

# DEEP MAGIC

## Void Magic

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# Void Magic

**A**ncient stories tell of the creation of all existence by means of spoken words that spun reality from the void. The words of creation are powerful, but—as light creates shadow—so too does creation cause destruction. Whispers of the ancient words of creation seeped into the narrow spaces between existence and nonexistence, and those whispers echo to this day. The power-hungry, the desperate, and the mad can find such whispers—with great effort and terrible risk. When spoken aloud or inscribed correctly, these words draw the power of nonexistence into the speaker's magic.

The ultimate source of the power that drives void magic is unclear. In most respects, a void magic spell is nearly identical to conventional magic and reaches toward the same mystical forces for its energy. The addition of void speech into the spell's verbal component, however, subtly alters the spell at the moment of casting, so that the spell reaches beyond the usual wells of arcane or divine power to siphon energy from strange realms of darkness, madness, and horror.

Several hypotheses exist to explain void magic's origin, from tapping the power of the Great Old Ones to drawing the last energy of a dying multiverse, but the truth is knotted in an enigma that can't be untied without tangling oneself in madness.

## Void Speech

At the heart of the enigmatic and dangerous school of void magic lies void speech. The glyphs and spoken words of the void are the essence of oblivion given form. They exist in a paradoxical state, and as such they corrupt and degrade physical reality around them. Void speech is dangerous under any circumstance, even when not infused into magic. Those who hear correctly enunciated void speech find it impossible to comprehend, but they know in their bones that what they hear is terrible. Splitting headaches, sudden nosebleeds, spoiled food, and cracked glass follow a void speech pronouncement by a particularly powerful speaker.

Inscribed void glyphs are not much safer. Readers often bleed from the eyes or suffer blurred vision. Paper bearing a glyph blackens over time, and even stone carved with the blasphemous glyphs eventually takes on a slimy texture and becomes pitted, corrupt, and foul. Explorers and scholars who stumble across a preserved void glyph have gone mad from the sudden shock to their souls. Despite the corrupting nature of such glyphs, the substance upon which they're inscribed never seems to degenerate completely—it rots and becomes loathsome, but it seemingly lasts forever in that corrupted state.

### NURTURED IN DARKNESS

Void speech and the magic that derives from it thrives in the darkest places of creation. The Great Old Ones murmur it to their followers during the cultists' grimmest nightmares. Creatures that dwell far from mortal worlds in the frigid black expanses between the stars came upon the secrets long ago, catching whispers in the silence. Void dragons, star-spawn, and other hoarders of ancient knowledge and power possess scraps of the speech cultivated into power.

Chief among earthly creatures who gather and study the power of the void are the aboleth. Those

ancient creatures discovered void speech long ago, when the nihileth returned from distant wanderings. Void speech formed the basis of the maddening glyph language that adorns their sunken cities.

Wherever anyone utters void speech, no matter how well-meaning, darkness follows. Things from beyond hear the call and can follow its echo into existence. With sufficient study and preparation, a speaker into the void can protect him or herself from the brunt of the horrors that arise and even turn deadly manifestations against foes. No amount of caution in using void speech and magic, however, can completely shield a practitioner from its corrupting nature. The void will have its due.

## The School of Void Magic

Void magic comprises a dangerous school of wizardry that exists alongside, but in the shadows of, the more well-known practices. This magic is anathema to existence itself, making it difficult to master and dangerous even to study. Dabblers rarely produce effects more profound than minor injury, property damage, and psychological scars to themselves and those around them. More serious investigations into void magic can spell disaster. Only alien creatures whose psychology and physiology defy human understanding seem capable of commanding void magic with relative ease; even beings as anomalous as aboleths respect and fear the power of void magic.

Void magic spells can never be added to a wizard's spellbook as part of the two spells learned automatically for gaining a level (with the exception of void savants; see below). To learn a void magic spell, a wizard must find an NPC void speaker who's willing to impart the knowledge or discover the spell written as a spell scroll, in a captured spellbook, carved on a temple wall, or some other form of recorded lore. Alternatively, if the GM allows it, a character who sees and hears a void magic spell being

## Void Speech in Midgard

Void speech serves specific roles in the Midgard Campaign Setting. In the Western Wastes, massive, alien beings known to the inhabitants as Great Old Ones lumber across the blasted land. Dust goblins, selang, and aberrations scamper in the creatures' shadows and crawl over their twisted bodies in worship. These beings were originally called to Midgard from beyond the stars by void speech incantations. Their coming was a disaster that devastated the once fertile plains. Shamans and sorcerers among the twisted dust goblin tribes have puzzled out bits of void speech

and wield the dark magic against their enemies.

