

# The Alchemist's Lab

## A GUIDE TO MAGICAL MANUFACTURING

for use with your Fantasy Role-Playing Game



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## INTRODUCTION

Alchemical laboratories are part of the bread and butter of the fantasy genre. Our imaginations have been intrigued by thoughts of walking through such a lab, whether it came to us in a book, movie or comic. Bubbling beakers, colored liquids in odd glass containers, tubes and pipes, odd noises, odder smells; this is the real stuff of fantasy.

But even with all that color and mental imagery, the rule books seldom get into any details about the lab itself. They might say how much a beaker and a bottle cost, and how much the lab as a whole is worth, but there simply has never been the kind of detail that could be used. This book aims to change that.

By focusing on what normal and, to a greater degree, what magical equipment can be found in the lab, we hope to bring alchemists to life. Every fantasy rule book has magical items for the warriors and the battle mages, but they neglect to define the items available to the alchemist. After all, he is the one crafting the magic; shouldn't he craft some to help himself out?

Expect to find things that intrigue you. Expect to find things you don't think will work in your rules system. Expect to see strategies that you had not thought to try, but are now planning to use in your campaign world. The ideas are going to be coming from all directions, so that you can use what you like, and may choose to ignore some of the others.

### How We See Alchemy

As this is a generic supplement, there are some concepts that we want to establish. Every game sees magic, including alchemy, in a different way, and this can cause some confusion.

Alchemy is a science, but it is also a form of magic. By using certain ingredients and mixing them in certain ways, the alchemist is able to draw out the magic within and utilize it to make some form of alchemical substance. Not all alchemical substances are potions, but we'll get into that later.

In order to properly mix these ingredients, the alchemist needs a laboratory and certain equipment. Seemingly normal chemical processes such as

burning, boiling and distilling are part of the activities, but there is a lot more to it than simply that.

Alchemy at its roots attempts to break things down to their most basic forms, and then build other things up from those forms. Most alchemists will see elements as the most basic forms, typically fire, water, air and earth. Some disciplines may include other "elements" such as life, death, light, shadow, etc., but we'll be concentrating on the historic four.

The intent here is not to separate this book from your regular gaming rules, but simply to serve as a guide to what alchemy is in a reasonably simple definition.

### How We See Alchemists

While alchemy is likely to be very similar in most games, alchemists are not always the same. We see alchemists as a group (class if you insist) unto themselves. We will assume that one does not need to study a different form of magic for any length of time in order to become an alchemist. Even if your rules insist upon this, this book can still be useful.

Further, we see alchemists as folks who stay pretty close to the lab. We're not going to be coming up with ways to make the alchemist a terror on the battle field. In fact, we typically assume that an alchemist cannot cast his spells of alchemy without a lab to summon the magic. Some systems have alchemists casting what constitutes combat attack magic. That will not be covered here.

We'll be focusing on the alchemist as a craftsman. As a craftsman, he will need to purchase his ingredients and equipment, craft his product, and then sell his product. We'll be focusing on these points and not the wild, chaos of an active adventurer's life. This doesn't mean that active alchemists cannot exist or cannot use this book. It only means that those active aspects of their lives will not be covered here.

It probably sounds like we're trying to dissuade you from using the book. We're not. But we want to make certain there are no misunderstandings as we get into the meat of the subject.