts its attacker and adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the titivullus must see the attacker.

