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INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

THIS BOOK IS WRITTEN FOR ANYONE fascinated by the *Forgotten Realms* and the shadowed forces that shape them. While much of its content is structured to support Dungeon Masters in play, it also offers insight, history, and perspective for readers who simply wish to understand the *Arcane Brotherhood* more deeply.

Some information is deliberately framed to be contextual rather than explicit. The *Arcane Brotherhood* is most compelling when encountered through consequence, omission, and partial truth. For those moments where guidance, hidden structure, or behind-the-scenes intent is required, clearly marked DM boxes appear throughout the book, separating narrative understanding from table-level revelation.

You are about to delve into a campaign setting focused not on a single city, but on one of the most dangerous and influential arcane organizations in the *North*: the *Arcane Brotherhood*. This book leads you and your players into a world of secrecy, ambition, and ruthless curiosity, where knowledge is currency and power is never shared without cost. The *Arcane Brotherhood* is not a simple faction. It is a moving target, a network of cells, towers, agents, and agendas whose actions shape events far beyond the places where its members are seen.

Intrigue, manipulation, and asymmetric power define every interaction with the *Brotherhood*. Its members may appear as patrons, rivals, reluctant allies, or distant observers, but they are never neutral. This book is designed both as a comprehensive guide to the *Arcane Brotherhood* and as the foundation for future adventures and campaign material available via the DM Guild. You can use it to place the *Brotherhood* at the center of your campaign, or weave it subtly into existing stories such as *Storm King's Thunder*, *Rime of the Frostmaiden* or the *Tyranny of the Dragons* campaign.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

For all who want to use the *Arcane Brotherhood* primarily as NPCs and encounters, can jump directly to **Appendix B: NPC** section. For Everyone else I strongly recommend reading this book in full before running adventures that involve the *Arcane Brotherhood*.

This introductory section explains how the material is structured and how it is meant to be used. Early chapters establish the *Brotherhood's* mindset, behavior, and methods in the field. Later sections explore its internal hierarchy, research priorities, and the role of the *Host Tower* as both headquarters and living structure.

Additional chapters examine the *Brotherhood's* relationships with other powers, its enemies, and the long-term consequences of its actions.

Toward the end of the book, you will find practical tools for play: adventure hooks, NPC profiles, organizational templates, and escalation models that help you integrate the *Brotherhood* into your campaign at any scale. Once you are familiar with the material, you can introduce a single *Brotherhood* agent, an entire cell, or the *Host Tower* itself into an ongoing story with confidence.

WHAT YOU NEED

To run your campaign and adventures using this book, you will need the three core rulebooks of the fifth edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* (5 or 5.5): the Player's Handbook, the Dungeon Master's Guide, and the Monster Manual.

The Monster Manual contains the stat blocks for most creatures referenced in this book and its adventure hooks. Any additional stat blocks not found in the core books are provided in the Appendices. Whenever a creature or NPC name appears in bold, its stat block can be found either in the Monster Manual or in this book, with clear references provided.

Spells and equipment mentioned are described in the Player's Handbook. Magic items appear in the Dungeon Master's Guide unless they are new creations specific to the *Arcane Brotherhood*, in which case they are detailed in the Appendices.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Begin with the Introduction and Calimra's letter. These pages establish tone rather than facts. They teach you how the *Brotherhood* sees the world and how outsiders experience it. This is essential. Every later interaction with the *Brotherhood* should feel measured, polite, and unsettling rather than openly hostile.

Use this section to internalize one core idea: if the *Brotherhood* is speaking to the characters, it has already noticed them.

HERE'S THE BROTHERHOOD

This chapter should be your entry point for introducing the *Arcane Brotherhood* into your play. Use it when characters first encounter a *Brotherhood* agent, sponsor, or intermediary “per accident”.

The guidance here ensures that your roleplaying of *Brotherhood* members is consistent: they are curious but guarded, helpful but incomplete, calm but never transparent. Don't rush escalation. Players must feel assessed, not threatened.

This chapter accomplishes its mission when players question, “Why does this feel wrong even though nothing bad happened?”

SPECIAL NOTE

Do not use everything at once. The *Arcane Brotherhood* works best when it unfolds over time. Let players sense it before they understand it. Let them benefit from it before they have grasped their full nature. And when consequences come, make them quiet, precise, and unavoidable.

The *Brotherhood* does not need to win every conflict. It only needs to remain standing.

IN THE FIELD

When the *Brotherhood* becomes a recurring presence, turn to this chapter. It explains how authority flows without being visible and how field teams are structured.

Use this material to decide who gives orders, who takes risks, and who is expendable. Not every mage the party meets is important. Most are replaceable. This knowledge empowers you to create tension without resorting to constant combat.

This chapter is particularly useful when players interfere with *Brotherhood* operations. It shows how the organization reacts without emotion or revenge, only adjustment.

MAGIC, RESEARCH, AND FORBIDDEN

KNOWLEDGE

This chapter defines what the *Brotherhood* wants. Use it to frame quests, expeditions, and moral dilemmas. The *Arcane Brotherhood* pursues magic not for wonder or beauty, but for scalability and control. Artifacts, myths, *Netherese* relics, and unstable zones are not treasures, they are data.

Whenever you design an arcane problem that feels too dangerous or irresponsible for sane institutions, this chapter explains why the *Brotherhood* engages anyway.

ORIGINS, THE HOST TOWER, AND INTERNAL FRACTURE

This chapter provides the deep foundation. Read this before placing the *Host Tower* or the *Overwizards* into your campaign.

You will learn the reasons why the *Brotherhood* behaves as it does, how *Illusk* shaped it, and why the *Host Tower* is not just a headquarters but also an enforcement structure. Use this chapter to establish the political tension, internal rivalry, and long-term consequences. DMs should consult this chapter when players ask, “Why has no one destroyed them yet?”

