

RPG: Baldur's Gate 3

In the game Baldur's Gate 3, players are offered many choices for character customization. Some of these choices are made during character creation, but just as many are offered over the course of the character's growth time.

JR) Add one brand new way for a character, either a main character or any secondary character, to offer the player a new way to interact with pieces already in the game, such as a new spell or a new way to spend a resource.

Trading Lore items for Utility Scrolls

Opportunity

Informational/Lore items, like books and notes provide players with stories, guides and curiosities.

No significant natural purpose beyond that. Lacks deeper reasons for the player to care, therefore it's rapidly discarded - including main quest items.

The Worth of Lore Items

These items have a strong appeal to narrative and role-play, for contributing to increasing the feeling of a lively worldbuilding. This could sum up their main technical purpose, but it can never reach their worth because that's determined by the players. From a canonical dictionary of definitions to practical collectable sets, lore items are already repurposed by players in a great variety of ways.

But that doesn't mean they are valued by everyone and that all who value them don't actually just pile them up after reading them once or twice. That's why this is a solution that might be very meaningful for some but, most importantly, can be ignored by everyone. It's about keeping the purpose up to the players.

Goals

- Incentivize players who don't enjoy this kind of content to at least consider it;
- Stimulate players who do to keep it up and have a new type of reward to look forward to;
- Encourage players to acknowledge and spend their usually saved up and never used resources.

Values

- Repurposing items that get obsolete easily;
- Offering an interesting but not potentially game-changing resource;
- Highlight game content that might be easily overlooked or poorly managed by players;

Anti-Goals

- Meddle with many different game resources/specifications;
 - The game has a complex balance through many different areas.
 - Allow a gameplay style entirely based on this solution;
 - Overlap and/or disrupt involved game mechanics.
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New Interaction



Core

Trading Informational/Lore items for *Utility scrolls* (very useful, but not game changing). The scrolls are marked and have a failure chance (included in item description).

- There is a 40% chance the spell will fail;
 - Encourages players to use them, they are expendable.
 - When it fails, an action is spent with no extra side effects (include explicit feedback).
- **Implications of luck** only affect this feature if the “Lucky” feat is in play.
 - Players can spend one luck point to ensure the scroll's success.
 - The racial feature “Lucky” or effects such as “Luck of the Far Realms” won't affect this.
 - To avoid desarranging the scroll fail factor of being affected by combat mechanics.
- **Implications for inspiration**
 - For backgrounds Entertainer and Charlatan:
Trying to trade the signed version of Volo's Guide to Baldur's Gate to Volo himself.
 - For backgrounds Sage and Acolyte:
Trading a full book saga/franchise, not necessarily all at once.

While trading you can choose between any utility scroll with rarity based on the trading item's rarity:

Books / Notes		Trades For	All Utility Scrolls			
Rarity	Examples		Rarity	Name	Icon	Short Spell Effect Description
Common		↔	Common	Scroll of Feather Fall		You and nearby allies gain Immunity to Falling damage.
			Common	Scroll of Jump		Triple a creature's Jumping distance.
			Uncommon	Scroll of Darkvision		Grant a creature the ability to see in the dark out to a range of 12 m / 40 ft.
			Uncommon	Scroll of Detect Thoughts		Focus your mind to read the thoughts of certain creatures while talking to them.
			Uncommon	Scroll of Speak with Dead		Grant a semblance of life to a corpse, allowing it to answer questions.
Legendary	 The Red Knight's Final Strategem	↔	Rare	Scroll of Dimension Door		Teleport yourself and up to one adjacent ally to a place you can see. The ally cannot be larger than Medium.
Story/Quest Item	 Necromancy of Thay		Rare	Scroll of Fly		Bestow the ability to Fly: Fly up to target position, up to 18 m / 60 ft each turn using your Movement Speed.

**Scroll for examples*

- **Restrictions**

- You can't sell marked scrolls, they won't be accepted;
 - To avoid money loop exploits.
 - This interaction works as a transaction but **not** as a sale, used items cannot be refunded.
 - You can only trade each item once.
 - You can't trade the same "issue" of a book twice.
 - Variants (signed, destroyed etc) count as the same item, check by the main title.
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Optional Scaling

Utility Scrolls might not feel appealing enough for naturally uninterested players to care. One option is to include other kinds of scrolls, bringing up a wide choice range:

Having a differentiation between books ("public" info) and notes/mail (personal info) can incentivize the player to pay attention to the type differences.

- Trading common notes for level 1 spells instead of utility scrolls
 - There are tons of notes in the game but they are spread very differently from books, always with their almost exclusive context

Instead of having all items separated only by rarity, unique/limited items (only one existing in the game) can show bigger importance, acknowledging how special they are.

