Spell Gems

The secret of both how to use and craft the special Spell Gems was passed from elves to humans almost a millennium ago, and the incident is still mourned as a great disaster in elven lands. The craftsmanship required to craft these items of power were thought to be beyond mortals, and thus a handful were granted to a human wizard by a grateful elven monarch as reward for assistance in battling a wayward Demon Prince.

As humans are wont to do, the wizard (whose name has been lost to history) studied the gems, wondered at their power and wanted to make that power his own. He managed to recreate the process, but in a much less elegant way – elven Spell Gems contain a beautiful resonance that sings with the magic of the spell, which means they can be used and made to sing again. His copies contained a suppressed dissonance, which worked just as fine for containing the spell but would cause the gemstone to shatter or crumble upon release.

Since these ancient times, the secret of creating Spell Gems has spread across the lands formerly conquered by the Dolovian Empire and among the different Mage's Guilds and secret societies that traffic in these items. They are not uncommonly found for sale in larger settlements, but almost always for exorbitant prices, since the secret to creating them is very well guarded and the process itself is time-consuming.

Elven Spell Gems

These rare treasures are unique artifacts, and are not sold on the common market; a very accomplished or rich wizard may own one or even several, but would not normally be willing to part with them. These can only be created by elves, and then only by a few select masters among them – it is unclear if any still exist to this day.

An elven Spell Gem has a power level; few have a power level below III, and most are in a range between IV and V, but a few very rare ones can be more powerful. When a Magic-User or Elf casts a spell while holding (or otherwise being in contact with) such a gem, he or she may expend power from the gem temporarily equal to the level of the spell cast; if this is done, the spell does not leave the caster's memory as usual.

To recharge this kind of Spell Gem, any arcane spell can be cast "into" it, raising its current power by an amount equal to one less than the level of the spell cast. Of course, this may never raise the current power of the gem above its Power Level. There is, however, a 1 % (non-cumulative) risk that the gem shatters each time this is done, which means most owners of these prized items use them as seldom as possible, and recharge them with their most powerful dweomers.

Common Spell Gems

Those wizards and alchemists who know the secret and are willing to spend the required time create these lesser gems of power and sell them at exorbitant prices. They are crafted from regular gemstones, which are cut down in a very complicated process requiring exact geometrical precision, and the rate of failure is high.

A common Spell Gem holds power much like an elven variant, but is simply not rechargeable; they are used in the same way, but when used the shatter or crumble and are reduced to worthless dust. They are also never found above Power Level V, and most hold much humbler amounts of energy. They are still very popular among practitioners of the arcane arts due to their small size and versatility.

Common Spell Gems are often available for purchase from Mage's Guilds and similar organizations, albeit at a hefty price. They are often sold exclusively to, or at a rebate to, members.

If a player should learn the secret of creating these prized items, they may perform the process themselves. The gem used needs to be of suitable purity (and thus value), and an amount of time must be spent as per the formula below. However, the process also requires a roll against the Gem Cutting secondary skill to succeed, something which means these gems are generally created by specialized artisans.

Gem Value: 100 x Power Level x Power Level
Time required: 2D6 x Power Level days
Sales Price (Town): Power Level x 750 sp