POWER, POLITICS, AND ENEMIES

Use this chapter to situate the *Arcane Brotherhood* among other factions. It explains why the organization survives despite being feared and distrusted.

When running interactions with *High Captains*, the *Zhentarim*, the *Harpers*, or *Bregán D'aerthe*, this chapter tells you where cooperation ends and silent conflict begins. It is ideal for intrigue focused campaigns where battles are rare but consequences are lasting.

This section helps you keep the *Brotherhood* dangerous without making it omnipotent.

USING THE ARCANES BROTHERHOOD IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This is your primary toolbox chapter. Use it to decide whether the *Brotherhood* functions as ally, obstacle, or antagonist at any given time. The escalation model is paramount. The *Brotherhood* almost never uses violence. It watches, restricts, and isolates first.

Consult this chapter repeatedly during play. Each time the players change the balance, return here and adjust the *Brotherhood's* response.

CUTLASS ISLAND AND THE HOST TOWER

Use this chapter when the *Host Tower* becomes physically relevant. It provides atmosphere, structure, and logic for one of the most dangerous locations in the *North*. The tower is not a dungeon in the traditional sense. It is a controlled environment that resists intrusion and judges behavior over time. This chapter will help you run it as a living system rather than a map of rooms.

It's perfect for high-tension diplomacy, infiltration attempts, or moments when players realize how small they are.

THE LATTICE COSMOLOGY

Use this section when you want to push magic beyond spell slots and schools. It explains how some wizards within the *Arcane Brotherhood* understand magic as burden and structure rather than flow. This material is best introduced slowly, through rumors, notes, or experiments. It is particularly useful for high level campaigns where the use of traditional magic feels redundant or too comfortable. And as DM you are able to introduce a new element into your campaign.

UNDERSTANDING CALIMRA'S SECRETS

Throughout this book you will encounter verses, fragmented notes, and excerpts from Calimra's songbooks and journals. These passages are not mere flavor. They reflect the way knowledge circulates within and around the *Arcane Brotherhood*: encoded, incomplete, and intentionally ambiguous.

These fragments often hint at hidden research, internal conflicts, or truths the Brotherhood prefers not to record plainly. Interpret them freely, adapt them to your campaign, or use them as subtle clues and rumors for your players. Calimra knows much of the Brotherhood's truth, but like all who survive within its orbit, he understands that some knowledge is safer when sung in riddles rather than spoken aloud.

QUICKSTART WITH ADVENTURE SHORTS

Chapter IX offer ready-to-play scenarios set throughout *Luskan* and the wider surrounding. Each short reveals a different face of the *Arcane Brotherhood* describing political schemes, exploration or magical phenomena.

Designed for one or two sessions (3-6 hours), these adventures can stand alone or link into a larger campaign shaped around the *Brotherhood's* power.

The goal is not to script a faction, but to let it develop through decision and consequence.

Now you have all the information you require. Enjoy the book, Philipp

A LETTER TO AN OLD FRIEND

TO THE COUNT OF ELVERATH, ERIN MOONFALL,
UNDER THE EVERGREEN HALLS OF THE HIGH FOREST

My friend,
it is a strange turn of fate that I now write to you about these people in particular. These mages, who ventured into the High Forest to seek an audience in your halls, were barely a faint whisper along the Luskan coast just a few years back, after they have destroyed themselves some time ago. And now they're chasing the remnants of an ancient Mythal?

When you wrote to me that representatives of the Arcane Brotherhood had arrived to visit you in the heart of your realm, I could not help but smile. I imagine how they attempted to be polite as you faced them with that graceful and steadfast control that can quiet even Flinx for a few valuable moments. Yet I am also aware of this: if they have managed to reach you, then a greater force is starting to stir.

You requested that I compile a collection of my insights for your forthcoming meeting with the Brotherhood. I have dedicated the past ten days to fulfilling that request. I have listened, inquired, charmed, entertained, imbibed, and most importantly, I have observed.

The Arcane Brotherhood remains one of the most closed-off organizations I have ever encountered. What they show is rarely their true face. What they say is often only the shadow of their intent.

Still, if anyone can coax something useful from them, it is a drow AND bard who learned in his youth how to weigh words and draw out secrets with nothing more than a smile. Many of the details I gathered were

obtained from second or third hand sources. Taverns, merchants, sailors who have seen more than they ever wished to, and mages who drank more than is safe for their profession.

I write to you with humility. Not everything contained in the included manuscript will be unquestionable truth. But everything in it is likely, and much of it is very likely, at least judging after several bottles of imported red wine.

I dare say that this collection offers one of the best overviews an outsider can have at this moment. Perhaps even better than what some members of the Brotherhood know themselves.

Above all, it is meant to protect you. From their games. From their expectations. From their hunger for power, knowledge and forgotten secrets.

I know you possess the strength to meet them as an equal. You are a warlock who carries powers beyond this world at your back. But even a gifted warlock may stumble when he does not know where dangers lie beneath the surface.

For that reason, I gathered everything that may aid you. Their structures, their rivalries, their old enemies, their magical research, their artifacts, their political allies and those they hope will never become allies.

I only hope my efforts help more than they harm.
And Erin... be careful.

I usually write such words with a smile.
This time I mean them completely serious.
With friendship and the hope of seeing you again soon beneath stars that belong to no circle,
Calimra



HERE'S THE BROTHERHOOD

"If the Arcane Brotherhood ever greets you politely, assume you have already been noticed. By the time you realize you were negotiating, they have long since decided what you are worth."

