

Amulet of the Dead Lord

By C. Phipps

The Amulet of the Dead Lord (a.k.a. Seal of Bakholis) appears as a stunningly beautiful silver amulet covered with an intricate silver carving of the land of Indivia. In the center of the pendant there is a large red ruby which has been shaped magically to the image of a snarling wolf's head.

Background:

The Amulet of the Dead Lord was originally the most visible and well known seal of office for the Darklord of Indivia, Bakholis. The werewolf was known for his savage murders at the slightest offense and for his fits of rage as much as for his prowess as a warrior. Thus, when he was slain by the frightened little girl who ultimately replaced him his vengeful spirit refused to depart from the land of the living and stayed on. Gabrielle Aderre was no fool however, and using an ancient Vistani curse her mother had taught her, she bolstered by the new power at her disposal to imprison Bakholis' spirit before he could muster enough power to make another challenge for his title. The Dark Powers had had enough of his defeats and so abandoned him. Later Gabrielle sold the seal of office (and thus the Lord's spirit) to a wandering trader from Gundarak. However, after Gabrielle's humiliation caused by her son, the powers that kept the artifact stagnant wavered and its cursed magic grew in terrible proportions. Now the artifact has left a trail of destruction in its journey back to Indivia...

Powers:

The Amulet, when placed around the neck, immediately grants its wearer the following abilities:

- A +18 charisma to all wolves and wolflike beings including Wolfweres, Werewolves, Dire wolves, Winter Wolves, and Worgs. Normal members of the species will not attack unless magically controlled.
- The power to let out a blood curdling howl that prompts a Fear check for all beings around the wearer three times per day.
- The power to grow claws for combat: these nails are as sharp as steel and can strike even magical forms of creatures up to a +1 bonus. Unfortunately there is a 1% chance for every point of damage that is inflicted that the victim will become an infected werewolf.

Curse:

First of all, the amulet is haunted by the spirit of Lord Bakholis and thus is extremely dangerous in its use. Once placed on it can only be removed if placed upon another willing person or if the wearer chews on Wolfsbane under a full moon while a remove curse spell is cast.

Those who sleep with the amulet on them will have vivid dreams of Lord Bakholis' evil deeds through HIS EYES and will live them as if they committed them, sometimes calling for a horror or madness check (30% of probability).

Finally, there is a 1% chance for every day that the amulet is worn that the wearer will become an infected werewolf, his alignment gradually shifting towards Lord Bakholis' original one (Chaotic evil). If in Indivia however, there is a 10% chance each day to become A TRUE werewolf with all the associated powers and weaknesses. After the transformation, the wearer

must make a saving throw vs Spells and if he fails, Bakholis' spirit and willpower take over the character.

NOTE: The Lord can be spoken with using a Speak with Dead spell.

Suggested Means of Destruction:

The amulet can be destroyed by plunging the silver knife that ended its occupant's life into it: the amulet will then bleed and dissolve.

Also the Spirit of Lord Bakholis can be driven from the amulet with a simple exorcise spell. However, as 4th magnitude Ghost he will immediately try to retake his position as darklord of Invidia destroying anyone who stands in his way.

Charles Phipps

Azalin's Crown

By E.C. Daniel

History

The Darklord of Darkon created a very special crown of iron when he realized precisely where he was and what he had happened to him. The Crown was an attempt to ease Azalin's misery over his imprisonment through a project of sufficient complexity to occupy his formidable mind. The Crown was cold-forged from iron taken from deep underneath Darkon and not exposed to sunlight until completed. The central spire is decorated with a single yellow gemstone that had been carefully harvested and polished in much the same manner as Azalin's Orb. The whole, when finished to Azalin's exact specifications, was enchanted by Azalin himself to be a representation of Darkon and the curse that kept him here; sort of a grim poetry set in metal and stone. The Crown has a minimal elegance in its engraving and shape.

As to what has happened to this item since the catastrophic events in Il Aluk, who can say? Perhaps, in the rubble of the Grim Fastness, this cursed item lays in wait....

Powers

Its powers are simple but useful, acting as a helm of comprehending languages and reading magic, meant to give Azalin these capabilities without the expenditures of what little magic he had. The Crown, however, also has several special curses woven into its material. Whenever a living being or an intelligent undead one other than Azalin dons the Crown, the curses take effect.

First, the wearer cannot leave Darkon with the Crown. He, she, or it is effectively trapped within the borders of Darkon. Second, the wearer becomes extremely reluctant to part with the Crown, eventually wearing it at all times. Next, the wearer gains an almost insatiable desire for knowledge. Unfortunately, this is offset by a drain of knowledge (measured in Intelligence points) caused by the Crown. The Intelligence is drained first by 1 point every two weeks until the original score is halved (round up fractions). Then 1 point is drained every week until the new score is halved (round up fractions). The same process continues until Intelligence is reduced to one point. By that time, the final point disappears in five minutes with a flash in the eyes of the victim, leaving him, her or it an empty shell. During this process, the victim is subject to unbearable frustration, trying to learn and relearn information while his ability to learn is reduced more and more quickly. When the victim is left a mindless body with no ability to do anything, an alarm is signaled to Azalin (wherever he is) to come and take the Crown.

It is a symbol of all Darkon, and probably would be sought after by treasure hunters all over the Land of Mists. Little do they know the enchantments remain totally in force, perhaps even stronger.

Eric C. Daniel

Black Book

By Stormonu
History

Physically, The Black Book is rather unremarkable. It is a little over two hands spans tall, a hand-and-a-half wide and as thick as a man's fist. The outer binding is worn with age and is protected by midnight blue felt that at a short distance seems black, the edges of the dark wood backing peering where the felt has worn away. The pages are brittle with age, and the script upon them is set in the blackest of cursive, seeming to have been drawn onto the page by an artist instead of scrawled by a mortal's hand. The book appears to be the memoirs of an unidentified mage, who fills the pages with the harsh realities he has seen throughout his life, and further filled with the observations of man's darker nature. Nearly 3/4ths of the book is filled with the script, and then abruptly turns to the penmanship of the Mirror Man. The penmanship is very much like the previous writing, but observant characters (those who succeed a INT check at -4) will be able to spot the change in narration and penmanship. Of course, set on the back binding of the book upon the inner side is a shattered mirror.

The book radiates strong *Illusion/Phantasm* magic and weaker emanations of *Enchantment/Charm* as well as *Alteration* magic (there is a 25% chance the *Enchantment/Charm* and *Alteration* is cloaked by the strength of the *Illusion*). In truth, the book is actually a treatise on fiendology, similar to Van Richten's Guide to Fiends. However, the book has been enchanted so that its pages have been bent by a form of Illusionary Script/Mistaken Missive spell (named Hidden Truth by the wizard who invented it). Those who view the book must immediately save vs. spells or be struck by a Suggestion to hide the book. Further, those who are not of Chaotic Good alignment cannot read the true contents of the book without first casting Dispel Magic, followed by Comprehend Languages, or use True Seeing.

The mirror page set in the back binding was at one time a Mirror of Life Trapping. The previous owner used it to trap fiends or other evil beings in the mirror, but long ago it shattered, releasing its contents - except for one cell, which is still intact. That cell contains the life force of a quasit, who has learned to project his spell-like abilities beyond the mirror.

While he has been in the Mirror Man's possession, he has been trying to coax the [Mirror Man](#) by means of subliminal Suggestion to slowly bend towards evil, goading the mage's disgust with the darker side of man. The quasit has gone somewhat mad during its long imprisonment, and believes itself to BE the life force of the book, and therefore will not desire to be freed of its prison.

Finally, the writing of The Mirror Man in the latter half of the book has been inspired by the goadings of the mad quasit, and these pages have taken the power of a Book of Vile Deeds. Though the Mirror Man cannot benefit from these pages, those daring to read these pages suffer the same effects as if they had laid eyes on such a vile book.

The mirror has etchings/carvings on it that might be unique identifiers: a bard/sage or other researcher might have some clue that he'd heard of a similar mirror described in tales before, leading to eventual clues that the mirror was involved with trapping souls when it was created.

One might then trace the mirror's history until it found its way into the hands of the man who actually wrote the book. But this would be difficult unless magical artifacts are historically traced like modern day objects d'art. [See the adventure *Dark Reflexes*]

Stormonu

Bone Trumpet

By G.W. Harper

Note: A bone trumpet is actually a flute-like instrument made of bone, rather like a modern transverse flute.

Appearance

This wind instrument is simple, its osseous material golden-white as ivory by age and satin-smooth from the touch of many hands.

Though an unskilled eye might mistake it for ivory, those with a knowledge of anatomy will discern with careful study that the femur of a humanoid creature was used to form its body. The mouthpiece and holes are simple holes bored into the bone. Etched into the underside of the flute in the tongue of Sri Raji is the phrase: "Sweet is a grief well ended", with an odd pattered of incised dots, in rows from left to right above each letter.

Manufacture

Crafted by a pious hermit long ago in the deepest jungles as an instrument of devotion and stolen for purest spite by a band of maurauding pallid goblin that infest those jungles when their theft of the aged hermit's life wasnt enough to sate their cruelty. They intended to use it as a blowgun (and it can be so used by simply placing a light plant thorn, needle or cactus spine into the flute before playing. consider it to do 1d2 hp damage plus poison, if any and to have a maximum range of 60 feet; firing the dart will always be audible due to the sounding of notes at the same time but has a 60% chance to go unnoticed). However, the foolish beasts played it, using the pattern depicted on the bottom, placing their fingers as the line of dots indicated... Their rigid corpses were found by a band of adventurers, who remarked on the look of utter horror on the frozen faces, even with the depredations of Sri Raji's many predators mercifully blurring the details. The party bard, a flautist himself, had a weakness for rare instruments and prized free the trumpet, to add to his collection... and so its travels continued.

Charges

The Bone Trumpet neither has nor needs charges so long as the breath of a player gives it voice and the touch of hands shape its threnodies.

Powers

The Trumpet is a simple flute, with a marvellously lovely, evocative sound, warm and rich in tone. It is only when the melody denoted by its carved pattern is played, in whole or in part, that it is anything more.

The tune depicted is in an odd, contemplative minor key, intricate, though strangely repetitive, playing it tends to induce a light trance in listeners. The full melody can be completely played out in 1d3 turns.

The trumpet was crafted as a comfort to the bereaved, though it does bear a curse to punish the wicked and impious. The full melody permits the evocation of the combined spells Speak with

Dead, Thought Capture, Memory Read, Emotion Read and Summon Spirit, with the departed manifesting as a soft, disembodied voice and its words, thoughts and memories accessible to all. In addition, this melody permits similar speech with an undead being or beings (note that the undead in question can choose to falsify its thoughts or emotions as normal, however).

Spells which may be cast by partial playing of this melody are: Invisibility to Undead, Feign Death, Animate Dead, Negative Plane Protection, Reincarnate, Wail of the Banshee, Charm Undead, Hold Undead, Contagion, Mask of Death, Bloodstone's Frightful Joining, Lifeproof, Hold Undead, Magic Jar, Summon Shadow, Bloodstone's Spectral Steed, Shadowform, Death Spell, Control Undead. These spells are evoked by varying combinations of notes, usually discovered by accident. As the use of these powers are perversions of the Trumpet's nature, all Powers Checks involved in the casting of these spells should be applied, doubled for accidental or noble uses, tripled for selfish or evil intent on the user's part. Particularly egregious violations are likely to draw the curses listed below as well.

Curse

Playing the trumpet does no harm, unless the reasons are selfish in nature. For those who think only of disturbing the blessed departed for their own selfish gain, the Trumpet inflicts the following penalties.

First, those who play the trumpet with selfish intent suffer the ire of the affronted departed. This takes the forms of an *Enervation* spell and a minor curse, typically making the defiler the focus of a minor sinkhole of evil as well as plaguing the cursed one with the whispers of those he wronged, tormenting him day and night (treat as a *Neverending Nightmares* spell at night, and a source of distraction by day with ghostly whispers hissing in his ears and phantom caresses bitter on his flesh, leaving icy pallid splotches). After each week make a fear, horror and madness check at a cumulative -1. Failure of each deprives the user of a minimum of one point each of Wisdom and Charisma to a maximum loss which cannot go lower than 3, at which point the blasphemous one will need to make a save vs death magic at -3 or die of the shock. Success leaves him or her as a near-mindless Lost One.

In addition, playing parts of the melody (to evoke the additional powers) without the instruction of a Sri Rajan anchorite runs the risk of perverting the powers the Trumpet draws on, giving a cumulative 5% chance per uninstructed use of summoning such creatures as Bastelli, Grave, Mist or Pyre ravenloft elementals, odem, will-o-wisps, undead of all sorts, corporeal and incorporeal, animators, Boowray, fenhounds, hearth fiends, radiant spirits, remenants, rushlights, psionic spirits, cannibal zombies, zombie fog, ghoul and zombie lords, grim reapers and wandering mist horrors. In addition, as troubling the departed is usually considered an ill thing, the use of this item carries a required 5% powers check. Note that good heroes using it to obtain vital information about a monster which murdered a person from that person via its use would not draw the wrath of the departed, as that is an unselfish use, nor would a loved one who used it to seek comfort or to say goodbye. The user might summon monsters by misplaying, however. Note that a *Quest* or *Atonement* from a Sri-Rajan holy man can lift the curses.

G. William Harper

Cello Evensong

By R. Sweeney

Deep dark wood, tinged red. Smoothly and perfectly varnished, the instrument was crafted with care by the hands of a true master who loved his art above all else. The stings themselves were taken from the sineus of a living victim of the vampyre. The coloration of the instrument is deep, dark, and rich.

The sounds produced by this instrument float soothingly upon the air.. richly enchantingly.

Curse

The strings of the instrument are sharp. Anyone playing extensively upon the instrument will find the strings eventually cause sores to form on their fingertips.. which eventually bleed. The cello requires a wis check in order to play successfully, failure to do so means the pain in the fingertips distracts the user from their music. After 5 minutes, the cello player must save vs spells every round or their fingertips will bleed.. draining one hp from them. The cello itself consumes this blood.. and this feeding enhances its powers. (No great ammount of blood is seen by onlookers.)

Once it has begun to feed, the wielder begins to fall under the thrall of his own music.. it becomes harder and harder to cease playing.. a wis check must be rolled with a penalty of -1 for each pt of blood the cello has consumed during this bout of playing. (Allways a 5% chance of success). If the player drops to 0hps.. he continues to play as he slowly bleeds to death.. each round he/she must make a con check.

Failure indicates they collapse to the ground. Success indicates they are sturdy enough to continue playing. At -10 hps, they are permanently dead, their spirit consumed by the cello, they cannot be revived.

Even someone completely lacking in musical skill can pick up and begin toying with the strings... the cello enhances any latent musical talent in the user. Anyone playing the instrument (but not knowing about the curse) must make a wisdom check or begin attempting to play the violin in earnest. They continue to attempt to play for a minimum of 1-10 rounds. If the cello player winds up toying with the instrument for more than 5 minutes, they will have to make the save vs spells or have their fingertips bleed. At this point, they must make the wis check or fall under the thrall of their own attempts at making music... (as above). If this novice plays until they are at -hps but falls unconscious they gain both a boon, and a compulsion.

Boon: they get mundane skill with the violin and can boost morale as a 1st level bard can with their music.

Compulsion: They must make a wisdom check in the future or play any violin they lay their hands on... for a minimum of 1d6 rounds.

Benefits

However, this cello is not without its benefits. For at all times the wielder (if a bard) acts as if 4 bardic levels higher for purposes of 'alter reaction' rolls and inspirational music. Non-bards playing the cello gain the 'alter reactions' ability of a 2nd level bard.

After it has begun 'feeding' the wielder of the musical instrument gains additional abilities.. their musical skill equals that of a 10th level bard OR twice their current level. (The greater). The user also gains the ability to cast enchantment/charms to a limited extent (6 spells of first through third level -only 'spells' the user 'knows' how to cast, however). The cello player, however, can play the cello regularly and effectively 'research' songs like a mage would. (The monetary expenditures go into the purchasing or creating of sheet music.) Only spells of less than 3rd level can be researched in this way.

Origins

The cello, created from macabre materials, was enchanted via a necromantic ritual that involved human sacrifice and the bonding of spirits to the baneful instrument. The instrument is ancient, easily 300 years old, the toy of a long forgotten bardic vampire.

New Spell

Evensong (only works in RL)

(Alteration/Enchantment/Necromancy)

Level: 3rd

CT: 3 turns

Duration: Playing

Range: 1"/level

Components: V, S, M (violin)

To cast this spell, the magi must already be highly skilled in the use of the violin (or derivatives). (NWP level of 15+ or a Bard). All others find no use for this spell whatsoever. (Note: Someone using a violin enchanted by this spell does have the required musical skill.)

One of the material components is a the violin, which must be of the finest craftsmanship, strung with human sinews, and the wood treated with the blood of a vampire. (Min 2,000 gpv instrument)

The spell requires the caster to pre-arrange for a victim to be dying slowly by some independant means. slow acting poison, being impaled upon a spike while gravity slowly drives the point through the body, drowning in quicksand. The victim must see and hear the musician playing while he or she dies slowly.

This spell only gives a chance of success augmentes as follows:

Base: 1%/level +

Violin worth more than 5000 gpv +5%

Vampire blood used was from old vampire +1%/century (max 5%)

Victim casts curse upon player +5%

Deadly curse +25%

Victim later becomes 'living wall' + 10%

Victim later rises as a ghost/renevant +10%

Per level of victim +1%

Player fails power check during the process +50%

Violin has been enchanted by this spell before: +10%

If successful, the violin becomes pseudo magical (as per cello above) for a day.. at the end of the day, the item must roll another check at 10% less than the one that created it. Success means the cello continues to be enchanted for the next day. Failure means the cello becomes non-magical. (And must be re-enchanted).

If the Evensong-enhanced violin is used to cast another Evensong Spell, the %success of the violin remaining enchanted after dusk goes up by +10% (counter acting the 10% degradation per day). A second such spell can be cast during the same day to add another 5%. A third such spell has no effect.

Note: If the combined % chance is above 100% and the die roll is a 01, then the instrument is permanently enchanted so long as it 'feeds' once a week.

Cello Evensong's Enchantment:

500 year old 10th level Bard vampire (+10%) using his own blood (+5%) on a previously enchanted violin (+10%) valued at more than 5000 gpv (+5%) traps his brother, a 10th level warrior, (+10%) behind a wall where the brother slowly suffocates to death..cursing the vampire with a 'deadly curse (+25%) and later becoming a living wall (+10%). As an act of ultimate darkness, this causes the vampire to fail a powercheck (+50%) total: 125%

He later continued sacrificing a victim a day until the cello became permanently magical.

Robert Sweeney

Clock of Midnight

By C. Phipps

Appearance:

The Clock of Midnight is as varied in appearance as the countless times it has appeared. Indeed some sages speculate that there are indeed hundreds of clocks of midnight and they are all encircling the world for their dark purposes, any sage who understands the purpose of the dark thing argues that it is simply a thing that changes its appearance. It should be noted though that no sage who has studied the clock extensively keeps a timepiece and quite a few avoid them as a normal man would avoid a man with the Scarlet death.

The most common appearance of the Clock of Midnight is that of a huge grandfather clock with gold numbers and cold iron hands. It is covered in carvings of demons, gargoyles, and monsters of types usually familiar to the owner but above the twelve is the image of a beautiful angel looking down. It should be noted the clock has also appeared as a pocket, cuckoo, and hourglass with similar features (engraving on the inside, similar hands, gold sand-iron casted). In all forms there somewhere in the inside of the Clock is a number thirteen after the twelve-the key to the clock's power. The clock due to its purpose registers as completely unmagical.

History:

Sir William Schaefer was the son of a very minor noble in Mordent and a clockmaker's daughter in the early part of that domain's history (due to the wealth of Clock of Midnight it's believed that he was born in the time the domain was still a prime material one).

Sir William lost his closest friend in war, missing rescuing him by a few seconds before the man was cut down by bullets.

William's fiancée, a woman of the lower classes whom he was dearly in love with, died of suicide due to a relative's note that he was dead. He was three days too late to stop it. Finally Williams ancestral farmlands were stolen by the egotistical Willfred Godefroy in a crooked land deal in which the deadline was past.

Sir William became obsessed with the concept of time: the idea that the reason humanity was in such a terrible shape was that each human did not have enough time to study, think things out, or do things properly. William became slightly insane counting the seconds, filling his house with hundreds of perfectly exact clocks, sundials, and hourglasses. Servants needed perfect punctuality or were relieved of their duties.

Eventually a large well dressed merchant heard of Sir William and brought him a large stack of books which talked about the fundamental principles of the occult but more precisely how they related to the principles of time. William downed the books in exactly one year and one day, spending ten hours each day reading and practicing them. Then Sir William vanished without a trace. His house was put up for sale but oddly enough no one bought it. Even Willfred Godefroy did not touch it, though it must be noted that the entity had long since died of suicide and his home and land had been bought by a brilliant alchemist-scientist to serve as his family's future home and laboratory.

Ten years on the day after, exactly thirty from when the alchemist died, Sir William returned to his abandoned estate in the middle of the night, a look of blanched horror on his face and emacipated and thin. He looked at least to be in his eighties though he had only been thirty five when he had left.

When one particularly brave neighbor confronted that man and asked who and where he was he said "I am Sir William Schaefer and I have seen the horror that is this terrible places's creation, I HAVE SEEN WHAT WILL COME TO PASS! IT MUST ALL BE STOPPED! IT MUST NEVER HAVE HAPPENED! ONLY THEN CAN THERE BE ANY HOPE FOR MANKIND!". The neighbor with good reason fled as William spent twenty years alone (making him well over a hundred in appearance) working all day and all night in his home, using unscrupulous rogues to fetch him supplies of all kinds and using some inexhaustable money supply to pay for all the odd things that were brought.

Exactly twenty years after his arrival William Schaefer died. The Mordentians found a single grandfather clock among his possessions (many more clocks and alchemist's tools along with much mystical "bric a brac") and the tales of the Clocks of Midnight began soon after.

Minor Powers:

The Clocks of Midnight possess the same powers no matter their form, though it must be admitted their mobility is extremely affected by their appearance.

- The possessor of the Clock of Midnight can cause a Timestop once per day. This effect usually occurs instinctively and the clock uses a great deal of judgement in determining when it is used (see below). The timestop is shown by the extra hour (the number thirteen in the clock).
- The Clock of Midnight keeps perfect time down to the second and the bearer can never lose track of time himself. Useful when hunting for daylight.
- The possessor of the Clock of Midnight can cast Slow or Haste at least three times per week, often the clock itself determines when this will be used but it reasonably accurate.

Major Powers:

The Clock of Midnight possesses this awesome power which CAN NOT be understated. It is usually only used when the Clock so wills it but on occasion villains have harnessed this power somehow with devastating results.

- A owner of the clock of midnight may once per week "rewind" or "fast forward" time by turning the time setting on the clock backwards or forwards. The affects are as amazing as one would imagine, with the sun and moon rising and setting in seconds, people moving like ants in impossible speeds, and a beautiful object turning to dust before one's eyes. There is no limit to the amount travelled except finger cramp. The owner is effectively outside time while this occurs.

Curse:

The Clock of Midnight possesses suitable curses which accompany so powerful a relic.

- The clock is intelligent and may be "possessed" by Sir William's ghost. It is regimentally lawful neutral with good intentions. The clock has only one desire: to rectify ALL

wrongs it perceives, be they someone's death, a man who died unredeemed, or someone executed it THINKS might have been innocent.

- If the clock of Midnight is used too often by someone it feels is not worthy (the Dark Powers have gifted strong willed evil the power to wave over the clock's intelligence). The Clock may catch them in a "time loop" which could be anything from the endless repeating of a single day until ALL WRONGS done in that day are corrected (GroundHog day was an example of the clock-not LETTING THE OWNER DIE) or making the owner LITERALLY relive all wrongs that he did or missed chances until his life is "perfect" causing new wrongs ect. The Clock may be passed on if the clock isn't too "attached" or with a Remove Curse. More than one owner has "perfected" his life only to pass the clock along and go to an insane asylum or commit suicide gibbering while his neighbors wonder why a man with a huge fortune, a loving wife and three children, ect would do that.
- People who have possessed the clock of midnight before are effectively "out of time's natural flow" forever and are thus immune to the clock of midnight being used against them. This could be very bad as many villains deprived of their relic can easilly see the sun passing, people rushing about ect around the clock (it should be noted its restricted to a domain usually due to the demiplanes unique temporal flow.) and WANT THEIR ITEM BACK.

Possible Means of Destruction:

- The Clock of Midnight must be used by a darklord to rectify his evil deeds and prevent his induction into the Demiplane of Dread.
- The Clock of Midnight must be brought together with all other versions of it (with thousands due to its time stream crossing lifestyle) in one time period and a paradox caused-with possible devastating results and even worse the possible release of Sir William's time hopping spectre.
- The Clock can be destroyed by artifical magical aging. Though the time it must be aged could be anywhere from 20 (the pieces time to be created) to 110 (Sir William's lifespan) to the entire life span of humanity's existence (in which one would best find another method).

Charles Phipps

Crown of Solanica

By C. Phipps

Appearance:

The crown appears as a large gold and jeweled diadem with cross like upturnings all round, each cross is inscribed with what appears to be a faintly sparkling gem, and are extremely varied (diamonds, emeralds, and rubies ect) the largest is a extremely large in the front of the crown which seems to change color and type every night.

Background:

When the Paladine King of Solanica began feeling the poison Prince Cyrus had inserted into his banquet's food he stared in mute horror at the Prince for he had condemned him and his entire clan to one of the most painful deaths imaginable. While his strength was faltering, the aged Knight removed his crown and shouted to his deity, calling down a powerful curse upon the item with these words:

"Cyrus, your foul deeds and soul have bought you this crown, but may all who will wear it feel and know thy wicked deeds, understand thy true nature, and feel the source of your evil power for all time! May it also forevermore CAUSE YOU NOTHING BUT PAIN!"

