

Bookwormburrows · Series II

*The*

# BURROW NOTEBOOK

*companion to your own notebook*



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THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

MY BOOKWORM'S NAME

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STARTED ON

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Bookwormburrows is a game played around a book. The book might be one your class or seminar is reading together, one the person leading the session chose for the game, or one your group agreed on.

You play a character called a **bookworm**. A reader like you who can step into the world of a book and become part of the story for a while. The person leading the session is the **DM**, and they play with you. The DM helps the story along, tells you what your bookworm sees and hears, and reads the paragraphs you write. Everyone playing together is the **party**.

A **session** is one time you meet to play. It might be a class period, a seminar block, a club hour, a study group evening, a tutoring sitting, or a quiet hour at home. A **campaign** is the whole story you play through together, session after session, until the book is finished.



When you play this game, you write things down. Most of what you write goes in any notebook you already love. A notebook from your shelf. A journal you keep. A small notebook for your pocket. Whatever feels right in your hand.

This little book is the helper that goes with it.

### WHAT LIVES IN HERE

- The X-card you can raise when the story feels like too much
- Your Lines and Veils, the list of what to keep out of the game
- The book your party is stepping into right now
- How outcomes work in this game
- The shapes to use in your own notebook for keeping track of people, places, and the rest
- A running list of every book you ever step into with your bookworm

### WHAT GOES IN YOUR OWN NOTEBOOK

- Everything that happens during a session
- Every Roll Page (more about those later in this book)
- The people your bookworm meets
- The places your bookworm visits
- Open questions, what you are carrying, letters home, maps, anything else

Whatever feels good to draw, sketch, write, or scribble belongs in your own notebook. This little book stays small on purpose.



*Every campaign starts inside a book. Write down what you know about it before your bookworm walks in.*

**TITLE OF THE BOOK**

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**WHO WROTE IT**

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**WHEN AND WHERE THE STORY TAKES PLACE**

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**THREE WORDS FOR THIS WORLD**

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*Draw something or someone from the cover of the book*

**WHAT I HOPE WILL HAPPEN**

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**WHAT I AM A LITTLE WORRIED ABOUT**

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### WHEN THE STORY STARTS TO FEEL LIKE TOO MUCH

Open this book to this page and hold it up so everyone can see it. You can also just say ‘X’ out loud. The moment you do, your DM stops the scene. Everyone at the table moves to something easier.

The X-card belongs to every bookworm at the table. Anyone can raise it any time, for any reason. You can keep playing your character. That part of the story just gets skipped over.



Before you start playing, write down two kinds of limits. Lines are the kind you want to keep out of the game completely. Veils are the kind that can happen in the story but stay off-screen. Your DM will skip over those parts. Fill in the boxes below before play starts. Your DM keeps them off the table.

**MY LINES** · to keep out of the game

**MY VEILS** · that happen off-screen

**The open door.** You can step out of any session whenever you want, for any reason. Everyone at the table knows you can always leave and come back.



A session is one time you all sit down to play. Your bookworm burrows into a book, meets some people, walks through some places, and decides what to do. You write all of it down. Here is the shape of a session.

### **BEFORE**

Open your own notebook to a fresh page. Write today's date at the top, and which book your party is reading.

### **DURING**

Write what is happening as it happens. Use one page for words and the other for sketches if you like. When your bookworm wants to do something hard or tricky, you write a Roll Page (see page 11).

### **AFTER**

Before you close your notebook, look back at what you wrote. Find the questions still hanging in the air. Pick one you want to come back to next time and circle it. Add any new people or places to your running lists.



In this game, your writing is what decides what happens. When your bookworm tries something, you write a paragraph about how they do it. Your DM reads what you wrote and tells you the outcome. The clearer the paragraph, the better the action turns out.

### **STRONG**

Your paragraph is clear and full of details. Your bookworm's action works the way you wanted. Your DM tells you the success.

### **MIXED**

Your paragraph is part of the way there. Some of what you tried works. The rest comes out different than you hoped. Your DM tells you both halves.