Calimra

FIRST CONTACT, BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS, AND SILENT EVALUATION

IMAGINE YOUR PLAYERS WALKING DOWN THE road or crossing paths in the wilderness, and realizing the person before them is a mage. Not the flamboyant kind, no sizzling power or theatrical gestures. This one is composed, almost disarmingly so. They notice a brooch: gold, shaped like a stylized tree with four slender silver branches. They've maybe seen it once before, in a tavern story or a half-remembered warning. The *Arcane Brotherhood*. The mage greets them politely, asks their names, listens carefully. There is genuine interest in her eyes, yet it comes across as reserved, as if curiosity itself were something rational.

PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter will teach you how to successfully initiate contact with the *Arcane Brotherhood*. I'm not going to explain them. I'm not justifying them. Their presence must be felt. Use this chapter when your players encounters a *Brotherhood* agent for the first time. The *Arcane Brotherhood* does not announce itself as a threat. It is inconspicuous at first.

The questions of the *Brotherhood* mage come easily. "Where are you coming from. What brought you here. Have you noticed anything unusual on the road." Nothing insistently, nothing alarming. Yet with every answer your characters give, the imbalance grows clearer. The party speaks freely. They do not. When they are asked something in return, the responses are courteous but thin, shaped to satisfy without being revealing. The characters quickly realize that the conversation is not about introduction or exchange of information, but calibration. How much they know. How predictable they are. Whether engaging further would be efficient.

When the encounter ends, it does so without tension. No threats. No warnings. Perhaps even an offer for help,

should they need it later. The *Brotherhood* member departs, leaving behind an undeniable sense of unease. Something has undeniably shifted. Not around them, but about the departed. The road feels exactly the same. The world does not react. They only realize later that the *Brotherhood* mage didn't arrive to change anything in front of them. The wizard came to decide whether the adventurers were worth remembering at all.

Now the party is familiar with the archetypical member. A great mage, polite, interested in everything and its grandmother, not very open, sometimes helpful, sometimes manipulative, and, occasionally, gone in a blink.

WHAT CAN BE EXPECTED AT INITIAL CONTACT?

Initial contact with the *Arcane Brotherhood* almost always presents itself as reasonable. It may take the form of academic interest, shared concern over a magical anomaly, or a seemingly coincidental overlap of objectives. The tone is professional and restrained. Courtesy is deliberate. Urgency is avoided. The *Brotherhood* prefers situations in which the other party reaches the conclusion that engagement is sensible, even advantageous.

"THEY ASK WHAT THEY ALREADY KNOW TO BE,
A QUIET TEST OF WORDS AND HONESTY.
NOT WHAT IS SAID BUT HOW AND HOW TOO FAST,
FOR CARELESS ANSWERS SHOW THE MASK AT LAST."

Information exchanged during first contact is accurate but incomplete. Questions are narrow and purposeful. Answers resolve trivial issues while leaving deeper implications untouched. The *Brotherhood* seldom imposes demands at this point. Rather, it sets the context and monitors reactions. What is important is predictability, not consensus.

Direct contact is not established. Instead,

intermediaries, sponsored expeditions, or collaborative institutional environments act as buffers. This enables the *Brotherhood* to evaluate both utility and risk without jeopardizing its own stance. From the beginning, the interaction is structured to make disengagement seem unnecessary rather than perilous

BETWEEN COOPERATION AND MANIPULATION

The *Arcane Brotherhood* uses structural methods to exert its influence. It does not rely on overt coercion. Their members are committed to reshaping the environment in which decisions are made, rather than forcing decisions. Information is distributed unevenly. Options continue to be technically accessible, yet they are increasingly impractical. They create barriers that are characterized as procedural, logistical, or obscure requirements instead of intentional hindrances.

"Coercion invites resistance, and resistance invites noise. If the structure is sound, people will choose the correct path themselves and thank you for removing the inconvenient alternatives."

Zelenn the White

Collaboration with the *Arcane Brotherhood* is frequently a matter of instrumental use. While these collaborative endeavors are portrayed as genuine partnerships, the wizards maintain ultimate control, at least they try.

Risks are always transferred to their partner's side. At first, they define objectives in a limited scope and later often broadened once commitment is established. Access to resources is provided temporarily and can be withdrawn without warning after the *Brotherhood* meets its objectives.

*"THEY LEND NO FUTURE, ONLY WHAT YOU HOLD,
NO PROMISE KEPT IN TOWER, TOME, OR GOLD.
WHAT LEAVES YOUR HANDS WAS NEVER MEANT TO STAY,
THE HOST CLAIMS ALL THAT DRIFTS TOO FAR AWAY."*

Language emphasizes equality while preserving control. Decisions are framed as collective agreement, yet implementation stays with the partners. Those involved may believe themselves to be collaborators, but the *Brotherhood* never relinquishes oversight of outcome or escalation. Cooperation persists only as long as it remains useful.

WHEN THEY HELP AND WHY?

The *Arcane Brotherhood* provides assistance, and its effectiveness is the reason why it is tolerated across the *North*. Intervention is necessary when instability threatens long-term research, when arcane infrastructure is at risk, or when visible competence

reinforces their reputation as indispensable experts..

*"NO HAND IS RAISED FROM KINDNESS OR FROM GRACE,
THEIR AID IS CAST TO FIX A SINGLE PLACE.
THE DEBT IS SET BEFORE YOU KNOW ITS NAME—
AND COIN WON'T SAVE YOU WHEN THEY CALL THE CLAIM."*

Their help is exact and contained. Problems are solved narrowly, never broadly. Protection is offered without allegiance. Resources are provided without explanation. Aid resolves the immediate issue while establishing future leverage. The cost is rarely disclosed at the time it is incurred and often cannot be paid in coin.

The *Arcane Brotherhood* does not offer help as a gift. It is a strategic investment and never a gesture of generosity.

HOW THEY IMPLY THE END OF A COLLABORATION

Certain behaviors reliably indicate escalating danger. Sudden generosity is among the clearest. One of the clearest signs of sudden generosity is when someone gives away something they don't need. When the *Brotherhood* provides more than what a situation seems to require, the actual extent of the cost has been evaluated in another context.