Cyrus had heard enough from the man who had usurped his father, so he cast a Phantasmal Killer down upon him, letting him die with his worst fears in his eyes.

When he took the crown from the king's fingers and placed it upon his head however, he was immediately overwhelmed by the horrifying images of fiendish pacts, bloodthirsty assassinations and decadence that assaulted him. Burning on his head, he threw it to the ground and fell on his knees in desperation. The crown was sacred to the kingdom and he had to be crowned with it to become the rightful King of Solanica. So he decided to discover a way to remove the curse before the official crowning and brought the item with him when he travelled to the royal palace. But during his trip, he encountered a strange fog and he was drawn into the demiplane and awarded Lordship of the Island of Solanica.

The Dark Powers however saw the potential of the Crown and snatched it from Cyrus as he was brought over, thus forever denying him the position of king he so desires and condemning him to being a mere Prince. Then they proceeded to somewhat alter the curse and strengthen the divine punishment.

The Crown was then laid in a secluded crypt in Barovia and was eventually discovered by a group of travelling mercenaries who had recently been summoned into the Demiplane. One of them placed the crown on his head and discovered that his intelligence was remarkably increased by its repeated use. He also discovered that it gave him wizardly abilities, not to mention his tastes improved. The party, which had always seen their friend as a slobbish oaf, was pleased by this sudden change and when the Crown's power saved them from perishing at the hands of Strahd's zombies, they acknowledged its power and usefulness. But as weeks went by, they started to be horrified by the increasingly obsessive drive for power and desire for magic that had overcome their friend. Eventually the party attempted to destroy the crown, seeing how the

very features of their friend had begun to change. This was a mistake and the man whose own memories had become vague and dreamlike destroyed them easily and without remorse. However, after spending various years in the domains of the core, the new "Prince" was eventually drawn into Solanica as many others have been over the centuries, there to face its ultimate fate...

Powers:

The Crown for Solanica has several minor abilities listed here:

- The Crown grants an immunity to all illusions from 1st through 3rd level for as long as it is worn
- Three times per day the wearer of the crown can cast Improved Phantasmal Force as a illusionist of 8th level, regardless of class.

The Crown has also two major abilities which can be invoked once per day, though at a terrible cost.

- The Crown can cast Improved Phantasmal Killer (A spell common to Cyrus' illusion rich homeworld): this functions as a normal phantasmal killer except the creature has 8 Hit Dice instead of four and can physically attack creatures not usually affected (ie undead).
- Cyrus' wisdom: The name given to this power comes from the fighter who placed the crown on his head believing it functioned as a reflection of the knowledge of the Prince. Anyone who uses this power can permanently raise either his wisdom or intelligence score by one, up to godlike. Though this is somewhat regulated by the crown's curse.

Curse:

The Crown has a very specific curse, everytime one of the major powers is used treat the character as if he had just failed a Powers Check. The Path of Corruption here is very specific however: all victims are transformed into copies of Prince Cyrus. At the first (1-3) levels of corruption the character becomes more elegant in tastes, he begins to become obsessive about his work, and develops a fascination with illusion magic. At mid level of corruption (4-8) the character becomes fanatical in his work and demands similar strict conditions to his companions. Long term planning and subterfuge become his preferred methods, and the character will drop current class and take up illusion as his trade. In the Final Stages (9-12) the character will begin to forget his entire life, his memories slowly being replaced by the Darklord of Solanica's memories. The character's appearance also changes to become an exact replica of Cyrus, while the character's ability scores are altered to match Cyrus' original ones, dropping or raising, and all gifts of the crown are removed if they are higher than 13. Finally the new Prince is drawn into Solanica.

Once the victim is drawn into Solanica he will join the rebellion against Prince Cyrus and lead it against the Lord. If he defeats him however, the Crown will vanish and he will destroy his own rebellious forces, taking up the role of Prince of Solanica as Cyrus and maintaining things as they always were.

The Crown can be removed at will but will always appear on the forehead of its wearer at night and whenever the character wishes to use one of its abilities. It can only be definitely removed by a Paladine of at least 15th level (an extreme rarity in Ravenloft) or after a Remove Curse cast by a priest of at least tenth level and of lawful good alignment. Once removed (possible at any of

the stages from 1-12) the character will slowly recover should he not attract the attention of the Dark Powers. A Powers check will simply further a recovering character on this list. The Crown also has a minor curse for its normal abilities: characters who don't use its major abilities will dream nightly of the planet of Solanica and the story of Cyrus, coming to either respect or loath the figure, and all will believe he had far more powers and wisdom than he actually does.

Suggested Means of destruction:

- Prince Cyrus and the current wearer of the crown must be forever destroyed and the Prince crowned King of Solanica upon death.
- The Crown must be taken to Prime Material Solanica and placed in the hands of the Paladine King's only surviving distant (and illegitimate) heirs. This will not destroy the crown but lift its curse.

Charles Phipps

Cursed Items from Friday the 13th (The Series)

"Lewis Vendredi made a deal with the Devil to sell cursed antiques, but he broke the pact and it cost him his soul. Now his niece Mikki and her cousin Ryan have inherited the store--and with it, the curse. Now they must get everything back... and the real terror begins."

This TV show of the early nineties focuses on cursed items that the main characters have to recover before they can bring more evil into the world. The cursed antiques cannot be damaged or destroyed, so the people who have inherited the store must recover the items and lock them away. Most of the episodes deal with the recovery of one of the items.

The interesting part is the nature of the curses and the reason behind them. In Christian theology, the Devil seeks to corrupt people by causing them to sin. Therefore, the purpose of the curse is to encourage the owner to sin; more specifically, to commit murder. The owner of the item benefits from the curse, but must kill another person to receive the benefit. This benefit may be the ability to kill - easily and undetectably. More often the benefit is something else - power, money, love, fame, health, beauty, and so on.

The owner is (usually) not forced to use the item, and can get rid of it at any time. The owner knows that using the item will kill someone. Thus, the (Christian) criteria of knowingly and of free will committing a mortal sin apply, and if the owner uses the item he is literally damned. Adapting this form of curse to a RPG campaign may pose some problems, as it requires the equivalent of free-will sin and the Devil as a tempter. That is, people must be judged in some way by the acts that they freely and knowingly commit, and there must be a powerful, evil entity which encourages people to perform evil acts. This might not fit in well with some game worlds, but it is an interesting reason for the existence of some cursed items.

A campaign based on the series premise -- recovery of a group of such cursed items -- might be interesting. Incorporating such items into a campaign requires that the players be good ROLE-players, though; ones who would say, "Sure, by using this item my character can get rich; but would he do so at the cost of eternal damnation?"

The first season objects:

Doll -- The doll talks to its owner, encouraging her to commit evil acts. If the owner consents, the doll can help perform the acts through the use of telekinesis-like powers.

Quill pen -- Anything evil written with the pen ("John will die") happens.

Cupid statuette -- The statuette will cause anyone to fall in lust (not love) with the owner. The owner must kill the victim after they have sex.

Teacup -- When the victim drinks from the cup, the cup kills him and makes the owner younger. The additional youth only lasts for a day or so.

Magician's cabinet -- The victim is locked in the cabinet, and the owner then performs amazing "illusions", such as having swords plunged into his body. The wounds the owner would have suffered are instead inflicted on the victim.

Scalpel -- When used in an operation, the scalpel will cure hopeless cases. The scalpel will also cut through anything (metal, stone, etc.). The owner must "recharge" the scalpel by killing people with it.

Boxing gloves -- The wearer of the gloves is invincible in the boxing ring. During the match, the owner's shadow takes on a separate physical existence and kills a person chosen by the owner (and yes, the episode title was "Shadowboxer").

Garden mulcher -- Any person fed into the hopper of the mulcher comes out as currency. The denomination of the currency depends on the wealth of the victim; the richer the victim, the larger the denomination.

Comic book -- The comic book's owner can become "Ferrus the Invincible", an armor-plated superpowered humanoid. Ferrus is immune to (almost) all forms of attack, can smash down steel doors, and can kill in one blow.

Scarecrow -- The scarecrow seeks out and kills (by decapitation with a scythe) any person whose photograph is pinned to it; it can teleport while pursuing the victim. By causing three such killings each year, the owner is guaranteed an abundant harvest.

Glove -- The glove miraculously heals any disease or injury when the owner touches it to the ill person. The disease is transferred into the glove and "magnified"; it must soon be transferred (again by touch) to another, who dies. If the disease is not transferred within a certain time, it kills the owner.

Cape -- The cape makes its owner immortal, irresistible to women, and a vampire. If the owner removes the cape, he instantly becomes old and withered; replacing the cape restores him.

Lantern -- When shone on a shipwreck, the lantern uncovers buried treasure (it might even _create_ the treasure; this was not clear). After each such use the lantern must be shone on the diver who brought up the treasure, who burns to death.

Compact -- If a beam reflected by the compact's mirror strikes any man in the eyes, he falls in love with the owner. The owner must later kill him.

Tattoo needles -- The owner tattoos the victim using the needles (which also give tattooing skill). Later, the owner has good luck while gambling, and the tattoo comes to life and kills the victim.

Trephinator -- This device was built in the nineteenth century by a quack who thought intelligence could be transferred via cerebro-spinal fluid; the curse makes it work. The person who is drained dies of severe brain damage, while the owner gains their intelligence and memories and some personality traits.

Electric chair -- The owner can receive and hold a powerful electric charge by electrocuting someone with the chair, then sitting in it. The charge can be released by conduction as the owner desires (possibly to kill other people, so this curse is doubly corrupting).

Quilt -- The owner of the quilt can dream whatever they want while sleeping under it, but some other person (chosen by the owner) experiences the dream as a nightmare and is killed by it. The chosen victim is forced asleep when the owner begins dreaming.

Camera -- Taking and developing a picture of a person with this camera creates an exact duplicate of the person. The duplicate must obey the orders of the photographer. Destroying the negative destroys the duplicate. If the negative is not destroyed within five hours, the original dies.

Foghorn -- Sounding the foghorn summons the ghost of Angus MacBride, a pirate who died when his crew mutinied. The ghost will trade gold coins for the bodies of any of the crew's descendants.

Sheriff's badge -- When the badge is pressed against the victim, the victim is branded with a star pattern and dies in convulsions; the badge then teleports back into the owner's hand, allowing a safe getaway.

Pipe -- Lighting the pipe produces a cloud of smoke which will seek out and kill the victim by asphyxiation. If the victim runs, the smoke will follow; it can ooze through the smallest cracks. After the victim dies, both body and smoke disappear.

Cradle -- The cradle will keep even the most sickly baby alive, and will eventually completely heal the baby. For this to happen, the baby's parents must kill seven people in water.

Two additional magic items were presented. These were not cursed; instead they were used by Lewis (played by R.G. Armstrong) in attempts to return from the dead and continue serving the Devil.

Amulet -- The amulet lets a ghost take material form until the next sunrise.

Canopic jar -- Fumes released from the jar cause anyone who inhales them to have a dream in which they re-live their most terrifying experiences, eventually causing a heart attack. This was the end-of-season show, incorporating scenes from previous episodes.

The second season objects:

Mask -- a voodoo totem which gives various magic powers.

Radio -- broadcasts false "news reports" which can be used to kill. In exchange, the radio broadcasts information that profits the owner.

Coin -- can be used to resurrect a corpse, even one that is centuries dead.

Violin -- allows the owner to play as a virtuoso.

Makeup Case -- can make even the ugliest person beautiful, for a short time.

Handkerchief -- can animate a wax figure, which must obey the owner.

Boutonniere -- also can animate a figure. In the episode, it was used for a ventriloquist's dummy.

Watch -- the owner can experience one hour (starting and ending at 1AM) in which everything else is stopped in time.

Key and Chain -- allow the owner to win auto races.

Beehive -- makes "vampire bees" which are able to kill by draining blood. The bees then sting another person and change his appearance to that of the victim. To remain alive, the transformed people must eat honey made by the bees.

Playhouse -- can transport a child to a world where he can have whatever he wants, provided he brings other children to be trapped.

Magic Lantern -- permits travel to the time and place of projected slides. A person must be killed both to travel back in time and to return.

Compact -- makes the owner beautiful, for a short time.

Syringe -- can draw fluid from the victim's brain, removing a part of their humanity. The fluid will temporarily cure a psychotic person. The victim becomes increasingly animal-like, until nothing human is left.

Movie Camera -- makes a movie character real; the character kills people who were filmed by the camera.

Ring -- shows the outcome of a future sporting event.

Shard -- anyone stabbed by the shard becomes a statue.

Coffin -- can resurrect a child. The child has to kill to live.

Amulet -- can resurrect a corpse if another one is slain.

Bauble -- grants wishes, after hypnotizing and killing the victim (who obeys all orders, including commands to commit suicide).

Pool Cue -- allows user to win games.

Symphonia (Music Box) -- forces people to dance to their death, but the dances are beautiful works of art.

Rattle -- cures diseases.

Sculpting Tool -- converts clay into mommets ("voodoo" dolls)

Kamikaze Jacket -- makes the wearer invisible.

Several additional magic items were presented which were not cursed (at least not in the same way as the above items) but were used by various evil groups to attack the main characters.

Mirror -- provides a gateway to hell.

Snow Globe -- contains a miniature universe which people can enter.

Witch's Ladder -- magnifies a magician's power.

The third season objects:

Book -- a "Satanic Bible"; if its prophecies are fulfilled, the devil will rule the world.

Dagger -- Summons and controls demons.

Wheelchair -- enables the user to move about in a spirit-like form and kill; the chair gradually heals the user.

Hearing Aid -- allows thoughts to be heard.

Coin -- can be used to resurrect a corpse, even one that is centuries dead. (It was also in the second season, in a different episode.)

Car Radio -- takes the car and occupants through time to the year of the radio's manufacture.

Cross -- destroys vampires. One of the better episodes, due in part to the moral ambiguities: a cross, cursed by the devil, destroys vampires - provided the holder kills someone else with the cross.

Movie Print -- a character from the film can be brought into the real world, but someone else takes the character's place (and dies).

Fountain Pen -- allows the owner to control the behavior of another.

Monkey Idols -- "see no evil" allows the owner to change another person's perceptions; "hear no evil" allows thoughts to be heard; "speak no evil" speaks, giving useful information.

Aspirator -- a mortician's device; it can raise the dead.

Cameo -- holds the soul of a dead person, which can be released (reviving the dead person) by killing another.

Charm -- allows transfer of a soul into another body.

Leash -- transforms animals into humans and vice-versa.

Jack-in-the-Box -- allows communication with the dead.

Television -- maintains life. Used by a medium to show images of the dead to her clients; the images later attacked the clients through other televisions.

Cernuous Statue -- animates an oak tree and reproduces itself.

Painting -- allows travel back in time.

Dancer of the Everlost

By G.W. Harper

Introduction:

This fine music box is a wonderful sight: its wood dark and shining, carved all over with the first flowering vines of spring and arbors laden with the riches of summer roses at full-bloom. Amid the nooks and arbors are people, all young and seemingly carefree disporting themselves at various pastimes or in courtship, or simply lying and drowsing.

If one looks carefully, though, their expressions seem to hold a different tone: a bit of sadness behind the laughter, something achingly haunted in a maiden's face... And why do they all seem so familiar somehow? It must be just a trick of the candlelight.. surely, it could be nothing more, now, could it? Go ahead: open it..

Within is a gaily painted scenery, a grand palace and countryside in miniature, painted on the inside walls of the box, birds and beasts and folk all included, detailed with gold and tiny gems, bright as a flickering flame.

And within that, perhaps a moth? For in the center is a tiny dancer, dressed in some fantasy of silk and tiny pearls that seems oddly familiar... You remember now: you dreamt of that costume long ago! It was during a wonderful dream, where you were the brightest star in a glittering entourage, the best-loved in the entire court. It was an incredibly long and vivid dream about your adventures in a court of some far-away land. You lived years in a single night, only to lose them all to the light of dawn when you awoke. But, look: the figure.. it's you! And the scenes are becoming more fluid, moving.. The paintings are coming alive... the gallants and ladies... You can hear the minstrels play the song the court's laureate wrote just for you. You hear their voices now, you see them as if you were there. And you are there! Taking one hand and another, whirling in the grand ball you were so rudely forced to leave so long ago.. You're back now, and if memories of that other place you dallied in so long before you found your way here once more are fading, what does it matter?? You really can't imagine ever wanting to leave...

Background:

This box bears the touch of the Ghost Dancer, and it once belonged to a sad and lonely pair, a brother and sister who grew old alone together, with nothing left to them but dreams they'd dreamt together long ago. They had a precious gift: the dreams of one were shared by the other as they roamed sweet lands of heart's delight, seen only with their inner eye. For many years, they dreamed thus, uncaring that time slipped by and friends and family drifted away or were lost: they always had their beautiful visions to distract them. What matters if hair whitens, skin wrinkles and limbs grow arthritic? In their dream-lands they were young as the first flowers of spring, fair as the fairest in the land and could live among those who loved and cherished them as none did in the dim lands of waking. But age has its dangers, and time dulls the sharpest memory... There came a time when they slept more and more, but found their faery kingdoms blurred and strange, and then gone, as memory failed entirely, leaving only scraps and fragments. Their regret and longing drew the Dancer and she, perhaps, decided to be kind. She danced for them, and in her dancing, all the lost visions sprang back to life and they became once more, one

last sweet time beautiful and loved, merry and wise, the monarchs of their secret kingdoms. On aged faces in a hovel in some forgotten domain, facing each other as they huddled together under tattered rags, joyous smiles appeared one last time, before both faces relax, now in a sleep dawn can never break.

From between the clasped, frail hands, a small dark shape of polished wood slipped, kept bright by careful tending through the long years: a last remnant of an ancient childhood, and the key to show others the way they walked to the lands of heart's desire.. and the final resting-place of the Ghost-dancer's gift. For a moment the sounds of an organ playing in a Theatre far away faintly can be heard...

Game Mechanics:

Simply put, this music-box allows the opener to live his or her most cherished dreams, especially the ones not quite able to be recalled, the ones which leave an ache of regret at their loss. The opener gradually recognizes the tiny dancing figure at the center of the box to be the dreamer himself, dressed as he was during a long-lost dream. The painted scenes seem to be from that same dream, gradually becoming more and more real as the dreamer is drawn into the dream, his body left holding the open music-box as his mind dances in a dream bubble in the Nightmare Lands. The dreamer can leave at any time, at least at first, but may not choose to, having found his heart's desire, or so it seems. The dream may gradually warp or twist later, especially if the dreamer's friends try to make him depart. It is suggested that the whole dreamscape be played out using the rules in the Nightmare lands boxed set. If the dreamer remains too long, though, thirst and hunger's ravagers go unleased.. and we all know how time in dreams can be.. Dreamers who escape suffer the effects of a variant Nightmare spell in which they're torn by longing, left so distraught in the morning that they suffer the penalties listed for that spell, until he returns to the dreams he longs for. The dreamer will seem to control the dreamscapes for the most part, but the one actually holding the strings is the Ghost Dancer and she may make her puppets dance in ways they'd rather not, in time...

G. William Harper

Darkshade Armor

by R. Sweeney

History

The Darkshade Armor was thusly named for the undead host created by Ahlimer of Folkswan, The Darkshade legion. Since its inception this armor has led men down a path of self-deception and ruination tracing back to the original downfall of Ahlimer's qabal, The Shadows of Light, in the early dark ages.

Ahlimer and his Adepts fell into temptation and ruin while studying forbidden magics. According to legend, Ahlimer was an Adept of the black magic of necromancy, the head of a qabal once dedicated to the learning of necromancy, but not the practice. This qabal, the Shadows of the Light, studied the Art of necromancy in an attempt to better combat this dark force. The lure of the power, however, promised by the Arcane text Ahlimer studied, however, led him to temptation and failure. In his vanity, he felt he could forestall the inevitable doom which comes to such practitioners by simply being careful. The fool... the utter fool. The qabal, The Shadows of the Light, grew corrupt through the practice of necromancy.

Ahlimer's qabal became known to the church as a den of wickedness. In the battles that ensued between the qabal and the Church, Ahlimer was forced by necessity to create undead minions for the defense of his precious library.

Ahlimer's black art was employed to gather said minions from an unsuspecting hamlet. Ahlimer and a circle of his Adepts cast a spell over the tiny hamlet, Folkswan. The shadows of the people there began to fade and disappear over the course of several days. As their shadows faded, they grew weak, frail, and tired. The victims aged at the horrifying rate of a decade a day. Eventually, no longer able to stand the villagers lay in bed awaiting death by starvation or unnatural aging, lying in their own bodily emissions until death finally took them. Animating as lesser undead, they rose and answered Ahlimer's necromantic summons, traveling by tireless feet over hillock and vale until they finally arrived at his door to join his ghastly host, Darkshade Legion. Not content with the relative weakness of these lesser undead, Ahlimer flayed the flesh from their undead hides and enchanted them with eldritch powers. While these armors, "Made of Leather, Flayed from man" were worn by his Darkshade Legion, the powers of these lesser undead were greatly increased. The armor imparted upon his skeletal undead a zombie's resistance to attacks by blunt weapons, greater strength, and an increased ability to resist attempts by Mystics to turn them back. Some reports also indicated that thusly armored undead could drain the vital energy (wisdom) of a man they touched with their grimy hands.. but this was not reliably confirmed.

Enter into this dreadful scenario, a noble warlord and his holy Council, Kretzmer. Kretzmer was a Cardinal of the Church with 12 fighting men devoted to god under his command. Kretzmer and his men, known as the Holy Council of Evensgrad, were warriors on par with the Templars, but their leader's views on ethics and morality bordered on Heresy in some areas. Kretzmer, in line to head the Church when the reigning patriarch died, was given a quest by his leader to find,

rout, and destroy Ahlimer and his works. Kretzmer gladly rose to the challenge, rallying his men for the task. But first, as any good general, he studied his enemy carefully.. seeking to learn his strengths and weaknesses. Kretzmer read several ancient text to learn what he could expect from his vile enemy. During this perusal he fearful of his enemy, but also intrigued.

Kretzmer and his men did indeed slay the dark necromancer, but not without great cost. Rather than destroy the library of his now-vanquished enemy, Kretzmer gathered up all of Ahlimer's research and studied it to satisfy is curiosity. Having never seen the like of Ahlimer's Darkshade armor before, Kretzmer sought a way to purify it so that he and his men could benefit from its enchanments. To this end, he studied the secrets of its making carefully. In the end, this proved to be his downfall.

Kretzmer discovered a simple way to make the enchantment more permanent. By incorporating a few of the skeleton's bones in the armor, the wearer of the armor would gain a zombie's resistance to bludgeoning weapons and a modest bonus to the defensive value of regular studded leather armor as well. This armor has bone studs that are pieces of the original skeletons. The armor also uses the ribs of the undead creature for added support.

The evil seed of vanity infested Kretzmer as it had Ahlimer before him...driving this man of the church down the same path to darkness tread by Ahlimer before him. Thinking he had removed the taint of evil from the fabric of the ghastly armor, he and his men each donned a suit of it and began a slow decent into darkness all the more horrible when one considers the lofty seat of goodness they once held.

Curse

The Transformation: slowly the armor destroys the heart of the man... the spirit. As time passes his emotion fades completely away. He sleeps less, eats less, lives less. The entire process takes one year per point of wisdom to complete. At some point before the affected victim will feel compelled to find a leader for himself. This leader will have to make more and more of the victim's decisions for him. However, at the same time as the armor drains his vital essence, the armor grows more powerful from its feeding...granting to the wearer the strengths and powers of the undead.

When the victim's will is fully drained, the wearer's heart ceases to beat. He is a zombie with no will of his own.

Powers

Rumor has it that the armor grows more powerful as it drains a man's vital will. (Wisdom)

Immediate effects:

Beneficial:

- Invisibility to Undead (special). – Most non-intelligent undead seem to believe the wearer of the armor to be one of them and ignore any reasonable behavior.
- +3 con and str. (Str cannot go more than 1pt beyond racial and class maximums, but Con can be increased to monstrous levels.)
- Invisible to Infravision: The wearer's body temperature drops to that of the surroundings.. effectively rendering infravision useless.

Hindrances:

- Can be turned (as a paladin would be turned by an evil cleric)
- Gaunt appearance (-2 to Chr)
- Immediate (permanent unless Restored via spell) loss of 1 Wisdom point upon donning the armor.)
- Cold body temperature frightens NPCs (-2 to chr if NPC is aware of PCs cold touch).
- Compulsion: PC wears the armor at every reasonable opportunity.
- Addiction: People with emotional difficulties may become addicted to the armor for a secondary effect. The armor reduced the emotions of the wearer greatly. Therefore, someone suffering a traumatic and devastating loss may be driven to wear the armor in order to avoid feeling these painful emotions. Since these emotions come back once the armor is removed, some people become dependent upon this side effect of the armor.

Additional effects by time of armor worn:

One year: Increased protection from hot or cold. Wearer no longer sweats from exertion alone.

Three years: Increased stamina. Wearer seldom sleeps.

Five years: Increased strength. Wearer eats less. No longer feels love.

Seven years: Increased protection. Wearer no longer needs to eat, but still drinks on occasion. No longer feels sad.

Nine years: Cannot be seen with infravision. Increased stamina Does not maintain normal body temperature. No longer feels pain.

Eleven years: Increased protection. Immune to normal cold. Half damage from enchanted cold. Immune to fear. Gaunt skin, pale -- nearly albino. No longer dreams.

Thirteen years: Increased stamina - never tires. Immune to emotion affecting spells. No emotion.

Fifteen years: Immune to charms. Immune to magical sleep.

