



by Michael Hammes

A Dozen Bothersome Spells

Introduction

What are bothersome spells? Bothersome spells are spells that can be used to cause interesting and unique situations. Such spells don't cause any (or much) direct damage and, for most, their usefulness lies more in the imagination of the spellcaster than in the spell itself. Furthermore, such spells tend to frustrate those that suffer their effects rather than causing them harm directly.

Fireball is not a bothersome spell; it simply blasts creatures away. *Animate rope*, on the other hand, is a bothersome spell. In addition to tying a creature up, it can be used as a trip line, frustrating pursuit. *Lightning bolt*? Not bothersome. *Grease*? Bothersome. *Disintegrate*? Potentially bothersome. *Bestow curse*? Definitely bothersome. *Mirror image*? Very bothersome.

This PDF presents twelve spells in this vein. All have a quantifiable impact on the game, all can give the spellcaster and his or her allies some form of advantage, but these are not the kind of spells that are likely to kill outright and many require some imagination to maximize their effectiveness.

Disguise Other

Illusion (Glamer)

Level: Brd 2, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Humanoid creature touched

Duration: 10 min./level (D)

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes

You change the appearance of a humanoid - including clothing, armor, weapons, and equipment - to look different. The humanoid can seem 1 foot shorter or taller, thin, fat, or in between. You cannot change the humanoid's body type. Otherwise, the extent of the apparent change is up to you. You could add or obscure a minor feature or make the person look like someone entirely different.

The spell does not provide the abilities or mannerisms of the chosen form, nor does it alter the perceived tactile (touch) or audible (sound) properties of you or your equipment.

If you use this spell to create a disguise for the creature it gets a +10 bonus on the Disguise check.

A creature that interacts with the glamer gets a Will save to recognize it as an illusion.

Gibberish

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Brd 1, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature

ROLE-PLAY ALERT

It is up to the GM and the players to make the spells in this PDF, and other spells like them, truly bothersome and memorable. While these spells obviously have a quantifiable impact on the game, hindering foes or even aiding allies, if you choose they can serve to lighten the mood and to introduce an element of humor and comedy into the game.

This is achieved by the GM and the players through clever and original uses of the spells, and by the GM through encouraging proper role-playing (i.e. ensuring that NPCs have the proper reactions).

For instance, *disguise other* can be used to disguise an unwilling target; an NPC can change the appearance of a PC to look like a wanted criminal, or the PC can change the look of the overpowered guard from jail to look like him and make his escape in the confusion.

Glue can be used to stick an unwanted object on a creature, an action that can have very interesting results if a *delayed blast fireball* is involved.

Of course, many of these spells can provide comedic moments. *Grow hair* inevitably makes the creature look very silly, especially fearsome monsters or when cast in a social setting, a fact that the GM should emphasize (gales of laughter, snickers, guffaws, etc. from witnesses as the entangled werewolf stumbles about the place).

The GM or player can add interest, and levity, when an NPC or PC is affected by *immobilize extremity* by acting as though his or her own arm or leg were paralyzed whenever the NPC or PC takes an action.

Obviously, if this is not the style of the campaign, then the spells can simply be used as they are to hinder foes and give your side an advantage in combat. But nothing livens up the umpteenth encounter with orcs like having their leader suddenly blow up into a giant hairball, having him start speaking nonsense, and/or having a *phantom boot* kicking him in the tail. Who knows, maybe the orcs will become so embarrassed that they simply quit the field?

Duration: 1 min./level (D)

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Upon the casting of this spell you render the speech of the affected creature unintelligible for the duration of the spell. A *comprehend languages* spell will not render the affected creature's speech intelligible, although a *tongues* spell will. A spellcaster affected by this spell cannot cast any spells requiring a verbal component. A bard affected by *gibberish* can still make use of bardic music, provided that he has sufficient ranks in a Perform skill other than Perform (oratory) or Perform (sing).

Arcane Material Component: A piece of parchment with illegible scribbles upon it.

Glue

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: One object or a 20-ft.-square

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: Reflex negates; see text

Spell Resistance: No

A *glue* spell covers a solid surface with a layer of sticky translucent adhesive. Anyone in the effect's area when the spell is cast must make a Reflex save. If this save succeeds, the creature is entangled, but not prevented from moving, though moving is more difficult than normal for being entangled (see below). If the save fails, the creature is entangled and can't move from its space, but can break loose by spending 1 round and making a DC 20 Strength check or a DC 25 Escape Artist check.

Once loose (either by making the initial Reflex save or a later Strength check or Escape Artist check), a creature remains entangled, but may move through the *glue* very slowly. Each full round devoted to moving allows the creature to make a new Strength check or

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Escape Artist check. The creature moves 5 feet for each full 5 points by which the check result exceeds 10.

An entangled creature cannot run or charge and takes a –2 penalty on all attack rolls and a –4 penalty to Dexterity.

The spell can also be used to create a sticky coating on an item. Material objects not in use are always affected by this spell, while an object wielded or employed by a creature receives a Reflex saving throw to avoid the effect. If the initial saving throw fails, the creature is immediately stuck to the item. Attempts to remove the object from the creature's hand, or to pick the item up if it is stuck to something, take a full round and require a DC 20 Strength check. Note that attempts to pick the item up will likely cause the creature attempting it to become stuck to the item.

Grow Hair

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 min./level (D)

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell causes the hair (body, facial, head, etc.) or fur of a creature to grow to a ridiculous length and impede its movement. Its own hair effectively entangles the creature. The creature can move only at half speed, cannot run or charge, and takes a -2 penalty on all attack rolls as well as a -4 penalty to Dexterity. In addition, unless the creature takes some form of action to clear the hair from before its eyes (such as holding the hairs with one hand or tying them off), it suffers a –1 penalty on attack rolls, Search checks, and Spot checks for the duration of the spell. A spellcaster that attempts to cast a spell must make a Concentration check (DC 15 + the spell's level) or lose the spell.

Attempts to cut the hair off are futile as the hair grows back instantly. A creature that does not have hair or fur is not affected by this spell. Multiple castings of *grow hair* do not increase the entanglement.

Material Component: A bit of hair or fur.

Note: The hair can be tied off using ribbons, bits of clothing, etc. and mobility restored. This takes at least one minute and assumes that materials and help are readily at hand. If the creature attempts to accomplish this action itself, it takes significantly longer.

Immobilize Extremity

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Brd 1, Clr 1, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S, F/DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One humanoid creature

Duration: 1 round/level (D); see text

Saving Throw: Will negates; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

One of the creature's bodily limbs or appendages becomes paralyzed and useless. This has a variety of potential effects.

Immobilizing the arm of a creature renders it unable to use that arm. The arm and attached hand hang limply. If it was holding a weapon or shield in that hand, the weapon or shield is not dropped but the weapon cannot be used to attack with and the shield's Armor Class bonus is reduced by 1 (i.e. a buckler or light shield provides no protection while a heavy or tower shield still provides some protection as the creature slings its body around). In addition, the creature suffers a -2 circumstance penalty to all Dexterity checks, Dexterity-based skill checks, Reflex saves, and all Strength checks and Strength-based skill checks where the arm is used to aid in accomplishing the task (i.e. Climb, Jump, and Swim checks).

Attempts to pry an item out of the grasp of a paralyzed hand need to succeed at an opposed Strength check against the paralyzed creature's Strength.

Spellcasters that have an arm immobilized are not negatively affected in terms of their spellcasting, as a somatic component requires only one hand to be free.

Immobilizing the leg and attached foot of a bipedal creature causes it to drag and reduces its movement rate to one-half and causes it to suffer a -4 circumstance penalty to all Dexterity-based checks and skill checks, Reflex saves, all Strength checks and Strength-based skill

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checks where the legs are used to aid in accomplishing the task (i.e. Climb, Jump, and Swim checks) and Armor Class.

Immobilizing the leg of a quadruped creature causes it to drag and reduces its movement to three-quarters and causes it to suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to all Dexterity-based checks and skill checks, Reflex saves, all Strength checks and Strength-based skill checks where the legs are used to aid in accomplishing the task (i.e. Climb, Jump, and Swim checks) and Armor Class.

Furthermore, if the creature was moving at a pace faster than a walk at the time the leg is immobilized, it must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save (DC 10 for quadrupeds) or fall prone.

Each round on its turn, the subject may attempt a new saving throw to end the effect. (This is a full-round action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.)

A winged creature that has one of its wings paralyzed cannot remain in flight and spirals slowly to the ground, flapping wildly.

Arcane Focus: A small, straight piece of iron.

Inflict Illness

Necromancy

Level: Clr 1, Drd 1, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature touched

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The subject falls immediately falls ill, becoming sickened and suffering a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks for the duration of the spell.

Inflict Pain

Necromancy

Level: Clr 2, Drd 2, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature touched

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Unbearable pain wracks the subject, making it nauseated and unable to attack, cast spells, concentrate on spells, or do anything else requiring attention. The only action such a character can take is a single move action per turn.

Irritating Fog

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Drd 3, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft. level)

Effect: Fog spreads in 20-ft. radius, 20 ft. high

Duration: 1 min./level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

A bank of fog billows out from the point you designate. The fog obscures all sight, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. A creature within 5 feet has concealment (attacks have a 20% miss chance). Creatures farther away have total concealment (50% miss chance, and the attacker can't use sight to locate the target).

In addition, any living creature that enters the fog is irritated by the scratchy nature of the fog, which causes the creature to itch uncontrollably. The creature suffers a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks for as long as it remains in the fog and for 1 round thereafter. Spellcasters attempting to cast a spell while in the fog must succeed at a Concentration check (DC 10 + the spell's level) or lose the spell.

Unlike normal fog, only a strong wind (21+ mph) or stronger can disperse *irritating fog*, and it does so in 1 round.

Material Component: A boiled poison oak or poison ivy leaf.

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Phantom Boot

Evocation [Force]

Level: Brd 1, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: Tiny boot

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

A magic *boot* of Tiny size (about the size of a size 10 boot) and composed of pure force springs into existence and attacks opponents at a distance, as you direct it, dealing 1d4 force damage per hit. It strikes the opponent you designate, starting with one attack in the round the spell is cast and continuing each round thereafter on your turn. It uses your base attack bonus (possibly allowing it multiple attacks per round in subsequent rounds) plus your Intelligence modifier (Wizard) or Charisma modifier (Bard, Sorcerer) as its attack bonus.