*"FEAR NOT THE THREAT THAT NAMES ITS INTENT,
BUT SILENCE, WHEN NO WORD IS FURTHER SPENT.
WHEN GIFTS ARRIVE AND QUESTIONS END TOO SOON,
THE TERMS ARE SET AND CHOICE HAS LEFT THE ROOM."*

A shift toward formal, distant politeness can mark the end of genuine negotiation. Likewise, the disappearance of detail is significant. As explanations become more concise, when processes take the place of dialogue, and when results are shown as unavoidable instead of contingent, the willingness for collaboration has already been forfeited.

Withdrawal is the *Brotherhood's* most consistent form of enforcement. When an individual or group becomes unpredictable, politically inconvenient, or no longer useful, contact diminishes without prior information and explanation. Messages go unanswered. Access closes. Intermediaries vanish. Protection that once existed simply ceases.

The decision is executed quietly and completely. By the time absence is recognized as intentional, alternatives have already narrowed. The *Arcane Brotherhood* has no explanation for its silence. They simply cut off all communication.





THE BROTHERHOOD IN THE FIELD

"If you can see who is giving orders, you are already standing too close to the bottom of the structure. The Arcane Brotherhood reveals itself not through authority, but through how efficiently everyone else is treated as replaceable."

Calimra

HIERARCHY, CELLS, AND THE LOGIC OF EXPANDABILITY

THE ARCANES BROTHERHOOD DOES NOT reveal itself through uniforms, sigils, or overt authority. Its agents rarely announce who they are, and they almost never operate alone. Those who learn to recognize them do so not by their symbols, but by their behavior. The *Brotherhood* is present wherever magic is treated as a logistical resource rather than a personal talent, and wherever decision-making follows a rigid yet quietly adaptive hierarchy.

which knowledge may circulate and which must remain isolated, even within their own towers. Direct contact with an *Overwizard* in the field is exceptionally rare and usually signals that an operation has reached a critical or uncontrollable stage.

"THE OVERWIZARDS BLEED NO BLOOD BUT INK,
THEY WEIGH ALL LIVES BY WHAT THEY LEARN AND LINK.
ALL THINGS MAY BURN, ALL SOULS MAY TURN TO DUST,
IF KNOWLEDGE LIVES, THE SACRIFICE IS JUST."

PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter explains how the *Arcane Brotherhood* operates once it becomes active in the world. Use it when the party disrupts *Brotherhood* activities, when *Brotherhood* missions are present in the same area as the players, or when assets, agents, and researchers are met in the field and the situation intensifies beyond initial contact. This chapter definitively answers one question: Who is allowed to be lost, and who isn't?

Below them operate the *Magisters*. These are the primary commanders of field activity. A *Magister* translates the *Overwizards* goals into viable directives and assigns resources accordingly. They coordinate multiple cells simultaneously and remain close enough to operations to intervene if outcomes diverge from expectations. In many cases, a *Magister* will never be physically present at a site, yet their influence will be evident through procedural constraints, reporting requirements, and the sudden arrival or withdrawal of support.

HIERARCHY IN PRACTICE

Operational hierarchy within the *Arcane Brotherhood* is functional. Rank is defined by authority over information and not by social status, bloodline or tenure within the *Brotherhood*. The most powerful wizard of the *Host Tower* stands at the top of the *Brotherhood* and is called the *Archmage Arcane*. Since the *Brotherhoods* foundation this position was always led by a male human mage, leading four *Overwizards*, whose influence is felt far more often than it is seen.

The *Overwizards* do not lead expeditions, negotiate contracts, or appear in volatile situations. Their role is strategic oversight and training their apprentices. They authorize objectives, define acceptable risk, and decide

EXPANDABILITY AS A PRINCIPLE

Specialists form the backbone of active operations. These are mages, apprentices, or practitioners selected for specific competencies rather than general ability.

Various *Specialists* are deployed because particular problems align with their expertise. Their authority extends only as far as their function, but within that function their word is rarely challenged. *Specialists* are replaceable, but not casually so. Losing one is inefficient, not tragic. Only one of five *Specialists* will ever attain the *Magister* level. Three out of five will perish in the attempt.

"ONCE IN THE YEAR THEY CAST AN OPEN SNARE,
ALL WHO DRAW NEAR ARE MEASURED, STRIPPED, AND WEIGHED.
WORTH IS FOUND WHERE MINDS MAY BEND OR BREAK,
TO SERVE THEIR HAND, OR STAND AS FOES THEY MAKE."

At the lowest tier are assets. Assets are viewed not as elements of the hierarchy, but rather as tools. This category includes local guides, hired guards, informants, mercenaries, and associate spellcasters. Assets may or may not be aware of who they are working for.

It is essential that you provide them with only the information necessary to perform their task. Do not inform them of the larger objective. Assets are considered expendable if circumstances require it.

DESIGNING A STANDARD EXPLORATION TEAM

When the *Arcane Brotherhood* investigates a site, retrieves an artifact, or conducts field research, it does so through standardized team structures. These teams are not rigid templates, but recurring configurations optimized for control and survivability.

"THE APPRENTICE WALKS ALONE INTO THE DARK,
NO SHIELD, NO HAND, NO CIRCLE LEFT TO MARK.
THE MAGISTER BRINGS GUARDS AND SPELL AND STEEL,
SO LEARN WHAT WORTH THE LOWER RANKS REVEAL."

When creating a team of this nature, begin with the core, the *Arcane Lead*. This individual holds authority over the mission's magical direction. They determine how power is applied, when risks are taken, and which phenomena warrant further study. The *Arcane Lead* is not necessarily the most powerful spellcaster present, but they are the one whose judgment defines escalation.