Seventeen years: Bone cold touch drains strength and stamina.

Additional Effects by Wisdom of wearer:

- Wis 18: No effect, the wearer is simply a bit less emotional than before and somewhat dispassionate.
- Wis 17: The wearer grows less responsive, occasionally sitting and staring at nothing for several minutes.
- Wis 16: The wearer grows less empathetic, tending to not understand feelings or emotions of others unless told explicitly. (ie, you are making me angry).
- Wis 15: The wearer displays a fondness for macabre scenes and scenery. He or she finds gothic architecture and paintings fascination while others are disturbed.
- Wis 14: The wearer enjoys visiting graveyards during the day and reading the inscriptions.
- Wis 13: The wearer occasionally collects bones (1-3) of human origin and traces their features with his fingers. (Normally, this is a human or humanoid skull.)
- Wis 12: The wearer occasionally 'talks' to inanimate skeletons or skulls if they are present before realizing that they are not living creatures.
- Wis 11: The wearer enjoys watching funerals.
- Wis 10: The wearer enjoys planning his funeral.
- Wis 9: The wearer occasionally wander off at night to visit a graveyard.

- Wis 8: The wearer sits passive for longer periods of time unless roused by shaking. (1-10 rounds).
- Wis 7: The wearer begins to lose his ability for independent thought. He begins to look for a leader.
- Wis 6: The wearer asks others opinions on nearly any issue before making a decision.
- Wis 5: The wearer is comfortable with letting his leader make decisions for him.
- Wis 4: The wearer can communicate with skeletons and lesser undead.
- Wis 3: The wearer is passive for hours unless roused or commanded to perform some action.
- Wis 2: Human suffering no longer concerns the wearer
- Wis 1: The wearer seeks a grave or coffin to sleep in.
- Wis 0: The wearer is undead.

Note: A note scrawled in the margin of this page expressed some confusion about whether the effects of the armour took place over years or months. It is possible that the references to being affected over years may just be an embellishment for dramatic purposes, meaning that Darkshade is even more insidious and corrupting than previously believed.....

The Legend

Pray tell, do listen well, as this tale I tell to you, Take to heart, every part, for I swear each word is true.

Thirteen sets of armor were recovered by Kretzmer from the arms of evil. Black leather with stone-hard studs made of human bone, the armor looked as wicked as its maker. But in vanity, did Kretzmer fail and think himself to remove from that wicked mesh the taint of evil.

Twelve sets did Kretzmer make, one for each of his Liege-men. Each man had suffered long the road of war and battle, and much wisdom did they gain as their spoils of war. Yet one more, on top of those, for himself he made. Thirteen sets of that fell, hell-borne, armor. Thirteen men led to doom.

Perhaps, some claim, that dreadful number what brought the blight upon the council. Others, in hushed tones always, whispered of what the armor was made. Kretzmer claimed, to those who knew, that by magic means he himself had clean the taint of evil from their mesh. But other voices urged the man, that never could the touch of evil be purged from armor made from leather flayed from man.

The years pressed on, and of the armor naught seemed to come. For the land and law produced a fertile crop. The fruitful lands, grew grains a plenty. And Kretzmer's men thundered across the land ...banishing bandits and slaying sinners. The criminals did fear the land, like none other they had seen. But so too did the citizens quiver and hide from the lawmen on their steeds. For swift justice oft was dealt, from the lawman's wicked flail.

Darkshade widows, The Tale of 13 Lords and their Wives...:

Lord Kretzmer's wife
did ride one night
in a carriage to leave her lord.

It wasn't right,
Lord Kretzmer sighed,
as watched her speed away.

At the hour of ten,
He gathered his men,
and they rode in hot pursuit.

On the back of an ox,
they returned with a box,
and their ladies they summoned to dine,

Thirteen days did stay,
those ladies away,
and spoke not a word of it thereafter.

They practiced restraint,
and held their complaints,
and spoke not of leaving their masters.

For over a year,
they all lived with fear,
'till one of them finally snapped,

Lady McKeanin,
Crying out "freedom",
Sheathed her lord's dirk in his breast.

She really was screaming,
that lady McKeanin,
when her lord did not quite seem to notice.

For Thirteen more days,
Were the ladies away,
On their return, they numbered eleven.

Knowing quite well,
they were living in hell,
they searched for a way to escape.

A dozen and one men,
With the ladies aside them,
came to a feast in their honor.

All had gone fine,
Till the lords drank their wine,
And the poison did not seem to faze them.

To escape a cruel fate,
They each made a date,
To dance with a stranger called death,

So as fast as they can,
by their hand,
they die to escape retribution.

The aforementioned song is sung by Lewendell, a bard who was invited to play at the last feast by the lords. When the ladies killed themselves, they were not afforded the escape they so desperately sought. Rather, their spirits and those of their undead lords were trapped within Kretzmer's castle until another could free them.

Lewendell, who was trying to flee, was caught by the lords and forced to remain... continuously playing music each night as the ladies and lords are forced to relive that fateful feast. Eventually, he died (of starvation) and his ghost continues to play. He seeks freedom from this curse and will help the PCs to defeat the lords and escape with their lives in the only way he can.. by singing his song and telling the party a riddle.

Note: Perhaps Lewendell's throat was cut to keep his spirit here... if so a thick beard covers this fact until the party has spoken with him for awhile. (read: "until the party has spoken with him for too long.")

Adventure Hooks

- The party is bet/paid/dared to spend the night at old Kretzmer castle.
- the party angers a NPC, who threatens the party to a duel of honor at night fall at the old Kretzmer castle. (The NPCs don't show up.)
- The party angers an NPC, who gets revenge by hiring a messenger to claim that Lord Kino of Lockwood requires the aid of good strong men. The place they are to meet Lord Kino is on his ancestral estate, (*insert directions to Lord Kretzmer's castle.*)
- Lord Kino may be the descendant of Kretzmer and actually wish to retrieve some gold from Kretzmer castle to pay some debts.
- On a "Dark and Stormy night..." the party is forced to seek shelter from the storm at the nearest estate... Kretzmer castle.
- The party requires a magical item for some other quest... rumor has it such an item can be found in Kretzmer castle.

The party is trapped inside the castle walls...

- They hear the bard playing and listen to him. Without knowing it, they are entranced by his song until the sun sets... at which point the gates close and the castle is sealed. No one may enter or leave by any means... treat as a lord sealing his domain.
- They enter the courtyard and the ground collapses... trapping one PC under a good deal of debris. The rescue attempt takes longer than the available sunlight... the gates close.
- Vines entangle the PCs as they enter... holding them fast until the sun sets...
- The bard's song puts the PCs into an enchanted slumber until after nightfall.

The song:

- Either sung all at once (to make it easier).
- Verses are sung in no apparent order all night long. (PCs must piece together the song -- harder). [Write down the verses and hand them to the PCs on slips of paper so they can review them].

Plot

Logic problem:

The bard tells the PCs "Each lord can die as did his lady, so hear out my riddle, will it save you? Just maybe". He then tells the PC a logic problem listings clues as to how each woman died and clues as to who her husband is. I will have to 'puzzle' this out later...

Note: Some degree of trial and error would work as well. 13 ways of killing are listed and there are 13 lords.. eventually process of elimination must succeed. J Straight combat could work, too... if the PCs are powerful enough.

The night:

Except for when the lords see the PCs they re-enact the feast. When they see the PCs, they (of course, talk to them until they find them 'guilty' of something and then attack them. Fast talking PCs might be able to bluff their way out of it. "We're the chimney cleaners... we just can't seem to find that fireplace. Would you help up, please?") The PCs can find the cause of each wife's death by watching for it to 'happen' again (or it appears so) but fate works hard against them and they keep missing it. (Another lord happens by to see the PCs and questions them.)

Robert Sweeney

Ebon Lyre

by Shadowspawn

Appearance:

The Ebon Lyre is a 20-inch long musical instrument, apparently made of a dark metallic alloy, in the resemblance of a pair of antelope's horns. It is adorned by an intricate complex of gems and a large egg-shaped blood-red ruby marks the middle of the instrument's base.

Background:

The "metallic" horns actually are the remains of a Tanar'ri Nabassu that was transpositioned and later defeated by a group of adventurers. The irony about the Lyre is that it was designed not for evil, but as part of a passionate attempt to summon the transpositioned victim back from the Abyss.

Not long ago, the elder of this group of adventurers, an poor yet honored warrior, fell in love with the young song mage that had just entered the party. He already was more experienced than the others and wanted to settle down and eventually marry her, while she couldn't help but feel an insatiable wanderlust. Although she was actually quite attracted to him, she rejected his advance and left him behind to follow her own heart's desires.

Shattered by grief and a little maddened by passion, he regreted not having accumulated riches during his adventuring life. With no idea of her true feelings towards him, he reasoned that, if he could become powerful and rich, she would at last notice him. This attracted the attention of a Nabassu, that mentally approached the hero and convinced him that both could gather at one body and, with the warrior always in charge, he would obtain the desired power a lot faster than he expected. In exchange the fiend only asked for a few "favors". The passion-blinded warrior accepted, confident that he could banish the fiend at any moment. And then the transposition started.

When the other heroes learned what was happening and came to rescue their friend from his own madness, it was too late: the Nabassu, now fully transpositioned, scornfully told them the true history of why he had been summoned.

A long battle issued, but at last the fiend was defeated. The mage, regretting the way she had treated her beloved one, decided she had to save him at any cost, and imagined that a magical song of conjuration might be able to save him. Unknown to her, through unimaginable tortures in the Abyss, he had become a Bodak.

Ignoring the truth, she took the horns as "trophy", isolated herself and immediately started her work. Studying forbidden spells, she devised the Lyre, reasoning that the instrument might be attuned to him as the monster was before and therefore summon him back from the Abyss. However, her former companions suspected the truth about the "trophy" and tried to stop her, invading her tower just as she was performing the ritual. Already under the Lyre's influence, she counter-attacked with the artifact's powers and her own spells, and another terrible battle took place, this time between former friends.

In the end, she was killed but not before half of the party had been destroyed as well and the remaining survivors (including the priest, one of the Guardians) were severely maimed. Unable to complete her owner's transposition, the Lyre absorbed her soul and disappeared, and since that time the Guardians have been tracking it through the Demiplane, with little success.

Powers:

As an evil artifact made by a song mage with fiendish remains, the Lyre has both song-related powers and the abilities and resistances of a mature nabassu. Such powers include: a small reality wrinkle, immunity to normal fire and electricity, the ability to cast Darkness 15' Radius, Infravision, Silence 15' Radius (the Lyre itself would be resistant to Silence spells), along with four levels of invocation spells, the power to summon ghouls/ghasts once per day. It is also able to (once a week) play a deadly melody imitating the spell Wail of the Banshee and turn dead victims into ghasts or ghouls under the (partial) control of the Lyre's owner. Its major power, however, would exactly be the reason of its creation: under specific conditions the Lyre's player would be able to summon a specific bodak. This ritual would by no means be an easy task, though, and chances are that instead of the bodak, more ghasts and ghouls arrive (this time without control).

Curse:

The Lyre has very high Ego and Intelligence, easily possessing the weakling. Also, anytime it is used to do evil, the owner goes one step into transposition with another nabassu. If the owner dies before completing the transposition, his soul is not safe, as there is a high chance he will become a ghast or ghoul.

Note: This curse means the Lyre must be new to the Land of Mists, otherwise there would be a fiendish overpopulation in Ravenloft.

Possible Means of Destruction:

So far the only imagined way to destroy the Lyre forever is to use it to summon the warrior, whose name has been long-forgotten – now a Bodak– then convince him to use his deadly gaze upon the Lyre's ruby to "kill" it. Naturally, consciously summoning a Bodak may qualify as an evil act that grants transposition, so the Order of the Guardians would prefer to keep the cursed artifact safely locked until they can find another way.

Adventure Ideas:

1. Of course, the best adventure ideas would go around the summoning of the bodak or the "permanent" storage of the artifact. Meanwhile, the song mage might return – not as a ghast, but as a wailing spirit – still trying to take the Lyre back and use it. This would also involve the Order of the Guardians (perhaps Brother Dominic from the CotM).
2. The Lyre's most recent victim tried to use the Wail to get rid of a band of brigands but was killed by an arrow shot from a safe distance. Now he has become a ghostly bard and taken control of the bandits killed by the Lyre (ghoulish thieves). They formed a deadly band and are stalking the city after the surviving thieves. The guild leader comes to the PCs (under disguise)

and asks them to investigate. During an encounter with the undead, one of the brigands takes the Lyre and immediately starts his own killing spree, rapidly going through transposition. The PCs have to choose between helping the guild – and possibly being betrayed later – or putting their hands on the Lyre themselves and risking their very souls while trying to deliver it to the Order of the Guardians or to destroy it themselves.

Shadowspawn the Dragon

Eye of the Beholder

By R. Sweeney

Introduction

Very rarely does a mythological monster like the fabled beholder float into the misty realms of Ravenloft... but when they do, they can be quite dangerous, and quite fascinating to those of a magical bent.

One such Beholder, a mutant named Radnock, wandered into a misty bank... and stumbled into the lands of the mists. Here, he immediately attempted to use his special magical abilities to rule and subjugate the lesser beings he found.

Eventually, his malevolence earned him the attention of the fell powers of Ravenloft. One of his 10 eyestalks withered under a necromantic assault from his would be prey... withered, but did not die in a normal sense. It turned hard and crystalline, as the stalk connecting it to his head withered and died. The crystal eye then floated separated from the rest of the beholder's body, much like an ioun stone.

Radnock could still see through the eye, but could not unleash its powers. Eventually, through magical experimentation, he discovered something of what had happened and the nature of the changes to the eye.

General Properties of the Eye

The beholder could no longer use the eye's magic since the eyestalk had withered. However, he could see through the eye as if nothing had happened. Through simple concentration, he could use the magical eye as a "wizard eye" spell with no restrictions on range, though the speed of motion was slow (as per spell).

The eye, itself, has physical properties akin to an IOUN stone, including hardness, ac, and resistance to attempts to destroy it.

The eye could also be set rotating around the head of another person, typically a human, upon doing so. The stone would follow the recipient round as a normal ioun stone would and allow the Eye Tyrant to see through the eye.

The person allowing the eye to float around their head would find that they could see through the eye whenever the eye tyrant wasn't attempting to use the eye himself. (Although they didn't know why these blank spots happened). They were also subject to hypnotic suggestions from the eye tyrant 3/day. Each eye has incidental powers as well, but those will be detailed more fully under their individual descriptions.

Whenever an eye is near (3") to an empty eye socket of a human, it leave's its temporary host and embeds itself in that socket.. instantly grafting itself into place. Once to implanted, the eye cannot be removed without killing the victim. The beholder can still see through the eye, resulting in 'blank spots' as noted before. The wearer of the eye also can be subject to 6 "hypnotic

suggestions" per day. However, at this time, the wearer of the eye can actually use the 'primary power' of the gem. This power can be used once per day at the discretion of the owner... or once per round at the discretion of the eye tyrant. (Who may choose to permit a wearer's desired use of the eye.... the wearer doesn't, however, know they need the will of the eye tyrant to use the eye.)

Anyone wearing the eye grated into their head undergoes a slow transformation into a beholder.. extra (non functional) eyes begin growing on the surface of the victim.. first appearing like large acne.. then opening up to reveal themselves as tiny eyes.. eyes that turn to look at the surroundings as if sentient. Eventually, the victim will possess a 'head' like that of the beholder attached to a normal trunk. At this point all eyes become functional, but non-magical and the eye-gem departs.. leaving a large central eye in the newly mutated head. The eye gem now functions like and ioun stone as per it's earlier description.

Continued history:

The beholder enjoyed the additional powers of the eye.. for the beholder-men created became his pawns..his slaves.. and in the meantime he saw utility in the more wide reaching abilities of the eye gems. He deliberately continued transforming his eyes into these more powerful eye-gems.

Beholder (mutant) eyes (original)

Central (anti-magic eye)

1. Charm Person or Monster
2. Hold Person or Monster
3. Telekinesis
4. Disintegration
5. Cause Serious Wounds
6. Sleep
7. Vampiric touch
8. Enervation
9. Chill touch
10. Ray of enfeeblement

Powers of the Eyes

Central (anti-magic eye): was not changed into an eye gem, still lies in the beholder's head.

1) Eye of Enchantments: Glamor's Gaze.

Ioun stone: +1 int, +1 chr, wearer saves at +4 vs enchantment magics.

Wearer has 'empathy' in a 3" radius.

Eye: +2 int, +3 chr, wearer is 95% immune (MR) to enchantments. Wearer has empathy in 6" radius.. and cannot be surprised by thinking minds lest they have some form of magical shielding. Wearer can use Charm Monster once/day.. more if the Beholder wills it so.

Curse: The eyelid can no longer close.. eyepatches designed to hide the eye are burned through within 1-3 rounds (Note, this also includes hands covering the eye.. OUCH!). If the wearer sees his own reflection (more specifically, there eye in the reflection), they must save vs spells or be

enthralled by their own reflection for 1-4 rounds. Each time they are enthralled by their own reflection, there is a 5% chance that they will walk into the mirror.. and be trapped within (unless stopped). The "eye" falls to the ground outside the mirror. The victim is trapped within the mirror as if via a mirror of life trapping but for the fact that they cannot be released.

2) *Eye of Holding:* Painful Paralysis.

Ioun Stone: +1 wis, +1 con, wearer saves at +4 vs paralyzation. Wearer's gaze temporarily freezes opponents in their tracks.. giving them a -2 penalty to initiative as they fight a minor enchantment trying to freeze their limbs.

Eye: +2 wis, +1 con, Wearer is immune to paralyzation by spell or poison, wearer's gaze causes rigidity in the muscles of those gazed upon (no save) dropping their dex by 2 and penalizing their initiative rolls by 4 for as long as they remain transfixed by the Eye. Wearer can use Hold Monster once per day.. more if the Beholder wishes.

Curse: The wearer suffers nightmares of being parylized on a nightly basis.. they are difficult to awaken.. require a save vs magic each round in order to move again. Wearer feels compelled to remain in motion.. after 2 weeks of wearing the eye, they must save vs magic in order to move again after each time they remain stationary for more than 10 minutes. At the end of each game month, the wearer must make a dex check.. failure caues their Dex to be permanently reduced by one due to rigidity of the muscles. At Dex 0, they are permanently paralyzed.

3) *Eye of Telekinesis:* Forceful Glare

Ioun Stone: +1 str, +1 con, wearer gains a permanent unseen servant and armor spell (the ARMOR SPELL regenerates from damage at the rate of 1 pt per round-- max 20pts..see spell description).

Eye: +2 str, +3 con, wearer gains 3 unseen servants and AC of 5 due to improved armor spell. Also gains use of the "Sheild" spell. Can move via telekinesis up to 1000 lbs or use powers of a RING OF THE RAM 1/day .. or as often as the Beholder allows.

Curse: Objects move about of their own volition when the wearer gets agitated. Eventually, (after a week or so) the wearer must save vs spells each time they get angry (engage in combat) or spawn a free willed dust devil (not necessarily on the wearer's side).After one month of use, the wearer begins developing headaches when they use the powers of the gem.. -1hp each use. After 3 months, they wearer suffers repeated migranes, requiring a save vs spells each day or their head explodes if they try to use the powers of the eye.

4) *Eye of Distintegration:* Eye of Destruction

Ioun stone: +1 to all damage rolls, -1 to saves of victims. Energy eye blasts doing 1-4 pts of damage (save for half).

Eye: +4 to all damage rolls, -4 to saves of victims. Energy eye blasts of 1-10 pts of damage and full use of the Distintegration power 1/day. (more if the beholder allows).

Curse: After 1 week wearing the eye, the victim finds all opponents doing +1 damage when they attack him. Upon using the distentigration power (Full strength) they must make a wis check to shut the beam off. (Destroying 8 cubic feet of matter per round until they pass.) Eye beams can be reflected by any silver or mithril mirror.

5) Eye of Wounds: eye of pain..

Ioun stone: +1 con, +10 hps, wearer saves at +4 vs any pain effect.

Wearer gains bless spell effect whenever an aware sentient creature is delivered more than 10hps of damage in one round.

Eye: +3 con, +10 hps, Wearer immune to pain (doesn't feel any pain.) Blood spilled within 10' of the wielder of the eye of pain becomes animated as a blood monster... 1hd/8hps of blood spilled.. damage nearest dice to # hd of blood monster.. ie, 6 hd blood monster does 1-6 hps/blow. 23hd monster does 1-20 hps damage (max). The blood monster is not under the control of the Wielder of the eye, but attacks any within 6" possessing bleeding wounds. It cannot be harmed by physical weapons.. requiring +1 weapons or some form of energy to damage.. a torch would work. Multiple blood monsters always join/fuse when they meet each other. Wearer can also use "Cause Critical Wounds" power of the eye to generate bleeding wounds in the creature struck (no save) 1/day or as the beholder desires.

Curse: Wearer suffers hemophilia after 1 week wearing the eye. Any blood lost, of course, becomes a blood monster that attacks the open wound attempting to draw out more blood. The eye cannot harm creatures of pure blood. After one month, the wearer starts forming spontaneous bruises and welts. After 3 months, the wearer suffers nose bleeds in his sleep.. save vs magic or give life to a small blood monster.

6) Eye of Sleep: Sandman's seeing.

Ioun stone: +1 int, +1 wis, wearer can 'see' into the dreams of anyone sleeping within 3" at will. Wearer can use sleep spell by gaze once per day (more if the Beholder chooses to allow it).

Eye: +2 int, +2 wis, wearer sees into the dreams of anyone sleeping within 6" at will and can project "Nightmares" (reversed dream spell) into these victims. Sleep spell (1/d..etc as above) can influence up to 12 hd of creatures without a saving throw or more powerful creatures with a normal saving throw.

Undead who do sleep can also be effected by the eye, thus mummies and vampires with periods of torpor can be affected despite their normal immunity to sleep magic.

Curse: Wearer begins suffering nightmares of beholders. Nightmare spell effect every night unless saves vs magic. 1% chance per week of being attacked by a phantasmal killer in his sleep.

7) Eye of Death: Vampiric Touch

Ioun Stone: +1 con, +4 saves vs necromancy, benefits of a ring of vampiric regeneration.

Eye: +3 con, 50% MR to any magical effect or spell cast by a vampire, +4 to saves vs necromancy. Benefits of a ring of vampiric regeneration. Use "Vampiric Touch" 1/d or as beholder wishes. Gains one level of spell use as a necromancer. (Ie, 6th level mage can become a 7th level necromancer or a 6th level fighter becomes a first level multiclassed necromancer.)

Curse: Vampiric Touch drains life energy from the target, healing the wearer. However, the flesh that grows back contains mutations, disfigurements. The wearer must save vs death magic or lose 1 pt Charisma per 20 hps drained, eventually taking on the pallor and appearance of a corpse. When at 0 Cha, they die and become reanimated as a zombie under the control of the beholder.

8) *Eye of Decay*: Enervation

Ioun Stone: Invisibility to Undead. Save vs magic to avoid life/essence draining attacks. Wearer never needs to sleep.

Eye: Enervation 1/day (more if willed by the Beholder). Each use of enervation randomly drains one point of Strength or Con.. recoverable with one turn of rest. The eye enables the wearer to 'detect necromantic magic' automatically as well as 'read necromantic magic' at will. Beings drained to death by an enervation strike die and become zombies under the wielder's control.

Curse: Undead created by the eye have a %chance to become free willed as per the Charm Person or Mammal spell. The wearer becomes obsessed with places of death and sees the spirits of the departed everywhere where even the smallest of ghosts reside. After one month wearing the eye, the wielder becomes sensitive to light .. like a young vampire.

9) *Eye of Shadows*: Chill touch

Ioun stone: Animate Shadows Psi power (Free), Control light/shadow Psi power (Free), hide in shadows +25%. AC+1 when standing in areas of shadowy illumination.

Eye: Character becomes a Shade. Use chill touch by eye beam 1/day (5' wide by 100' long) or as the beholder wishes. Ability points drained, however, do not return until after the user of the eye is slain. Any drained to death by this power become shadows under the command of the eye wielder.

Curse: Shade's weaknesses. Sensitive as the Drow to full sunlight (in addition to Shade's weaknesses. Wielder's shadow become animated and free willed.. user is treated as the shadow's 'leader'.. must make leadership rolls to see if Shadow obeys him (morale checks). Eventually, the shadow leaves.. rebelling against it's master and plotting his doom.

10) *Eye of Weakness* (the lazy eye): Ray of enfeeblement

Ioun stone: -1 str to all in 3" unless save vs magic. Those attacking the wielder don't get to add their strength bonuses to hit or damage. All in 3" overcome by laziness and must make wis check in order to do anything productive.

Eye: Ray of Enfeeblement power once/day (or more..as above) but with an area of effect of a cone 5' at the start, 20' at the end, and 6" long. Wielder gains 1/10th the strength drained (max 19). Laziness aura extends to 6" and wis check is at -4 before those effected can take action.

Curse: Wielder affected by sloth.. must make wis check to eat, bath, or groom themselves. -1 chr per day spent without taking a bath. -1 con per day spent without eating. Death by starvation causes the victim to be a ghoul with a ravenous appetite after death.

Tail story:

Eventually, the Tyrant was defeated, but the magical gem eyes were not destroyed. They have sense been spread to the 4 corners of Ravenloft.

Legend has it that the spirit of the old beholder still lives on through the eye-gems.. and it can reform if all 10 eyes are ever brought back together.

Currently, the latent spirit of the beholder can use the suggestion power of the eyes once per week (alho emplanted eyes cause their wielders to suffer a -4 save penalty) in an attempt to reunite the 10 eyes. The beholder also gets to try to implant a suggestion (save +4) every time the 'major power' of the eye is used.

It is known that the primary powers of the eyes can be used freely whenever their intended result would cause a powercheck for the wielder.