### **WEAK**

Your paragraph is short, rushed, or hard to follow. The world pushes back. Your DM tells you an outcome you were not expecting.

If the outcome was weak, try again next time with a clearer plan and a clearer paragraph. Every bookworm writes weak paragraphs sometimes. Just keep writing. Every paragraph you write makes you better at it.



Here is the shape to use for each session in your own notebook. Adjust it to fit how you like to write.

### THE SHAPE

At the top of a fresh page, write today's **DATE**. Underneath, write **WHERE WE ARE** and put down the book and the place inside it. Then write **WHAT HAPPENED** across the page. Underneath that, fill in what is happening. You can write as your bookworm ('I climbed the stairs and saw the courtyard') or as yourself ('Ola told us about her grandmother'). Either one is fine.

At the bottom of the page, leave three lines for **OPEN THREADS**. These are the questions still hanging in the air after the session. Things you wonder about. Promises your bookworm made. Mysteries the party can come back to later.

### A SHAPE TO COPY

**DATE:** *today's date*

**WHERE WE ARE:** *the book, the place inside it*

**WHAT HAPPENED:**

*a few sentences about what your bookworm saw, did, and decided*

**OPEN THREADS:**

*one or two questions still hanging in the air*



A Roll Page is what you write when your bookworm wants to do something hard or tricky. The paragraph you write is what your DM reads to decide what happens.

### THE SHAPE

In your own notebook, when it is your bookworm's turn to try something, start a fresh section. Write **WHAT I AM TRYING TO DO** on one short line. Then write **HOW I AM TRYING TO DO IT** as a small paragraph. The size grows with what you are trying.

Leave a small space at the bottom marked **OUTCOME**, with three boxes: STRONG, MIXED, WEAK. Your DM marks one after reading.

### THE SAME ACTION AT THREE SIZES

#### **BEGINNER** · two or three lines

**WHAT I AM TRYING TO DO:** *Climb the wall to see the river.*

**HOW I AM TRYING TO DO IT:**  
*I find a foothold. I pull myself up. I look out.*

#### **INTERMEDIATE** · five or six lines

**WHAT I AM TRYING TO DO:** *Climb the wall to see the river.*

**HOW I AM TRYING TO DO IT:**  
*I look for the lowest stone first. The moss is wet under my hand. I press my fingers into a crack and pull myself up slowly. At the top I crouch and look toward the water.*

#### **HARD** · eight to ten lines

**WHAT I AM TRYING TO DO:**  
*Climb the wall to see the river without being heard from below.*

**HOW I AM TRYING TO DO IT:**  
*I test the lowest stone first because the others might give. The moss is wet enough that I can rub it off without sound. I put my fingers into the crack the rain has opened and pull myself up one hand at a time, listening between each move. If I hear something shift I will freeze. At the top I crouch and look toward the river through the gap in the stones.*



Every bookworm meets people inside the book. Some help. Some get in the way. Some change everything. Keep a list in your own notebook so you can find them again.

**THE SHAPE**

For each new person, write a small card with **NAME**, **FROM** (which book or which part of the world), **WANTS** (one short line), and **MOOD** (friend, unsure, or enemy, pick one).

Leave a small box at the top for a face drawing if you want one. Two or three sentences underneath for anything else worth remembering.

**A SHAPE TO COPY**



- NAME:** *the name you wrote down*
- FROM:** *the book or the part of it*
- WANTS:** *one short line*
- MOOD:** *friend, unsure, or enemy*

*two or three sentences about anything else worth remembering. how they speak, what they smell of, what they do with their hands when they are nervous.*



Places change as your bookworm walks through them. A small entry for each one helps you find your way back later.

**THE SHAPE**

For each new place, write **NAME, IN WHICH BOOK, THREE THINGS I NOTICED** (two short lines), and **WHY WE MIGHT COME BACK** (one line). A small map drawing next to it helps you remember the shape of the place. If you find a picture or two that look like this place, paste them in.