Depending on the quest *Arcane Leads* are supported by one *Ritualist*. This role focuses on preparation rather than reaction. The *Ritualist* stabilizes magical environments, maintains wards, and ensures that long-form spellwork proceeds without interruption.

They are often underestimated, yet their absence is immediately felt when conditions deteriorate. *Ritualists* rarely make decisions, but their assessments heavily influence whether an operation continues or is aborted.

OPERATIONAL WEAKNESSES

The *Arcane Brotherhood* is efficient, not perfect. Here you can find situations that may alter the outcome of a mission.

- Cells lack full context and therefore may decide wrongly.
- *Specialists* cannot authorize strategy, even if they would be right.
- *Overwizards* respond slowly but decisively.
- Assets will not follow the arcanists to the very last consequence.

Think of these weaknesses, when playing a *Brotherhood* exploration team.

Physical security is provided by bodyguards or mercenaries. Their purpose is to absorb immediate threats and buy time. They are selected for reliability rather than loyalty and are often rotated between missions to prevent attachment or excessive familiarity with *Brotherhood* methods.

"THEY DRAFT FROM DOCK AND TAVERN'S FLOOR,
YET DROW FOR HIRE PASS BY THEIR DOOR.
STRANGE, IS IT NOT, FOR SKILL IS THERE?
OR IS THE GAP TOO WIDE TO DARE?"

Local guides or assets complete the team. They provide terrain knowledge, social access, and plausible deniability. Their value lies in what they know rather than what they can do. Once their usefulness diminishes, they are either dismissed or removed from the operational area. Long-term association is avoided unless the asset can be integrated more permanently, a process that requires *Magister* approval.

DM Note: It is crucial to note that the precise composition of these squads outside of *Luskan* and the nearby *Sword Coast* is not documented in this book. The basic concept applies to every squad, but adjustments are always advisable, especially for long-range missions and operations spanning multiple planes.

- A removed *Ritualist* may lead to raised instability of arcane sites and phenomena
- A killed *Arcane Lead* will lead to chaotic disorientation in escalation
- The *Arcane Lead* will invariably sacrifice the entire team to accomplish the specified objectives.



TYPICAL FIELD DANGERS FOR THE MUNDANE WORLD

The presence of the *Arcane Brotherhood* in the field introduces predictable risks, even when intentions appear benign. Collateral damage is the most common. Arcane solutions for example prioritize containment of the primary objective, not the safety of surrounding structures or populations. Damage that does not compromise the mission is considered acceptable.

Helpers and auxiliary personnel face a particular danger. Assets are valued for efficiency, not survival. When circumstances escalate, protective resources are allocated upward in the hierarchy. This is rarely stated openly, but it becomes evident when evacuation routes narrow or defensive magic shifts focus.

"THEY CHOOSE WHO FLEES AND WHO MUST STAY,
WHEN FIRE AND FORCE BAR BLOCKED AWAY.
THE HIGHER RANKS ARE GUARDED FAST,
AND WITNESSES ARE LOST AT LAST."

The most severe risk is arcane escalation. The *Brotherhood* prefers controlled environments, but it does not retreat easily. When resistance, instability, or interference occurs, magical intensity increases rapidly. What begins as observation can become experimentation. What begins as containment can become demonstration. Once escalation is authorized, reversal is unlikely unless the cost threatens higher-tier objectives.

Recognizing these patterns allows an observer to identify *Arcane Brotherhood* involvement long before formal identification occurs. Structured teams, asymmetric information flows, low escalation thresholds, and the tactical dispensability of those on the periphery are classic characteristics and hallmarks of a *Brotherhood* operation.

"Loss is only a problem when it interferes with results. Most things break before it is obvious they have served their purpose."

Teyva the Gray

Nevertheless, there are occasions when field missions are conducted solely by an individual wizard. Some of these missions are secret, while others are driven by personal development objectives within the *Brotherhood*. These operations carry significant risks and frequently result in failure due to the absence of backup assets and centralized coordination.

THE LOST TOMES OF THE HOST TOWER (TYRANNY OF THE DRAGONS STORYLINE)

More than a century ago, during one of the cyclical draconic upheavals known as the Rage of Dragons, the white dragon Arauthator took part in a coordinated assault against the *Host Tower of the Arcane* in Luskan. The attack resulted in the collapse of the tower's western arm and the loss of numerous arcane artifacts. Among them were at least three tomes containing rare and powerful spells, removed directly from the tower by Arauthator and presumed lost to the *Sea of Moving Ice*.

The *Arcane Brotherhood* never recovered these collections of arcane lore. Their disappearance remains an unresolved institutional failure. Decades later, this loss was a key factor in the *Brotherhood's* decision to send Maccath the Crimson on an expedition into the *Sea of Moving Ice*, which is highlighted in *The Rise of Tiamat campaign*. Her objective was not one of exploration but of restoration: to recover this lost knowledge is deemed essential to the *Brotherhood's* primary archive.

This event establishes that the *Arcane Brotherhood* operates on long institutional memory. Expeditions may be launched decades after the initial event. Ancient grudges against dragons, rival factions, or adventurers who interfere with recovery efforts can persist across generations.



MAGIC, RESEARCH & KNOWLEDGE

"Do not mistake their curiosity for wonder or their experiments for progress. The Arcane Brotherhood studies magic the way others study siege engines, with full awareness that something will break, and no intention of standing nearby when it does."

Calimra

WHAT THE ARCANE BROTHERHOOD WANTS AND WHY IT WILL NOT STOP

TO OBTAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF the actions of the *Arcane Brotherhood* in the field, it is crucial to first grasp their fundamental principles. Their driving forces are mainly shaped by the quest for acquiring, protecting, and advancing arcane knowledge and power, rather than by ideology, belief, or conventional ambition. All other elements, including alliances and expeditions, take a lesser priority to the objectives.

PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter definitively identifies the core motivation of the *Arcane Brotherhood*. Apply this when your group faces perilous experiments or volatile magic, and when players inquire about the *Brotherhood's* acceptance of significant risks. Your players will experience moral conflict as they grapple with the choice between safety and the pursuit of knowledge.

This chapter definitively answers one question: What is worth sacrificing?

FIELDS OF RESEARCH

The research interests of the *Arcane Brotherhood* are broad, but focused. They concentrate on systems of magic that scale beyond the individual caster. Personal spellcraft, while respected, is secondary to structures that persist, propagate, or influence environments over time. Central among these interests are large-scale arcane frameworks: persistent enchantments, long-duration wards, and self-sustaining magical structures. These fields provide what the *Brotherhood* values greatly:

Development of persistent illusion and abjuration fields designed to shape perception decision making and contractual compliance within urban diplomatic

and institutional environments including integrated protection against scrying and coercive influence.

Systematic integration of enchantment and divination magic for long term governance of individual and collective decision processes including memory preservation behavioral conditioning predictive modeling and the stabilization of preferred future outcomes.

Advancement of large scale storm and sea rituals to establish lasting control over maritime regions including elemental binding arcane fleet coordination and the use of water as a medium for summoning transport and coastal power projection.

Fusion of necromancy and transmutation to produce stable enduring life and replacement forms including chimeric bodies soul bound constructs and the removal of decay as a limiting factor in arcane continuity.

Geomantic regulation of planetary energy flows through the coupling of terrestrial power Ley Line resonance and naturally formed crystal reservoirs aimed at long term stabilization controlled energy storage and the prevention of irreversible magical overload on regional and structural scales.

For more detailed information about their fields of research please consult the information in **Appendix C - Faces of the Brotherhood**.

"AT NIGHT THEY DREAM OF AGES GONE,
WHEN CITIES FLEW AND DREAD WAS WON.
THEY WHISPER TALES OF SKY AND FIRE,
SOFT REQUIEMS OF LOST DESIRE."



THEIR INTEREST IN MYTHALS

Mythals represent a particular obsession within the *Arcane Brotherhood*. Unlike conventional enchantments, *Mythals* are living systems bound to place, sacrifice, and long-term continuity. They cannot be replicated through spellcasting alone.

The *Brotherhood* does not seek to recreate *Mythals* in their entirety. Instead, they study fragments, weakened *Mythals*, and residual effects. Their interest lies in isolating transferable principles: persistent warding, area-wide reinforcement, and enchantments that endure independently of a single caster.

"WHY STUDY TOYS OF STONE AND SPELL SO DEEP?
NOT JUST TO KNOW, BUT RULE WHAT THEY CAN KEEP.
FOR POWER MUST FIRST STAND, THEN OBEY,
CONTROL BEGINS WHEN IT WILL WORK AND STAY."

This research is inherently destabilizing. *Mythals* resist disassembly. Interference often produces unpredictable side effects, including spatial distortion, magical backlash, and long-term corruption of the surrounding area. The *Brotherhood* accepts these outcomes as part of the cost.

NETHERESE RELICS

Netherese artifacts form the conceptual foundation of the *Brotherhood's* worldview. *Netheril* is not regarded as a fallen empire, but as an interrupted project.

The *Brotherhood* seeks *Netherese* relics for their underlying logic rather than their surface power. *Mythallars*, spell matrices, floating enclave remnants, and arcane engines are dissected conceptually even when physical access is impossible. *Netherese* magic demonstrates that arcane systems can operate at scale, independent of divine sanction.

Many of the *Brotherhood's* most dangerous experiments arise from attempts to integrate *Netherese* principles with post-Sundering magic. These systems were never designed to coexist. Failures are common. Some are catastrophic. The *Brotherhood* continues regardless, convinced that stagnation is a greater threat than collapse.

"*Netheril* did not fall because it reached too far, it fell because it hesitated too long. If a system survives only by avoiding danger, it deserves to be replaced."

Jendrick the Blue

- Be very careful when integrating relics and artifacts into your game as they may influence the game balance.
- *Mythals* shall stay a mystery and do not need further explanations (in this book).
- Arcane engines exist but are hidden, studied and protected in the *Host Tower*.

THE BROTHERHOOD'S VIEW ON DANGERS AND CHANCES

The *Arcane Brotherhood* accepts high risk because it views caution as a form of decay. In their assessment, every stable magical structure was once dangerous.

Their hierarchical structure exists precisely to manage risk. When something goes wrong, damage is localized. Individuals may be lost. Sites may be abandoned. The archives in the *Host Tower* endure.

This mindset explains their willingness to operate in unstable regions, contested ruins, and politically volatile environments. These places offer the highest concentration of unresolved magic.

The *Arcane Brotherhood* does not perceive itself as ruthless. It perceives itself as disciplined. Moral considerations are not absent, but they are subordinated to outcome.

Assets are expendable because they are replaceable. Locations are sacrificial because they are confined. Even entire operations may be written off if the data



obtained justify the loss. The *Overwizard*'s plans may avoid unnecessary suffering, but they do not prioritize prevention of suffering if it interferes with research objectives.

„Scruples are a concern for those who believe outcomes can not be reversed. When knowledge is gained, the cost has already justified itself.“

Teyva the Gray

“THEY CALL IT ORDER, DISCIPLINE, DESIGN,
BUT LIVES ARE SPENT TO SAVE A SINGLE LINE.
NO WORD CAN DRESS THIS CHOICE AS WISE OR CLEAN:
RESULTS ABOVE THE DEAD ARE JUST OBSCENE”

The *Arcane Brotherhood* does not function with malicious intent. Its actions stem from the fact that those who challenge it on moral grounds frequently

overlook the *Brotherhood*'s perspective, which regards morality as a luxury that can only be maintained through stability. The *Brotherhood* holds that comprehending magic on a large scale requires sacrifices of comparable size.