If used for 'good' purposes, they wielder must make a wis check to get the power off. (-1 cumulative penalty per use that day). Any failure prevents further use of the eye for that day. Thus, if Alfred, a good squire, were to try to use the powers of the eye 4 times in a day, he would have no problem using the power the first time that day.. to defeat a zombie wandering about let's say. Then, perhaps, the second time.. while saving a villager from death in a fire, he must make a wischeck at -1 (he has already use the eye once that day). The thrid time that day, Alfred tries to foil the plans of a darklord.. and must make a wis check -3 to get the power off. However, the 4th time he attempts to use the power.. he mistakenly targets an innocent villager.. thinking them to be a werewolf. He whould have a -6 penalty to his wis check, but since the villager is innocent, the power comes off without a hitch,

Destruction of the eyes/removal:

Actually, any paladin or cleric of LG alignment can remove the eyes as long as they (the cleric or paladin) have not suffered a powercheck (are pure.) Otherwise, any darklord can remove the eye.. (leaving the victim at -10 hps.. and bleeding to death this round unless immediately aided). Finally, the spirit fo the deceased beholder can remove the eye.. if he is convinced this is in his best interests.

Robert Sweeney

Finger of Death

By JF Major

Appearance:

The Finger of Death is a bone carved of rune, a severed finger bone. A "Detect Magic" will reflect necromancy on the finger. A "read magic" cast on it will simply reveal these words "Bring me to Death, and I will make it Undeath". Any magic-user that cast "read magic" on the Finger must roll a Madness Check, or be overcome by all the emotions trapped within it.

Background:

It is Retean the Mad (Nec22) who crafted the Finger. He sewered a finger from his infidel wife after she had slept with his rival. He then killed his wife with a spell, and trapped her soul within the Finger. He then buried the Finger in the cemetery of the nearest village, and left it there for six years.

During those six years, his wife's spirit suffered. Slowly, the spirits of the dead haunting the cemetery corrupted her, making her avid of power.

When Retean finally dug her up, he sensed an evil of infinite darkness within the bony finger. Quickly, he took it, and left to his laboratory.

But one day, he lost the finger.

A week later, Retean was killed by a horde of fifty ghouls that attacked his tower. All during that week, the bony Finger crawled to the cemetery and touched, one by one, all the cadaverous inhabitants in their tombs. One by one, they raised from the Dead.

Powers:

There is a single power in the Finger: whatever dead thing it touches is brought back to life. A corpse could be changed into a ghoul, and dead tree, into an undead treant. Anything dead is brought back to life if the Finger OR its bearer (if someone is carrying the finger, whether consciously or not) touches it.

The finger cannot be injured by any spell or physical damage. If thrown away, it will reappear in its owner's pocket. There is only one way to get rid of it, and one way to destroy it. To get rid of it, it must be slid into another person's pocket (requiring a successful pickpockets roll). To destroy it, it must be touched simultaneously by a Chaotic Evil male necromancer of at least level 10, and by a Lawful Good woman.

The finger does have a mind of its own, with a Chaotic Evil alignment. It cannot be controlled: whenever its owner touches something dead (would it be a corpse, a dead tree, or even a dead fly), it'll bring it back to unlife in the most corrupted version ever imaginable.

The necromancer's wife's soul is still trapped within the Finger. The Finger, as told before, can reappear whenever it wants in its current owner's pocket. If needed, it can walk at the movement

rate of 1. The soul always try to pervert its owner's soul to Chaotic Evil. Every week, a character knowing that he owns the Finger of Death must make a saving throw versus spell. (If the Finger decided a Lawful Good character to become its new owner and decided to hide in its pocket, for example, would not require a saving throw.) Each time the saving throw is missed, the alignment shifts one degree to Chaotic Evil. First, the Lawful to Neutral to Chaotic alignment will change, then the Good to Neutral to Evil. (ex: a Lawful Good character voluntarily carrying the Finger will have its alignment shifting for LG to NG, CG, CN, CE) No Exp penalty is required for this alignment shift.

The soul trapped within the finger will try to force its owner to touch dead corpses and destroy its owner. Whenever its owner is faced to a dead body, he will have to make a saving throw versus spell, failure meaning that the character rushes and put his index on the carcass, animating it.

Unless the character's alignment is CE, the animated things will always attack him, even if he is who animated the dead.

Jean-François Major

The Good Ship, The Merry Maid.

By Mark Graydon

In the dark waters of the Nocturnal Sea prowls a danger most horrid. This creature is not one which dwells beneath the waves however. It is a thing made of man, a creation made to sail to the eastern land of Liffe. Now, it is naught but a death trap.

In 751 B.C., the Merry Maid, a Caravel, set forth from the city of Egertus in Nova Vassa for the island of Liffe to trade. It was freshly made, and her crew and captain were likewise novices. The captain was a native of Nova Vassa, a man named Conrad Farthing. Determined to make his fortune in the Nocturnal Sea, he was not without his vices. He drank heavily, and was subject to fits of anger and rage. Still, he had the presence of mind to have his ship built, and named her after a barmaid in one of his favorite drinking halls.

When the ship set forth into the perpetual fog that seems to cloak the Nocturnal Sea at times, it was doomed to never be heard from again. The next ship that sailed for Liffe made it safely, and after questioning the natives, found that no ship by the name of the Merry Maid had arrived at the ports anytime in the last month. It was sadly decided that the Merry Maid had run aground on one of the numerous underground reefs in the Sea, and her crew had perished. And so, it was forgotten.

The truth of the matter, is that the Merry Maid is neither gone, nor forgotten, by her crew at least. She still plies the waters of the Nocturnal Sea, though she never lands at port. Occasionally she is sighted, but never has anyone gotten close enough to read her name, for always does the ship turn away and disappear in a bank of fog that rises from the waters. None know the terrible secret of the Merry Maid.

Captain Conrad Farthing was not a thorough man. Though he spared no expense having his ship built, he did not particularly care where the materials came from, and bade the workers to use whatever they could get. Had he known what they chose, he might have thought differently.

The workers searched for the cheapest materials they could find, and through some contacts, found that a supply of materials had recently been washed ashore, south of Egertus. Years before, that area had been a small graveyard for convicted felons and criminals. But it had been placed too close to the edge of the Mists, and when they receded and the Nocturnal Sea was revealed, the constant movement of the tides eroded the coastline, finally freeing the buried inhabitants. The coffins of many a murderer lay exposed. The workers started at their grisly work, dumping the decomposed bodies into the Sea, and salvaging the wood. Thus, a good portion of the Merry Maid was constructed of the coffins of dead, evil men.

Something was attracted to that wood. Something dark and cold, malicious and cruel, and hungry. It fed upon dark thoughts; perhaps it was with one of the murderers when he or she was alive. Perhaps it was attracted when the coffins were unearthed. Whatever the case, the malignant thing attached itself and adapted to it's new form, that of the Merry Maid. To a creature like this that fed upon thoughts of anger and rage, Conrad Farthing was a good food supply.

The Merry Maid set off without incident, but once it was out of sight of the coast, the ship took over. She turned the wheel off course, into the Mists of the Nocturnal Sea. None of the crew had the strength to turn her back on course, and strange winds came up, blowing the ship even faster along. The crew had no alternative but to wait and see what happened.

Weeks passed. As it became apparent that no land was going to be reached soon, the crew started to construct fishing poles and lines, in hopes of surviving. Mercifully, it seemed to rain often enough for the water to be collected and stored for drinking. Strangely, the ship even seemed to slow down when the crew started to fish, as though it were trying to help them. Such thoughts were quickly abandoned however.

The first mate, a man by the name of Augustus Herald was a suspicious man. He had heard many a ghost story in his life, and he was indeed a native of the land of Tepest, to the north of Nova Vassa. However, he was also a little unbalanced. He was easily angered, and his suspicions were even easier to arouse. As he watched the captain drink himself into a stupor every night he would listen to the ramblings of the man. He heard the captain speaking to the ship as if it were a person, referring to it as a "she" and that "she" ought to get him some more drink, more of the "precious red liquid." The Captain was actually in a drunken stupor at these points, and all sea men worthy of the name know to refer to their ships as women. Also, the Captain only meant his red wine when he spoke of his drink, and in his addled mind, he considered the ship to perhaps be his Merry Maid, who worked in the bar back in Egertus. But to Augustus' ears, this man whom he called Captain was nothing more than a Vampire! The fact that the Captain slept all day only confirmed his suspicions! He ran up to the deck, spreading the news and inciting mutiny with the crew. Although not all were convinced, nearly half were, and they swept down below to kill the evil beast, with Augustus at the head. Only if the Vampire were killed, he reasoned, would the curse on the ship be lifted, and they would be able to return home.

As they swept below decks however, tragedy struck. As they coursed down the stairs, they buckled, and some of the men fell in the holes, causing them cruel wounds, and becoming stuck in the gaping fissures. As the other men tried to pull them free, the ship started to rock and shudder, causing the boards to rub against one another, and literally grinding the men where they were trapped! The death screams were horrible, and the men eventually fell through the holes to below decks where their moans did not cease for some time. This nearly routed the mutiny right then and there, but thanks to the charisma of Augustus, they pressed on, more determined to destroy the creature. Danger struck again however. As they propelled down a hallway to the Captain's quarters, a few of the less frenzied crew members noticed the temperature getting colder. Still, they pressed on, though not as resolutely as before. When Augustus threw open the door to the Captain's quarters and strode in however, disaster struck. The door slammed shut again, with such force that it injured the crew closest to it. The hatch to the deck behind them at the stairs also slammed shut. Then it got cold. Augustus and Conrad listened fearfully to the sound of the men, pounding on the walls and doors, screaming in desperation. Then the sounds slowly died off, and all was quiet. Augustus turned around with righteous fury, intending to destroy the Vampire Conrad himself. He turned on Conrad, hefting a makeshift stake that he had created from a chair leg above decks. At that moment though, the stake was pulled out of his hands and hovered in their air before Augustus. Fearstricken, both men could only watch as the stake turned itself around to face the mutinous First Mate. Then, with tremendous force, it flung itself at him, spearing the man against the wall. The stake pierced Augustus just under his left ribs, and he cried in agony as he hung on the wall. For his part, Conrad could only watch in stunned horror as a multitude of insects swarmed out of the cracks in the walls and the floor and converged on the helpless man. His death screams were not pleasant, and the only thing that Conrad could do was leap into his bunk and cover his head with his pillow as he felt his First Mate's eyes boring into him and the poor man was eaten alive by a million crawling insects.

When Conrad awoke, he thought at first that he had been the victim of a horrible nightmare brought on by excessive drinking. But as he looked to the wall and saw the half-eaten corpse of Augustus hanging by its stake, he knew that it was all too real. The insects were nowhere to be seen, and the

first thing Conrad did was to retch out his window. Then, shakily he walked past the body to his door. Opening it, he saw what had killed the other crew members. A thin layer of frost covered the entire hallway, and all the members of the crew lay upon the ground, covered in the same layer of coldness. All had horrible looks on their faces, frozen to death. The walls, floor, doors and hatches showed the claw marks where they had tried to escape, all futile. Another wave of bile rose in Conrad's throat, but he choked it down and made his way toward the hatch that led to the Deck. But on his way he saw something that horrified him. Forming on the wall below the hatch, the words "Here is your precious red liquid..." formed in fresh blood on the layer of melting frost. Hurrying past and swallowing his revulsion, Conrad rushed up the ladder. Above he found eight men, huddled in the front of the ship. They explained that when the screaming began, they had tried to open the hatch, but it would not budge, as if something held it closed. Then the screaming began, and fully seven of the men went to get on a lifeboat to flee the cursed ship. But when they got the boats in position, the ropes which held them snapped, and the life boats fell into the dark waters below and sunk out of sight due to water they took on from landing improperly. Those same seven men thereby decided as one and all leapt over the edge, hoping to find some sort of safety. Nothing was ever heard of them.

Since that horrible night of carnage, fully three more men have died in horrible ways. The corpses have all mysteriously vanished, but the crew suspects where they are. Strange noises are heard in the hold at night, thumpings and what sometimes sounds like a moan. Since the tragedy, none has been brave enough to go down to the hold to see what lays there.

The men stay on deck, and only go below to their rooms when they absolutely have to. They have learned that if they have to go down, they all go together, for the three that went down alone all never came back up. Now they survive by collecting rain water and fishing. They have not sighted land yet, and they have no hope to. Conrad himself is a despondant man, and sometimes he goes into a rage, cursing the ship which has trapped him here on the Nocturnal Sea. In these times the other crew members restrain him, as he has almost thrown himself into the Sea on occasion. For their part, they do not believe him a monster, rather they believe what he told them, that Augustus was the monster and wanted to kill him to take over the ship. They are safe for the moment, but all wonder when the next crew man will die...and how soon it is.

The Truth.

The truth of the matter is that the Merry Maid is possessed by a Greater Animator. The creature was attracted to the dark energies of one of the murderers in Nova Vassa, and was attached to the coffin of the man. When that coffin was used in the ship, the Animator grew to encompass the entire structure. It feeds off the rage and anger of Conrad Farthing, and causes the occasional death to create these feelings. Soon it will run out of crew members however, and in such an instance, it will allow another ship to get close to board her so that it may have new victims.

The bodies of all victims killed are animated and reside below decks where they wander around, making noise and generally scaring those above decks. They will attack anything that comes down to the hold with them, but they will not pursue it up at all. There are 17 Common Zombies down below, scattered about, some moving stiffly with a bit of frost on them, others have shredded torsos. The temperature in the hold is below freezing, about -5 degrees Celsius.

Common Zombies (17): Int 0; AL CE; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA Nil; SD Immune to sleep, charm, hold, cold, death magic, and poison; MR Nil; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65 each
-The zombies always act last in the round.

The only exception to this is the corpse of Augustus Farthing. His body hangs where it was last seen, but he has not rested easily. His spirit has risen as a dreaded Bowlyn, but it is tied to the room that it died in. Conrad once ventured down to his cabins to reclaim some of his liquor, but the spirit confronted him. When he fled, the spirit followed, but instantly howled in anguish. Turning, Conrad saw a horde of spectral insects flood over the ghost, eating him just as the real ones did when he died. Fleeing, Conrad has never ventured back down.

Augustus Farthing, Bowlyn: Int 10; AL CE; AC 10; MV 18; HD 4+3; hp 23; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6;
SA Cause Nausea; SD Immune to sleep, charm, hold, holy water, and normal weapons; MR Nil; SZ M;
ML 20; XP 975

-Those struck by Augustus must save vs. paralysis or be stricken with nausea. Such victims suffer a -4 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws, fear and horror checks, and proficiency rolls until they receive any form of curing magic which dispels the nausea.

Greater Animator: Int 16; AL CE; AC 5; MV 24; HD Immeasurable; hp Immeasurable; THAC0 1; Dmg 1d12;
SA Spells; SD Immune to mind and life-affecting spells; MR Nil; SZ G (70' long, 20' wide); ML 10; XP 40,000

-Can attack in various ways, from lashing ropes to slamming doors, all attacks cause 1d12 damage. Can exert a force equal to Strength 19 three times per day, for one hour each. Can cast the following spells twice per day: Animate Dead, Animate Object, Weather Summoning, Control Temperature 10' Radius, Control Winds, Cantrip, Summon Swarm, and Summon Insects. The Animate Object power is only usable on items that were on the ship when it set off.

Hammer of Eternal Rest

By Jack the Reaper

Background:

The Hammer of Eternal Rest was created by Amo Pesadilla, the famous undertaker from Il Aluk, in an attempt to atone for the evil he has unknowingly created through the Caskets of the Damned. It is a small hammer, made of a single piece of silver, and has holy runes carved into its handle.

Powers:

The Hammer is used to nail coffins shut. The occupant of a coffin whose lead has been nailed by the Hammer will never rise as any kind of undead, corporeal or incorporeal. The victim of a vampire, for example, will not rise as a vampire, and neither can be animated by necromancers. If used to seal an already undead creature inside a coffin, this creature will be granted the final death and will cease to exist as undead, whether it is a patriarch vampire or a simple zombie. If possible, however, the creature will resist this and fight to break out of the coffin, until he either succeeds or passes away when the last nail is stroke into place.

Used as a weapon, the Hammer of Eternal Rest inflicts 1d4 points of damage.

Against undead, it functiones like a Mace of Evaporation.

Curse:

The Hammer didn't escape the Dark Powers' influence though. For every undead lied to rest by a certain person using the Hammer, there is a cumulative 5% chance that the user will be affected by the Hammer's curse.

The user will start to believe that a particular person he knows is actually an undead, and will do all efforts to seal this person alive inside a coffin and to nail the lead with the Hammer.

Means of Destruction:

The Hammer of Eternal Rest can be destroyed if buried along with a victim inside a Casket of the Damned.

Jack the Reaper

Heart of Darkness

By Stormonu

Introduction

"There seemed to descend a chill in the darkness in the hall as I approached the patriarch's room. My flickering candle could barely light even a fraction of the grand hall of my father. A hall and house that would be mine if the alchemist's claims were true. The cold lump of granite in my hand did not pulsate or twitch as I had been told it would, and I cursed in the darkness that I had been cheated. The patriarch would rise from his bed and curse my head for my wicked desires, not die as I had hoped he would. In silence I approached the double doors to my father's room, and set the candle in the sconce beside the doors. Still, the grey stone seemed little more than sharp, cold rock in my hand.

Yet, as I firmly grasped the latch to the old man's door, the hard stone seemed to soften and warm. A dull, red light began to pulsate from the stone, and so too began to echo the beating pulse of a human heart.

Carefully, I pulled down on the latch, hoping not to wake the suspicious old man. With great care I quietly shoved the door inward, when the creak of the old hinges betrayed me.

"Whose there?" I heard the old man call out as the stone's pulse began to quicken in my hand. The hastened pulse calmed my own. He was frightened. The old man whose stern voice and imposing figure whom I had feared all my life was now at my mercy. It was time for him to feel the fear I had felt at his lash all these years.

A light from the old man's candle lit his haggardly features from beside the bed. Unafraid, I stepped into the room, holding the glowing, pulsing rock forward so that he could see the hate in my features.

"Robert?" came the old man's voice, half a question, half a demand. But as I grasped the fleshy stone, it was I who was in command, not him. He rose, grasping his candle and stepping towards me. Firmly and deliberately, I squeezed the red lump in my hand.

He suddenly stopped short, as if grasped from inside. Reeling in pain, I knew what was happening. The pulse of the glowing red stone quickened in my hand, as I knew did his heart. I began to slowly squeeze tighter. The old patriarch let out a gasp, unable to comprehend his doom. He looked up at me, across the stone, into my eyes. As my hateful stare locked with frightened features, I squeezed the stone even tighter. The pulse, which had been growing in a maddening tone, began to slow as the pressure against it interfered with the ability of the old man's heart to pump on. Something slick and warm began to trickle down my arm, and I did not need to look away to know what it was. It was blood, seeping from the stone.

Finally, I grasp the heart in my hand with all the might available to me. My father gasped one final time, and as the beating of the stone ceased, my father collapsed to the ground, stricken dead."

At that, Robert hung his head low, as the two constables stood dumbfounded before him. As they watched, Robert placed his hands over his ears and clenched his eyes shut. "His death was ruled to be of natural causes, and I inherited the estate, as I had planned. But since then," he stated with gritted teeth, "That blasted heart has not stopped beating in my head."

"Aye," one of the constables replied, "We'll take you to where you'll never hear that heart again." Robert rose as the two manacled him. "If your story is true, which I don't doubt, it'll be to the gallows with you."

Description & Powers

The Heart of Darkness appears to be a rather sharp lump of blackish granite, roughly the size and shape of a human heart. It is an artifact of unknown origin, and of foul powers. When grasped firmly in hand, the heart tunes itself to the heartbeat of one foe within 30' of the wielder. The stone changes consistency and appearance so that it becomes soft like flesh, and glows from an inner red light. The stone pulsates in rhythm to the victim's own heart.

By squeezing the stone, the victim is able to impede upon the victim's heart own beating. Each round that the victim grasps the heart firmly, the victim must make a saving throw vs. death or be slain as their heart ceases to function. The heart temporarily transfers the life energy of the victim to the wielder, giving the wielder a temporary increase of 1 level or hit dice for every 4 absorbed. The gained levels remain in effect for 1 hour, and then fade away.

However, there is a steep price to pay for the use of the stone. Its immediate use causes 1d2 points of damage to the wielder as the sharp edges slice into the hand of the victim, and has a 5% non-cumulative chance that the wound will permanently reduce the victim's dexterity by 1 point, if not magically healed.

Second, the stone must be kept fed. The stone requires the death of at least one victim known to the wielder per week. If not fed, the stone begins to pulse like a beating heart, slowly driving the wielder insane. Each day past the week that the stone is not fed, the wielder must make a saving throw vs. spells or be driven mad by the sound.

The final, and most dangerous drawback to the use of the Heart of Darkness is its greed. Every time it is used, there is a 1% cumulative chance that it attunes itself to the wielder's own heart, instead of his foe. This, of course, almost always leads to the premature demise of the wielder, and the stone then passes on to the next victim.

Stormonu

Iceheart Stiletto

By G.W. Harper

Appearance:

These blades are slim stabbing daggers of the type known as stilettos in renaissance Italy, used primarily as a stabbing weapon. They are made from transparent ice and are roughly 6 inches to 9 inches in length, plus the hilt.

Manufacture:

These daggers require the assistance of a mage capable of casting Enchant an Item and permanency spells as well as Chill touch, Vampiric touch, Proficiency and Enervation. The materials required include water blended from at least two of the following: the water of a bath in which a victim was drowned, the rime from a victim who died of freezing, the tears of a victim killed in hot rage, cold hatred or in malice, 4 hp worth of the bonded wielder's blood (half these hp are a permanent loss) and at least two pints of water from melted snow or ice. The water is magically frozen and the spells are cast as the dagger is sculpted.

Use:

An Iceheart stiletto may be used by anyone without a nonproficiency penalty (though proficient users gain an additional +1 to hit and specialized, etc benefits still apply), as the creation of these treacherous blades include an enchantment to make even a neophyte competent. 20% of these daggers are rumored to bestow proficiency in backstabbing on their wielders, as a thief of 1/3rd the wielder's actual level. Such blades possess intelligence equal to at least 12 a CE or NE alignment and an Ego of 12.

Powers:

Iceheart stilettos are daggers of +2 to +4 enchantment with a bonus of +1 to damage in addition to that enchantment. They do 1d4+1 per strike, plus damage bonus and 1 hp due to chilling cold. 3/day their wielder may evoke the effects of Chill Touch, Vampiric Touch and Enervation. These blades often possess the special powers of wounding and Nine-lives stealing (75%, with nine-lives stealing ALWAYS present) and perhaps 20% possess the ability to function as a dagger of venom. The chiefest power of these blades is the ability to be hidden. The bonded wielder simply pushes the blade into his or her own chest, above the heart, where it sinks in without harm or visible injury (though not without pain), such hidden blades may be drawn forth at will. The second propensity these blades are known for is the tendency of causing the blood of their victims to freeze (requires a turn to thaw, and leaves a fine rime about the wounds of a victim slain by such a blade, the rime also occurs whenever the blade's special powers are used on a victim. If the blade steals a victim's life, the victim's heart freezes solid). These blades shatter and swiftly melt away after having stolen nine lives.

Curse:

The wielder will never sweat and his or her skin is always cool to the touch. The wielder is always evilly aligned (alignment shift happens if needed). It is suggested that making such a blade result in at least one automatic failed powers check and that each killing require a check at 25-40% or more.

Aside from those gained by individual bearers, the wielders of these weapons are cursed with an inability to trust and will always betray and be betrayed by those they come to care for. Almost all of the wielders of these blades have died by murder or poison, most at the hands of their own lovers, siblings, spouses or children.

G. William Harper

Insidious Dreamcatchers

By Stormonu

These dreamcatchers appear similar in many respects to normal dreamcatchers, being small hoops of wood with thread woven about the hoop and decorated with feathers and beads. Insideous Dreamcatchers, however, are easily discernable by the materials used to create the item; the hoop is made of dead wood, the threads have been culled from the remnants of a Memory Web, the "leather" thongs are actually the semi-dried sinew of a beast or human, the beads are bits of bone, and the feathers have been taken from a raven.

When used by being worn about the neck (for smaller dreamcatchers) or placed above the bed (for larger ones) they ensure that the character will be free of evil dreams and protected from creatures that haunt the dreamscapes of Ravenloft (including the influence of the Nightmare Court). However, they also have an insideous side effect - they slowly eat away at the memory and dreams of the character.

For every night spend under the influence of the insidious dreamcatcher, the character cannot remember the events of the night (as if they had a restful night's sleep), and suffers a memory loss of 1 hour's worth of events per day spent under the charm. This will mean that the character will slowly lose his memory the more he/she remains under the influence of this item, until each morning the character awakens, with no knowledge of the previous day's events. Further, for each three nights of sleep under the item, the character will temporarily lose 1 point of INT and WIS. If either drops to zero, the character will be transformed into a Bastellus.

Unfortunately, if the character attempts to divest himself of the item once it has been used, he/she is certain to suffer greivous nightmares, which will have the effect of the wizard spell Nightmare (reverse of Dream). Its use also has a 20% non-cumulative chance of having attracted the Nightmare court to the PC (If it wasn't already being used to protect him from them).

