

Cannibal Hearts

This web enhancement for *Dead Man's Chest* by **Necromancer Games** was written by Lance Hawvermale, with Matt McGee and Robert Hunter.

Those who own *Dead Man's Chest* know all about the wondrous items called *cannibal hearts*. Here are four new and original *hearts* to add to those appearing in DMC.

No one knows how these odd and grotesque items are created. In fact, they aren't even magic items at all, but rather the actual bodily organs from the people of a certain lost tribe.

Explorers refer to this tribe as the Anezi, a term meaning "ghoul-men." Though the natives are of course not undead, they are seen as ghoulish because of their societal practice of ritual sacrifice. The location of their tribe remains a mystery; it lies somewhere in the heart of a trackless jungle on the far side of the Moonsilver Sea. All that is known for certain is that the tribesmen occasionally trade with courageous explorers, appearing on the shore and waiting for a trade ship to approach. After the bartering has concluded, the Anezi slip back into the jungle and are not seen again for months.

The Anezi are a magical society, and their rituals must truly be powerful, for the hearts torn from the chests of the sacrificial victims become imbued with mystical power. No sage has yet been able to explain the workings of the so-called cannibal hearts. The Anezi trade them to the explorers in exchange for spices and steel. The explorers make a profit by selling these hearts to those who crave their power.

To benefit from a cannibal heart, one must eat it. After consuming the entire heart, the recipient feels an unequaled rush of magical energy. The exact effects depend upon the type of heart consumed, detailed below.

Strong transmutation; CL NA; Price 5,000 gp each; Weight: 1 lb.

Heart of the Sovereign.

Though scattered throughout the jungle domain, Anezi communities all live under the rule of an Anezi king. The wisdom of age tempers the fierce nature of this proud ruler, but when the time comes for him to pass on to the afterlife, the event is greeted with solemn ceremony. After the king's death, rituals for atonement of perceived transgressions against the king's favored spirits, gods and ancestors last approximately a month. During this time the body lies in state, protected by the king's personal guards. The widespread mourning concludes with the rising of the next full moon, which signifies the completion of a cycle and provides light for the king's final voyage to the spirit realm. At the conclusion of a public ceremony, the heart of the king is extracted and traditionally eaten by his successor.

Ingesting a *sovereign heart* grants the eater a bonus of +8 to Charisma. Further, the eater enjoys the full benefits of the Leadership feat, if he does not already possess it. These benefits persist for 1d4+1 days.

Strong transmutation; CL NA; Price 5,000 gp each; Weight: 1 lb.

Heart of the Teacher.

Teachers are highly respected within Anezi society. As educators of the young and figures of considerable knowledge, teachers in their twilight years are often looked upon to sacrifice themselves in the name of the perpetuity of wisdom. Such teachers are granted a day-long commemoration in which they are greeted by their living pupils one by one, from youngest to oldest. At the end of the ceremony, the teacher's heart is extracted and eaten by his most senior pupil.

Those consuming a *heart of the teacher* receive a +4 competence bonus to all Knowledge checks for the next 1d4+1 days.

Heart of the Tracker.

Of the many members of a Anezi warband, few are as skilled as the trackers, who combine mysticism with an uncanny understanding of nature in order to follow their quarry under seemingly impossible conditions. Though they tend to be loners, trackers are revered by the Anezi people. Many trackers accumulate a trove of gifts and trophies during their careers. They guard the secrets of their methods quite steadfastly. When they die, their hearts are usually consumed by a pre-appointed apprentice.

By eating the *heart of the tracker*, one gains great insight into the delicate symbiosis between hunter and hunted, resulting in a +15 to all Track checks for the next 1d4+1 days.

Heart of the Traitor.

There is nothing more reviled in Anezi society than cowardice, and the ultimate display of cowardice is to betray one's village, family, or kingdom. Captured traitors are put to death in a way that defies humanity. For days they linger, reduced by torture to near madness. Upon their deaths, their hearts are removed and set afire. However, every so often a cunning smuggler finds a way to remove such a heart before it falls to the flames.

Consuming a *heart of the traitor* imbues the ability to tell convincing falsehoods, granting a +15 bonus to all Bluff checks. The consumer is immune to all magical attempts to detect his artifice, letting the lies slip from his tongue without fear of discovery. This penchant for prevarication persists for 1d4+1 days.

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