FINAL GUIDANCE FOR THE DM: The *Arcane Brotherhood* does not seek power for its own sake. It seeks systems that outlast people. When players confront the *Brotherhood*'s actions, do not argue morality. Present consequences. Let the *Brotherhood* remain restrained, accurate, and unrepentant. They are not villains. They are worse. They are convinced they are right





IDENTITY AND LEGACY

"They did not invent their rules, they dug them out of the ground and decided they were laws. Once you understand the Host Tower Axiom, you stop asking why the Arcane Brotherhood behaves this way and start asking why anyone expected them to behave differently."

Calimra

LUSKAN, THE HOST TOWER, AND THE PRICE OF SURVIVAL

TO GRASP THE CURRENT STATE OF THE Arcane Brotherhood, it is essential to first comprehend the foundation upon which it is built. This is not a metaphorical understanding, but a literal one. The Brotherhood did not come into existence in a vacuum, nor did it assert itself over an established order. Instead, it originated from a context where authority had already collapsed, where the past was obscured by more recent acts of violence, and where magic was regarded for a long time as a tool for survival rather than a source of enlightenment

PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

This chapter makes it clear why the Arcane Brotherhood cannot simply be destroyed. Use it when players ask why no one has wiped the Brotherhood out or the Host Tower becomes politically or physically relevant. You will find answers here if internal conflict within the Brotherhood surfaces or your high-level party considers regime change, infiltration, or collapse scenarios. This chapter definitively answers one question: What happens if the Brotherhood fails?

ILLUSK AND LUSKAN - A CITY BUILT ON ESCAPE

Before Luskan became a City of Sails, captains, ships, and shifting loyalties, it was Illusk. Illusk was not founded as a port or a political center, but as a refuge. In the waning centuries of Netheril, when the empire fractured under pressure from the Phaerimm and internal collapse, some arcanists fled rather than fight. They sought distance, stable Ley Lines, and ground uncontested by rivals. The delta at the mouth of the river Mirar offered all three.

"WHEN THREATS RETURN, WHERE DO THEY RUN?
TO ILLUSK THEN, FROM LUSKAN SOON?
A CITY BUILT TO FLEE AND HIDE,
PERHAPS THEY SHOULD DEPART THIS TIDE."

Illusk was shaped by defensive intent. Its arcane infrastructure was designed to regulate magical flow, to shield against siphoning effects, and to endure isolation. When the orc hordes later razed the settlement, towers fell and names were lost, but the deeper structures remained.

Luskan rose atop those remnants without inheriting their purpose. It became a city defined by absence of rule rather than presence of order. Authority fragmented. Power accumulated wherever it could be enforced or negotiated. In such an environment, magic became the most reliable currency available. It required no consensus.

THE HOST TOWER - MORE AN ANCHOR THAN A HEADQUARTER

The Host Tower of the Arcane was not conceived as a seat of rule. It was built as an anchor. Early arcanists drawn to Luskan by rumors of lingering Netherese workings discovered that Illusk had not been erased, only buried. What remained beneath Cutlass Island was not merely power, but structure. The decision to raise the Host Tower there was deliberate. It bound surviving Ley Lines and ancient conduits to a new institution capable of exploiting them.

Refer to Chapter 8 - The Lattice Cosmology for an alternative perspective on the origins of the Host Tower and its source of power.

lore

From its inception, the tower functioned as more than a building. It centralized information, regulated access, and imposed internal order. Over time, its architecture incorporated *Netherese* principles of spatial distortion and layered defense. The tower did not merely protect those within. It filtered them.

"WOULD SERVE THEM WELL IF WALLS SOMETIMES DECIDE TO KEEP A MAGE, OR CAST HIM BACK OUTSIDE. A TOWER THAT REMEMBERS PRIDE AND SIN MIGHT TEACH THEM WHAT FITS AND WHAT STAYS IN."

Following the fall of Arklem Greeth and the destruction of the original *Host Tower*, many assumed the *Brotherhood* had lost its foundation. This assumption proved false. The tower was not rebuilt in the conventional sense. It underwent a transformation. Stone reacted to sigils that had always retained some level of activity since foundation. Ancient geometries reemerged. The revitalized *Host Tower* represents not merely a rebuilding but a modification influenced by loss, instability, and a series of adjustments.

The *Host Tower of the Arcane* is situated on *Cutlass Island*, above the buried remnants of ancient *Illusk*. Its history reflects the rise, decline, and resurgence of arcane supremacy in *Luskan*.

The initial *Host Tower* was constructed by the *Netherese* arcanist Melathlar in -354 DR to safeguard *Illusk* from the threat posed by the *Phaerimm*. In 1376 DR, the *Host Tower* was obliterated during the *Siege of Luskan*, coinciding with the downfall of Arklem Greeth and his magocracy.

In the late 15th century DR, following the Spellplague and the Second Sundering, the tower reconstituted itself through the application of potent magic.

Further details can be found in *Chapter 7 - Cutlass and the Host Tower* and *Chapter 8 - The Lattice Cosmology*.

The *Brotherhood* resides within this structure, yet it does not possess complete control over it. The tower reacts to magical violence, manages access, and discreetly upholds the balance of creation and destruction. Inside its confines, authority is maintained not solely through hierarchy, but also through the very architecture itself.

"The *Host Tower* does not endure because it was rebuilt, but because it learned. Structures that remember their own failures no longer need to be maintained."

Druette the Black

- This information is not widely known and should be used with diligence.
- The *Host Tower* limits reckless magic, access changes based on behavior.
- Consider valid justifications for why your party should be granted access to the *Host Tower*.

THE HOST TOWER AXIOM

The *Arcane Brotherhood* does not proclaim a doctrine. It operates on assumptions that are rarely written and never debated openly. These implicit truths are collectively known among senior members as the *Host Tower Axiom*.

