

Forbidden Book:

The Temptations of YHVH

It's usually safe to assume that any book that's currently in Yves' Special Collection doesn't exist anywhere else - provided, of course, that the Main Enemy didn't write it. Destiny works in strange and mysterious ways, and its Servitors do their best to add efficiency to the mix. They tend to enjoy virtually perfect records in tracking down almost all of the really *dangerous* tomes ('dangerous' in the sense of 'semantic equivalent of a neutron bomb, with a yield to match'). They are, in fact, nigh-infallible in that regard.

Please note that a good number of qualifiers were used in the above paragraph. *The Temptations of YHVH* is the reason why: the Damned book doesn't want to stay in one place.

Strictly speaking, it isn't a book at all, as it isn't a set of sequential pages of writing bound together - instead, it's a vaguely book-shaped collection of faceted, milky white quartzes (it was actually discovered in 1974 AD that the material was crystallized ineffability, to the profound shock of the Seraph of Revelations who apparently simply

guessed the answer). To 'read' it, you stare at one of the facets; a person in the right mental state can fairly easily call up information from the item. How it's presented will depend on the user; visions, text scrolling and/or verbal narration seem the most common options, although several Servitors of Animals who have encountered *The Temptations of YHVH* have reported that some amazingly sophisticated olfactory and tactile information can be accessed from it.

The 'title' of *The Temptations of YHVH* is a bit of a misnomer: it implies a narrative of past temptations, when indeed all it does is provide a future one. This item sort of grants wishes; more accurately, it explains how to achieve one's wish. This would be a problem, but not a Special Collection-worthy problem, except that the item also makes almost all things possible for the user while he, she or it is questing to fulfill that wish.

Note almost all things 'possible', not almost all things 'inevitable': the user will have to earn their success. But said success will never be outside the user's grasp: this thing can be used to, say, allow a human to break through to another plane of existence and free the prisoners found there or give a demon a fighting chance to destroy and eat a Demon Prince (yes, there are rumors that this item was instrumental in both of those events) just as easily as it can find open spaces in crowded parking lots. You can't

use it to take over somebody's mind, and it won't directly kill anybody for you, and if asked it'll somehow indicate that both sides have already made sure that it do what it could to ensure victory in the War - but that's pretty much it when it comes to limitations on leveling the playing field.

Naturally, all this requires a lot of warping of reality. There is some debate as to exactly how the item can do what it does, as it is effectively immune to just about everybody's interested gaze, resonance, or multiband sensory scans. The ethereals who know of the item avow that it is the focal point for the fabled Almighty Strand, which at least sounds better than the *We Have No Idea, Really, But It Probably Has Something To Do With God* theory shared by Heaven and Hell. Asking the item is usually an exercise in futility.

Oh, yes, *The Temptations of YHVH* has a personality, which can usually be adequately described as 'amused'.

Of course, all of this predisposes that the user has an opportunity to muck around with the item for any length of time. This is hardly a safe assumption to make, as the stereotypical first reaction that any celestial has upon seeing *anyone* holding *The Temptations of YHVH* is to make a running tackle.

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