Stormonu

Jumanjí

by B. Kirby

Background:

This game is naturally shrouded in a bit of mystery. Some say that it was created by the Vistani, others say the Vistani "won" the rights to it and have tried to hide the game from all giorgios. The problem is that a particular Vistana became obsessed with finding out the truth about the game, stole it, succumbed to its evil and became a darkling. The Vistana/darkling eventually made his/her way to Souragne and attempted to wrest control from Anton Misroi by challenging him to the game, but was defeated. Prior to the arrival of the darkling, a band of Vistani had come seeking information about the outcast and warned the townsfolk not to play the "game." The specifics of the game were not mentioned to the townspeople, but Misroi demanded to know what the game did, and the Vistani informed the zombie lord that anyone who played the game had the chance of physically being consumed by the game, never to return. This was a half-truth that the Vistani had mentioned, and even the half that was true, was only a half-truth, though they are not aware of its total ability.

Description:

The truth is that there are *two* games, but the Vistani tell no one of this, except those who are of pure Vistani blood. Originally, both looked exactly the same and now only time, weather, wear and tear mark subtle differences. The game consists of nine marbles, two dice and a playing board consisting of 51 squares and a starting point. Each square has a small dimple/ indentation for one marble to rest in. The squares go around the outlying edge of the board and circle back on the inside (basically a spiral effect), with square 51 being for the winner(s) and able to hold four marbles.

Rules of the Game:

The rules are that the eldest goes first and play is followed in descending age order. The player whose turn it is rolls both 6-sided dice and advances that number of squares. If a die rolls off the game board [in game play, off the player's lap, or dice box, or onto the floor, etc.] that die does not count. If both dice roll off the game board, the player only advances one square. If doubles are rolled, the player goes that many squares and rolls again; however, if the dice total is odd on the second roll, the player advances only one more square, if the total is even, the player advances two more squares and passes the dice. You do not roll more than twice in one turn. The first player to get to square 51 wins. The final roll does **not** have to be exact to get to the winner's square. If a player lands on another player's square, the victim (not the current player) goes back to the starting point. The game can have up to four winners.

The Curse:

Every 10th square is mystically trapped (square 10, 20, 30, 40 and 50). Whenever a player lands on one of those five squares, the DM rolls a 10-sided die. If the result is 1-7, the player changes into mist and is sucked into the game, at that square [more on this later]. Every time a person rolls doubles, there is a 1-in-8 chance that this same thing happens. (This offers the game a double jeopardy in some instances. For example, if a character rolls two 3's, the player moves six spaces and the DM rolls an 8 sided die, if a "1" does not come up, everything is okay. If a one

does come up, once the marble is placed and the player is rolling, he/she changes into mist and disappears. However, say the roll of six puts the player on space 28. When the player rerolled, if an even # came up, the player would advance two spaces and land on square 30, thus calling for a 10-sided die roll. If the player rolled doubles and landed on 30 as a result, the DM would roll an 8 and a 10 sided die and apply the results if it came out bad.) If any player of the current game WISHES to know what happened (the character has to ask this aloud), he/she will be teleported to that player's general area, generally within 1 to 10 feet of the person in question.

Note: Asking what happened or demanding to know what happened will not achieve results. The word WISH must be included in the phrase. The game will not suggest or hint this. Also, once ANY player has passed square 10, no one may quit the game until all players have either placed (1st thru 4th) or disappeared. Every time a person disappears, the square their marble is on opens up swallowing the marble and the mist that is the person.

Game 1:

When the people disappear in this game, they -and all the belongings they had on them- go to a random island domain or cluster, never the core. All players of the same game will go to the same island or cluster (if a cluster, they will all go to the same domain in that cluster, chosen randomly). The second and any following people will appear within 1 to 20 feet of the first person that arrived. No one will arrive in a space already occupied. If, somehow, the first person that arrived is stuck in a crowd that surrounds him or her for 20 feet or more, the people following will appear in mid-air. This is the game that is now in Anton Misroi's possession. Only he, the darkling and Vecna are aware that the game is in Souragne.

Game 2:

When the people disappear in this game, they -and no possessions except up to only one weapon that was on them (players' choice)- go to a pocket domain inside the game. This pocket domain (a 25 mile diameter jungle) is more a prison than a domain, as the people inside generally are not evil enough to warrant a domain, though power struggles exist amongst the evil inhabitants, and the person "in charge" is aware each time someone new arrives. The "domain lord" knows their exact direction for the first hour the person arrives and then the ability is lost. If a paladin, lawful good cleric or any LG character of 5th level or higher arrive, the "domain lord" knows their general direction (within 100 yards) once they are within a 1 mile radius of each other. The bad side of this (for the "domain lord") is that once within 100 yards, the paladin, LG cleric or any other LG character of 5th level or higher knows that something corrupt (the "domain lord") is coming after them. They don't know the race, gender or power level, just that it's tracking them. Once within 100 yards of each other, both sides can narrow each other down to within 10 yards. The only known escape is when the current "domain lord" dies, a portal opens up somewhere in the jungle for approximately one hour and leads to a various island of terror. All creatures in this jungle domain -while not *necessarily evil* are much more aggressive. All creatures have a minimum of 5hps per die and encounters are daily, if not hourly. This game is in the darkling's possession; however, Vecna and the Vistani know of its existence as well.

Escaping the Game:

The best way to win is to get to square 51 first, though arriving 2nd, 3rd or 4th has some benefits as well. When the first person wins, a side of the game opens up and a platinum coin comes out for every person who disappeared prior to this player winning. Second place gets a gold coin for

every person who disappeared between 1st place winning and 2nd place winning. Third place gets an electrum coin for every person who disappeared between 2nd place winning and third place winning. Fourth place follows suit by getting a silver piece for everyone that disappeared between third place winning and 4th place winning. There will always be a minimum of one coin coming out in case no one vanishes. Anyone who might be left at this point has a 1 in six chance of turning to mist and disappearing. After all is said and done, all marbles vanish and reappear in the waiting tray. If anyone tries to throw a marble away, it appears back in its last proper spot when no one is looking, including the short time it takes to blink.

Destroying the Games:

The games can be destroyed one of two ways. The first is by dropping them into lava. The second is, if the Blood Dagger (see below) is already destroyed, either game can be burned by fire. The Vistani, the darkling and Vecna all know this. If game 2 is destroyed, all inhabitants are randomly distributed to jungle or wooded areas throughout the demiplane.

The Blood Dagger

Whoever made the games also made a dagger that went along with them. A dagger that is, at least now, if not since the time of its creation, an evil item now referred to as a blood dagger. Whenever the blood dagger strikes a blow that would take a life, the power of the weapon grows. The more people "killed" by it, the more power it gains -including influence over the owner. The blood dagger's strength is measured in levels. The blood dagger begins at level one, but if it "takes" a number of lives equal to its current power level, it rises to the next level. For example, at level 1, a person is "killed" by the dagger. Now it is at level 2. In order to reach level 3, the blade must "take" two more lives. To reach level 4 from level 3, the blade must take 3 lives.

Powers:

The dagger has a level rating ranging from 1 to 5, whatever the level of the blood dagger is, is the bonus to hit, damage and saving throws along with what creatures it can affect. For example, at level 3 (a minimum of three "kills", the dagger is able to hit creatures affected by +1, +2 and +3 weapons, it gives a +3 bonus to hit, +3 on damage and +3 to all saving throws. Each time a new person obtains the dagger, it is at speed factor 2. After the first "kill," it goes to speed factor 1. After the second, it goes to speed factor 0 and cannot be improved. The speed factor will never worsen as long as the same owner possesses it. When a person is "killed" by the dagger, the body disappears, but the clothes, armor, coinage, etc all stay, with the exception of one weapon. No owner has yet to figure out why this is.

The last benefit is that every time the dagger reaches level 5, the owner gains one permanent hit point, up to the maximum allowed by class and level (i.e. a 5th level fighter with a 14 CON could never have more than 50 hps and a 5th level fighter with a 17 CON could never have more than 65 hps). The possessor is immune to the ill effects of the games. The owner is instinctively aware of all the benefits once they come into play.

Drawbacks:

The blade is evil and can be detected (by paladins or a detect evil) as chaotic. By spells it can be detected as either "enchantment" or "alteration." When the blood dagger is at level 5 and it has

"killed" it's fifth victim, it reverts back to level 1. The owner is instinctively aware of this and knows that he/she must get more victims/ sacrifices/ subjects, etc. to increase the blade's level again.

Whenever in a stressful situation, the owner must make a save vs Death Magic or attack the source of his/her frustration, or the closest person if the source is not available. The save is at a minus for every level the blade is at.. Thus at level 5, the character's save is minus five. Also, if the person doesn't kill someone within a week, or resists the initial save, all ability checks are at a similar minus. A new roll can be attempted each day by the character to lessen the penalty by one.

Example: At level 4, if a person hasn't killed someone within a week's time, the owner knows the blade wants blood and all ability checks and saving throws are minus four. If the player makes a successful save vs. Death Magic, the penalty becomes a minus 3. The owner can try again the next day to make it minus 2. The penalty goes away when in combat, but will return if the victim flees. If the dagger is used against undead or a domain lord, the dagger ADDS temporary hit points (if the amount would go over the target's normal max) to the target the amount of damage that would normally have been dealt. To an undead domain lord, the amount is DOUBLED. The possessor is not immune to the effects of the game if playing against a domain lord. Strangely, the domain lord is aware of this, but the possessor of the dagger is not. Lastly, the dagger cannot be thrown away or destroyed while its owner is alive. If thrown away (not at someone to kill or injure them), it will magically appear in the flesh of the owner, causing 1-4hp damage (no STR bonus would apply here).

Means of Destruction:

The only exceptions to destroying it is by dropping the blade in lava (destruction is immediate) or by hitting an undead that has draining abilities (either levels, CON, etc.). If it hits an undead that qualifies, the weapon must make a saving throw of 15 with a +1 bonus for every level of the dagger, but a -1 for every level/CON/etc. that is drained. Thus at level 1 (+1 to save), if it strikes a vampire that drains two levels (-2 to save), the saving throw would be at -1 or 16 or higher. At level 5 (+5 to save) if it hits a vampire that drained 1 point of CON (-1) then the saving throw would be at +4 or 11 or better. If the weapon is destroyed, the last owner loses 1-4 hit points permanently.

The information on destroying the blade naturally does not become known to the owner. Currently, the darkling has possession of the dagger.

Brett Kirby

Lammasu, The Golden Mace

An unusually cursed weapon for Ravenloft
By L.F. De Pippo

DESCRIPTION

Lammasu, the Golden Mace, is a beautifully crafted weapon. Made completely of gold, the head of the mace is carved in the form of a crouching Lammasu, its wings folded in its back. When the command word is activated, the Lammasu extends wings and the special power of mace is activated.

BACKGROUND

A long time ago, in a forgotten world, lived Amarch, a cleric of great piety and great prowess. In that world undead infestation was the norm and certain parts of it were literally crawling with the living dead. Long and bitter were the battles of Amarch against the undead host, but his faith never wavered and his power continued growing. It was during a particular dark time that the superiors of Amarch brought him a gift from his god. A beautifully crafted mace was presented to him, a mace with special powers against the undead. The Golden Mace was not only a powerful weapon for good, it was also aware and intelligent and it was called Lammasu, in honor of one of those noble beings who had helped the church in the past.

A fast friendship was forged between the priest and the weapon and for nearly ten years they fought together the undead host. Each one of them trusted the other with their lives and they even made an oath never to flee from an undead enemy no matter how powerful it might be. During one campaign against the undead they were claimed by the mists. Awakening in an strange land, they were in a mountainous pass. Unknown to them, the Dark Powers had put them in Cavitus the dreaded land of the Lich Lord Vecna. For the Chained God, the aura of goodness of both the priest and the mace were anathema and he decided to deal with the problem. The maimed god appeared in front of the cleric and told him, in no uncertain terms, to flee or he would personally kill him and shatter his mace. Amarch has never encountered so foul an evil, but he stood his ground and prepared to attack the lich god and die, for he knew he lacked the power to destroy the undead monster. It was during that time that Lammasu's courage broke. Using his superior ego, he took possession of Amarch and made him flee. It was blind chance that they fled toward Tovag and outside Vecna's influence, even though the lich did not really wish to stop them, judging that they would bother Kas more.

When they were safe Amarch was angry at Lammasu. They had sworn an oath and they should have honored it. Lammasu argued that if they died no one would fight the undead horde, but to no avail. Angry with his cowardly weapon Amarch said in bitter tones "I renounce thee unworthy weapon, and cast you into this mists that have brought us misery. I name you oathbreaker, may you forever doubt your abilities so your powers will fail your master when they are needed most, until you right the great wrong you have done me". So powerful was the curse that the mist rose and Lammasu was transported to the Core, where it still awaits a new owner.

POWERS

Lammasu works as a mace of disruption with some extra powers. It is a +2 mace of lawful good alignment. Any evil character touching it will receive 5d4 points of damage. If it strikes any undead creature (but not creature of other planes) it may utterly destroy the creature. Skeletons, zombies, ghouls, shadows, wights, ghastrs and wariths are instantly blasted out of existence.

Other creatures roll saving throws as follows:

<i>Creature</i>	<i>Save</i>
Ghosts (1/2/3/4/5 magnitude)	65/70/75/80/ 85%
Mummies (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th rank invulnerability)	20/25/30/60/ 80/%
Spectres	35%
Vampires (fledgling, mature, old, very old, ancient, eminent, patriarch)	50/55/60/65/ 70/75/80%
Liches	95%

Note that lords of a domain (even when they fit the above categories) cannot be disrupted by the mace.

Even if these saving throws are effective, the golden mace scores double damage upon opponents of this sort, and twice the damage bonus (but see hindrances). Once per day it can cause a sunray, as per a sunblade, to issue from between the wings of the lammasu. It requires the utterance of the command word (sunbright) and a round to charge the weapon. It can only be used during daylight hours and only in a place where the sun shines (cannot be used in a dungeon unless some sunlight is present).

The mace speaks four languages and has an ego of 35.

HINDRANCES

Lammasu was cursed by Amarch and as a result its powers have become warped. The mace is extremaly cowardly and will try to avoid any conflict.

- Every time that the disruption power is used it runs a chance of turning against the one using the mace. When an undead succeeds in the saving throw, it will suffer no damage and the owner of the mace will suffer the damage instead of the original target. Those undead who are disrupted automatically will cause the wielder one point of damage.

- The mace used to grant magic resistance (50%) against the powers of the undead. As a result of the curse now the owner saves at -2 against all the powers of the undead and necromantic magic and the magic resistance is no longer in use.
- Lammasu continuously doubts its abilities. When faced with a powerful enemy, such as a lich or powerful undead, it will try to take control of its owner and flee. If that is not possible it will become difficult to swing resulting in a -4 penalty to the attacks rolls.
- When asked for advice it will be cowardly and sneaky. The mace does not want to enter combat against undead and has a pathological fear of liches in general and Vecna in particular.
- When activated, the sunray power will blind (save to avoid) the owner and his allies for 4d4 rounds.
- In a situation when the mace's powers are needed most (DM choice), they will fail. For example if the owner is reduced to 1 HP and hits a lich and dispels it, nothing will happen, regardless of die roll. This curse works only once for encounter.

The mace can be left behind, unlike other cursed weapons, but it will try to stay with a single owner and dominate him if it is ever in danger of being left behind. In those cases an ego conflict arises.

MEANS OF DESTRUCTION

Lammasu can be destroyed as easily as any magical item of similar power. The curse can only be lifted if Lammasu is used to strike Vecna (it doesn't matter if the lich lord is hit or not). Note that Lammasu will try, by all means necessary (including murder), to prevent being taken to Cavitus and once there it will try to dominate its owner and flee. If the mace is used to strike Vecna the shade of Amarch will appear and reclaim the mace. Then they will attack Vecna in a futile attempt to destroy him, giving the previous owner some time to flee.

Luis F. De Pippo

Liar's Kiss

By G.W. Harper
Introduction

Drink to me only with thine eyes,

And I shall drink with mine..

But place a kiss within the cup,

And I'll not ask for wine...

-from an old folksong

"How wrong I was! I thought Ivy cold, a calculating, vicious harpy. How could I have been so blind! When she invited me home after the funeral... I thought her a vulture, a scavenger who was picking the corpse of my love for sweet Emily, her sister, barely cold in the ground... but when she spoke kindly to me and poured a goblet of wine and kissed the brim, murmuring a blessing on her sister's soul as her lips touched the glass and sipped... When she gazed into my eyes with her own glorious emerald eyes as I drank... It was only then that I realized the beauty and the strength in this radiant angel... The devotion which unfolded within my heart was unequalled even by what Emily and I had shared, overshadowed as a candle is dwarfed by the noonday sun. I only know that I burn for her: her eyes, her lips, her dulcet voice. I only know that I would give my honor to kneel at her feet, my life to kiss her lily hand. I the moth and she the sun whose fiery consummation is the apex of my yearning. I must have her! I shall perish if I do not: I cannot live with this longing! Ivy, oh dearest Ivy!"

-Matthias Tolver, written a week after his fiancée Emily Dunson's mysterious demise, one month before his marriage to Emily's half-sister Ivy Dunson, some two years before his own death by a unknown wasting sickness.

Appearance

This goblet of the finest, most delicate crystal is etched around its bowl with scenes of a night-blooming garden whose fantastic flower lure moths to partake of their delights. In certain lights the petals seem to almost unfold wider, their translucent matte fini rosy blush could make one half expect them to be living flowers to the touch, cool in the dusk and fragrant. The flared edges of the goblet are covered with a fine line of purest, palest gold, and its foot, which is formed in the shape of one of the great blooms carved so that it emerges from the stem and is veined and its matte petals edged in the same gold.

Charges

Liar's Kiss is a permanent item and needs no charges, only wine in its bowl and a kiss on its inner rim (before or after it is filled) to function.

Powers

The user kisses the inner rim of the goblet, before or after it is filled, while concentrating upon the type and nature of the emotions he or she wishes the drinker to feel regarding him or her. The

victim then must imbibe the wine and will be affected by a powerful charm effect, under which the victim will feel whatever way the user specified, with consuming intensity, and everything the user says acts as a suggestion spell. The user will seem to have a charisma of no less than 19 to the victim who will passionately defend him or her against all slanders, devoting him or herself to the welfare of the user. The chosen effect is usually a passionate romantic attachment, but others, such as parental or filial devotion, or the respect of a student for a teacher or the deep affection of a trusted friend are possible. The effects are permanent, unless the user is forced to release the victim (a verbal statement will do so) or a Limited or full Wish is employed. Note that the death of the user alone will do nothing except possibly make the killers some very determined enemies!

Curse

The curse of the goblet is that it gradually deadens the user's ability to feel love, caring, friendship or respect for anyone, or eventually any positive emotion. The user may command the adoration and respect of many, the devotion of everyone he or she ever wished for, but it will all turn to ashes. In addition, a Powers check of no less than 20% is recommended per use. A Wisdom roll at each use, with a cumulative -1 per use of the goblet's powers may be called for to avoid the drain. As the loss progresses, fear, horror and madness checks may be required.

G. William Harper

Ogre fist

By R. Sweeney

History

This oaken club served well her master for many a winter's raid on the halls of Belfour, where her mistress would take sport and meat from the Baron's men. Tall and willowly like the wavering trees of her abode, she stood six and a half feet tall with wild hair falling in tangles to her waist and beyond. Naked but for a tunic cut of the flesh of men, the fell witch sanctified the enchanted wood with bath of blood.

The Weapon

Crafted from black heart wood of an ancient tree in a desolate forest, the wood oozes a slick greasy oil and assaults the nose with the stench of rotted detritus. Those who have laid eyes upon the maul claim the wood itself bleeds, for traces of this redish brown oil stain the hands and clothes of her user.

Powers & Drawbacks

Ogre's fist grants the user a random Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution adjustment per round. In short, the wearer rolls a new ability score on 3d6 every round, adding 1 point for every 10 points of damage she has done with the club that day (only damage applied against creatures that can bleed are applicable: a vampire counts, a zombie does -since it can leak a bloody ichor-, a flesh golem does -since it, too oozes a blackish fluid-, but a straw golem or a skeleton do not, nor do any manner of plant creatures, even if they leak sap). If the new total is higher than the PC's own, they gain a boon form the dreaded club. The Maximum ability score supplied by the club is 19, regardless of the die roll. However, at this point the user is driven insane: a raving berserker (+1 attack/round, +2 to hit, and an NPC under the DM's control) until slain or the club is removed from them for no less than 1 week.

(The PC will resist having the weapon taken away, even at peril of her life. If somehow miraculously separated from the weapon, they try to regain it by any means at their disposal. -- They roll 3d6 with no adjustments every round to determine their insane-driven strength... thus at some point they suffer a weak moment Str 3 and at some point they have 18 strength and a fair chance to break bonds. They are completely irrational for this week... recovering only after a full week or resistance as a full NPC. -- Even 'recovered' characters make a madness check when reunited with the weapon. Failure has predictable results.)

The weapon also bears a unique enchantment. Kinship bond, the witch called it. If facing a creature not harmed by normal weapons, the club can harm them if it 'tastes' (is dipped in) fresh blood of a creature type that shares primary or secondary kinship with the resistant creature. This ability lasts for 1d8 rounds after 'tasting' that creature's blood. At the end of that time, blood from a *different* creature must be used to restore the Kinship bond.

For example:

Torg is fighting a werewolf. He cuts his own skin and pours some of his blood on the weapon. For 1d8 (the DM rolls this in secret) rounds, that club can hurt werewolves (who have kinship

with men.) Torg could also have used the blood of a wolf. After a few rounds the club no longer harms the werewolf, and Torg cannot use his own blood again to reform the kinship. One would normally say use the werewolf's spilled blood, however, the club is a blunt weapon and doesn't draw enough blood from the victim under normal use. Thus Torg decides to attack kill a wolf nearby with a bladed weapon (so it bleeds) and use that pool of blood to get another precious 1d8 rounds. Note, this may be hard to do while a werewolf is clawing at your face.

Robert Sweeney

Pendant Of The Gilded Donjon

By G.W. Harper

Introduction

"If he broke my will, his will would claim me, and I would run to his side, believing then and ever after that I loved him and was eager to be his bride...but, deep inside, some part of me would be screaming... and it would continue screaming until the very end of days"

-paraphrase of a quote from one of the books in David Edding's *The Belgariad*

"How dare she! I devote my life to her, lavish her with affection, live my every moment with her foremost in my mind, and she betrays me thus, so callously! I was gone for but a day or two on some trifling matter of business, and I find that while I was away, she let that dithering whey-faced buffon Viers take her to the ball! She claims it was innocent, that he's no more than a childhood friend who accompanied her through a dance or two. But I saw the way he looked at her at the banquet her parent's gave at our betrothal, I saw her smile at him... How dare she smile at another so! How dare he covet that which is mine! I shall see that this never happens again..."

-Galver Ferratin, wealthy, elderly landowner, shortly before wedding his fiancée Elsabet Wellsten, a few weeks before the slaying of Ricard Viers in his bed, still unsolved. The killing weapon probably an oddly slender blade, like a stiletto or knife made for a feminine hand. The wound was placed as if the wielder was embracing Viers during the stabbing, impaling him through the heart from the side.

Appearance

This pendant is magnificent by any standard, a oval of amber perhaps two and three-fourths inches long by nearly two inches wide, the stone clasped by a loose cage of strands of gold wire, simply but gracefully formed.

Within the amber, trapped with its wings at fullest extension, a butterfly is trapped within the pale golden stone, its wings deepest inky black and shot with silvery gray and gold, umber and copper, emeralds and aquamarine, sapphire, jade and amethyst and ruby red as new love. The pendant is suspended from a fine chain of small, interwoven links. each strand twined through and linked to others, so that many tiny shains forms the complete length, joined by a strong key at the ends.

Charges

None needed

Powers

The Pendant has only one power, but that one is a terrible one. It causes the person whose throat it is clasped about to be compelled to behave as if utterly devoted to the one who put it there and to obey every command he or she gives. In no way, by word, action or deed can the victim reveal anything other than love and devotion for the user or disobey the user, though the victim's

emotions are not changed, only prevented from expression. Thus a bride could loathe her husband and yet be forced to live her whole life through as the perfectly loving, faithful and devoted wife.

The pendant saves against all things as 'Metal, hard' with a +3 bonus, and its clasp is Wizard Locked closed as if by a 14th level mage, unless the user removes it or a priest of 15th level or higher or a mage of 18th level or higher casts Dispel Evil followed by Remove Curse. Remove curse or Dispel magic only allow the victim to speak his or her true feelings for one turn or allows those feeling to be read in the victim's mind by magic or psionics.

Curse

The user (the person who placed the necklace on the victim) is gradually transformed into a succubus or incubus and becomes obsessively jealous of the victim. In addition, members of the victim's preferred gender, species, etc. begin to fall in love with the victim, triggering the user's murderous jealousy and rage. The victim is immune to all Enchantment/Charm spells, except for those cast by the user, even those of creatures with natural charm powers

G. William Harper

Pigments of Immortality

By J.M. Baker

The origin of these pigments supposedly dates back to before Ghastria entered the Dark Realms over 200 years ago. Their existence was only theorized until 749, when a bottle washed up on the shores of Mordentshire, containing this note:

" To my dear family,

As you well know, I have long felt that the key to immortality could always be found in art, as its true form remains pure with the passing of centuries while the mind that creates it does not. I have searched texts, museums, and private collections for this key, yet find it I did not. There was one last place to look: the beautiful yet distant halls of Ghastria. Although traveling across the Sea of Sorrows was difficult and treacherous, I have finally reached the shores of the land in time to partake of an opening of the Marquis Stezen D'Polarno's celebrated gallery. The beauty of such works are unparalleled. The place breathed with the lives given to produce such works of passion, ranging from the carnal pleasures of the beast to the most profound insights into the human condition in the world. And yet, the secrets I yearned for were not revealed to me upon the canvas or chiseled in stone.

They came from the words of the Marquis' lecherous assistant, the Baron Camar D'Marosso. I had watched his interest shift from the walls to my body as the night progressed. Having learned that there is much power in the swaying of a man's heart or at least baser things and unwilling to let the search for my goal become lost to a lustful leer, I let him approach me.