The *phantom boot* strikes as a spell, so it can damage creatures that have damage reduction. As a force effect, it can strike incorporeal creatures without the normal miss chance associated with incorporeality. The *phantom boot* always strikes from your direction. It does not get a flanking bonus or help a combatant get one. Your feats or combat actions do not affect the *phantom boot*. If the *phantom boot* goes beyond the spell range, if it goes out of your sight, or if you are not directing it, the *phantom boot* returns to you and hovers next to your foot.

Each round after the first, you can use a move action to redirect the *phantom boot* to a new target. If you do not, the *phantom boot* continues to attack the previous round's target. On any round that the *phantom boot* switches targets, it gets one attack. Subsequent rounds of attacking that target allow the *phantom boot* to make multiple attacks if your base attack bonus would allow it to.

A *phantom boot* cannot be attacked or harmed by physical attacks, but *dispel magic*, *disintegrate*, a *sphere of annihilation*, or a

rod of cancellation affects it. A *phantom boot*'s AC against touch attacks is 12 (10 + size bonus for Tiny object).

If an attacked creature has spell resistance, you make a caster level check (1d20 + caster level) against that spell resistance the first time the *phantom boot* strikes it. If the *phantom boot* is successfully resisted, the spell is dispelled. If not, the *phantom boot* has its normal full effect on that creature for the duration of the spell.

Focus: An ordinary boot or other form of footwear.

Rotting Touch

Transmutation

Level: Drd 3

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One non-magical wooden object or plant (or the volume of the object or plant within 5 ft. of the touched point) or one plant creature

Duration: See text

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Any wooden item or plant you touch becomes instantaneously decayed and rotted, effectively destroyed. If the wooden item or plant is so large that it cannot fit within a 5-foot radius, a 5-foot-radius volume of the wooden item or plant is rotted and destroyed. Magic items made of wood are immune to this spell.

You may employ *rotting touch* in combat with a successful melee touch attack. *Rotting touch* used in this way instantaneously destroys 1d6 points of Armor Class gained from wooden shields and iron-wood armor or shields (to the maximum amount of protection the armor or shield offered) through decay.

Weapons in use by an opponent targeted by the spell are more difficult to touch. You must succeed on a melee touch attack against the weapon. A wooden weapon that is hit is destroyed.

Note: Striking at an opponent's weapon provokes an attack of opportunity. Also, you must touch the weapon and not the other way around.

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Against a wooden or plant creature, *rotting touch* instantaneously deals 3d6 points of damage +1 per caster level (maximum +15) per successful attack. The spell lasts for 1 round per level, and you can make one melee touch attack per round.

Slapping Hand

Evocation [Force]

Level: Bard, Sor/Wiz 0

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: One glove of force

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

Slapping hand creates a hand of Diminutive size (about the size of a normal human hand) that slaps the target you designate. You must succeed at a ranged touch attack to hit your target, at which point the hand delivers a resounding slap to the target that deals 1 point of damage.

As a force effect, *slap* can strike incorporeal creatures without the

normal miss chance associated with incorporeality.

Focus: Your hand.

Tear

Transmutation

Level: Brd 0, Clr 0, Drd 0, Sor/Wiz 0

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 10 ft.

Target: One object of up to 1 lb.

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless, object)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless, object)

Tear creates a small break or rip in an object. It will break small metallic objects such as a ring, a chain link, a medallion, or a slender dagger. Small ceramic or wooden objects split apart completely under this spell while larger objects, such as a table leg or chair leg, break in one place. The spell can also be used to create a hole in an item of clothing or a container such as a sack or wineskin. The spell cannot affect a magical item or creatures.

Tear counters and dispels *mending*.

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by Michael Hammes

A Dozen Carved Items

*Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook*

Introduction

I myself have no artistic talent and have always been fascinated by art, especially art requiring great technical skill. Among such art is the art of carving; the ability to take a sharp tool and create something recognizable out of a piece of wood or other material is something truly fascinating.

Since wood plays such a large part in pre-industrial societies, it is only natural that one would find any number of wooden items in a fantasy setting. Naturally, such items will be improved upon by their owners, whether it is for a reason as simple as being bored, seeking artistic expression, or as part of a magical process.

The items contained in this PDF are magical and mundane items of a carved or inscribed nature and are intended for the same thing that all of the items in the Dozen series of PDFs are: as interesting items in and of themselves and also as a means for giving you, the player and/or GM, ideas for your campaign.

CARVED CORPSE

Appearance: The horrible rictus on this half-elven corpse gives mute testimony to the terror that filled his final minutes. In addition to the jaggedly cut throat, what looks to be a mirrored “R” has been carved into the corpse’s chest.

Appraise Information: DC 12. This corpse is just the lat-

est in a string of identical mutilations that have been found in the Slums. Gather Information checks turn up a number of theories including that these corpses are the result of a predacious evil cult, a lone mass murderer, and some being from beyond this world.

Value: 2 gp (2 gp as an anatomy model).

Special Rules: None.

DECORATED SKULL

Appearance: This is an obviously humanoid skull, yellowed with age and its jawbone missing. It is covered with fluid carvings that have been stained black. The extensive carvings form a series of loops and whorls that cover the entire surface and also the interior.

Appraise Information: DC 15. It is a human skull, a fact that can be revealed with a successful Heal check (DC 12). The work is representative of the Tangled Claw goblin tribe whose members believe that taking the skull of one’s enemy gives them that opponent’s strength. Inevitably, once separated from their owner, the skulls find their place somewhere in the goblin’s home after being blessed and decorated by one of the tribe’s clerics.

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Value: 5 gp (5 gp collector's value).

Special Rules: While all the Tangled Claw warriors see such skulls as good luck charms, the clerics of the tribe use such skulls as their unholy symbols. During the blessing ceremony, the skulls gain an evil taint and anyone that is not a goblin is burned by unholy energies for 1d4 points of damage (no save, 2d4 points of damage for non-evil, non-goblins) whenever they touch such a skull.

DEMONIC CHARM

Appearance: This mahogany charm, about the size of a man's palm with a leather thong for hanging around one's neck, is a carving of a hideous face. Great bulging eyes stare at you while a giant maw with two protruding tusks appears eager to bite whatever comes near.

Appraise Information: DC 17. Natives of the tropical Starward Isles, an area barely touched by civilization, believe that such charms protect them from the "living demons" that stalk the dense rain forests so prevalent in that part of the world.

Value: 20 gp (2 gp for curiosity value).

Special Rules: The *demonic charm* surrounds the wearer with a continuous *protection from evil* (as per the spell) effect.

Faint abjuration [good]; CL 1st; Craft Wondrous Item, *protection from evil*; Price 4,000.

DIVINATION STONES

Appearance: Contained in a fist-sized plain leather bag, these are flint chips, about a score in number, each with a single rune carved into the surface.

Appraise Information: DC 17. Used by the northern runecasters, mysterious figures said to be a cross between a cleric and a wizard, such stones are a treasured artifact among the northern tribes and their possession by an outsider is a crime demanding the most severe punishment.

Value: 500 gp (500 gp collector's item).

Special Rules: None

ROLE-PLAY ALERT

Although not magical, divination stones serve a role-playing purpose when used as a prop for certain divination spells such as *augury*, *commune*, *contact other plane*, *discern location*, etc. Rather than having everything take place in the diviner's head (i.e. the GM simply tells the player(s) the answer), the diviner can cast the runes to receive his answer.

This is especially effective with NPC diviners where the GM can roll the dice, flip some coins, toss stones, etc. into the center of the table and then "interpret" them.

Of course, props other than divination stones are possible. Carved sticks, decorated bones, or even tea leaves are all possibilities. A druid, for instance, could cast some grass into the wind and interpret the results (this works well with the "yes" or "no" nature of a number of divination spells).

DWARVEN WAY MARKER

Appearance: This large obelisk is some ten feet tall and looks to be carved from a solid piece of steel-gray granite. The top has been carved into the shape of a helmet while lines of runes cover the surface.

Appraise Information: DC 16. This sort of dwarven way marker appears every mile along the major above ground roads of dwarven kingdoms and is carved from whatever the predominant stone of the land is. In this case, the helmet on top is that of Clan Mithaxe, accomplished stoneworkers and creators of numerous such markers. Anyone who can read dwarvish can decipher the runes, which point the distance and direction to various nearby clanholds.

Value: 425 gp (250 gp for the stone, 175 gp for workmanship).

Special Rules: None.

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ELVEN CARYATID

Appearance: This freestanding weathered black walnut column stands slightly taller than eleven feet and features an elven maiden, replete with armor, shield, and sword, standing on an unmarked pedestal. Although the elven maiden was once very detailed, time and moss have worn away some of the superior craftsmanship.

Appraise Information: DC 20. Rarely seen by outsiders, such caryatids are found only deep within the elven realms. There they are found in secluded groves and clearings standing silent guard for centuries. Many become covered by native vegetations such as moss or vines until nothing of the original column can be seen.

Value: 1,500 gp (1,500 gp collector value).

Special Rules: It is up to the GM to decide whether elven caryatids are magical or not; they can simply be decorative statues that stand as silent sentinels, or they can be much more (or there can be some of each type).

A magical elven caryatid has the following statistics:

	Elven Caryatid
	Large Construct
Hit Dice:	8d10+30 (74hp)
Initiative:	+0
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class:	14 (–1 size, +8 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 17
Base Attack/Grapple:	+6/+15
Attack:	Slam +10 melee (2d6+7)
Full Attack:	Slam +10 melee (2d6+7)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./10 ft. (tall)
Special Attacks:	See text
Special Qualities:	Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., detect non-elves, hardness 6, low-light vision
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +1, Will –3
Abilities:	Str 20, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

Skills:	—
Feats:	—
Environment:	Any
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	4
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	—
Level Adjustment:	—

Elven caryatids are magical guardians in the shape of elven maidens that watch over glades, groves, and other places treasured by the elves, protecting them from harm.

Elven caryatids are immobile until activated by someone, or something, fulfilling the instructions of their creator. Such instructions are inevitably simple, such as “keep all non-elves out of the grove” or “destroy any orcs that enter the clearing”.

Once animated, an elven caryatid fights until its enemies are driven from the area it is protecting or until it is destroyed. An elven caryatid attacks by bludgeoning with its large wooden sword; the sword, like everything else about the statue, is carved from wood a single block of wood and cannot be removed without destroying the caryatid.

Construct Traits: A caryatid possesses the following traits:

—Immunity to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).

—Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and necromancy effects.

—Cannot heal damage on its own and cannot be repaired except for with a *plant growth* spell which acts as a *cure serious wounds* spell to the caryatid (it restores 3d8 points of damage +1 point per caster level to a maximum of +15).