**A SHAPE TO COPY**



**NAME:** *the name you gave this place*  
**IN WHICH BOOK:** *the book your bookworm is in*  
**THREE THINGS I NOTICED:** *one detail of sight, sound, or smell  
another, and another*  
**WHY WE MIGHT COME BACK:** *short reason*



Open threads are the questions still hanging in the air after a session. A question your bookworm has. A promise the party made. A mystery still waiting for an answer. The party can pull on any thread later.

### THE SHAPE

In your own notebook, keep a numbered list. Each entry gets a short description of the thread, the session number when it started, and a blank space for the session number when it closes.

When a thread closes, check it off and write the closing session number. Threads stay open as long as they need to. Some last the whole campaign.

### A SHAPE TO COPY

1. *a question your bookworm has not answered yet. (Started: session #.)*
2. *a promise the party made. (Started: session #.)*
3. *a mystery the party can come back to later. (Started: session #.)*



Some items ride with your bookworm. Some are shared by the party. Both lists matter, especially when the party splits up.

### THE SHAPE

Two short lists in your own notebook. **On me** for what your bookworm is carrying. **With the party** for what you are all carrying together. For each item, write the session number when you picked it up. That way you can remember where it came from later.

### A SHAPE TO COPY

**ON ME:**

*an item (session #), another item (session #), another item (session #)*

**WITH THE PARTY:**

*a shared item (session #), a shared item (session #)*



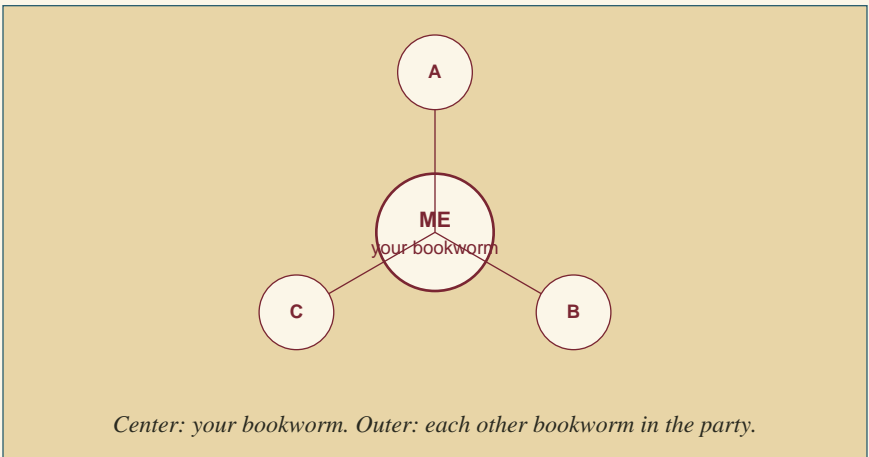
The other bookworms at the table are the most important part of the story. Keep track of what they mean to your bookworm and how that changes.

**THE SHAPE**

In your own notebook, draw a small circle in the middle of a page. Put your bookworm's name in it. Around that center, draw a smaller circle for each other bookworm in your party. Draw a line from the center to each one. Next to each line, write a few words about what that other bookworm means to your bookworm right now.

Draw this page over again every few sessions. The bonds will change.

**A SHAPE TO COPY**





A letter home is a page you write as your bookworm to someone they care about. A page from your bookworm's diary works too. Letters work in a different way from Roll Pages. Your DM may read it and let it shape what happens in a later session.

**THE SHAPE**

In your own notebook, on a fresh page, write **TO** with the name of the person you are writing to. Or the name of your diary. Then the letter itself, in your bookworm's voice. Then **FROM** with your bookworm's name.

Write between sessions, while you are at home. A letter is your bookworm's quiet time. Pick a day that mattered to your bookworm and write about that one.