Despite, and most likely, thanks to the stench the local spirits left on him as a haze of debauchery, he took me aside, away from the gallery's masterpiece, spoke of my quest, and informed me that he did indeed hold the secret to eternal life, and that it was held within a mystical version of paint. He told me that if I were to come to his room within the hour, he would be willing to work its magic upon me, so that he could savor my truth and beauty for all time. He gave me the key to his bedroom and told me to meet him there. Although I fear his desires are unsavory and beastly, I am quite sure that if he can give me such a gift, I shall be able to withstand his torments and survive him, able to live for eternity. I feel sorry, my dear family, that I will most likely be unable to visit you again, but I will be quite able to care for our ancestors, and our family shall thrive until the end of time. Please give a fitting reward to my manservant for delivering this notice, and consider my leaving you not a time for mourning, for I have not died, but a time of triumph and celebration over the frailties of flesh and mind.

Martissa de Montreux ,,

The Truth:

As a side effect of trying to break his curse, the Marquis Stezen D'Polarno has created, with the help of the Baron Camar D'Marosso, a process of refining pigments that can completely capture the essence of life, along with mind and body, in a painting. If the Pigments of Immortality are used to paint a model person or object, the model is removed from this world and entrapped in the painting. There, the model ceases to age with time as a mortal, but can stand centuries of life as long as the painting is intact.

With the proper command word and sprinkling of water on the painting, the subject is freed and lives as a regular person again.

However, this process is not without hazard. The painter must be very well skilled in the process. The painting releases the subject exactly as the subject is painted on the canvas; although the insides and rear of a subject are assumed to be made and are released when the word is spoken, a poor rendering of the subject will result in a poorly-rendered version of subject in life. Thus, if the painter lacks a true understanding of color, the color of the subject when released will be incorrect, and shadows may fall incorrectly on the subject's features. Furthermore, the painting only stores the parts of the subject that are painted; to preserve a person in entirety, the entire body must be painted.

If the subject's eyes are painted, the subject can still see. If the ears are painted, the subject can still hear. If the painting is touched, the subject can feel it. If the head is intact, the subject can still think and experience emotion. However, the subject obviously cannot move.

The painter must paint the subject in one sitting, and rather rapidly, because the subject is removed from the world and placed on the canvas while the subject is being painted. This can be quite painful for the subject if the painting is not completed with haste.

Some people believe that Ralpuchio the Painter has figured out the formula of the Pigments of Immortality, and uses them with horrible effects.

Also of note is that since the discovery of the note, someone has noted that there is a painting of a nude bust of Martissa de Montreux hanging in the D'Polarno galleries, in which she smiles in a quite lustful, inviting, unladylike fashion.

John M. Baker

Pipes of Doom

By Stormonu

History

The Pipes history stretches back to Heward of Oerth, creator of the famous organ that bears his name. In ages past, after Heward had created the magic organ, he and his fiancée would spend many evenings listening to the unearthly music and magic they created. But when the rats gnawed away at the inner workings of the organ and corrupted it, Heward could no longer play the organ as he had. His fiancée began to waste away from the melancholy of not hearing its music, and Heward was forced to take action.

Heward crafted the pipes in an attempt to revive his fading love. By the time he completed the task, his lady was a pale, faded, white reflection of her former self. He did play the pipes for her, and it brought her a smile, but it was too late to save her. Thus, with a peaceful expression did she pass away. Heartbroken, Heward laid her to rest with the pipes at her side. Heward was thought to have wandered the land in madness for several years following these events, but the final fate of Heward is unknown, and not the place for such a discussion.

Since the years of the pipe's burial, they were sought out by thieves, who defiled the lady's tomb and made off with many other treasures. Eventually Heward returned briefly to bring the tomb raiders to justice, and the thieves were caught and hung, but from there the pipes were not with them. In ages to come, they were passed on from person to person, their abilities practically unknown.

However, the pipes were eventually abandoned at a bridge near a shallow stream, where they had been left by a young minstrel who had played the pipes and attracted a Nymph's attention. Enraptured by the music player, she charmed him to come into her river. Unfortunately for the two of them, he left the pipes on the shore. The nymph died at midnight, and her charmed victim died shortly afterward, drowning in the Nymph's undersea cave.

It was here that [Petri O'Toole](#), now known as the Piper, found the instrument. He knew stories of the Nymph in the river, and quietly stole away with them, fearing they might have belonged to the Nymph.

Complete Powers of the Pipes:

The pipes allow the player to use any spell from the enchantment/charm or illusion/phantasm school, providing he knows the proper music score to activate the power, and has the Musical Instrument (Pan Pipes) of at least a score of 12 to play the instrument. The following spells can also be used:

Dancing Lights (1st), Dimension Door (4th), Haste (3rd), Power Word Kill (9th), Slow (3rd), and Sending (5th). The user can duplicate the effects of 1st-3rd level spells at will, as long as the pipes are played. For spells of 4th-7th level, their effects can be recreated once per day, and spells of 8th level can be reproduced once per week. Finally, the effects of 9th level spells can be reproduced once per month.

The chance of discovering the correct melody is 5% per point of intelligence of the player, +5% per level of the player, and -10% per level of the spell. On a result of 96-100%, a wild surge result (consult Tome of Magic) occurs.

It should be noted that any time the pipe player rolls his Musical Instrument score exactly has played a tune that is unparalleled. The result negates the effects of any charm, melancholy (such as that caused below), and temporarily raises all of the listener's ability scores by one for the duration of 1 hour.

Curse

However, there are serious downsides to playing the pipes. First, anyone who hears the pipes must save vs. death at -4 (including the player) or become addicted to the music they have heard. If they do not hear the pipe player's songs again, they will lose 1 point of Con each day until they die. If they hear the pipes on any given day, no Con lost occurs, but lost Con is not regained. Further, the spirit of Heward's lost fiancée still haunts the pipes. She manifests herself in the form of a Banshee at the stroke of midnight, seeking out and slaying those who have heard the music of the pipes, and disappearing at the cock's crow in the morning. Her touch drains like a vampire's touch, and she can be kept once per night. Those slain by the spirit do not rise as undead themselves. However, the spirit cannot harm the pipe player, and cannot approach within 10' of the pipes when they are played, as if it were a Protection from Evil 10' Radius spell.

It is said that to destroy the pipes, one must return the pipes to her lady's grave, and reconsecrate the grave site. Only then can both the body of the lady and the pipes be burned, and thus destroyed. Until such occurs, no force can appear to harm the pipes.

This item is extremely powerful, though if properly played, its curse can be very unforgiving. However, if a DM will be allowing a group of PCs to acquire the item, he must ensure that the majority of its abilities remain a mystery - especially ones that would upset the campaign - or rule that certain spells are unavailable through the use of the pipes.

Stormonu

Portraits of the Darklords

By C. Phipps

Appearance:

The portraits of the Darklords have two likenesses: the first one is the appearance of the Darklord, always showing the profile of the individual at his finest and most idealized state. The second one is the way the Darklord or any talented mentalist sees it. They see an image of immense horror, showing somehow all the foul deeds that made the Darklord what he is (ie Strahd would be standing on the corpses of his brother, Tatyana and his guests, a look of lust and bloodthirst on his face). Anyone who sees this horrofic scene must immediately roll a horror check (darklord included) and those of less than 13 wisdom must make a madness check.

Background:

Ralpuchio was the most talented painter in all of Ghastria, exceeding the skill of the Marquis of that realm himself. He was somewhat egotistical and said that his work could capture the life essence of anyone he painted. These ill chosen words were to seal Ralpuchio into his fate. Hearing these rumors, the Marquis sought to test this boys' skill and perhaps even free himself of his curse, so he "invited" Ralpuchio to paint a portrait that could match depict him when he was still vibrant and full of life. The Marquis' plan was then to transfer his life essence into that portrait, retaining his youth and his emotions forever. Tortured an forced to paint the most horrific images the twisted noble could think up for a full year (until the Marquis day of "change") as a way of preparing him for his task, Ralpuchio developed a burning hatred for the Darklord but also a terrifying fear of what would happen to him should he fail. So, as last desperate attempt to escape his fate he made a terrible pact with the forces of the Demiplane the day before he was to paint the Marquis. Asking for the knowledge that would allow him to paint as the Marquis wished, he also asked for vengeance. The Powers granted the fisrt part of his request on one condition: that for all eternity he would serve the Darklords he so despised; they then spirited him away from the Marquis's manor in East Riding. Since then some 123 years later, he has appeared throughout the demiplane, his evil mystical portraits becoming legend. This is one of his most terrifying creations for it gives the Darklords something that is truly terrible. Freedom... if only for a while.

Note: The process to make a "Portrait of the Darklords" is known only to the "mad artist" himself and must be tailored to each darklord it is supposed to represent. A process that requires Ralpuchio (who is unageable due to one of his foul creations) to know the full sordid history of the lord in question and spend at least four hours in his presence painting uninterrupted. The portrait is also said to made of materials best left undiscussed. At the end of the process part of the Darklords soul is infused with the portrait giving it the following power, despite its name it can actually be done to non darklords though the devices main power becomes rather pointless.

So far only seven of these items are known to exist.

Powers:

1. A darklord who fuses his soul with one of these portraits gains the power to leave his domains borders, albeit temporarily. His domain does not dissolve or "switch over" to a

new lord since his sport is technically still there. He maintains all non land related abilities and may be a danger to any other lord. Restrictions on this power by the DP are extremely painful: the darklord can leave only during a Solstice or Equinox and must have gazed upon the portrait for a full day beforehand. Since the image is so horrifying and guilt inspiring, this is extremely difficult and at the end the DL must make a madness check. Whether he succeeds or not is irrelevant: he may leave his borders to chase offenders, gather magic, or do really nasty things. However the strain inspired by this view is immensely painful: each day the Darklord will lose 1 point of strength, dexterity, and constitution. Should any be reduced to zero, the DL will be placed into a coma and returned to their domains, where they will regain their forces at rate of 1 lost point per day. Should all scores be reduced to zero, such is the ultimate end of the lord. Thus many lords are extremely cautious when using this item.

2. The painting also forever will protect the wielder from old age, should he not be protected from it already. Not ageing a day after the portrait is created. Each year however the image "somehow" becomes more repulsive to the darklord causing most to keep it under lock and key.
3. The portrait is indestructible as its lord, existing as long as they do, and it regenerates after being damaged. Should either Ralpuchio or the lord be slain however, the darklord's painting would burst into flames (all of them if the former).

Note: Aside from Strahd whom the rumors that he possesses one will not die out, no one can say for sure which darklord has one of these portraits and woe to any foe of these men who thinks he is safe when he crosses the border... the demiplane has gotten even more dangerous.

Charles Phipps

Shalaktor's Book of Undead

by L. de Pippo

Appearance

Penned long ago in a forgotten world this book is as dangerous as The Gathering Cloth, in its own subtle way. The book is 50 cm high and 30 cm wide and 5 cm thick. There are more than 800 pages but the book always keeps the same thickness.

No designs appear on its covers, which are made of pine wood, and only the sigil of Shalaktor is on them. When magic is detected the book radiates a strong aura of abjuration. Nothing on it gives a clue about its dark nature. When the book is opened a fluid script reveals its secrets.

History

Shalaktor was the greatest wizard that his world have ever known. He researched hundred of spells and improved existing ones. But he was only a mortal and mortal people die. So in the end he turned to the black arts of necromancy, for he was afraid of death. The Banished One, a powerful god? of his world appeared in dreams to him and promised not to let death take him. But he would have to create new and improved soldiers for his armies and set the instructions in a book so anybody could do it. Nearing death Shalaktor accepted.

The Banished One was true to his word and he didn't die of old age. After 20 years of hard work Shalaktor completed his book, and presented it to the god. Inside the book where the rituals to make the first iron, wizard and death skeletons.

But the Banished One wanted proof that the book worked and used the ritual contained in the book, to turn Shalaktor into the first death skeleton. Before the transformation was completed Shalaktor asked why, and the Banished One simply replied "I am the destroyer of your world, and you will be the first of my new army, go and spread my word".

Shalaktor took the book, and the mists took him, he appeared in Darkon and tried to conquer it. At the same time the Dark Powers took the Banished One and granted him the domain of Neverending Darkness.

Shalaktor tried to conquer Darkon and was quickly destroyed by Azalin, who took the book. Because the lich could not understand it, due to his curse, he put it in the Black Vault where it laid for many years, until Rudolph Van Ritchen came. A wizard companion of him took the book and fell for the dark promise of power. After he created numerous iron skeletons and attempted a coup in a little Falkovnian town. Drakov sent an army and he too fell to the Falkovnian soldiers. After the battle one of the commanders took the book and sold it in Hazlan to a Guardian wizard. After falling to its curse the Guardians destroyed him and they kept the book until Hazlik destroyed their monastery two years ago. A little dark figure was last seen escaping from the flames with the book. The book currents whereabouts are unknown.

Contents

The first hundred pages are devoted to the study of the standard type of undead: skeletons, zombies, vampires, etc. After a month of study any class, no necessary a wizard, gains the necrology, anatomy and netherworld knowledge for free.

The second part contains nearly all the spells necromantic spells that deal with life energy and undead: Chill Touch, Corpse Link, Corpse Visage, Corpselight, Detect Undead, Locate Remains, Animate Dead Animals, Command Undead, Preserve Death, Summon Undead, Undead Servant, Cloak Undead, Speak with Dead, Spectral Hand, Attract Ghoul, Embalm, Ghoul Touch, Skeletal Hands, Undead Mount, Resist Turning, Call Spirit, Call Undead, Hold Undead, Vampiric Touch, Mummy Touch, Skull Watch, Skulltrap, Undead Control, Death Sight, Double Undead, Undead Summoning (all), Enervation, Charm Undead, Mask of Death, Summon Spirit, Control Death Tyrant, Disrupt Undead, Shadow Summoning, Animate Dead, Bind Undead, Graft Flesh, Magic Jar, Disguise Undead, Improved Skull Watch, Ghast Creation, Nulathoe's Ninemen, Undead Familiar, Animate Dead Monster, Corpse Host, Death Spell, Reincarnation, Ghoul Gauntlet, Imbue Undead with Spell Ability, Lich Touch, Transmute Bone to Steel, Teleport Dead, Undead Regeneration, Psychic Drain, Control Undead, Finger of Death, Bloodstone's Frightful Joining, Zombie Double, Create Crypt Thing, Death Link, Defoliate, Ghoul Lattice, Create Spectral Wizard, Temporary Resurrection, Undead Aides, Unlife, Create Watchghost, Energy Drain, Create Minion, Wail of the Banshee, Undead Creation, Master Undead.

The third part has instruction on raising and resurrecting human and demihumans without a chance of error.

The fourth part is the most important for a necromancer. It contains a number of rituals destined to the creation of new undead types. In this pages are the rituals to create iron zombies and 3 new kinds of skeletons: death, iron and wizard.

To create Iron Zombies the common materials for the ritual are not expensive, costing about 250 GP and they always require the hearth of a person who respects law and good. Two iron zombies can be animated during a single ritual. The newly animated zombies are under the complete control of the creator.

To create Iron Skeletons the common materials for the ritual are expensive, costing about 1.000 GP and they always require the hearth of a person who respects law and good. Up to ten iron skeletons can be animated during a single ritual, that requires 10 corpses and 20 pairs of arms. The newly animated skeletons are under the complete control of the creator.

To create Wizard Skeletons the common materials for the ritual are expensive, usually 5.000 GP and they always require the sacrifice of at least 1 permanent magical item (not potions or scrolls). Up to five skeleton wizards can be created and they are under the control of the creator. But they gain a saving throw vs. spell every year to break free of the spell.

To create a Death Skeleton the requirements are very specific. First the wizard must buy materials that costs 10.000 GP. Second during a full moon he has to defile a temple dedicated to a good deity. Additionally the caster must have the hearth of a Paladin and a maiden of unspoiled virtue.

This two beings are joined during the ritual, which lasts 5 hours, to create a death skeleton. They are never under the control of the creator.

Curse

The book is not cursed per se. Rather it tempts the reader with the promise of unlimited power over life and death. Most of the necromantic spells in the pages are extremely rare and many wizards would give tons of money to learn them. But the knowledge is dangerous. Just perusing the book is cause for a Powers Check with a 1% chance of failing. Learning any of the spells causes another check with 3% chance per spell level of catching the dark powers attention. The reader is not aware of this.

Raising people from the death with the help of the book is dangerous. While the character automatically makes the resurrection roll, his alignment changes one step towards evil. That is not explained in the book and usually is a surprise for the resurrected adventurer. No matter what spell was used the caster loses 3 HP permanently, another fact that is not written in the book. The loss of vitality is not noticed unless the caster suffers damage. Once he is injured he immediately knows that he has lost HP but cannot know that it was because of the book.

But more dangerous than any of the above are the rituals. Not written in the book is the fact that each ritual drains a variable number of constitution point from the caster.

Creating iron zombies or skeletons results in the loss of 1 point. Creating wizard skeletons results in the loss of two points, while creating death skeletons results in a four point loss and a save vs. death magic or be transformed in a skeleton wizard.

The first four rituals merit a powers check at 50% chance. But the last ritual is, in itself, three acts of ultimate darkness (defiling the temple, killing the paladin and the maiden and the ritual) requiring three powers check at 100%. The fact that the death skeletons are not controlled by the wizard can be considered a curse (that little tidbit of information is not in the book either).

Final Notes

The book is impervious to any type of physical and magical attack, with one exception. Cutting it with scissors made with the bones of Shalaktor will permanently destroy it, as will the death of the darklord of Neverending Darkness.

Afterword

To the most honored keeper of the scrolls in the Great University of Sry Raji.

I send the last extract of a journal that was found in Lamordia. I am sorry by the delay but the calligraphy was nearly illegible.

"The cursed book, it promised everything but in the end it gave me nothing. I am hunted by my own creation and i cannot escape. Cursed ritual and cursed book. But he will not have me. Better to die in the cold winter than in its icy claws..."

The journal was found clutched in the hands of a strange looking skeleton. The only surviving witness, nearly mad and death from frostbite, claims that the skeleton was made of iron.

Luis de Pippo

Slayer Daggers

By R. Sweeney

Nightslayer Background:

Night didn't always go by his nocturnal pseudonym, but having grown up an orphan on the street, he saw only darkness in humanity. He began making his living by the only means available to orphans... thievery.

It started with small things, but quickly escalated. Soon, he had attracted the attention of organized crime. Those were tough times, when Night learned the truly dark things men will do for money, power, and fame. He hated his employer. He hated his victims. He hated himself. To escape the masters whom he hated so, Night faked his own death, appearing to die trapped in a fiery conflagration as his compatriots fled. He already had what he needed to make his own way: a single book of magical lore, which promised him a new hope... a new life.

But alas, the new life was as the old. The necromancy he learned from the book slowly began to turn him.. to change him into a thing he couldn't recognize. Horrid, ugly, reviled by all. He was forced to eek out a living among the diseased, malformed, and decayed.

Life embittered him, life taunted him... wanting vengeance on all that dared to be beautiful and happy, he began creating a dagger to invision all his hatred for man and mankind. The dagger was enchanted by necromantic means and required the life sacrifice of many people. But the last one required for completion shocked him.

He had captured a family, a family that was happy, healthy and smiling. He only needed one to finish his work. The woman huddled to protect her child. And the father volunteered to be the one.. if it would save his wife and child. Night did not understand this. Never in his life had he known someone to be self-less. He could see no reason why the man would choose to die.. and it vexed him. As he prepared to plunge the dagger to feed the last soul to the dagger.. he saw the hurt in her eyes. The sadness. Remembering his sadness at having no family.. he couldn't bring himself to finish the final deed. Rather, he killed himself with his creation... knowing that only he truly deserved to die.

Nightslayer Powers

The dagger, Nightslayer wouldn't be enchanted to hit those who are evil (since we can't detect that in RL, but rather +1 to hit for every failed powercheck of the attacked creature... +5 vs Lords of a Domain, +1 vs someone with cat's eyes...It does this, out of the self-hatred of Night for what he had become. Night's soul within the dagger is evil, but cries out for the ruthless destruction of the corrupt.

Dawnslayer Background:

Dawnslayer would an opposite story, where Night's twin Dawn (female) was given every good thing but grew vain and self-righteous. In the end, Dawn's attempt at a holy creation was as perverted and twisted as her heart. She has sought vainly to create a masterpiece and rather created as dagger which took her own life. Dawnslayer is a good dagger that destroys 'heretics'

and 'hypocrateds'. It is so strongly LG that it must destroy any others who claim to be good but it finds wanting. It judges good-priests and always finds them wanting.

Dawnslayer Powers

Priests struck by the dagger are ranked according to their standing with their god. Against saintly god priests, the dagger is merely +1 against fallen good priests (those who were good priests at any point in their life) the dagger is +5. Everyone else falls somewhere in between, but faithless lay-people are never at more than +2 to hit.

If someone is slain by the dagger and reincarnated or ressurected (or even brought back from death's door) their alignment is permanantly LG.. and they are a NPC. (LG fanatic).

Final Notes:

Because these two were twins, the daggers interact strangely with each other. While wielded by one person, both of the twins' souls mingle.. and become one again, complete and whole. When this happen, the daggers lose all magical plusses, but the wielder gains a Wisdom of 19 so long as both are held. (Together the two daggers find what each was missing in the other's soul.. and find peace.) However, their alignment is True Neutral and they lose their original class in favor of a druid class.

This druid class starts at 0xp but can gain xp normally as a druid would. When both or one dagger is sheathed.. the alignment and class return to normal (at the former level).

Robert Sweeney

Spectacles of Photographic Reading

By Jack the Reaper

Background:

The origin of those magical spectacles is unknown. Most scholars believe they were created for the good purpose of assisting magic-users, but were later corrupted by the Dark Powers. Some, however, claim that the evil curse they bestow upon their user was the Spectacles' creator original goal.

Manufacture:

The frame of the Spectacles is made of pure silver, crafted by a master smith. The glasses are made of rare elven crystal. Despite their fragile appearance, the Spectacles are impervious to most kinds of attacks.

Powers:

The Spectacles were created for the use of wizards and mages. Other character classes will find them useless.

The Spectacles' major power is accelerating spell memorization. Instead of sitting long hours in front of the spellbook, trying to memorize spells, the wearer of the Spectacles just has to scan his spellbook briefly before going to sleep. This takes only one round for every spell level, e.g. one round for all the first level spells, one round for all the two level spells, etc. After sleeping a good, undisturbed sleep, the mage will awaken with all of his spells fully memorized in his brain. Note that the Spectacles don't enable the wizard to memorize more spells than what he is normally able.

This ability of the Spectacles can be used not only for memorizing spells, but also for any other written information. The wearer can scan a text at an incredible rate (a page in two seconds), and to have all the information in it added to his knowledge.

In addition, the Spectacles enable the wearer to Read Languages and Read Magic. The Spectacles' powers are activated simply by wearing them.

Curse:

With time, the wearer will become more and more dependant on the Spectacles. Reading will be more and more difficult to him without wearing them; the letters will appear to him very blurred and faint. Gradually, the wearer will also start to lose his normal sight, until he becomes virtually blind. Only while wearing the Spectacles does the wizard regain his normal sight. But at this stage, the Spectacles will start playing foul tricks on the wearer: they'll add little but dangerous changes to the things the wearer read. For example, if a wizard tries to memorize beneficial spells from his spellbook, the Spectacles may alter the runes he reads, add or delete some of them, so that the wizard will actually be memorizing necromancy spells, even though he has none in his spellbook! He will not notice that, until trying to actually cast one of them. Or the wizard may see innocet letters or journal written by his friends as evil conspiracies they plan against him, until he becomes truly paranoid. With time, the Spectacles tricks will become even

more pronounced, such as bestowing the equivalents of Death Sight, Phantasmal Force, or Phantasmal Killer upon the wearer, until he can't distinguish truth from illusion anymore. But he has no choice, for if he doesn't want to remain blind, he must use the Spectacles...

Means of Destruction:

It is said that the only way to destroy the Spectacles is to write the word "Shatter" seven times in a particular pattern, using a Quill of Law, and then to read it using the glasses. This poses risk to the wearer, however, for the shattering crystal can easily injure his eyes. He must make a saving throw vs. paralyzation to avoid this. If he is successful, the Spectacles are destroyed and the wizard's sight is restored to him.

Jack the Reaper

Sword of the Clan ApBlanc

By J.R. Lowe

Appearance

The Sword of the Clan ApBlanc is a five foot bladed Claymore that was once used by Tristen ApBlanc to murder his son Morholt in the year Forfar year of 1833.

History

In the year 1833 of the Forfar calendar, Morholt, the second son of Tristen ApBlanc and Lady Isolt, had made friends with a Priest by the name of Duncan ApDuguid. Without the knowledge of his parents, Morholt planned on joining Duncan's church, an order of warrior-poets who worshipped Morrigan, Celtic goddess of war. Morholt did not inform his parents of his decision until the summer of that year, and as he did so Tristen simmered with rage. Soon thereafter Duncan was invited to visit the young ApBlanc at the Lord's Tower when Tristen hatched the plot to kill the young Priest as he slept. Unbeknownst to Tristen, Duncan had complained to Morholt that his bed was uncomfortable, so, being a chivalrous and kind young man Morholt gave up his own bed to Duncan, and in return slept in Duncan's bed. When Tristen crept into Duncan's room and slaughtered the young man, he was shocked to discover that he had murdered not Duncan, but his own son.

For over a year the sword was hidden by Tristen in the highest level of the castle's south tower, for a shard of metal discovered in Morholt's side would forever link the sword to the murder. It wasn't until the death of the Lady Isolt that Tristen recovered the weapon for his own use. Soon thereafter the blade disappeared from his possession, its current whereabouts are unknown.