—Not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, or energy drain.

—Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects, or is harmless).

—Not at risk of death from massive damage. Immediately destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points or less.

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—Since it was never alive, a construct cannot be raised or resurrected.

—Constructs do not eat, sleep, or breathe.

Hardness 6: A caryatid is always made of some form of hardwood due to the longevity obtained from such woods. Thus, all caryatids have a hardness of 6 and reduce any damage done to them by 6 points.

A caryatid must be sculpted from a single log of wood weighing at least 400 pounds. Creating the body requires a DC 15 Craft (sculpting) check.

CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects* or *animate plants*; Price 12,000 gp.

FINE LEATHER ARMOR

Appearance: This suit of leather armor, complete with matching coif, looks to be extremely well made. But what sets this armor apart from other fine examples you have seen is that the leather has been decorated with finely carved images of bantam fowl. Everything from chickens to ducks to geese is represented and, although there are numerous images of each species, no two images are exactly alike.

Appraise Information: DC 17. It is not uncommon for individuals to pay additional money to set their suit of armor apart from others of its kind. Common decorating schemes include heraldic symbols, such as family names or orders, religious symbols, and, as in the case of this suit, a play on the owner's name. The latter applies in this case as the armor once belonged to the notorious elven thief Tinadë whose nickname was "Bantam".

Value: 610 gp (300 gp for masterwork, 300 gp for workmanship, 10 gp for leather armor).

Special Rules: This suit of masterwork leather armor has the following statistics:

Armor Bonus	Max Dex. Bonus	Armor Check Penalty	Arcane Spell Failure	Speed (30 ft.)	(20 ft.)	Weight
+2	+7	0	5%	30 ft.	20 ft.	15 lb.

Note that although this particular suit of leather armor is of Medium (elf) size, such a suit can obviously be of any size.

"REAVING THE DEAD"

Appearance: This large woodcut is some four feet high and six feet long. It consists of three panels that fit together to show a single scene. The scene itself is very dark in theme, showing devils with swords cavorting among pitiful figures that are either praying or lying prostrate. As you peer closer you notice that each devil and figure is unique and the artist has managed to capture both the ferocious glee of the devils and the desperate hopelessness of the people in exquisite detail.

Appraise Information: DC 18. This is definitely the work of Calius the Mad, a wood carver of exceeding ability and, depending upon whom you ask, genius or madness. Calius' works often depict desperate scenes in excruciating detail, and among his other famous works are "Famine in Trellyn" and "The Scabrous Death".

Value: 5,000 gp (5,000 gp artistic value).

Special Rules: None.

SCRIMSHAW DRAGON

Appearance: An incredible piece of work even to the untrained eye, this scrimshaw of a dragon in flight is so life-like that one at any moment expects it to take off from its ivory perch. Almost a foot long and filled with impressive detail, this is clearly the work of a master.

Appraise Information: DC 20. The scrimshaw dragon is part of a larger set depicting fantastic creatures that was made by an unknown sailor some three centuries ago. There are rumored to be a total of 12 pieces, although only 11 have ever been accounted for. Those 11 are in the hands of two collectors: seven residing with the Duke of Umbry and the other four in the possession of the wealthy merchant Putkins the Elder.

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The twelve pieces are:

- | | |
|------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Dragon | 7. Unicorn |
| 2. Pegasus | 8. Hippogriff |
| 3. Griffon | 9. Manticore |
| 4. Hydra | 10. Nightmare |
| 5. Chimera | 11. Wyvern |
| 6. Sphinx | 12. Mermaid (missing) |

The dragon was part of the Duke of Umbry's collection until a fortnight ago when it was stolen from his residence by person, or persons, unknown. The Duke has publicly offered a reward of 200 gp for its return.

Value: 1,000 gp (1,000 gp for the scrimshaw dragon, 25,000 for the entire 12 piece set).

Special Rules: None.

TABLET OF SUMMONING

Appearance: This plain clay tablet is marked with a number of hieroglyphs depicting various animals. You count three hawks, a snake, and two crocodiles in various places on the five lines, and lots of empty space in between.

Appraise Information: DC 18. Although bulky, clay tablets like this are a common means of storing records in areas where paper and/or ink is scarce. Naturally, since they are so bulky, the peoples who make use of them come up with a kind of shorthand and use symbols to represent sounds as well as concepts such as gods, dawn, etc.

Value: 2 gp (2 gp for curiosity value).

Special Rules: Anyone who touches one of the hieroglyphs instantly summons that creature as if he or she had cast a *summon monster* spell at the 5th caster level. The creatures are:

Hawk = fiendish hawk (*summon monster I*).

Snake = fiendish snake, medium viper (*summon monster II*).

Crocodile = fiendish crocodile (*summon monster III*).

The summoned creatures attack the nearest creature (except the summoner) regardless of whether they are friend or foe of the summoner unless the summoner can communicate with the creature.

Each disappears once it is reduced to 0 hit points or after 5 rounds; the summoner cannot dismiss the summoned creatures.

Once a creature has been summoned, its hieroglyph disappears from the tablet.

Faint conjuration; CL15th; Craft Wondrous Item, *monster summoning I-IX*; Price caster level x spell level x 50 gp per spell.

WALKING STICK

Appearance: This stout oak staff has been decorated with delicate and detailed carvings of various woodland animals such as a woodpecker and a squirrel.

Appraise Information: DC 12. While walking sticks are quite common, it is rare to see such a fine example of the carver's art. The detail on the figures is very fine and has clearly been done by a trained hand. This is probably the work of some woodsman or perhaps even a druid.

Value: 20 gp (20 gp for artistic value).

Special Rules: This walking stick can be used to defend oneself much like a quarterstaff, but it is lighter and thus does one die lower damage (1d4/1d4 for Medium size, 1d3/1d3 for Small size).

WOODEN SHIELD

Appearance: This ordinary, light wooden shield has obviously seen some use as the cuts and chips on its surface can attest. Despite the damage, the decorative carving of a sun shining over a bucolic agricultural landscape is immediately recognizable.

Appraise Information: DC 13. Priests of the God of Agriculture (or some other GM determine deity) carry such shields into battle. Made of oak and held together with iron bands, the shield itself is of no remarkable quality. The carving, however, is well done, if not masterfully so, and even the damage does not really detract from it; if anything, the damage attests to the sturdiness of the shield.

Value: 13 gp (3 gp for the shield, 10 gp for artistic value).

Special Rules: None.

A Dozen Carved Items

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by Michael Hammes

A Dozen Ceramic Items

Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook

Introduction

One of the greatest leaps in civilization came when the first person formed clay into a useful vessel for storage. Since that time, ceramics have played an important part in the real world in everything from drinking mugs to body armor, and one would assume that they play an important part in a fantasy culture as well. Move aside iron, steel, and all those unusual materials, it's time for ceramic items to get their due.

The items contained in this PDF are magical and mundane ceramic items and are intended for the same thing that all of the items in the Dozen series of PDFs are: as interesting items in and of themselves and also as a means for giving you, the player and/or GM, ideas for your campaign.

BOWL OF COLORFUL BEADS

Appearance: This small iron bowl contains scores of small glazed ceramic beads of various colors and shapes. A quick perusal shows squares, triangles, and circles in the colors of yellow, blue, red, black, and white and there are others besides.

Appraise Information: DC 13. Many peoples wear beads as decoration, most commonly for hair or clothing. In this case the beads are of dwarven manufacture and are braided into the hair (both beard and head) for decorative purposes.

Value: 2 sp.

Special Rules: If the GM wishes, the beads can have symbolic meanings attached to them. For instance, a certain color could be reserved for a specific craft (i.e. black for blacksmith, red for weaponsmith, brown for woodcarvers, etc.) or profession (white for clergy, gold for merchant, red and black striped for warriors, etc.). Or, much like Scottish tartans or heraldic colors, specific clans could wear specific colors and patterns (i.e. alternating blue and white for Clan Brightaxe, yellow and black for Clan Deepdelve, etc.). Or they could even tell of a personal, family, or clan history (i.e. black beads for a death, red for a battle, white for a wedding, etc.).

If complex enough, characters might need to have ranks in Knowledge (dwarven beadwork) in order to be able to decipher the meanings of the beads (dwarves would have this skill as a bonus class skill).

CERAMIC ARMOR

Appearance: This suit of full plate mail appears to have been fashioned of dried clay, as it is a dull earthen tone in appearance. It is exceptionally light for such a large suit, but appears nonetheless to be relatively strong.

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ROLE-PLAY ALERT

In history, manufacturing secrets have usually been jealously guarded by their creators, ensuring themselves a monopoly within a certain area and in many cases tremendous influence and power (the first iron weapons made real mincemeat of anyone wearing bronze armor and later on the superior firepower of European armies allowed an area once considered backward to dominate the world). In fact, some secrets have never become known; to this day no one can duplicate the quality of a Stradivarius.

The same can be done with such secrets in a fantasy campaign. Just because there is a way to work with mithral, or adamantine, or in the case above, ceramics, doesn't mean that just anyone can do so. In fact, it would be in the best interest of those who discover the technique to ensure that they retain possession of it; having sole access to a special technique, especially one related to warfare, brings great profits and also a massive advantage in terms of combat capabilities. Of course, others would want access to the technique, which naturally results in a wellspring of adventure possibilities.

For example, assume that suits of ceramic armor suddenly make an appearance on the elite troops of an evil kingdom. Being more mobile than others with the same amount of protection, these troops begin to dominate the field of battle, inflicting heavy losses upon their foes.

Obviously, those states threatened by the kingdom will want to find out a way to neutralize, or copy, this advantage. Needless to say, they will attempt to obtain examples of the armor, perhaps from dead foes, or from a shipment headed for a fortress. But even with examples, they may not be able to duplicate the process. So they send someone out to steal the process, either through direct observation (undercover), or by kidnapping one of the master armorsmiths working for the evil kingdom.

Naturally, agents of the evil kingdom will do their best to forestall and turn back such attempts. They keep a sharp lookout for spies. They track down those who have gotten hold of suits with the intention of killing them and bringing back the suits or, failing that, destroying the suits themselves. And they will attempt to rescue, or kill, any kidnapped armorsmiths.

In short, with a little bit of thought, the introduction of something such as a suit of ceramic armor can lead to an entire series of adventures.

Appraise Information: DC 21. Indeed, this suit of armor is made of ceramic instead of steel. Although its creator is unknown, as is the process of crafting such a suit, if it is battle-worthy then it is indeed a great find. As it stands, however, the suit has no more worth than a masterwork suit of full plate.