KNOWLEDGE IS CURRENCY.

Information is not shared freely. It is traded, withheld, or revealed strategically. Secrets possess measurable value, and ignorance is a liability.

MAGIC LEGITIMIZES AUTHORITY.

Power does not require consent if it can be demonstrated. A spell that changes the weather commands more respect than a decree.

CONTROL OVER THE NORTH.

Luskan is not the destination but rather the starting point. The conditions that allow the *Brotherhood* to thrive here exist elsewhere in fragmented form. Trade routes, unstable borders, forgotten ruins. *Illusk* was just the beginning, and not a unique exception.

These principles are binding and beyond question. The tower is a tangible expression of them.

"WHO SETS ALL WORTH IN SPELL AND ART, WILL LEARN TO SCORN THE LIVING HEART. IN LUSKAN'S STREETS SUCH MINDS DON'T STAY, FOR THOSE WHO SPURN LIFE DRIFT AWAY."

ARKLEM GREETH

Arklem Greeth represents a cautionary extreme within the *Brotherhood's* history. As leading Archmage and later lich, he embodied the belief that arcane dominance could replace political restraint. Under his leadership, the *Host Tower* became openly coercive. Fear was employed as a stabilizing tool. The *Brotherhood* ruled

"WITH CASHEEN LOST, THE TOWER STANDS UNBOUND, AND DEATH NOW SEEKS A THRONE ON HOLLOW GROUND. SHE BARGAINS YEARS WITH BONE AND BORROWED BREATH, SOON UNDEAD RULE, AND CALL IT LIFE FROM DEATH"



rather than influenced. His fall was not merely a personal failure. It demonstrated the limits of overt control. The assault against his existence, the destruction of the tower and the backlash from the wider *North* forced a recalibration. Greeth is remembered within the *Brotherhood* not as a mad tyrant, but as proof that visibility invites opposition. His legacy is invoked sparingly and usually as warning rather than inspiration.

The *Brotherhood* avoids becoming a target and errors of the past will not be repeated. The *Host Tower Axiom* has withstood Arklem's rule and will persist.

REBIRTH AND THE PRESENT FRACTURE

The modern *Arcane Brotherhood* is not unified by ideology, but by shared infrastructure. Following the rebirth of the *Host Tower*, internal factions emerged shaped by differing interpretations of past failure.

Formally and officially, *Casheen* has led the *Arcane Brotherhood* as the *Archmage Arcane* since 1489 DR, though his authority has long since become theoretical rather than practical. Shortly after the assault of the Black Fleet in 1500 DR, he was last seen seeking counsel beyond the *Sword Coast*. Rumors claim he traveled east to *Thay*, hoping to secure protection, knowledge, or perhaps a pact with the *Red Wizards* that might shield *Luskan* from future undead threats.

"SOME SAY THE GRINNING DROW IN SHADOWED HAT WAS NEAR WHEN CASHEEN VANISHED—MARK THAT. YOU DO NOT KILL SUCH MEN WHEN THEY DISPLEASE, YOU HIDE THEM DEEP, WHERE TRUTHS ARE MEANT TO FREEZE."

Casheen never returned. Some believe he fell victim to *Thayan* intrigue, others whisper that he remains in honorable captivity of the *Red Wizards*. Officially, his name still stands as *Archmage Arcane*, yet the *Host Tower* has been adrift ever since. Without a central figure, its mages are divided by ambition, fear, and competing interpretations of survival.

Some favor restraint, advocating influence through necessity rather than fear. Others argue that the *Brotherhood* has overcorrected, sacrificing authority for survival. Still others focus outwards, seeking relevance through expansion and discovery rather than dominance in *Luskan* itself.

The reality, however, is a much greater secret. *Casheen* became a victim of an internal conspiracy. The two *Overwizards*, *Druette* and *Teyva*, viewed the *Archmage's* cautious leadership and inactive political stance as a betrayal of the *Host Tower Axiom* and their legitimate authority in the *North*. There is no established protocol for deposing an *Archmage of the Arcane*, but in their eyes, *Casheen* had to disappear. Since knowledge must not be lost to the *Brotherhood*, *Casheen* could not be killed. His research and expertise were too valuable, which is why he has been imprisoned in a pocket dimension within the *Host Tower* since 1500 DR. Of the four *Overwizards*, only the two conspirators are aware of this. *Casheen* is kept in a form of stasis and is guarded by magically bound undead sentinels.

Hardliners believe the *Tower* should reclaim its former dominance. They see restraint as weakness and point to the era of *Greeth* as proof that fear is effective. Their internal influence primarily lies in the defense of the *Host Tower Axiom* and coercive research.

Pragmatists prioritize survival and stability. They favor negotiation, controlled influence, and incremental growth. For them the *Brotherhood* must endure rather than dominate. They hold many administrative positions and often act as intermediaries.

"Unity is a luxury afforded by certainty, and certainty has been absent for some time. Until it returns, we will demonstrate unity among us four *Overwizards*."

Zelenn the White

Expansionists look beyond *Luskan*. They seek power in distant ruins, emerging cities, and unstable regions. Their projects are risky but potentially transformative. They argue that stagnation invites irrelevance.

Overlaying these philosophies are personal agendas. Ambition. Rivalry. Old grudges. Apprentices cultivate patrons. *Magisters* hoard favors. Alliances shift quietly within the *Tower's* halls. The *Host Tower* itself moderates these tensions by limiting access and redistributing influence, but it cannot eliminate them entirely.

"FEAR HARDLINERS WHO OPENLY WOULD REIGN, THEY SHOW THEIR CHAINS, THEIR FIRE, THEIR PAIN. BUT FEAR THE PRAGMATISTS FAR MORE THAN THESE, THEY TURN LIKE SAILS TO CHANGING BREEZE."