Powers

The Sword of the Clan ApBlanc has become enchanted following the murder of Morholt. It is believed that a portion of the lad's spirit resides within the weapon, thus giving it powers to be used against his father and creatures similar to him.

The Sword of the Clan ApBlanc functions as a Claymore +2 (+3 vs. 4th Magnitude Ghosts/+4 vs. 5th Magnitude Ghosts). If the Ghost encountered is of Magnitude's One through Three (as classified by VanRichten's Guide to Ghosts), the sword continues to act as a +2, if the ghost is of Fourth Magnitude the enchantment increases to +3, and if the ghost is of Fifth Magnitude the sword acts as a +4.

The Sword of the Clan ApBlanc also possesses several other enchantments linked to Morholt and his beliefs. As a follower of Morrigan, Celtic goddess of war, Morholt was to be a Priest and a Warrior; thus the blade retains powers directly related to both.

- 1/day the blade grants the wielder *Cure Serious Wounds* (as per the priest spell). The spell is initiated by uttering the phrase "Oh, Morrigan preserve us!"
- 1/week the blade can be used to Inspire (as per the Bard ability) the wielder's followers or allies, as well as the wielder. When initiated those within the group will begin to hear the playing of bagpipes, inspiring them to fight well in battle. This grants the party +1 on

attack rolls, or a +1 to saving throws, or a +2 bonus to morale. The effect lasts for a total of 1 turn, or 10 rounds. The spell is initiated by uttering the phrase, "Oh, Morrigan be with us!"

- 1/month the blade grants the wielder *Speak With Dead* (as per the priest spell). The spell is initiated by uttering the phrase "Oh, Morrigan speak with us!"

Drawbacks

Unfortunately for the wielder, the Sword of the Clan ApBlanc has been altered with several other abilities upon its entrance into the mists of Ravenloft.

When faced with a battle including more than ten combatants, the Sword of the Clan ApBlanc will function as a *Cursed Sword of Berserking*. The wielder will go into a warrior rage; attacking the nearest creature and continuing to fight until dead or until no living thing remains within 60'. The wielder is allowed a saving throw vs. spell with a -2 penalty in order to fight the rage. It is unknown if the sword can be exorcised of this curse through a remove curse spell or a wish spell, as with normal *Cursed Sword of Berserking*.

The Sword of the Clan ApBlanc ceases to maintain any of its magical abilities for 1d10 days if it is ever used against a Priest of any good alignments.

If the wielder of the Sword of the Clan ApBlanc ever willingly flees a battle, he/she will be despondent for 1d4 hours. The PC will suffer a -4 penalty on all ability checks and -2 penalty on all other checks during this time. The PC will often utter the following phrase, "Morrigan will not tolerate fear in her followers," for the remainder of the time he is despondent.

The Sword of the Clan ApBlanc will not function as a magical weapon until the missing shard is returned to it.

Means of Destruction

The Sword of the Clan ApBlanc can be destroyed in two different ways.

- The Sword of the Clan ApBlanc will be destroyed when it causes the ultimate destruction of darklord Tristen ApBlanc;
- The Sword will cease to exist if an adventurer can travel back to the time of 1833 on the Forfar calendar and prevent the murder of Morholt ApBlanc.

Jarrold Ray Lowe

Tapestry of Shadow

By M. Morris

Foreword

The Tapestry of Shadows is the prayerbook that essentially got Grianna drawn into the mystis in the first place. Within Carthasana it was a book of vile darkness.. Its powers could only have magnified once drawn into the mystis.

Tapestry of Shadow

One of the older books of the Telzoan religion is a relic known as the Tapestry of Shadow. This small tome contains the prayers and rites required to receive from the dark gods some of the most baleful spells ever devised.

These spells can be cast by the specialty priests of Senda, the clerics and mystics of the Court of Shadrea regardless of the spheres they might have access to. Whether or not the priests of other religions can receive these spells is at the sole discretion of the Dungeon Master.

The book has covers which are made from the scales of an ancient shadow dragon, and as a result the entire book seems to waver and flicker with the available light. In darkness the book is as black as ink, whereas in direct light the whole book becomes opaque and unreadable. The faithful of Senda can read the book without shedding any light on the subjects contained therein, but others who need light to read will find that light literally drives the macabre inscriptions from the page, only to return when the light is removed.

The history of the Tapestry of Shadow is a lengthy tale of hatred, manipulation and vile cunning. Created in the Year 4620 in the Kingdom of Telcasholme, far to the south in Losineris, as the Shadrea court made her way northwest during the great exodus the book was captured for a time by the forces of the Necromancer of the Calishmere. During this time he recorded 3 wizard spells into the pages of the tome: Summon Shadow (5th), Death Spell (6th), Shadow Walk (7th). Either by design or by Senda's dark will the formulae of these deadly spells mutated into prayer and ceremony such that a priest who studies this tome can use any of the three of these spells as if they were priest spells.

After a time the book passed out of the Necromancer's possession and back into the hands of Senda's following even as the peoples who worshipped her completed their northwest migration to the island of Telzoa. There the book remained as a cornerstone of the faith until recently. Grianna the Shaded stole the book from her superiors. A mid-level priest of Senda's following, she was also known for her incredible vanity and her wish to preserve that vanity was followed up by using the spells of this book (Dark Ritual and Vampiric Metamorphosis) to turn herself into a vampire. However, her choice of victims attracted the attention of the Dark Powers, and having won at least some rage from Senda for the murder of her superiors the Goddess of Night removed her hand which usually protects her children from the retribution for her deeds and Grianna and the book found themselves in Ravenloft. There they apparently remain at present.

Within the pages of the book are the procedures required for the composition of the robes of ceremony used throughout the Court of Shadrea.

The following new spells are also in the covers of the book.

Dark Ritual

(Necromancy, Sorcery)

Level: 2

Sphere: Necromancy

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Special

Casting Time: Special

Area of Effect: 20' radius around the victim.

Saving Throw: None

This gruesome spell drains the vital energy from a victim and converts it into spell points for the use of the priests using the spell. The victim of the spell must be tortured and subdued violently for at least six hours in order to gain sufficient favor for this spell to work. Once it is begun it takes one turn for every experience level of the victim to complete.

The dark ritual provides the spell energy to cast a single spell of a maximum level the victim could cast if he was a priest: Hence a 14th level victim provides the energy for a spell of up to 7th level. At the conclusion of the dark ritual the priest will have the ability to begin casting his chosen spell within the next hour.

In theory this spell allows a 1st level character to get off a 7th level spell, but remember that subduing a 14th level character is next to impossible for a low level character.

The victim of this spell has their soul completely obliterated, and as a result they are irrevocably dead, and nothing short of a wish spell combined with a resurrection can bring the character back, and even then they are 90% likely to be permanently insane as a result of the spell. Enemy priests are rarely targeted by this spell as it has a 1% chance of failure per level of the priest tortured with this spell. The use of this spell in Ravenloft is considered an act of ultimate evil. This should be noted because more than a few priests have been pulled into the mysts for particularly macabre uses or victim choices for this spell.

RAVENLOFT: Reading any amount of the prayers of this vile spell prompts a horror check. If a good aligned character attempts to memorize this spell they must make a powers check. As detailed above, the actual casting of Dark Ritual is an act of ultimate darkness. However, it is not to the DM's advantage for each and every evil NPC to go monstrous with this spell.

Character who are already well on the road to the gallows may use this spell without automatically failing powers checks, although they still must make a check.

Witnessing the casting of this spell requires a madness check in Ravenloft. Further, all assistants in the torture of the victim of this spell must make powers checks.

Skullfire

(Necromancy)

Sphere: Combat, Necromantic

Level: 2

Range: 0

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1 turn + 1 round / level

Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: None

Using this spell allows a caster to fill a human skull with the fires of rage. That skull then begins to attack all available opponents. It will engage opponents of the caster as long as the caster maintains concentration, but if that concentration is lost for even a moment the baleful creature turns upon its creator and seeks out her death.

These Fire skulls have the following Monster Manual Statistics..

AC: 2

Movement: 18 (Fl B)

Hit Dice: 2+Creator's Level

THAC0: Creator's

No of Attacks: 1

Damage / Attack: 2d4

Special Attacks: Flame

Special Defenses: Standard Undead

Magic Resistance: Nil

Size: S

The skulls have the THAC0 of the priest that created them. They can be turned only if a priest rolls high enough to have turned their creator.

These baleful creatures cannot move more than 120 yards from their master: If they do they fall lifeless to the ground.

If the master of a Skullfire loses control of it they can attempt each round to regain control. They have a 50% chance + their level of doing so.

It is possible to use gourds (i.e. squash, pumpkins and the like) instead of skulls as a material component to this spell, but these are less effective, having an AC of 6 and 2 hit dice without adding the creator's level. Even then, the bone shard of a skull is still required to cast the spell. The other material components of this spell are unholy water and the priest's unholy symbol.

RAVENLOFT: Should a domain lord employ this spell the skulls will remain under his control regardless of any distractions: no concentration is required. Double the hit dice of any skull created in Ravenloft. The spell prompts a powers check.

Vampiric Drain

(Necromancy)

Sphere: Necromantic

Level: 4

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1 round / level

Casting Time: 1 round

Area of Effect: Creature(s) Touched

Saving Throw: None

Through the use of this incantation the caster drains the life energy of the foe and adds it to his own. In this respect the spell is no different from Vampiric Touch (Wiz 3rd level), however this spell is considerably more devastating to the foe. When touched the foe loses a level of experience and the caster gains 1 die of hit points equal to the hit die used by the touched foe (i.e. if a warrior is touched 1d10 hit points are gained). This drain lasts for 1 hour per caster level. If a creature is drained to 0th level (or hit dice) he falls unconscious immediately and must success at a system shock roll or perish.

RAVENLOFT: Two levels are drained / gained by this spell. A powers check is called for when this spell is cast.

Wall of Hopelessness

(Necromancy, Illusion / Phantasm, Shadow)

Sphere: Wards, Guardian

Level: 5

Range: 10 yards

Components: V, S, M

Duration: 1 turn + 1 round / level

Casting Time: 5

Area of Effect: Up to 10-foot square / level

Saving Throw: Special

This insidious spell erects a shadowy barrier that saps the will, strength and life force of anything that dares to enter (or is unfortunate enough to be caught in) it's grasp. As with a wall of fire the caster chooses a facing direction for the wall's powers to be felt.

Those approaching within 40 feet of the empowered side of the wall will feel a chill that drives down to their very souls. Natural animals must roll morale checks or panick, they cannot be convinced to approach any closer to the wall. Those who step within 30 feet of the barrier will take 1d4 points of damage from the unearthly cold, save to negate. Those foolish enough to press within 20 feet of the wall will lose 1 point of strength per round at this distance until drained to half strength. Each round they may save to negate. Those within 10 feet of a wall of gloom lose a level of experience each round, again until they are drained to half the level they entered the wall with. At this distance there is no save against the strength loss, there is however a save from the level drain to negate it each round.

The lost strength and levels are regained very slowly, one per day if a successful saving throw is made that day.

The material components are a crushed black pearl of 5000 gold piece value.

The caster is never affected by his own wall of gloom. Walls of Hopelessness cannot be cast in a brightly lit situation, but any lights introduced to the wall after it's creation dim and eventually flicker out, even if continual (if continual they resume once removed from the wall's area of effect).

RAVENLOFT: Again, this spell is significantly augmented by the Domain of Dread. Those within 30 feet of the wall will take 3d4 points of damage, save for half. Those within 20 feet lose a point of strength and a point of constitution, save at -4 to negate. Those within 10 feet of a wall of gloom lose a level of experience every two rounds, but the loss is *permanent*. In Ravenloft the spell can be cast in full daylight, but it reverts back to its tamer form. Casting the spell prompts a powers check.

Vampiric Metamorphosis

(Necromancy)

Sphere: Necromantic

Level: 7

Range: 0

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Permanent

Casting Time: 1 night

Area of Effect: The caster

Saving Throw: Special

By means of this dark sorcery the caster changes herself into a vampire permanently and irrevocably, yet still possessing all priestly powers held during their life.

To receive this spell requires that the priest have served the forces of night faithfully in their life, and that they are willing to continue to do so during death. The spell requires that a live human sacrifice be prepared before casting. During the casting that person is slain by the caster, who then eats the innocent flesh of the one so slain. A system shock is rolled.

If it is successful, the caster undergoes the transformation and is henceforth a creature of the night for all time. If the system shock fails the caster falls dead.

As a result of the transformation the caster's strength immediately improves by 2, to a minimum of 18 / 50 (19 in the Dusk system) and a maximum of 19 (24 in Dusk). Charisma improves by 1.

The material component of this spell is the victim, who must be innocent in all possible respects (Shadreans prefer kidnapped children for this).

RAVENLOFT: The newly created vampire is a "fledgling" in accordance to Van Ritchen's Guide. And, a powers check is required for this spell.

Michael Morris

The Doll

By R. Sweeney

Introduction

In the aftermath of the fire, poor orphans are gathered around coughing and choking. Young Marie, the cleric of the Sainted Mother, tends to them as best she can soothing their fears, drying their tears.

As you look upon the remains of the orphanage, now engulfed in flames, a young girl walks up to you with a tiny doll in her hands. "Hi!", says the young girl.. pehaps 5 or 6 years old with innocent eyes and light blonde hair. "Thank you for saving us, you are so very brave and all. And strong too.." she giggles. "My name is Silva, and I'd like to give you my dolly.. she's real nice and she's all I can give you ... here take her."

At first your impulse is to let her keep the doll.. but then you take a good look at the fine craftsmanship. This doll is indeed valuable to a collector, fetching a price of perhaps 100 coins. And you did risk your life to save them after all...

Description

"Dolly" as Silva calls her special friend, is an item of interesting enchantments. She has been meticulously hand-crafted from the finest wood by a master artisan. A cowl or hood, carved from the same wood as the rest of the doll, covers her head. The head was crafted in such a way that the face can be turned to the right or the left to bring another face to the front. All total, there are three such faces.

The first face, Inceptia, resembles an youthful girl with a mischievous smile and a twinkle in her eyes. The face of Inceptia belongs to a girl no more than seven summers old, but the eyes hold the gleam of intelligence beyond her years.

The second face, Summa, bears the weight of twice as many seasons as Inceptia. She wears an expression of a stern matron or nanny. Her hair has been faintly touched by the first gray touches of time's hand.

The third face, Apropos, wears more than twice the years of Summa. Apropos has been twisted by time into a knobby, bitter old woman.

The doll has a 'hood' made of wood and the face part rotates to display one of three 'porcelaine' appearing faces, which are actually polished ivory from a dragon's tooth.

The rest of the doll's body appears to be cared from an unusual type of wood that even druids have a hard time identifying. Perhaps a druid with a bit of experience would realize that the wood itself came from an undead treant.. but it would be highly unlikely that anyone would notice this from a casual examination of the doll.

Of course, like all good dollies, the triple headed dolly would be dressed in nice doll clothing (a dress of some sort). Her feet and shoes would be solid pieces of wood, but painted red, her fingernails, 1/4" long but sharp, would be painted white.

A very close examination would reveal that the joints are hooked together by metal, a metal painted pitch black. Attempts to look further inside the doll would be futile, since it resists being opened by any delicate means. The legs and feet cannot be disassembled.

Powers

Inceptia, is Telekinetic. (A psionic item, the porcelain mask which makes up her face.) It is she that animates the doll to give it mobility.

Summa, the second face, is more mature and subtle. Summa is also a psionic item, but she has a genius level intellect and Telepathic powers.

Apropos knows both the formula for spells (alho she cannot cast them herself) and is a meta psi item. Apropos possesses psychic surgery power.

Being Psionic, the doll does not radiate magic.

Inceptia: PSP 56

Sciences: Molecular Rearrangement PS 13

Telekinesis PS 15

Devotions: Animate Object PS 15

Body Control PS 10

Levitation PS 15

Molecular manipulation PS 15

Inceptia uses her Molecular Rearrangement powers to repair and improve the body of the doll. Originally made of normal wood, Inceptia has given the doll a skeleton of adamantium. She has also improved the joints for smoother and easier motion. Inceptia can animate and move the doll body using nothing more than her Telekineses thanks to a complicated clock-work mechanism she has designed for the diminutive coven's physical vessel.

Since the doll lacks a true biological body through which to channel Inceptia's telekinetic talents, this face tires quickly when exercising her gifts. Inceptia, despite the best efforts of the other two heads, also lacks discipline. She is lazy. She prefers to use simple Telekinesis, which she finds the least taxing. The dominant influence of the other two heads, however, force her to spend long hours using Molecular Rearrangement when it suits their purpose.

Summa: PSP 64

Sciences: Mindlink PS 13

Domination PS 14

Devotions: Attraction PS 14

Contact PS 18

Id insinuation PS 14

Invincible foes PS 15
Intellect Fortress PS 18

Summa prefer the world of nightmares to the waking one. Her powers feed off of fears and nightmares. Unlike other Psi items, Summa can only regain her expended points when she rides a dreamer's nightmares.

Anyone sleeping within 10 feet of Summa must make a saving throw vs paralyzation or Summa will twist their dreams into warped demented dreamscape where insanity reigns. The id and the superego of the afflicted person clash in a bloody heartless war for domination of the dreamer's psyche. Twisted forms and vile monstrosities rage against one another and the sleeper's avatar, his dream presence.

Apropos: PSP 56

Sciences: Empower PS 6
Psychic Surgery PS 13
Devotions: Cannibalize PS 12
Convergence PS 18
Psychic Drain PS 12
Receptacle PS 13

Apropos, twisted by time, practices a manipulative evil. She teaches the dark arts of sorcery to those who own the doll. She also uses her Psionic powers to further the evil goals of the nightmarish doll. Her power of receptacle enchants a gem in the body of the Doll to contain another 54 PSPs. With this added store of points and the power she can drain with Psychic Drain, she strives to Empower other dolls to live under her command. (She has not succeeded yet.) Her powers work slightly differently than one would normally expect. Her ability to Cannibalize drains constitution points from whomever she is touching at a rate of one point per round. This power cannot cause the death of her victim, however. It only functions on sleepers. Due to the genius level intelligence of the coven, each face is able to communicate telepathically with the others. It is this special ability that allows Apropos to utilize her convergence power when attempting to empower an item. It can also be used to psionically implant one of Summa's Telepathic powers into the target.

With her ability to perform Psychic surgery comes the ability to awaken the psionic abilities in another person. Apropos always implants a telepathic power when she uses Psychic Surgery (after all as long as she's in there, she might as well do something interesting.) It is worth noting that nothing actually stops the dolly from empowering other toys and dolls so long as they are newly made. It does take quite a while for the triple witch doll to do this, however, and is most easily done in a situation where lots of people are sleeping nearby. Apropos being able to "Cannibalize" other's constitution and also possessing "psychic drain" to further draw psionic power.. perhaps from children sleeping in an orphanage.

Goals of the doll:

The three faces of this witches coven were originally carved from a dragon's tooth by the three hags of the Blackwood. One of these hags, rather than exploring the ways of magic, took to the

art of Psi. When she combined her psionic powers with her sisters magic, the result was this accursed item. The hags unleashed it onto the world to cause mayhem wherever it might go. The item desires the death of the hags which gave it birth. Only when the secret of its creation is destroyed will it feel secure.

Story of creation:

"Ah, my sister, heart of the woods blackened. I have a plan.. Yes indeed.. A plan to spread fear, mayhem and dismay among those petty mortals." Thus spake Illithar, the aged crone.

"And how, do you plan to do this, you old goat! Did your maggot ridden brain forget how we were routed by Gregor in your last ingenious scheme?" barks Clotho. "Your warts must have spread to your brain.. We lost Gutha, we are not three anymore, oh, festering dunghill. With the coven dissolved, our powers reduced."

Illithar bares her fangs, snarling at the stick-like Clotho, whose skin resembled moss-ridden bark more than anything else, while her hair hung sparse and grey .. Like spider's webs draped over her like a cowl. "Complements will get you no where my hideous sister. You are forgetting, the dolt that you are, about our youngest sister, who dwells not far from us."

Clotho scratches a few flees from her hide and gingerly flicks them towards her gray-green skinned sister. She scratches a large wart on her lower earlobe and growls in reply, "But...curse your slimy armpits, she's weird...all strange...her magic, it just isn't like ours."

Illithar snarls in return, "But...a witch is she, if a weird witch it be. We need another, we need to be three for the binding... Lord Gregor's young son has born a set of twins and soon the celebration will be held.. Where Count Raphael and his sister Delphi are anointed. Afterwords, they will present gifts to the new babies. Gregor knows to be wary of us and magical things... but our dear sister's enchantments will not show to his warlock's tests. We will make a doll... a little toy for Delphi.. Three faces, three witches, a small coven that will lie under Gregor's very nose. They will teach Delphi, they will take Delphi, they will make Delphi like us what Gregor hates. In this way, we three shall avenge the death of Gutha."

"But," returns the ugly one's sister...'Will the younger agree to this, after we threw her out...'" Illithar smiles, "She will have no choice in this."

The doll faces were carved from the ivory of an ancient dragon tooth while the wooden body was crafted from a undead treant's flesh. The wood was treated and tempered with a vampire's blood and set in a vat of brine for 27 days and 18 hours while the three witches worked their spells.

Suggested way of destruction

They alone, knowing the secret of its creation, know how to unmake the doll. First, the doll must be blessed by a pure priest and then soaked in holy water for as long as it as soaked in brine. Next, the wood must be treated with the blood of a paladin, then the remaining wood buried under the roots of an ancient treant that no longer moves. Any other method provides only temporary reprieve, as the essence of the three hags that comprise the doll force Inceptial to reform the doll out of whatever material is present, a procedure taking at least a week to complete.

Determined efforts to examine the doll via implements and tools designed to disassemble it will be met with resistance by the doll, Telepathically and Telekinetically.

Upon temporary destruction, the doll can be seen to have a bizare inner construction as portions of the wood itself seems to have been transformed to adamantium.. lending the doll its bizare resistance to physical damage.

Final Notes

The Doll, malicious like a coven of witches, manipulates others to gain power. While one would expect the doll to wish to be 'real' that's not the primary motivation of this little coven. IT/they want to destroy their creators.. so that the secret of their making (and thus unmaking) is forever lost.

Adding a multiclass through Apropos' guidance makes a lot of sense.. otherwise she can't very well tempt non-spell users. Originally, the goal was for Apropos to collect weak minded (weak willed) children and adults.. perform psionic surgery to attempt awakeing their Wild Psi Powers .. and teach them either Black Magic or Psionics as their nature allowed. She's attempting to gain minions. But in the hands of a PC, the ability to start learning spells as a multiclassed character seems interesting.. perhaps a good way to add an Anarchist class to a human PC.

The adamantium may seem a bit overboard and can be replaced with attempts to change their nature into flesh. However, the Molecular manipulation power cannot create living tissue, only dead tissue duplicates, and a rough duplicate at that. Still, nothing will stop the three from trying. And an articulated bone skeleton would be easier to move/manipulate.

Robert Sweeney

The Dragon of Bones

By C. Phipps

The Dragon of Bones is a title of a unique portrait painted by a so far unknown painter. It is a huge picture appearing as nearly six feet tall and ten feet wide. The portrait itself is of a huge Silver Dragon which sits on a mountain of skeletons and partially devoured bodies in a large black cave. Several of the less decomposed corpses are strikingly lifelike. The dragon despite its type appears with a greedy and hungry look on its face, blood dripping from its mouth. Despite all it is a magnificent wyrm with shining scales. Still it is a disturbing piece and not one for the faint of heart, especially those who know how to use its vile powers.

Background:

The Silver Dragon Gaynede was born on Krynn some two centuries ago, a young wyrm noted for his pride even among a especially vain group of dragons.

During the War of the Lance Gaynede and a knight riding him destroyed a powerful wizard and his tower at severe cost to themselves. Both were badly wounded and Gaynede suffered scars all over his scales and wings which refused to heal.

Shifting through the towers wreckage to try and find something to help them (in addition to magical booty) Gaynede found a carnal house of dead humans. Discovering the Black robes journal he found the human had made a magical process that would allow him to gain the skills and strengths of others but it required the eating of their flesh. Initially repulsed, he soon came to the realization he was dying of his wounds and choosing that a human was less valuable to the war effort than himself, he murdered and devoured his knight, healing his wounds and gaining his strength in the process.

Gaynede was wracked with guilt over his deeds but used the magic again and again over the War of the Lances course devouring whole hordes of goblins, ogres and human mercenaries, slowly becoming a wyrm stronger than dragons twice his age.

During the Great Chaos war his own brother discovered his practices when he came across him just as he devoured an entire human trading party. Attacking him for he believed him possessed by Chaos, Gaynede slew his brother. Horrified, he tried to perhaps "preserve his essence" devouring him. At that moment mists came over Gaynede and he appeared in Sithicus. When Lord Soth found out about the Wyrm in his domain (and the several small villages that had been devoured) he sent a painter that had offered his services to bring him in the open (believing that once he devoured the painter he could attack) but was surprised to find the man, Ralpuchio, return several hours later with a huge painting of the beast who was now nowhere to be found.

The painting has then passed through several hands leaving a trail of dead foes and corpses that is truly staggering. The most recent possessor is Lucien Arapada, a merchant willing to trade in anything...

Powers:

The portrait (titled *The Dragon of Bones*) possesses inside it the essence of the Dragon Gaynede who has been entrapped there for several decades now. Gaynede however can be temporarily freed from his prison with the sacrifice of not less than three sentient creatures within 24 hours. These poor unfortunates are dragged into Gaynedes portrait "domain" and are devoured (appearing as the bodies in the painting): at that Gaynede arrives on the outside world and will do the bidding of his summoner until the end of the sacrificial period (another 24 hours) when he is drawn back into the painting.