Value: 1,650 gp (1,500 gp for being a suit of full plate, 150 gp for masterwork quality).

Special Rules: This suit of armor is a one-of-a-kind prototype for ceramic armors. Its (GM-determined) creators have managed to discover the process of fashioning clay into a ceramic that is as strong as steel, yet much lighter.

Because it is a prototype, it is not designed to fit any specific person, and because it is a suit of full plate, it cannot be worn by anyone unless it can somehow be altered to fit (something that can be judged impossible since, unlike iron or steel, there is no way to bend or otherwise alter the ceramic plates of which the armor consists; new ones would have to be made).

If the suit were to fit a specific individual, the suit would be the equivalent to a suit of full plate except that it is considered one category lighter (medium armor instead of heavy armor), has its spell failure chance reduced by 15%, maximum Dexterity bonus increased by 3, and armor check penalties lessened by 4 (to a minimum of 0).

It is up to the GM to decide whether ceramic armors will be included in his or her campaign, and to what extent. Perhaps this is the sole example of the art, its creator having died with the secret, or perhaps the process is just too difficult or too expensive to make it worthwhile. Alternately, ceramics could join other special materials like mithral or adamantine, and the process could be a well-guarded secret known only by its creator, a small group of craftsmen, be a racial secret, or be as well-known as any other armorsmithing process.

If ceramic armor is going to play a significant part in any campaign, the GM can use the following write-up:

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Ceramic: Made from clay and other materials combined in a special process, ceramic armor and weapons are as hard as their steel counterpart but much lighter.

Ceramic armors are one category lighter than normal for purposes of movement and other limitations. Heavy armors are treated as medium, and medium armors are treated as light; there are no standard light armors that can be constructed of ceramic, although if there were they would also be considered light. Spell failure chances for armors and shields made from ceramic are decreased by 15%, maximum Dexterity bonus is increased by 3, and armor check penalties are lessened by 4 (to a minimum of 0).

Armor made of ceramic weighs one-third as much as normal armor of its type. Armors not primarily made of metal are not meaningfully affected by being partially made of ceramic.

Only bludgeoning weapons may be made of ceramic; there is no way to give an edge or sharp point to a ceramic weapon (a mace could be a ceramic weapon, a pick or longsword could not).

Ceramic armors or weapons are always masterwork items; the masterwork cost is included in the prices given below:

Type of Ceramic Armor	Item Cost Modifier
Light armor	+1,250 gp
Medium armor	+5,000 gp
Heavy armor	+11,250 gp
Shield	+1,250 gp
Other Items	+625 gp/lb.

CERAMIC GOLEM

Appearance: This massive ceramic statue stands some 8 feet tall. Its features are distorted, with a barrel chest, huge, knobby shoulders from which hang large round arms, and a pair of squat legs ending in flat feet.

Appraise Information: DC 20. This ugly statue is an advanced version of a clay golem. A ceramic golem is significantly tougher than its lesser cousin, cannot go berserk (it is speculated by scholars that the firing process a ceramic golem undergoes infallibly binds the elemental spirit within), and is capable

of breathing fire (a side-effect of the aforementioned firing), all of which makes it a very powerful automaton indeed.

Value: 80,000 gp (80,000 gp total construction cost).

Special Rules: A ceramic golem has the following statistics:

CERAMIC GOLEM

	Large Construct
Hit Dice:	16d10+30 (120 hp)
Initiative:	-1
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class:	26 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +28 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 26
Base Attack/Grapple:	+12/+24
Attack:	Slam +19 melee (2d10+8 plus cursed wound)
Full Attack:	2 slams +19 melee (2d10+8 plus cursed wound)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Breath weapon, cursed wound
Special Qualities:	Construct traits, damage reduction 10/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., haste, immunity to magic, low-light vision
Saves:	Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +5
Abilities:	Str 27, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1
Skills:	—
Feats:	—
Environment:	Any
Organization:	Solitary or gang (2-4)
Challenge Rating:	15
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	17-23 HD (Large); 24-38 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment:	—

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A ceramic golem has a humanoid body made of glistening ceramic that glints in torchlight. A ceramic golem appears much as a sexless, distorted humanoid with overly large features. A clay golem wears no clothing, although it is often colored, painted, or decorated with symbols (especially holy symbols) by its creator.

A ceramic golem is warm to the touch and its eyes glow red with its internal fires while thin wisps of smoke emanate from the creature whenever it animates.

A ceramic golem cannot speak or make any vocal noise. It walks and moves with a slow, clumsy gait. It weighs around 600 pounds.

Combat

Breath Weapon (Su): 20-foot cone of lava, free action once every 1d4+1 rounds; 8d6 points of fire damage, Reflex DC 18 half. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Cursed Wound (Ex): The damage a ceramic golem deals doesn't heal naturally and resists healing spells. A character attempting to cast a conjuration (healing) spell on a creature damaged by a ceramic golem must succeed on a DC 28 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the injured character.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): A ceramic golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A *move earth* spell drives the golem back 80 feet and deals 3d8 points of damage to it.

A *disintegrate* spell slows the golem (as the *slow* spell) for 1d4 rounds and deals 1d8 points of damage.

An *earthquake* spell cast directly at a ceramic golem stops it from moving on its next turn and deals 5d10 points of damage. The golem gets no saving throw against any of these effects.

Any magical attack against a ceramic golem that deals acid damage heals 1 point of damage for every 2 points of damage it would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. For example, a ceramic golem hit by the

breath weapon of a black dragon heals 11 points of damage if the attack would have dealt 23 points of damage. A ceramic golem gets no saving throw against magical attacks that deal acid damage.

Haste (Su): After it has engaged in at least 1 round of combat, a ceramic golem can haste itself once per day as a free action. The effect lasts 3 rounds and is otherwise the same as the spell.

Construction

A ceramic golem's body must be sculpted from a single block of clay weighing at least 1,000 pounds, treated with rare oils and powders worth 1,500 gp, and then fired in extremely hot temperatures (such as a giant kiln, the caldera of an active volcano, or the fiery breath of a red or gold dragon of at least Adult age). Creating the body requires a DC 19 Craft (sculpting) check or a DC 19 Craft (pottery) check.

CL 15th; Craft Construct, *animate objects*, *commune*, *flame strike*, *haste*, *resurrection*, caster must be at least 15th level; Price 80,000 gp; Cost 41,500 gp + 3,200 XP.

CHILD'S DOLL

Appearance: This doll's body is hand-sculpted ceramic. The doll's face is hand-painted in good detail, although there is some wear evident. The doll is wearing a hand-sewn, beaded fabric lined with fur and has all the looks of a noble woman.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This doll is far too nice to have belonged to anyone but a child of wealth. The costume is an exact copy of the style worn by the Ukey nobility and has been masterfully stitched with real fur. While there is some wear and tear evident, showing that the doll was loved by its owner(s), and this does detract from the value, it is nevertheless a fine doll.

Value: 100 gp (100 gp for craftsmanship).

Special Rules: The doll's value can be increased by an additional 25 gp (to a total of 125 gp) with a successful Craft (doll-making) (DC 13) check and an investment of 4 gp for paint, thread, and a bit of fur.

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FINGER SPIN TOP

Appearance: This strange item looks like a disk with two ziggurats rising from it. The top is divided by colors into four equal sections, each one running from top to bottom. The four colors are gold, black, white, and gray.

Appraise Information: DC 12. Both simple in design and appearance, this top is a child's plaything designed to be hand-spun on a flat surface. Although the exact rules are not known, the four colors undoubtedly correspond to some form of scoring in whatever game the top is used for.

Value: 2 cp (2 cp for the top).

Special Rules: This top is a *top of augury*. Once per day, the top may be used to cast an *augury* (as per the spell) with an 80% chance of success. The four colors correspond to the four results possible with the spell (the GM can change the colors as he or she sees fit):

Gold - Weal

Black - Woe

Gray - Weal and Woe

White - Nothing

Faint divination; CL3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *augury*; Price 600 gp.

HUMANOID CENSER

Appearance: This rather crudely fashioned ceramic item is some six inches in diameter and consists of a cup with a removable cover in which slits have been carved. The entire thing is held together by three small leather thongs and is swung from the end of a fraying, two-foot piece of hempen rope connected through an eyelet at the top of the cover.

Appraise Information: DC 14. This piece is rather crude in the extreme, and the cup smells vaguely of animal excrement. It undoubtedly is of humanoid fashioning, probably goblin or kobold, although its exact origins cannot be determined.

Value: 1 gp (1 gp for curiosity value).

Special Rules: This censer was used in unspeakable rituals for the goblin god of disease and famine and anyone not of the faith that so much as touches it must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 14) or suffer from a supernatural disease (Touch of Rool, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d3 Con). The save DC is Wisdom-based.

As with most supernatural diseases, Touch of Rool is actually a curse, not a normal disease, and it continues to afflict the victim until the victim reaches Constitution 0 (and dies).

While the disease is in effect, any character attempting to cast any conjuration (healing) spell on a creature afflicted with Touch of Rool must succeed on a DC 18 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the afflicted character.

The only way to eliminate the disease is to first break the curse through a *break enchantment* or *remove curse* (requiring a DC 18 caster level check for either spell), after which a caster level check is no longer necessary to cast healing spells on the victim, and the disease can be magically cured as any normal disease.

KYRILLIAN VASE

Appearance: This onion-shaped vase has a thin, narrow neck and a wide bottom. It is glazed white and has images of green sea serpents fused into the glaze. It is extremely light and, upon close inspection, you can see a hairline crack from the mouth halfway to the base.

Appraise Information: DC 17. A fine example of a Kyrillian vase, that long-lost dynasty that ended when the last queen committed suicide, the hairline crack proves it to be original. It displays all of the hallmarks of the style, including the immediately recognizable onion shape, very thin construction, and green glazed sea-related imagery.

Value: 3,450 gp (450 gp for the vase, 3,000 for rarity).

Special Rules: The vase is very fragile and must be handled with great care (i.e. placing it in a box filled with wood shavings for transport, picking it up as little as possible), or it will shatter into a thousand pieces.

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Mending cannot fix such the vase once shattered, but *make whole* can. Unfortunately, *make whole* will also repair the hair-line crack, which makes the vase appear perfect and is a sure sign to a collector that the vase has been magically repaired. Such a vase is no longer original and is thus of much lower value (reduce the value from 3,450 gp to 450 gp); all Kyrillian vases had one or more hairline cracks when they were made due to the stress the firing process placed on the very thin vase walls.