In the Southlands, void speech is most prevalent in the Abandoned Lands. The ramag are well aware of void speech and the horrors void magic can unleash. Their gatekeepers ruthlessly hunt down any rumors of void glyphs or speakers to cleanse that taint from the world. They struggle with unstable gateways and unpredictable magic, due in no small part to void magic.

It's no coincidence that in both locations, void speech exists in lands poisoned by magic gone awry and hostile to life.

cast can add it to his or her spell book, using the same rules as transcribing a spell from a scroll.

Despite void magic's strange origins, it still functions similarly to other arcane magic on a fundamental level. Void magic follows all the normal rules for spellcasting and is susceptible to dispelling, countermagic, and antimagic as normal. Void magic spells always have a verbal component and can't, under any circumstance, be cast without it.

## Void Magic Feats

Under normal circumstances (or what passes for normal where void speech is concerned), only wizards can learn void magic. The following two feats make it possible for any character to channel the power of void speech in a limited way. At the GM's discretion, a wizard with a void magic feat may be able to learn void magic spells without finding them in written form, as if he or she was a void savant (see below).

### VOID CHANNELER

As an action, you can speak aloud a word or short phrase in void speech. One creature of your choice within 10 feet that can hear you must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against this magic (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier) or be frightened of you for 1 minute. A frightened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Other creatures who can hear you suffer minor reactions to the void speech such as spontaneous nosebleeds, headaches, bits of hair falling out, and other unsettling effects. The first time you use this ability, you suffer no adverse effect. If you use it again before completing a short or long rest, you take 1d4 necrotic damage. Each additional time you use it before finishing a rest, the necrotic damage increases by 1d4.

### VOID SCRIBE

As an action, you can use a writing medium to inscribe a magical void glyph on an unattended object within reach. As long as the glyph remains intact, the object is vulnerable to necrotic damage and it takes 1d6 necrotic damage at the end of your turn.

For the glyph to remain intact, you must concentrate on it as if concentrating on a spell. In addition to the normal demands of concentration, you must also make a successful DC 10 Constitution saving throw at the start of your turn or the glyph crumbles away and ceases to function.

## Arcane Tradition: Void Speaker

Given the nature of void magic, it comes as no surprise that a tradition of wizards sprang up from the study of void speech. Void speakers are a standoffish and secretive lot, prone to delving into crumbling, monster-prowled ruins and the dark corners of moldering libraries with equal caution; carelessly reading a text that may be sprinkled with void glyphs can be just as deadly as stumbling into a den of trolls. As you focus your study on void speech, you learn to properly invoke the words and glyphs to empower your magic and to tap the vast potential of the void.

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BRYAN SYME

Some void speakers risk the darkness for the sake of knowledge or defense against that which lies beyond. Others succumb to the madness and corruption that void magic touches and become living conduits for the horror seeking entry into the mortal world.

### Void Savant

Beginning when you select this tradition at 2nd level, the gold and time you must spend to copy a void spell into your spellbook is halved.

When you gain a level, one of the two spells you learn for gaining a level can be a void magic spell, even if you've never encountered the spell before. Similarly, when you learn a new cantrip, it can be a void magic cantrip, even if you've never previously encountered it.

### Whispers of the Void

Starting at 2nd level, as a bonus action immediately before you cast a spell of 1st level or higher, you can utter a few words of void speech and weave its dark magic into your spell. The tainted spell disorients one creature you can see that the spell affects when you cast it. The creature has disadvantage on the next attack roll or ability check it makes before the start of your next turn. You can't use this feature if you are unable to speak.

### Rebuke from Beyond

Beginning at 6th level, when you are damaged by a creature within 60 feet, you can use your reaction to bark a destructive word of void speech. If the creature can hear you, it takes necrotic damage equal to half your wizard level plus your Intelligence modifier. You can use this ability a number of times equal to your Intelligence modifier (minimum of 1), and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest. You can't use this ability if you are unable to speak.

### Powerful Echo

Starting at 10th level, when you cast a void magic spell that targets only one creature, you can have it target a second creature. Additionally, you have advantage on Constitution saving throws made to maintain concentration on void spells.

### Manifestation

At 14th level, you can use your action to pronounce a complicated phrase in void speech. Choose a point you can see within 60 feet. The area within 20 feet of that point is shrouded in dim light for one minute. Any creature hostile to you within the area is vulnerable to necrotic damage and has disadvantage on Wisdom checks. An affected creature that starts its turn in the area or that enters the area for the first time on its turn takes 3d6 necrotic damage, or half damage with a successful Constitution saving throw (using your spell save DC). Once you use this ability, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest. You can't use this feature if you're unable to speak.