Oddly enough however Gaynede is totally invisible and inaudible to all but his victims (as can be guessed he is usually used for assassination or large scale destruction). Those who try and fight (usually suicidal) or flee are usually branded lunatics by the surrounding citizens (at least until their charred or partially devoured corpses are found).

If Gaymede (use the statistics for a Very Old Silver Dragon even though he is but 250 due to his magical devourings) is slain, he will immediately return to his portrait and will heal for the next twenty four hours until he can emerge again. He enjoys his status (being admired all day by crowds and going out for some bloodthirsty work) and will seek out those who ruin his "fun" (by killing him or stopping) whenever he emerges.

[PCs will have to be wary to avoid being arrested if they try and attack in the center of town something that is not there to others (Gaynede enjoys this toying)]

Suggested Means of Destruction:

- Ralpuchio the Painter must be found and he must retouch the painting to show Gaymedes death by his foes.
- Foes must be "sacrificed" by the paintings owner and once in Gaynedes lair may slay the dragon permanently.

Charles Phipps

The Hand of Silence

By M. Graydon

Appearance:

This hand appears to be a many fingered hand at first glance (i.e.. a hand with all fingers straight up and spread apart as if waving). However, at the end of each finger is an eyeball growing right out of the flesh! An eyelash from each eye makes up the wick for the five candles.

Manufacture:

The hand must be cut from a man who died in his sleep. It must be cut by the blade of an experienced Assassin. After this is done, a Spectral Green Hag must be found to enchant the foul thing. The Hag will of course demand some foul service, and then will proceed with the enchantment. The supplicant will have to supply a scroll with the first level Wizard spell, "Sleep" scribed upon it.

The Hag then takes the hand and tosses it onto a burning grill for 65 minutes. (This doesn't harm the magical hand.) On the 66th minute, she tosses the scroll on. The scroll will burn slowly from the outer edges in, for a full round. When the scroll is burnt, the supplicant must place his hand upon the grill. His hand will, of course burn, but his blood will douse the flames and he shall have long black scars across that hand for the rest of his life. When this is done, the Hag will pluck off five of the supplicant's eyelashes, and then take his blood to draw eyes on the fingers of the hand. After this, the supplicant must voluntarily fall asleep in the presence of the Hag, and when he awakes, the Hand will be resting on his chest. All the eyes on the fingers will have become real, not drawings in plasma. The supplicant will suffer as if he had failed one powers check for his evil deeds.

The hand will burn for 13 hours (78 turns) before going out.

The hand must be lit in a certain order, the thumb first, followed by the index finger, and so on. To be extinguished, it must be blown out by a sleeping man's breath.

Powers:

When a finger is lit, the lighter must have a specific person in mind. That person will immediately fall asleep with no saving throw. (The user knows this because the eye on the finger closes.) The person will not awake till that candle is extinguished.

Or, the Hand may be used like a knockout tool. If the user wishes, then while travelling anyone who sees the Hand lit will fall asleep. But there must be no other sources of light present, and all fingers must be lit.

Curse:

As the Hand is used more, the user will begin to hallucinate. There is a 5% chance cumulative per time the Hand is lit that the user will see wispy and ethereal forms in the darkness around him. Prolonged exposure to these will cause the user to make a Madness check.

Means of Destruction:

The hand can only be destroyed if a sleeping person does something to it. Anything a waking person does will cause the hand to regenerate, but if a sleeping man were to break a finger by rolling over it, then that finger would remain broken.

It isn't known for sure, but it's suspected that there is some link between this hand and the Nightmare Lands.

Mark Graydon

The Mask of Might

By M. Graydon

Introduction

Late at night, the wind whistled strangely, stranger than it did during the day. Jarzala noticed this, and smiled grimly. It would make his last act in this realm that much easier to perform. Jarzala stood over the corpse and reached a clawed hand towards its face. He grasped the chunk of dead flesh, pulling it away as easy as if he was picking up a piece of parchment from the ground. Tossing it absently aside, he peered with his burning eyes upon the real object of his search.

The moonlight gleamed off the ivory of the skull that lay before him.

It had taken the Hezrou a long battle to kill this particular Lord, and he was not necessarily the better for it. But the vile Werewolf had searched him out and attacked him, and thus he had been forced to defend himself. But that defense came at a dire price. Now the very land about him was collapsing. He was too far from the border of the Mists to make it there in time. Thus, he decided to cause one last act of chaos that would hopefully live on much longer than him.

Grasping hold of the skull, he carefully used his claws to cut into the sides, and using a combination of strength and twisting, he wrenched the bone trophy from its resting place. Then he licked the vile bone clean of gore with his tongue, and pulled out the strips of leathery material he had taken from that strange land that the mortals called The Nightmare Lands. Affixing it to the back with a special word of power, he admired his creation. Then, laying it upon the ground, he slit his throat open and bled upon his dire creation. With his last gasping breath, he begged the evil powers he served to bless this object of evil. They did not respond. But the Dark Powers did. They spirited the mask away in a breath of mist, and dropped it in the Core, where it would be found soon enough. And thus, the Mask of Might was found, and its evil legacy spread throughout the Core.

Description

The Mask of Might appears as a gleaming human skull, though it is somewhat mutable, having appeared as a face covering with nothing but holes in it, and a grinning bone face at other times. It is a sentient thing, imbued with the spirit of the Hezrou Tanar'ri that created it. It has a pair of dark leathery straps affixed to the sides, and these stretch to accommodate whoever holds it.

The mask is an evil thing, but it desperately needs a wearer. Thus, it will do everything in its power to tempt mortals to put it on. Saying things like "Only I can help you..." It will not necessarily lie, but will use any method of temptation it can. If it cannot, then it usually remains silent.

Once the mask is placed on the wearer, it fuses into his head. The leather straps are seen to enter the skin at the sides of the face, and the whole thing looks ghastly. Basically, the mask has now become part of the being's face. The process is painful, but causes no actual damage.

Powers

When the mask is worn, it confers the wearer with a strength of 20. This causes an instant increase in muscle mass, and thus the being may need new clothes and armor if he was previously small and weak. It also gives the being bonus weapon proficiency in the Club, regardless of class.

The mask is also very knowledgeable about the lore of monsters of the lands, and has a 75% chance of answering any question that is asked by its wearer on the nature of a particular monster. In general, the mask knows the history of a creature, how it is created, what it intends to do (generally), and what a possible cure for any of its attacks may be. It always answers any question of how to kill it with "Hit it hard." The mask flashes red whenever it answers a question. It has no knowledge of the various darklords of the land. If it doesn't know the answer, the mask only remains silent.

The mask also has another power that it can use three times per day. It can change its wearer into a raging beast, so to speak. The wearer's strength automatically increases by 2 points (22) and the mask changes more. Now, it seems to cover the wearer's entire head, and merges into the skin at the suddenly much thicker neck. The whole head of the wearer is white, with the eyes and mouth glowing with a strong hellish red. During this time, the wearer is in a berserk rage, akin to that of a lycanthrope's bloodlust. The wearer gets a +2 bonus to hit and damage on top of those already provided for high strength. The being however has a +2 penalty to armor class, on top of any provided for high dexterity. The wearer will attack the closest thing to it, friend or foe (DM may allow the wearer a Wisdom check with a -2 penalty to identify friends from foes each time he attacks), in an attempt to slay it. Also, while in this rage, the wearer will use the most brutal and violent methods to kill that it can. To resist this berserk rage, the wearer can make a saving throw vs Spells. Usually, the mask goes into "rage mode" whenever the wearer witness or experience some nasty bloody event (DM's call to what "nasty" could mean).

Curse

The mask also has some drawbacks, of course. It will constantly try and tempt the wearer to enter areas of danger in hopes of going into its bloodlust. It will also try and subconsciously steer its wearer towards acts of violence and brutality. The slightest thing can set the wearer off, and while the wearer has full control of his actions, the DM should tell the player that he feels an urge to cause blood to spray.

If the wearer ever kills a creature (while not in bloodlust) in a very violent way, then it needs to make a save vs. polymorph with the following modifiers:

Wearer has suffered 25% damage: -1

Wearer has suffered 50% damage: -4

Wearer has suffered 75% damage: -7

Wearer is "new" to the mask: -9

"new" means the wearer has changed form using the mask's powers six or fewer times.

The mask is a very ugly thing, and of course those who see someone wearing it, and seeing the straps merging into flesh are likely to think the worst of the being. Finally, the mask also has an effect on the wearer's mood, causing him to be dark and grim most of the time.

To remove this item, the wearer must perform a task that is totally unselfish and difficult at the mask's urging. For instance, the wearer's love may be taken into an evil mansion, and the mask will urge the wearer to go in and fight. When the wearer's girlfriend is killed in the mansion, and he keeps going to fight off and destroy all the evil, and succeeds, the mask will shatter off his face. (The mask reforms later somewhere else.) However, because of the evil and negative energies of the mask, the wearer has a -1 penalty applied to his appearance or comeliness score. (Or a reduction of his Charisma by one point for the purposes of figuring his Reaction Adjustment for Charisma.) This scarring can be healed with a Regeneration spell.

Means of Destruction

There has been no method found to destroy the mask, only the one outlined above to get rid of it.

Mark Graydon

The Morning Star

By R. Sweeney

Trimor Falstaff entered the shadowy realm of Ravenloft through no fault of his own. He was a warrior-priest tailing a fleeing criminal into a shadowy bank of fog. The villain escaped and Trimor found himself trapped within the confines of Ravenloft.

He and his companions battled long and hard to leave Ravenloft, but eventually despaired. His various confrontations with evil in this dreaded realm left him physically weak and consumed by a wasting illness for which he could secure no cure.

He was not ready to go weakly into the night, but rather fought against the sinister powers of this place with a last, monumental undertaking.

His creation:

The Morning star is made from meteor-metal. This metal had been a fragment of a falling star that carried a Doppelganger plant to the demiplane. Trimor recovered the metal after slaying the fell creature. He saved it, knowing the value of such a metal.

The wood of the weapon is fashioned from a wooden stake that was driven through the heart of a 400 year old vampire for over a hundred years. Trimor removed the stake and permanently dispatched the vampire.

The coal used to fuel the furnace was excavated from the dark tunnels beneath the barren landscape of Arak. This was recovered with some loss of life, by Trimor's faithful men. Finally, Trimor read an evil manual, which detailed a method of creating an undead abomination from the corpses of many men. He burned the book and used the knowledge gained by it not for creating such an abomination, but in order to better know how to combat such beasts. The powder from the burnt book contained residual power over undead, and Trimor included it in his recipe for creating his holy weapon.

The Weapon:

The Morning Star is a morningstar weapon, and as such is usable to most clerics. Its head shines as of the purest silver and its handle is a solid varnished wood. Gold gilt-work on head of the weapon and golden bands around the handle immediately reveal the weapon's considerable material value, but it possesses a strong enchantment to aid those in their quest against evil. When used against any form of undead, the weapon does double damage and the undead struck must resist a turning attempt from a 12th level cleric or flee for 6 rounds. Clerics of good alignment and standing benefit from an increased ability to cast spells against undead (+4 spellcaster levels.. increasing duration, range, and damage as appropriate.. see also Necklace of Prayer beads: Bead of Karma).

The user of this item gains conviction and a determination to eradicate the undead, effectively gaining a 'species enemy' (as per the Ranger description) against all undead creatures. The weapon, which is semi-intelligent, can *Inspire* its wielder as per a bard's 'inspire' talent if given three rounds of warning. Lastly, the weapon is blessed with the ability to harm many forms

of undead (even those only hit by +3 or better weapons even though the weapons magical enchantment is only +1)

Hindrances:

The Morning star has its own agenda and will enforce some of its values on its wielder. The first, is the ranger-style species enemy power listed above. This grants a +4 to hit undead creatures, but comes along with a burning hatred of the undead in all its forms. To this end, the player suffers a -4 on reaction rolls when dealing with the undead. Undead who see the morningstar and know its purpose double this penalty. The next hindrance, is that the morningstar judges its wielder on a moral system of absolutes. If it feels its owner has committed evil actions (or even non-good ones) of any kind, it will seek to punish them.

The punishments consist of a nightmare-dream where the PCs is standing close to a brilliant light source which appears to be a star in close proximity. The starfire burns them as a voice from the star lectures them on their failures. The PCs is not allowed to reply or make counter arguments. The pain is too intense. When the PC awakens, they ache for the next day despite any curative attempts made.

Moral system (weapon's definition of evil):

- 1) use of necromancy
- 2) cooperating with undead
- 3) cooperating with those who use necromancy
- 4) fleeing battle with undead or necromancers
- 5) avoiding a known quest to destroy undead
- 6) the use of poison
- 7) Murder, stealing, or other serious crimes
- 8) Breaking an oath
- 9) Lying
- 10) Causing harm to befall innocents through action or inaction.
- 11) Giving away the weapon for any reason. (Even letting another PC use it). (This is seen as cowardice in the face of the weapon's quest to destroy undead.)

Note: These are supposed to be a bit unreasonable, that's the curse associated with this item. The weapon isn't swayed by 'reasons' or 'circumstances'.

During the his sleep, the PCs is burnt for one point of damage, cumulative, per sin the weapon notices since the last time they slept. (i.e. $1+2+3 = 6$ points of damage for three violations.. remember that this damage cannot be healed for a full day after penance takes place.) Deliberately not sleeping to put off 'penance' is also considered a sin.

Penance could kill the PC if they commit too many sins. Also, penance isn't dependant on the PC holding, wielding, or owning the weapon when he goes to sleep... he is punished for every violation that occurred while he had the weapon in his possession when next he sleeps.

Robert Sweeney

The Nine Rings

By R. Sweeney

These Rings are based on JRR Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* artifacts. In Ravenloft they shouldn't have definite magical effects, but rather bring out the strength that lies within the wearer himself.

The following is a list of suggested powers:

Invisibility, but weaker than the One Ring.

- a) Invisibility to animals (normal)
- b) Psionic invisibility to up to 6 targets.
- c) No sent, tracks, or other signs of passage.
- d) Invisibility to undead (lesser).
- e) Invisibility, but their shadow cannot be come invisible.
- f) MS/HS as a thief would.. but with greater skill.

The One ring also has perception enhancing abilities while worn. Thus the 9 rings could:

- a) double nighttime vision, double normal daylight vision, or double normal hearing
- b) spiritsense as per psionic power
- c) 5%/level to detect others hidden in shadows / moving silently.
- d) The ability to recognize plants and animals.
- e) To detect the 'scent' of magic.

The One ring also protected from aging, thus the 9 could act in this fashion as well, reducing the rate of aging by one half. (Magical or mundane).

Each of the 9 should also have some signature ability...

- a) specialization with a weapon. (or +1 attack / round if already specialized)
- b) double normal rate of attack for 1 r / level.
- c) Leaping and Tumbling NWP at double normal effect. (Jump twice as far.. tumble and attack at the same time.)
- d) masterful weaponsmithy and armorer NWP. (makes exceptional armor and weapons in 1/3 the normal time.)
- e) Act as a dark version of a Ranger.
- f) Act as a dark version of a paladine.
- g) +1 mage or cleric level. (Even allowing warriors to act as a level 1 mage.)
- h) +2 levels as a warrior.
- i) +50% xp advancement rate.

Downside

Just possessing the ring is corrupting (powerchecks 1 / week).

The ring has a will of its own and can shrink/grow/loose itself. (Like the One ring, which could try to slip off your finger or make you set it down, as apparently happened to Golum.) The ring also, of course, makes the wearer unable to part with it:

"When he took it out he had intended to fling it from him into the very hottest part of the fire. But he found now that he could not do so, not without a great struggle. He weighed the Ring in his hand, hesitating, and forcing himself to remember all that Gandalf had told him; and then

with an effort of will he made a movement, as if to cast it away - but he found that he had put it back in his pocket.

Gandalf laughed grimly. 'You see? Already you too, Frodo, cannot easily let it go, nor will to damage it. And I could not "make" you - except by force, which would break your mind.'

Robert Sweeney

Twin Goblets of Liquid Death

By J. Silva

Introduction:

Mellor's career as a necromancer had always been a failure. Right from the beginning, his tutor had said he lacked intelligence. In fact, if it wasn't for the large sums of gold Mellor contributed to his tutor's research he probably would never even had a tutor. He had already quit his history degree in Il Aluk's university to pursue a failed career in necromancy. By the 3rd level he found himself unable to progress, but he would have his revenge on his tutor, whom he blamed for his failure. So he set to study poisons. Again turning to his wealthy family he managed the gold to study what he pretended. Surprisingly he became extremely adept in its use. He lacked the courage to become an assassin, but provided anyone with poison in exchange for more knowledge of it.

Eventually, his revenge forgotten, he decided to leave Darkon. Already an expert in poisons, he remembered Ivana Boritsi from his history lessons, who he revered. He would have her, and together they would rule. But first he needed a gift to impress her...

His small skills in necromancy coupled with his lore of poisons allowed him to create:

Description:

The Twin Goblets are two ornate and expensive looking goblets for drinking wine, made of pure silver, carved with vines and grapes. Mellor created the goblets as well as a ring that granted immunity to its effects. Thus someone trying to use the goblets to poison another would pour water, wine or whatever into both and then drink from any of the goblets while wearing the ring that would have to be touching the goblet. Mellor offered the set to Ivana.

Any liquid poured into any of the containers becomes a foul poison which acts as follows after drinking even a sip (all effects are cumulative):

1st round: no effects

2nd round: stomach aches (-1 to DEX)

3rd round: dizziness and neck muscle spasms (-1 to DEX, -2 to missile attacks, -1 to CHA)

4th round: double vision and cold sweat (-2 to missile attacks, person needs to drink double the amount of water per day)

5th round: headaches (-1 to INT)

6th round: buzzing in ears, (-2 or -10% to listen rolls) roll first saving throw, if successful previous effects disappear 1 per round in reverse order. Otherwise proceed.

7th round: heart pains (-1 to CON)

8th round: heavy spasms in hands, unable to write or similar. (-2 to DEX, -2 to THAC0)

9th round: roll saving throw, if successful do not proceed but 1d8 of random previous effects DO NOT disappear.

10th round: Loss of balance, unable to stand.

11th round: Dry mouth, loss of vision.

12th round: Death.

When the Goblets were enchanted a thin gold ring was also enchanted to grant immunity to its wearer. Thus a person wearing the ring in the hand that holds the goblet is immune to the poisoning. Unfortunately the ring has long been lost (or is it?).

A side effect of this enchantment is that anyone wearing magical rings and drinking from the goblets is granted a +2 bonus to the saving throw per ring that touches the goblet. Unfortunately, due to Mellor's little magic skill, the enchantment is flawed and there's a big chance (50%) that the ring loses its magic properties.

This was what threw Ivana into a rage when she found out she had lost one of her favorite rings. She made Mellor drink from his own creation as a reward, and then threw the goblets out of the window in fury. They were later found and sold again and again till they found their way to the hands of Lucien Arapada, owner of the Mysterium Arcanum.

The ring of Immunity CAN be used in the same hand as any other magic rings. While other rings will function normally they will still be drained if used when drinking from the goblets. The ring of Immunity will only grant immunity against poison from the goblets and nothing else. A Neutralize poison can halt poisoning by the goblets, but if it is cast after the 6th round, 1d8 of previous effects will remain. These effects like the effects remaining after a successful saving throw can only be removed if high quality wine is poured into one of the goblets, drunk and then the drinker succeeds in the first saving throw required. Doing this can, of course, add even more side effects (cumulative) or worse, to the person trying to cure his affliction.

The goblets can only be destroyed if filled to the brim with Holy water (or Holy wine?) created by a priest of a deity of wine or similar (such as Dionysus from the Greek pantheon).

João Silva

Vampiric Poison

By A. Bozek

Background

This poison was rediscovered by a Hal-Elf in the northern part of Nova Vaasa, named Naranus Drannorian. He was skilled with both spell and sword, and was trying to stop a blood stealing creature in a small town, with the aid of his companions. Fearing the worst, that a vampire was preying on the town's populace, he created a poison he thought would work on the undead menace. The creature turned out to be a human trying to summon a fiend using a blood pool. However, later on, when Naranus found himself trying to undo a vampire, the poison worked as planned.

Before Naranus discovered this poison, the creator of the Amulet of Ravenkind, a priest in the prime-material Barovia, had another vision, previous to creating the amulet, of the undead drinking the life's blood from the entire land, pledging fealty to a fallen lord. With this vision in mind, the priest created this poison, designed to put the undead beasts into a mortal coma, so the warriors of light, justice, and virtue may perform the right rituals in order to slay them. This poison, and its recipe is hidden somewhere in the domain of Barovia. The only person who knows this is Pyoor Twohundredsummers, leader of the Keepers of the Black Feather (see Domains of Dread). Naranus has kept his discovery completely secret as well, knowing the repercussions of such knowledge being spread around the demiplane.

Powers

Vampiric Poison is an extremely rare mixture of garlic, holy water, and holy wafers, mixed with a specially treated type of hemlock. The hemlock is actually killed through smoking and then a raise dead spell is cast on the hemlock, by a druid (if this is done in Ravenloft, the druid requires a powers check because of the dark nature of the ritual). The undead hemlock is not necessary, but it does increase the effectiveness (the vampire gets a -2 penalty to its saving throw). However, dead hemlock is necessary in the ingredients. For a herbalist to create this poison (once he/she actually knows the ingredients) he or she must roll a natural 1 on their proficiency check. The herbalist attempting this must also have an intelligence of 16, and a wisdom of at least 12, this is because the recipe is complicated and the directions consist of somewhat arcane methods, not known to anyone during this age (with the exception of Pyoor Twohundredsummers and Naranus Drannorian).

This type of poison is incredibly rare, it should be treated as an artifact in terms of rarity. The poison puts vampire (any type) into a coma for 12 turns if it fails its saving throw after ingesting it. The vampire goes into a coma for 6 turns if the poison is applied to an object that pierces its skin. When the vampire goes into a coma it only turns into gaseous form just before daylight and returns to its coffin (or otherwise). If the coffin has been properly eliminated the vampire suffers the effects of the sunlight. While at night (or if the vampire is old enough to be immune to the effects of the sun, during the day) the vampire, while under the effects of the poison, it cannot revert to any other forms due to its abilities.

Note: This poison should be given artifact status in every way. It should be an important item in a campaign against these powerful undead beings. The actual apprehension of one vial of this

material should be the subject of a long and difficult adventure. The apprehension of the recipe for this poison should be a mini campaign on its own. DM's, be careful with how you use this poison in your game. It's power is so great that it can make for a great addition to a dramatic campaign, or it could be the very downfall of your campaign

Andrew Bozek

Violin Ariel

By R. Sweeney

Background:

The violin Ariel was crafted with silver strings and finely varnished wood. The instrument was crafted with exceeding pride by an ancient, but master artisan. The only thing marring the perfect beauty of the instrument is a tiny speck of red that stains the wood.

Wilheim Carver (1st level half-elf, cursed) was the original creator of Ariel. Wilhelm was cursed when he fought a gypsy in a drunken brawl, smashing his priceless violin. His curse was to make nothing but violins for the rest of his life, until such time as he replaced the priceless violin he had destroyed.

With skill only the obsessed could muster, the artisan crafted fine instruments indeed. With extreme advancing age, he finally managed to create an instrument that exceeded that which he had destroyed. Released at last from his curse, he sat down to finally relax and play his beloved instrument.. when he was crudely murdered for it.

The only remaining evidence of his murder is the blood stain upon the violin. However, this unsightly stain rendered the weapon less perfect than the one he had destroyed.. and Wilhelm's cursed and raging spirit was bound to the instrument.

Powers & Drawbacks:

Due to its beauty, the violin's presence on the wielder increases their seeming beauty and charisma by one. Due to the extreme quality of the violin, all NWP Musical skill checks are performed at +5. Bards gain an effective 5 levels for alter reaction rolls when using the instrument due to the near-perfect quality.

Because of the spirit bound to it, the violin has a Wis of 12, and Int of 15; and an Ego of 11. Only someone of strong mind can resist the violin's commands. Any so commanded immediately begin on a path of obsession as they attempt to create a finer weapon than the one Wilhelm smashed so many years ago.

However, those who have a higher Int, Wis, and Level than the weapon's Int, Wis, and Ego can command the spirit bound within. The music played by such a person upon this violin can enchant even the undead, allowing the player to 'turn' undead as an evil priest of their bardic level. (Good PCs can enchant the undead to 'sleep': this is not necromancy, but enchantment that does affect undead so no powercheck is required unless the player goes for control.)

The wielder also gains "Spirit Sense" Psi power but can't turn it off. They see every little spirit even those lacking the strength to affect reality.

Robert Sweeney

Wishing Imp

By J.W. Mangrum

Appearance

The Wishing Imp is a little figurine about a foot high. It looks rather like a cherub, except that it has two tiny horns, bat-like wings, and a barbed tail. Although it is actually a living creature, it appears to be a simple statue made of some sort of black stone, since it only moves to defend itself. Whomever possesses the imp is its master; the imp can communicate telepathically with this master.

Powers & Curse

But what makes the Wishing Imp so nasty is that it has the power to grant its master one wish a day ("With each new dawn...", as I put it to my players). The price for this power is that each and every wish is twisted horribly. The master generally gets what he wants, but not in the form he wanted it. The twisted wishes generally cost the master those things (or people) which he holds most dear. As soon as the wisher realizes what's gone wrong, the imp starts in on him ("You could fix it all with just one more wish."). The Imp can only be harmed by stone weapons. If it is destroyed in this manner, it reforms in one day, back in the possession of its master. To get rid of the Imp, another person must freely accept to take it as its own property. Also, the Imp cannot leave the mists of Ravenloft. Should its master escape, the Imp stays behind. But it will always seek to be reunited with its master, and will do all it can to bring him back.

For further reading on the Wishing Imp, see the short story [Wish A Little Wish](#).

John W. Mangrum