LARGE AMPHORA

Appearance: This amphora has two handles at its mouth, is some three feet long and is decorated on one half with blue and the other half with white paint. It has its widest point just below the mouth and tapers down to a flat bottom. A vaguely small amount of liquid can be heard sloshing within.

Appraise Information: DC 12. Favored as storage devices by the sea traders of the Brilliant Sea, this amphora's markings reveal it to have come from the island of Amicus, which is well known for its voluminous production of cheap red wine.

Value: 5 gp (5 gp for the amphora).

Special Rules: This amphora can hold four gallons and, when full, weighs about 25 pounds.

MARBLES

Appearance: This relatively large bag contains several score of simple, light dun colored clay marbles.

Appraise Information: DC 11. This item is exactly what it looks like, a bag of non-descript clay marbles.

Value: 1 cp (1 cp for the marbles).

Special Rules: A bag of marbles can be spread over a 5-foot area. Any creature moving through the area must succeed at a Balance check or fall down. The DC of the check varies with the speed of the individual:

Speed	DC
Half normal speed	10
Full normal speed	15
Charging (double normal speed)	20
Run x3	25
Run x4	30

MOUSE MASK

Appearance: This mask is in the shape of a realistic mouse's face, replete with elongated snout and appropriately painted. A trio of three crisscrossing leather straps is slipped over the back of a person's head to keep the mask in place.

Appraise Information: DC 16. Most likely a mask used during the annual theatre performances among the desert kingdoms, this mask is very realistic. While fine to look at, it would not be very comfortable to wear since all of the weight of the mask is concentrated toward the snout end.

Value: 25 gp (25gp for artistic value).

Special Rules: It is a *mask of the rodent*, one of a number of different masks, each with the face of a small (1HD or less animal) that, when donned, subjects the wearer to a *baleful polymorph* spell that causes the mask to morph to the wearer's face even as he or she takes on the form of the mask (in this case, of a mouse). A successful Fortitude save is required to negate the *polymorph* (DC 17). Failure at this check causes the victim to have to succeed at a Will save (DC 17). For further details, see the *baleful polymorph* spell description.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *baleful polymorph*; Price 7,200 gp.

A Dozen Ceramic Items

PEASANT BROOCH

Appearance: This large decorative, brightly glazed ceramic brooch in the form of a sheaf of grain features an iron clasp at its back.

Appraise Information: DC 11. Although of good quality, this brooch is of the sort bought by women of the lower classes to wear during important occasions and is universally ignored by those with money. Of course, the loss of such an item is a terrible blow to its owner.

Value: 1 gp (1 gp artistic value).

Special Rules: This sort of item is just the thing to catch the PCs attention upon meeting someone for the first time, and just the sort of item that is lost in a struggle, or dropped on purpose, when that someone is kidnapped or otherwise in peril. Naturally, its large size and bright coloration means it is always easily found in even the thickest underbrush.

SIMPLE BOX WITH POTION VIALS

Appearance: This small utilitarian wooden case is unmarked and closed with a small iron latch. It is velvet-lined on the interior and divided into six indentations, each of which holds a small, unstoppered ceramic vial.

Appraise Information: DC 15. Vials such as these are a common enough item in alchemist and spellcaster circles and can be gotten from any shop that caters to their needs. Once filled, such a vial is either stoppered with a cork or sealed with candle wax and its contents written on the vial body.

The case is also of the standard sort that is sold to those wishing to more safely store and transport their vials.

Value: 8 gp (6 gp for the vials, 2 gp for the box).

Special Rules: Although these vials are empty, the GM can fill them with anything (potions, poisons, liqueur, etc.) he or she desires prior to the characters getting hold of them.

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A Dozen Disgusting Spells

by *Michael Hammes*

Requires the use of the *Dungeons & Dragons®*
Player's Handbook



Introduction

Disgust: To excite nausea or loathing in; sicken.

I came up with the idea for this PDF after writing *A Dozen Bothersome Spells*, where I explored spells that annoy rather than destroy, and pondering what other areas of magic spell-casters might be interested in. How about one's that disgust?

Sure, while a certain number of the standard spells are already disgusting (i.e. *ghoul touch*, *stinking cloud*, *contagion*), what if a caster wanted to go beyond these? What if a caster wasn't simply interested in killing or hurting his or her opposition, but in grossing them out?

So, this PDF presents a dozen spells that feature unpleasant visuals, buckets of gore, stink like no one's business, etc.; in short, they are just plain sickening.

Why would a caster want such spells? Let me give you a couple of examples:

Haowin heard the words of power spoken by the evil priest as the priest's hand made contact with Sylva. He raced to aid his friend, but the fighter's body had already slumped lifelessly to the ground.

Haowin heard the words of power spoken by the evil priest as the priest gestured at Sylva and closed his fist. He raced to aid his friend as Sylva began to tremble, but it was too late. As Sylva screamed, the priest gave a swift curl of his arm and Haowin watched in horror as his friend's veins tore from his body to land in a bloody, mangled heap at the priest's feet. Haowin knew Sylva was dead before the blood-spurting body of the fighter ever hit the ground.

Which one of the above would make more of an impression upon your players?

ROLE-PLAY ALERT

A spell is only as disgusting as the DM chooses to describe it. While the spells in this PDF and several of the spells in the standard rules are by their nature disgusting, nothing prevents the clever DM from taking already existing spells and increasing the visceral sensation of their impact.

The GM could describe a creature killed by a *fireball* as having the skin melt from its bones, or the impact of a *lightning bolt* blowing off the fingers and toes of another creature.

Especially necromantic spells lend themselves to this sort of horrible description. *Finger of death* causes the target's blood to ooze out of its orifices as it sinks lifelessly to the ground while *destruction* causes dark light (necromantic energy) to escape from the target's mouth and eyes as it burns from within, the stench of burning flesh filling the immediate area until nothing but dust remains.

Not only do such descriptions do a better job of impressing the players with the magical power they, or their opponents, wield, but in addition, by varying the descriptions for each spell (i.e. same spell, different description), keeps the players guessing as to exactly what was used.

CURSE OF WARTS

Necromancy

Level: Brd 1

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The subject's body immediately becomes covered in warts from head to toe. The warts cause no physical harm in any way. They are removed instantly if the subject either receives a *remove disease* or *remove curse*, otherwise they must be cut off one at a time or physically removed in some other fashion. Once removed, the warts do not return.

The exact effects, such as penalties for Charisma-based checks, which are suffered by the subject are up to the GM.

Material Component: A piece of dead skin.

DEVEIN

Necromancy [Death]

Level: Clr 6, Death 6

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Short (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)

Target: One living creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Calling upon the powers of unlife to aid you, you draw out the creature's veins with one swift motion, literally pulling them out through the skin to land at your feet as the victim dies in unspeakable agony.

Even if the creature succeeds at its Fortitude save it still takes 3d8 points of damage +1 per caster level.

EXPLOSION OF GORE

Necromancy

Level: Clr 1, Death 1, Evil 1

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: One Small or Medium corpse/level in a 20-ft.-radius spread; see text

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex negates (blindness only); see text

Magic Resistance: No

Summoning negative energy into a dead body, you cause a corpse of Small or Medium size to explode in a shower of gore and bone. Each exploding corpse causes 1d4 points of damage (no save) to every creature within a 5-foot radius and covers the creature with gore, blinding it unless it succeeds at a Reflex saving throw.

A blinded creature cannot see, takes a –2 penalty to Armor Class, loses Dexterity bonus to AC (if any), moves at half speed, takes a –4 penalty on Search checks and on most Strength- and Dexterity-based skill checks, and has all checks and activities that rely on vision automatically fail; opponents have total concealment (50% miss chance) against a blinded creature.

A blinded creature can take a full-round action to wipe the gore from its face and clear its vision, or a move -equivalent action to restore most of its vision (–1 penalty on attack rolls, Search checks, and Spot checks).

Note that this spell only works on true corpses, not undead such as zombies or skeletons, which are already under the influence of negative energy.

MAGGOT INFESTATION

Necromancy [Death]

Level: Clr 6, Death 6

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One living creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude partial

Spell Resistance: Yes

One living creature of your choice within range dies instantly as thousands of maggots burst simultaneously from its flesh, ripping it apart and causing it to collapse in a bloody heap. The target is entitled to a Fortitude saving throw to survive the attack. If the save is successful, the maggots instead burst out of the creature's mouth, causing 2d4 points of temporary Constitution damage. Obviously, the subject might die even if it succeeds on its saving throw.

NOXIOUS STENCH

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature object touched

Duration: 1 hour/level (D)

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: No

The recipient is enshrouded in the smell of freshly rotting corpses. The smell radiates outward to a 10-foot radius and any living creature (except the recipient) within the area of effect must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw or become nauseated (unable to attack, cast spells, concentrate on spells, or do anything else requiring attention; only take a single move action per turn) for as long as they remain within the area of effect and for one round thereafter.

Those that succeed at their Fortitude saving throw are still sickened (-2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks) as long as they

remain within the area of effect and for one round thereafter.

Focus: A piece of rotting flesh.

OOZING ITCH

Necromancy

Level: Brd 2, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature touched

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The subject's skin breaks out in horribly oozing and itchy pustules. The subject can take no other action for the duration of the spell except to scratch the itch, taking a -2 penalty to Armor Class and losing his or her Dexterity bonus (if any).

Material component: a pinch of sawdust or a small feather.

PLAGUE OF BOILS

Necromancy [Evil]

Level: Clr 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The subject's body immediately becomes covered in pus-filled inflammations. The subject takes a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks immediately. Each additional day the *plague of boils* is active the subject must succeed at a further Fortitude saving throw. Further failures of the saving throw increase the penalty by 2 (i.e. to -4 then -6 then -8 etc.).

A *plague of boils* can be removed through a *remove disease* spell or by a successful Heal check (remove disease; the DC is the spell's DC).

RAIN OF PUTRESCENCE

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Brd 2, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Area: Creatures and objects within 20-ft.-radius spread

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

A heavy rainfall of fecal waste falls in the area of effect, reducing visibility and making things slippery. The rainfall of waste obscures all sight, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. A creature 5 feet away has concealment (attacks have a 20% miss chance). Creatures farther away have total concealment (50% miss chance, and the attacker cannot use sight to locate the target).

Any creature attempting to move within or through the area must succeed at a Balance check (DC 5 if moving at one-quarter speed, DC 10 if moving at half speed, DC 15 if moving at full speed, and DC 20 if running or charging).