- Trading limited/unique items (books and notes) for level 3 spells;
 - This includes the Scroll of Revivify, so it always keeps relevant.
- Trading legendary items (only exist as books) for level 6 scrolls.
 - Highest scroll spell level in the game, but there are only 4 legendary lore items in the game.

While trading you can choose scrolls with rarity restricted by the trading item's rarity/level and type:

Informational / Lore Items			Trades For	Magic Scrolls			
Type	Rarity	Examples		Rarity / Level	Type	Examples	Purpose
Book	Common		↔	Common	Utility Scrolls	 Feather Fall	Light Mobility
				Uncommon	Utility Scrolls	 Darkvision	Situational Information Gather
Note	Common		↔	Level 1	General Spell Scrolls	 Grease	Multi-Purpose Attacks, Defences and Utility
Book, Note	Limited/Unique	 Orpheus, Prince of the Comet parts	↔	Level 3	General Spell Scrolls	 Animate Dead	Multi-Purpose Attacks, Defences and Utility Highlight: Revivify

Informational / Lore Items			Trades For	Magic Scrolls			
Type	Rarity	Examples		Rarity / Level	Type	Examples	Purpose
Book, Note	Story/Quest Item	 Necromancy of Thay	↔	Rare	Utility Scrolls	 Fly	High Mobility
Book	Legendary	 The Red Knight's Final Strategem	↔	Level 6	General Spell Scrolls	 Circle of Death	Multi-Purpose Attacks and Defences Highlight: Disintegrate

*Scroll for examples

Narrative Possibilities

Flavour

As determined before, Lore items have great narrative/role-play potential value, therefore narrative design and writing are very welcome around this feature. Here's an original general start to be explored:

- Adding to one's collection is a generous but not selfless act. Some people collect treasure or living beings, but a truly valuable collection is one of *stories*. Those are immortal, much like ideas. They connect with people and breed in their minds, spreading through generations. Someone is paying for that obituary!
- Distinguished places carry rare stories, hard to know of and even harder to obtain. You bring exclusivity, you get exclusivity.

NPC

Volothamp Geddarm (Volo) fits just right as the trader (or at least one of them):



- A travelling wizard and a comical, suspiciously charlatan character. Fits the failing chance nicely;
- Is naturally related to some main campaign event places, potentially becoming a “camp follower” in a few scenarios.

In the occurrence of Volo’s death, the interaction would become inaccessible, like others linked to any specific characters.

Risks

Turning Lore items into currency can change how players feel about it, even knowing it’s not mandatory.

- Rare, mystic and unique items might feel special because they can be traded by interesting scrolls, instead of being special because of its natural rare context;
 - Story/Quest items might be traded before the player investigates/cares about the quest.
 - The fail chance can feel overwhelming in a bad streak, potentially being seen as not worthy of usage instead of encouraging players. The specific number would need some iteration but a first impression can define how the community feels about it;
 - Having a low fail chance might insert this feature in a meta/core focus gameplay, increasing the first risk point.
 - Volo and any other existing NPC already has his own theme and value to the players and narrative. Much like the items it is possible the feature redefines what the character is about, which, even if it's not an anti-goal, it's far from the original point.
 - Having a structure for this could avoid the risk but would probably lose narrative appeal and have a bigger toll in the development to create something entirely new.
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Conclusion & Overview (solution $\rightleftharpoons$ goals)

Core Interaction

- Repurposes lore items
 - Easily overlooked content that tends to get piled up without use
- Make them tradable for spell scrolls
 - Actively usable resource that also has the potential to be piled up
 - Useful for specific situations, not strong enough to actually change game states or meddle with other game systems
- Have the gained spell scrolls be marked for a considerable failure chance
 - Regulates meta-gaming, and gameplay entirely based on this feature
 - Avoid disrupting game balance or involved mechanics
- Usage restrictions to avoid gold and infinite scrolls exploits
 - Avoid disrupting game balance or involved mechanics
- Does not include any new content
 - Focus/Highlights existing content
 - Does not overlap existing mechanics

Optional Scaling

- Scales based on the existing items types and rewards
 - Doesn't create new categories for rarity or type
 - Makes a bigger point out of the existing types
- More impactful rewards for higher worth and purpose for player
 - Bigger range of possible rewards
 - Allows player to choose from a wide variety, fits different profiles
 - Hard to obtain items give hard to obtain rewards, feels fair

Flavour

Can easily fit the game's fantasy with intentional narrative existing objects being tied to it.

Risks

- Repurpose can go beyond the intended, altering the original item intent
- Fail chance can be tricky to balance
 - relevance in game/being game-changing vs appeal to the regular player
- Could repurpose other game elements involved with it
 - Such as NPCs and pre-existing thematics