Several metals, including iron, can be coated with a thin layer of gemstone dust, which greatly increases the metal’s hardness. There are a couple different methods for bonding gemstone dust with metal. One involves ionization and requires an Alchemy Craft check (DC 35). The other involves galvanization (Craft DC 30) and requires large amounts of electricity. Typically, this electrical current can be obtained from a lightning bolt or other electrical spell that inflicts at least 42 points of damage. Once the process is completed, the base item is coated with a thin, shimmering layer of gemstone dust that is permanently bonded with the metal. There are only a handful of gemstones that are harder than steel and therefore suitable for enhancing armor and weapons. Softer gemstones can also be used to coat armor, but no bonuses are gained from doing so.

The costs listed on the table are for coating suits of armor. Coating a shield with gemstone dust costs half the indicated amount. Characters wearing gemstone-plated armor suffer a −4 circumstance penalty to Hide checks unless they are in total darkness.

CREDITS
Written by: Lojag Hern
Cover Art: William McAusland
Interior Art: OGL content

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**Diamond-Plating:** Diamonds come in several hues, including blue, green, pink, and black. The most popular, of course, are the crystal clear diamonds. A diamond coat increases a metal object’s hardness by 5. Metal armor that is diamond-plated provides an additional +3 AC bonus.

**Ruby or Sapphire Plating:** Similar to diamond plating, this process involves slightly softer gemstones but achieves roughly the same result. This type of plating adds 3 points to the object’s hardness, and increases the AC bonus of metal armor by +2.

**Topaz or Emerald Plating:** Similar to diamond plating, this process involves slightly softer gemstones but achieves roughly the same result. This type of plating adds 2 points to the object’s hardness, and increases the AC bonus of metal armor by +1.

**Hell-Forged Steel**

Although not necessarily crafted on a lower plane, this material is forged with the aid of magic. Transmuted ores are worked with magically enhanced blast furnaces that reach hellish temperatures. The result is a high tension, pure grade steel that has an astounding hardness and resistance to fire based attacks. Note that this fire resistance (5 points) is not extended to the wearer, it only applies to fire damage that affects the armor itself. This steel also has a hardness of 12 and 35 Hit Points per inch of thickness. Metal armor made from this material grants the wearer a +1 circumstance bonus to AC.

**Reinforced Armor**

Armor with this quality has been constructed with thick, overlapping layers. Reinforced leather armors often appear nearly as bulky as half plate, chain armors are constructed with several overlaying coats of rings and leather. Although not as bulky as other reinforced armors, chain suits are quite heavy. Finally, plate armors are constructed with several additional layers of thick, deflective plates of metal. These suits are extremely cumbersome and often make the wearer appear much larger than he actually is. Reinforced armor is not required to be of masterwork quality, but if it is made of such quality, apply the reinforcement cost after the masterwork cost. If the armor is fashioned of special metals, such as mithral, apply, the reinforcement cost after the cost of the materials also. The entries on the table below indicate the differing values associated with reinforcing armors of different weight. A reinforced light armor, such as leather, costs 100% more, adds an additional +1 armor bonus, has a maximum Dexterity bonus of +5, has an armor check penalty of –2, has a 15% chance of arcane spell failure and weighs 1/3 more than a normal suit of leather, for example.