The material rained forth by this spell remains, clinging to the creatures' clothing, hair, etc. until cleaned off or otherwise removed (consider this a strong scent for purposes of Tracking through the use of the scent ability).

Material Component: a small vial of bodily waste.

SLIME TOUCH

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Targets: Living creature or metal or wood object touched

Duration: Instantaneous; see text

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: None

A touch from your hand infects the target creature or object with green slime, doing 1d6 points of permanent Constitution damage to living creatures or any other beings with a Constitution score. It also does 2d6 points of damage against wood or metal, ignoring metal's hardness but not that of wood. It does not harm stone or any other material.

Unlike the green slime encountered in dungeons, the green slime from this spell does damage the moment it touches the creature or object. A creature that is reduced to 0 Constitution has become a puddle of green slime.

Getting rid of green slime is difficult. Direct exposure to sunlight kills it within one round (although it still does 1d6 points of Constitution damage before it is burned away) while a *remove disease* spell destroys it instantly. The only other remedy is to burn or freeze it; anything that deals cold or fire damage destroys the green slime (and will deal damage to the victim as well).

Focus: a bit of green slime in a stone or glass container (for safety).

VACATE BOWELS

Necromancy

Level: Brd 1, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One living creature

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The target creature's bowels completely evacuate, with predictable results, if it fails its Fortitude saving throw. So violent is this action that the creature is immediately stunned (drops everything held, can't take actions, takes a -2 penalty to AC, and loses Dexterity bonus to AC) until the caster's turn next round.

VILE STENCH

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature or object touched

Duration: 1 hour/level (D)

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: No

The recipient is enshrouded in an awful smell reminiscent of the foulest sewers. The smell radiates outward to a 10-foot radius and any living creature (except the recipient) that enters the area of effect must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw or become sickened (–2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks) for as long as they remain within the area of effect and for one round thereafter.

Focus: A small bit of garbage.

VIOLENT RETCHING

Necromancy

Level: Brd 2, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One living creature

Duration: 1 round/level; see text

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

A target failing its Fortitude saving throw empties its stomach, vomiting and dry heaving forcefully; consider the target nauseated (unable to attack, cast spells, concentrate on spells, or do anything else requiring attention; only action is a single move action per turn) for the duration of the spell. A creature succeeding at its Fortitude save is merely sickened (–2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks) for 1 round as it fights back the urge to retch.

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A Dozen Distinctive Articles of Clothing

by Philip Reed

Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook



In *A Dozen Unusual Articles of Clothing* I presented twelve items that were almost guaranteed to be unlike anything a party of adventurers had encountered before. Numerous e-mails, both from players and DMs, have indicated to me that there is most definitely more gamers out there like myself that appreciate a wider variety of clothing options – especially options that help to make a character stand out from the pack. With that in mind I am pleased to present *A Dozen Distinctive Articles of Clothing*. While not all of the items in this PDF are unique I recommend to DMs and players that only one character in a campaign be outfitted with each item from this PDF. After all, if everyone is wearing the same tunic it is difficult to say that it is a *distinctive* article of clothing.

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The Clothing

ARCHER'S GREATCOAT

Appearance: This richly crafted greatcoat is deep green in color and hangs down to the wearer's knees. Thick straps wrap around the coat, fastening with gray metal buckles when the coat is closed. The left arm of the coat is leather while the rest of the garment is made of heavy linen. The entire coat is lined with white fur and is horribly warm to wear in all but the coldest of conditions. Down the left side of the coat are dozens of long pockets, each one of which is designed specifically to hold a single arrow.

Appraise Information: DC 16. This greatcoat was specially made two decades ago for the ranger Delphakae, a masterful woodsman that was as well known for his expertise with the bow as he was for his skill at tracking dangerous prey. The fur that was used to line the coat was taken from a winter wolf that Delphakae killed during the Goblinhost Campaign; a brutal goblinoid uprising that almost resulted in the death of thousands of human settlers.

Value: 565 gp (5 gp for the coat, 35 gp for the winter wolf fur, 25 gp for the artistry involved in the manufacture of the coat, and 500 gp for its historical significance).

Special Rules: The coat can be used to carry a total of 36 arrows, doing away with the need to carry a quiver. The coat acts as leather armor when worn and provides its wearer with a +2 circumstance bonus to Fortitude saves made to resist the effects of cold weather.

ASSASSIN'S BOOTS

Appearance: These high, black leather boots are flexible and in no way hinder the wearer's ability to move quickly. The soles of the boots are made of a thick, soft animal hide that is stretched over hard leather, providing the boot's wearer with ample protection while having no effect on his ability to move silently. The leather straps and metal buckles, used to tighten the boots when worn, are in excellent condition. The boots are decorated with a pattern of leather straps, each

one fastened down with a single silver stud, that criss-cross across the surface, resembling a spider's web.

Appraise Information: DC 15. Other than the fine craftsmanship put into the creation of these boots they are just simple leather boots. The soles of the boots were designed to be as silent as possible since this particular pair of boots was originally created for an assassin.

Value: 103 gp (3 gp for boots and 100 gp for the artistry involved in their creation).

Special Rules: None.

BLACKGUARD'S INTIMIDATING CLOAK

Appearance: This bright, crimson-colored cloak appears to trap the light, its surface so dull that it shows no reflections at all. A thick, metal chain secures the cloak around the wearer's neck while a frame beneath the cloak shapes it, making the wearer appear more muscular than he actually is. The cloak is lined with black leather.

Appraise Information: DC 18. Created over 1,000 years ago for Mercikus the Tyrant, a blackguard responsible for the death of hundreds of thousands of slaves and innocent captives, this cloak went missing when Mercikus was killed in the Battle of Hope. If correctly identified – a successful DC 35 Knowledge (history) check is required to identify this cloak as the one Mercikus wore – there is an excellent chance that paladins and good-aligned clerics from across the world will seek out the cloak and attempt to destroy it and its wearer. Legend has it that Mercikus' soul was trapped in the cloak and the forces of good will do anything in their power to ensure that this soul never again terrorizes the world.

Value: 43 gp or priceless (8 gp for the cloak, 35 gp for its intimidation modifier). If the cloak is correctly identified it immediately becomes priceless.

Special Rules: The cloak provides its wearer with a +4 equipment bonus to Intimidate checks.

Though it is said that the cloak carries other powers, including the soul of Mercikus, this is in fact not true.

BOOTS OF GLOOM CRAWLER HIDE

Appearance: These hard, knee-high boots are black in color and – even to an untrained eye – a work of art. The leather soles show slight wear and the laces are missing. The initials “GU” are stamped inside each boot. The boots have an odd, hard-to-identify look and feel.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The initials are for Gorya Urquat, a respected cordwainer and cobbler who lived some two hundred years ago. Urquat was well known for his work with boots and shoes and authentic “GU” footwear is highly desirable among the wealthy and powerful. This particular pair of boots is fashioned from the skin of a gloom crawler, a hideous magical beast that looks like a squid. Where Urquat laid his hands upon the hide of a gloom crawler is not known though research reveals (Knowledge (History) or other appropriate classification DC 20) that the cordwainer constructed six pairs of boots from gloom crawler skin.

Value: 1,605 gp (5 gp for boots, 250 gp for the gloom crawler hide, 100 gp for the craftsmanship, and 1,250 gp for being an authentic “GU”).

Special Rules: None.

DECORATIVE COWL

Appearance: A hood and gorget (a cape-like article of clothing designed to drape down over the wearer’s shoulders) combination stitched together to form a single piece of protective wear, this cowl is a bright blue in color and decorated with a white lace edging. Stars are embroidered into the gorget part of the cowl and the hood is lined with black fur. The cowl protects the wearer from light weather, such as a mist of rain or light snowfall, but is primarily intended as a piece of decorative clothing.

Appraise Information: DC 12. While masterfully made, this cowl is made of common fabrics and materials and the fur used to line the hood is from a common black bear. It’s an attrac-

tive item, but not particularly valuable.

Value: 15 gp (5 gp for the cowl, 10 gp for the artistry involved in its manufacture).

Special Rules: None.

DRAGONSCALE COAT

Appearance: This long greatcoat, majestic in appearance and a true work of beauty, is completely covered in thick, red scales, the arms the only part of the coat that are not protected by the heavy plates. The entire coat is made of leather that has been dyed red and it is lined with a dark, red-colored fur. Gold-colored chains and buttons secure the coat closed and silver-colored metallic chains are used as piping down the arms and sides of the coat.

Appraise Information: DC 16. The plates used on the coat are actual scales from a red dragon, each one cut and trimmed to fit perfectly on the coat. The individual scales are so small that they could only have come from a very young dragon or the very tip of a dragon’s tail. The fur is that of a yeti that has been dyed red while the chains and buttons are gold and silver plated steel. Exactly who the coat was made for is unknown but markings on the inside of the coat indicate that gnomish craftsmen made it sometime within the last ten years (so there’s a very good chance that the creators and original owner could still be found if an adventurer worked at a careful search).

Value: 2,190 gp (5 gp for the coat, 35 gp for the silver and gold-plated chains and buttons, 2,000 gp for the dragon scales, and 150 gp for the artistry of the coat).

Special Rules: The coat provides the wearer with a +4 circumstance bonus to Fortitude saves to resist the effects of cold. Additionally, the dragon’s scale used in the coat’s manufacture makes the wearer completely immune to draconic flames (though all other types of fire still injure the coat’s wearer).

ENIGMATIC MASK

Appearance: This mirror-like plate, connected with small links of chain to the inside of a plain, gray-leather cowl, completely obscures

the wearer's face, making it impossible to correctly identify the face of the person beneath the mask. When discovered the mask and cowl are wrapped in a tattered blanket and the mirrored surface of the mask is dull and in need of polishing – otherwise the item is in wonderful condition.

Appraise Information: DC 18. These masks were worn hundreds of years ago by members of the Tribunal of Arcanists, an association of powerful wizards that acted as judge, jury, and executioner, traveling the planes in search of those using magic for evil purposes. Members of the tribunal all dressed in gray robes and the group worked to protect the identity of its members. The last recorded appearance of a member of the association was forty years ago; what became of the association and its members is unknown though many speculate that they still exist and are waiting for the perfect opportunity to strike against evil spellcasters.

Value: 265 gp (15 gp for the mask and cowl and 250 gp for its historical significance).

Special Rules: This heavy mask makes it difficult for the wearer to see and hear, imposing a –4 penalty on all Spot and Listen checks.