**TO** \_\_\_\_\_

**FROM** \_\_\_\_\_



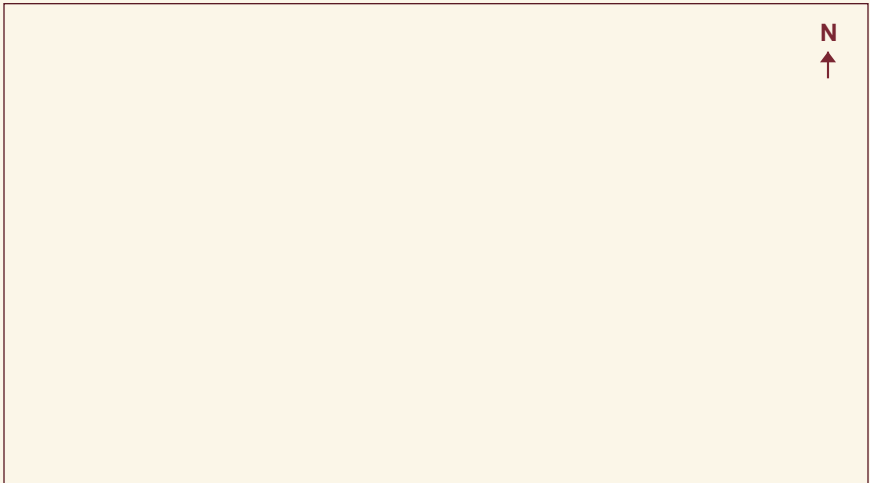
A map is your bookworm's memory of a place. It can be rough. It can be a sketch with a few labels. It can be detailed if you love drawing.

### THE SHAPE

Keep maps in your own notebook on a fresh page. If you have graph paper, that works well. At the top, write the name of the place and the session you drew it. Add a small arrow pointing north so you know which way is up.

Draw only the part your bookworm has actually seen. The map grows session by session as the party walks further.

MAP OF: \_\_\_\_\_





A short list to run through between one session and the next. All of it is optional. Pick whatever helps.

- Look at your last session log. Read it once.
- Add any new people to your people list.
- Add any new places to your places list.
- Add any new threads. Cross off threads that closed.
- Update what your bookworm is carrying.
- Write a letter home if there is something your bookworm wants to say.
- Read one chapter from the book your party is burrowing into.



Some questions are always allowed. Pull from this list whenever you feel stuck.

1. What does this place smell like?
2. What do I notice that the others might miss?
3. Has my bookworm been here before?
4. Does anyone here know my bookworm by name?
5. What time of day is it?
6. What is in arm's reach?
7. What sound is loudest right now?
8. Can I take a moment to think before I act?
9. Can I ask another bookworm for help here?
10. What is the closest way out?



Every campaign ends inside a book. Keep a running list of where your bookworm has been. One day this list will tell you who they have become.

#	BOOK	STARTED	FINISHED	ONE MOMENT TO KEEP
01				
02				
03				
04				
05				
06				
07				
08				
09				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				



#	BOOK	STARTED	FINISHED	ONE MOMENT TO KEEP
16				
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18				
19				
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28				
29				
30				



#	BOOK	STARTED	FINISHED	ONE MOMENT TO KEEP
31				
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45				



#	BOOK	STARTED	FINISHED	ONE MOMENT TO KEEP
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The Burrow Notebook is the small companion to whatever notebook you already love. It holds the rules of the game, the safety tools, and the running record of every book you have ever burrowed into. Your own notebook holds everything else.

Bookwormburrows · Series II · v2.1

Designed and written by Saul Nassau. The burrow drawing was made just for this book. The book is small on purpose.

Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 4.0. You can share this book. You can change it. Just say where you got it from. Selling it needs permission.

A small list. Pack it on a tray, in a pencil case, on a shelf, wherever it lives between sessions.

- This Burrow Notebook
- Your own notebook for the session log
- A pencil you like
- A second pencil, in case the first one breaks
- The book your party is burrowing into
- Your imagination



# THE BURROW NOTEBOOK

*Bookwormburrows · Series II*

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