IMPOSING WINGS

Appearance: This item of clothing consists of a metallic frame, a long, blue cape, and two magnificent feathered wings, each one of which is made of a rigid metal structure to which gold and blue feathers have been fastened. When worn this item makes it appear as if the wearer possesses beautiful, avian-like wings that are folded neatly on his back and stretch a few feet above his body. The cape almost perfectly hides the frame from sight and if a light tunic is worn over the contraption many people may, at first glance, believe that the wearer is actually a member of some rare race of winged folk.

Appraise Information: DC 22. This item was originally created for a costume party. It's a one-of-a-kind item but since it is so large and bulky, and extremely heavy, few people would willingly wear it for more than a few hours.

Value: 650 gp. A one-of-a-kind item that, if placed for sale at an auction, could easily spike much higher in value – it is quite beautiful and is an excellent artistic item.

Special Rules: Due to the item's size and weight it slows the wearer down, reducing all Strength and Dexterity (and related skill) checks by –4 and the wearer's speed is reduced by one-quarter (round down). Still, when combined with a mask the wings could be used as an excellent disguise for a short period of time.

KAMADAN CLOAK OF TERROR

Appearance: This waist-length cloak looks to be fashioned from the hide of a leopard though it has six serpents extending from the shoulders, each one supported internally by wire. The hood of the cloak is made of the creature's head and the inside of the garment is lined is smooth, black leather. The cloak ties at the neck with two thick lengths of leather.

Appraise Information: DC 20. This cloak is made from the skin of a kamadan, a magical creature that is rarely seen. The serpents give the cloak a terrifying appearance and the craftsmanship on the garment is near flawless. The leather used as lining is of a fairly common variety and is not special in any way.

Value: 601 gp (1 go for the cloak, 450 gp for the kamadan skin, and 150 gp for the quality of the garment).

Special Rules: The cloak is, in fact, quite frightening to look at. Anyone wearing the cloak gains a +2 equipment bonus on all *Intimidate* checks.

LADY'S CRISPINETTE

Appearance: This hair net is spun from a glistening, metallic thread that sparkles in the light. It is a heavy piece, weighing far more than any hair net should.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The silk thread used in the manufacture of this crispinette – also known as a fret or a caul – is crafted from the web of the giant spider found deep underground. Drow traders deal in this material and, in fact, this particular crispinette was made for a drow priestess.

Value: 21 gp (1 gp for the crispinette and 20 gp for the silk).

Special Rules: None.

MAGNIFICENT EVENING GOWN

Appearance: This long, flowing green gown is decorated with lace edging along the bottom of the gown and the ends of the sleeves and dozens of pearl strings drape about the wearer's neck and shoulders. The low-cut dress is quite flattering and is really an attractive, unique item. The bodice of the dress includes a steel girdle directly stitched to the gown and a velvet cape, secured to the gown by a silver chain, completes the outfit. It is obvious that the dress is intended for only the most glorious of parties and is not the sort of thing that would ever be worn to a common, daily activity.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This item was made for the Empress Terrience, former ruler of the people of the western woods, several centuries ago. It was to be worn at the wedding of the Empress' son but the night before the wedding the gown, as well as several necklaces, bracelets, and broaches, were stolen from the Empress' private quarters. The Empress and her people have been dead for hundreds of years but where the gown has been since it was stolen is unknown. Still, it is here now and it is certain that a collector somewhere would be willing to pay a rather handsome fee in order to own this beautiful gown.

Value: 5,920 gp (20 gp for the gown, 400 gp for the fabrics and metals used in the gown's creation, and 5,500 gp for the gown's collectible and historical value).

Special Rules: Though quite beautiful, the gown hinders its wearer, reducing all Strength and Dexterity (and related skill) checks by -4 and the wearer's speed is reduced by one-half (round down).

NECROMANCER'S GARNACHE

Appearance: This heavy, black supertunic is designed to drape over the wearer's body, covering his body in a thick, heavy shroud of black leather and cloth. The inside of the garnache is lined with dozens of small pockets, each one of which tightly closes with a simple drawstring.

The image of a black skull is stitched into the garment's back, though being of the same color as the supertunic itself the skull is difficult to see (a successful DC 20 Spot check is required to notice the skull design).

Appraise Information: DC 15. This particular supertunic was created a century ago and is one of dozens of items created for the now-destroyed Brotherhood of Skulls, a once-powerful organization of necromancers. The supertunic is created from strips of leather and heavy, black wool that have been sewn together and reinforced with a black silk underlining. The members of the Brotherhood of Skulls all wore supertunics of this type and the inner pockets were used to carry spell components and scrolls. Rumors persist of more advanced versions of these supertunics that were lined with bone plates, making the garment a more effective article of protection.

Value: 225 gp (10 gp for the supertunic, 200 gp for its ancestry, and 5 gp for the leather used in the garment's creation).

Special Rules: Anyone attempting to remove an item from one of the supertunic's pockets suffers a -6 penalty to their Sleight of Hand check. The supertunic is treated like leather armor.

SPIDER'S GLOVES

Appearance: These gloves are made of black leather and silk and the fingers are tipped with a short, black barb that assists the wearer during climbing. Leather strings can be pulled tight and tied at the wrist, securing the gloves tightly when worn and making it less likely that they'll slip off during climbing.

Appraise Information: DC 15. These gloves were designed specifically for climbing, the barbs digging into stone or brick and granting the wearer with a more secure grasp. The gloves have been well taken care of and are in excellent condition.

Value: 35 gp (5 gp for the gloves and 30 gp for the expert manufacture).

Special Rules: The gloves grant a +2 equipment bonus to Climb checks and can be used in combat (the gloves deal 1d3 slashing damage). The gloves are quite stiff, though, and impose a -2 penalty on all other skill (if hands are required to use the skill) and attack rolls.

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A Dozen Disturbing Rumors

by Philip Reed

Requires the use of the *Dungeons & Dragons®*
Player's Handbook



A Dozen Troubling Rumors was written with the intention of giving DMs ideas that they could drop into a campaign in order to make their game feel larger than it actually is. The response to that PDF, one I expected to do poorly (in comparison to some of my other PDFs), has been better than I dared hope and a few generous individuals have even gone so far as to e-mail me requesting more rumors. Well, the *DM's Idea Pipeline* has included a few rumors and for those of you still clamoring for more I've put together this new PDF.

Please note that *A Dozen Troubling Rumors* is not needed to use this PDF. I've included the "rules" information from that PDF here so that those new to these PDFs of rumors will have all of the knowledge needed to use these rumors in your next game session.

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Philip Reed has been working professionally in the roleplaying game industry since 1995. In that time he has worked for such companies as West End Games, Privateer Press, and Steve Jackson Games. Today Philip spends his days at home running Ronin Arts, writing and designing new games, and reading whatever books interest him at the time. To learn more about Philip Reed – and Ronin Arts – please visit www.philipreed.com and www.roninarts.com.

USING THE RUMORS

This PDF is intended solely for the DM. Players who suspect that their DM may have a copy of this PDF would do best to close this file now and find something else to peruse.

The rumors in this PDF may be sprinkled liberally in a campaign either as written or modified by the DM. DMs should always be prepared for the situations, characters, and locations discussed in any rumor to leap to the forefront of the game session; you never know what bit of information the players will grab and run with.

When in any tavern, inn, coffeehouse, or similar establishment where men and women gather, select a rumor (or two or three) from this PDF and have each player make a *Gather Information* check and then check the roll against the chosen rumor(s).

I've discovered that these rumors work especially well if, after the *Gather Information* check is rolled, you give the PCs first the failed result (if they made their roll) and then, shortly after, give them the successful result. This adds some roleplaying opportunities and, I've found, encourages the PCs to talk over the false rumor before discovering the truth.

Each rumor follows the format:

Rumor Heading (Gather Information DC)

Failed *Gather Information* Check: If the check is failed this is what the PCs hear. A section of this entry is to be read aloud to the players though many DMs will choose to paraphrase the information (especially if any

of it needs to be tweaked to better fit the campaign). This entry also discloses the source of the rumor.

Successful Gather Information Check: If the check succeeds this is what the PCs

hear. Again, this entry is intended to be read aloud and gives the source of the rumor.

Follow Up: If the PCs choose to investigate the rumor this information will help the DM to prepare for what could happen.

THE RUMORS

And now, with introductory text and instructions out of the way, let us dive into the meat of this short PDF.

The Bell's were Stolen (DC 10)

Failed Gather Information Check: “The church bells didna ring this morn cause they were stolen by thieves last night! I seen the bell ringer in bed on the way here. Roughed him up, the thieves did.”

Source: Jacob [male human, Com 1, 1 hp], a boy of about 10. He works in the market, running errands and messages for the shopkeepers.

Successful Gather Information Check: “Not stolen. It’s just that the boy charged with ringing the bells this mornin’ were ill and none of the folk in the church thought ‘a the bells. They’ll ring tomorrow so don’t worry about it.”

Source: Nathan Skrogs [male human, Com2, 5 hp], a middle-aged man with a receding hairline and dressed in tattered robes. Skrogs is barefoot, armed with a club, and sometimes works in Smithfield’s Chocolate House (see *A Dozen Documents and Papers* or www.philipjreed.com) as a rough.

Follow Up: Sure enough, the next morning the bells ring loud and clear. Jacob, a little research proves, is prone to creating his own news and sharing it with those who will listen to him. Only the most foolish of folk listen to the boy’s stories.

All Drow Live in One Great City and It's Filled With Treasure (DC 12)

Failed Gather Information Check: “That ranger, yes, that one you saw leaving. He was unable to pay a recent loan and offered up knowledge of vast import and

value. But for a dozen gold I’ll share it with you.”

The PCs Pay 12 Gold: “The drow city of Dr’kkazam is merely two days beneath us, hidden away in the Underdark. It’s a treasure trove of items and, for an extra twenty gold, I’ll give you a copy of the map I now possess. A map that leads to a secret store room that houses the drow treasures. All the drow in this city, all the drow that live on this world, store their magics here.”

The PCs Don’t Pay, or attempt to Haggle: “It’s too valuable, friends. A dozen gold is the least I can accept for this information.”

Source: Kent Matthews [male human, Exp4, 13 hp], a usurer (or moneylender). Matthews conducts his business in any number of taverns and coffeehouses in the city and does not have his own shop. Matthews frequently hires thugs and thieves to collect on loans.

Successful Gather Information Check: “One city? Directly beneath us? You’ve been listening to too many fools, I dare say. It is common knowledge amongst the learned ones that the dark elves have a multitude of cities hidden in the Underdark, though no city nearer than a day’s ride. There are drow cities of all sizes scattered throughout all levels of the Underdark. Do not trust any man, woman, or creature who tells you such lies as a single city of the dark elves.”

Source: Any sage, wizard, or member of the city library.

Follow Up: There is no drow city and the map, if bought, is a fake. Kent Matthews will claim ignorance of the situation if confronted and, if pressed will offer the PCs a

50 gold reward if they can find and deliver the ranger who sold the information in the first place.

The Water's Been Poisoned (DC 14)

Failed Gather Information Check: “Poison? Poison? Could ne’r happen as the wizards protect us. Me dad tole me hissself that the wizards are here to protect us all.”

Source: Keyhole [male human, Com1, 1 hp], a boy of about 12. If pressed, Keyhole lets on that his given name is Joshua and he’s called Keyhole because of his skill opening locked doors.

Successful Gather Information Check: “Yes, friends, I saw the villains responsible for our poisoned water. It was deep in the woods, just last week, when I came across the band pouring some foul liquid into the water. I tried to stop them but – see this bruise here and this cast on my leg – they beat me soundly and left me alongside the road. If I saw anyone of them I’d recognize them immediately!”

Source: Garreth Havanoder [male human, Com 3, 11 hp], a woodcutter some three and thirty years of age with close cropped, black hair and steel gray eyes.

Follow Up: There are a few ways to handle this rumor. The first is to have it lead into the next rumor below.

The second way to handle it is to have the PCs approached by the town council. They need someone to track down and bring the bandits back to the city so that they may be judged and executed. The bandits have fled deep into the woods to a cabin from which they conduct their activities. They poisoned the water supply in order to create chaos which will aid them in their criminal activities.

The bandits should be a group large enough to challenge the PCs.

Particularly clever DMs will, no doubt, use both options.

Disease is Spreading (DC 15)

Failed Gather Information Check: “The sickness is nothing more than a nuisance. Children and whores spread it – as do the rats – just mind who you touch and what you eat and you’ll be fine.”

Source: Ageb Brown [male human, Com3, 6 hp], a pawnbroker dressed in clean tunic and breeches. Brown is a fanatic when it comes to cleanliness.

Successful Gather Information Check: “The Justice tells me it’s blinding sickness the city clerics are working to purify the water. Whatever ye do don’t drink the water or your sight may be lost forever.”

Source: Rosalinda the Fair [female human, Com 2, 4 hp], maid to the Justice Clendenning. She has a doll-like face and thin, pleasing shape. Rosalinda’s skin and hair are quite pale and she protects herself from the sun and elements by wearing several layers of clothing.

Follow Up: It will take the clerics a week to eradicate the sickness from the city water supply. During that time, 1d20 people will go blind each day. If any of the PCs drink the water before the disease is destroyed there is a chance of blindness – see the *DMG* for blinding sickness.

Assassins Have Been Hired to Kill the Lady Doreen (DC 15)

Failed Gather Information Check: “It’s true, ‘tis. Assassins are even now workin’ their way through the underbelly ‘a the city so that they can kill the Lady. Her guards are set ta kill any man that comes near her without their permission.”

Source: Edgar Ellis [male human, Com1, 2 hp], a young dock worker who walks with a limp and is bald. Ellis dresses in filthy breeches and tunic and wears wooden clogs.

Successful Gather Information Check: “From what I’ve heard, the tale of assassins is a cover to account for the added protection around the Lady Doreen. What she’s really trying to do is keep her husband out on the streets so that he is distracted and doesn’t notice that she’s spending a little too much

time with a guard. The story is, if I can trust you to keep it mum, is that she's gonna be running away from her husband and has arranged things to make it look as if assassin's have killed her. Keep it quite, please. It's not polite to gossip."

Source: Clark Turner [**male human, Com5, 10 hp**], a barber who owns a small stall in the common market. Turner has friends on the city council and is well connected to local events.

Follow Up: It is true that the Lady has arranged the rumor in an attempt to distract her husband. Within a week, if they do nothing, the PCs hear that the Lady has been assassinated and her body stolen away in the night. Her husband, The Lord Rory the Red, offers 5,000 gold to any man that can bring the head of the assassin – and proof that it is the assassin responsible for his wife's death – before the city court.

A Witch has Cursed the City (DC 15)

Failed Gather Information Check: The Witch 'a the Wood has damned us all, claimin' we be set to die by the gods. Old Roget come down with the shakes just after we 'eard 'o the curse – it's witch work I tells ya!"

Source: Harriet (the Whore) [**female human, Com 1, 1 hp**], an ugly young woman that gets by in ways best not mentioned in the presence of one of such noble stature as yourself.

Successful Gather Information Check: "In the last week I've treated a great many commoners suffering from witches' shakes, a mild sickness that plagues those who do not keep themselves clean. This damned rumor is my fault for I didn't make it clear that the name of the sickness does not identify its originator. It's just a name, dammit!"

Source: Colin Weatherhead [**male human, Exp 3, 7 hp**], a physician who lives and works in a small stall just off of the marketplace. Weatherhead is young, anxious to please, and a skilled doctor.

Follow Up: As the days pass more and more people will tell of the curse. As soon as the disease has been treated the people

will forget it for whatever new bit of gossip is making the rounds.

The King Has Offered a Bounty on All Drow (DC 16)

Failed Gather Information Check: "It's true, 'e has. 50 crowns to any man that brings a dark elf to the King's treasurer – dead or alive. The King done made up his mind that the dark ones are a plague on the people and, for the good of us all, he's digging deep to pay those who eliminate the evil elves from the land."

Source: Ben Grinsly [**male human, Com2, 4 hp**], an elder gentleman who works in the city's market district selling candles, rope, gloves – whatever junk he can collect.

Successful Gather Information Check: "The King has proclaimed that the drow threat must be stopped at all costs. To that end, he is paying a 10 gold reward on each drow head brought before the Royal Guard. Living drow will also be paid for – at 20 gold. It is said that the drow have increased their patrols of the Underdark and that they're prepared for bounty hunters. I have heard the drow are taking all bounty hunters as slaves."

Source: Harold Bonelli [**male human, Exp 3, 10 hp**], owner of Bonelli's Wine Shop. Harold Bonelli dresses in a threadbare super-tunic that was, at one time, quite elegant and dark breeches with leather-soled booties.

Follow Up: For two weeks the King will pay the bounty on all drow. After the time has passed – or 100 drow have been delivered – the King issues a royal statement that the drow are defeated and have fled the kingdom. A large party erupts and the city congratulates itself on a job well done. The drow have not fled and, to be honest, the danger of drow was no greater than usual. The entire situation was a political maneuver by the King and his staff. Whether this becomes known to the public or not, none of us may say. Perhaps a group of honest adventurers will uncover the truth . .

Terrible Creatures in Hats Stalk the Streets at Night (DC 20)

Failed Gather Information Check: “Giant hats was all I seen! Each creature stood twice as tall as a man and there were fifty of them if there was one! I watched him go past the stall just this morning, talking in some kinda bug speech – sounded like crickets at night they did. Each carried a sword as big as a horse and they was murder in their eyes.”

Source: Amandine Bagwell [female human, Com 1, 3 hp], a comandarress – a woman who organizes groups of other women to act as servants – with a stall off the market. She’s an older woman, near 60, and walks with a limp. Her toothless smile is ever present as she talks in her cackling way.

Successful Gather Information Check: “Aye, huggermuggers they be. Little nasty bastards dressed in dark clothes, each no more ‘en four feet tall. They wear massive, wide-brimmed hats and strike with long, wicked knives. The bloody huggermuggers must have come in on a ship for they’ve never been seen in the city before now.”

Source: Asule the Trickster [male elf, Wiz6, 18 hp] a wizard dressed in leather armor and carrying a black, wooden staff.

Follow Up: A small group of huggermuggers, no more than 10, entered the city by river late one night last week. These creatures prefer the underground environments and are typically not seen in any cities save the absolute largest. The creatures are growing more brave due to a lack of food in their usual stomping grounds – this group has been sent ahead to scout out the location to see if it could serve as a new home and source of food.

Someone must locate the creatures, and slay them, before more arrive.

The Witch has Forseen that the River will Rise (DC 20)

Failed Gather Information Check: “Disaster approaches! The witch of the wood has cursed us all and the river shall break her banks and slaughter us all. Flee, citymen, flee to the safety of the hill lands!”

Source: Johnson [male human, War6, 33 hp], a one-armed beggar. Years ago Karl Johnson was an elite soldier in the army of a neighboring country. An unfortunate accident lost Karl his arm and his will to fight. For over 30 years now Karl has moved from city to town to village, all the while begging for his scraps of bread and the occasional drink.

Successful Gather Information Check: “It is true, I fear. That foul witch of the wood has indeed forseen that our river shall flood the city this year – even the royal seers have told of this coming catastrophe. The King is set to announce a plan by which we shall save many people and much property.”

Source: Sir Pearcey Evanrude [male human, Ari 3, 14 hp], a military tactician in his early thirties. Evanrude is a small, near-diminutive man who is constantly stroking the ends of his well-kept – yet short – cathedral beard.

Follow Up: The coming flood, set to take place in less than a fortnight, will be the worst on record. The entire city finds itself flooded and many are killed during the onslaught of the rushing waters. Guards patrol the area during the week between the flood and when the water levels drop.

It will take many months for the city to rebuild and clean after the flood waters have left.

A Flight of Dragons Destroyed Blackgate (DC 20)

Failed Gather Information Check: “’tis true, lad. I were at The Serpent’s Tongue just last night when the news came in through messenger. Twenty powerful dragons fell on the city and destroyed it, breathing fire and acid and killing every man, woman, child, and lesser folk in the city.”

Source: Button Hughes [male human, Com3, 6 hp], a man in his 50s wearing an old robe and sandals.

Successful Gather Information Check: “Dragons? Destroyed Blackgate? Ha! Unlikely, gentlemen. The city of Blackgate is defended by some of the most powerful wards devised and, even so, a flight of dragons has not formed in some one hundred

years. It's a laughable thought and one you're better off forgetting. Would any of you gentlemen happen to be interested in an enchanted dagger?"

Source: Frederick Mekalvey [male human Exp5, 18 hp], roughly forty years old and has long, reddish-brown hair. Mekalvey is a dealer in magic items and has a small shop in the city.

Follow Up: Nothing has happened to Blackgate. A merchant caravan, assaulted by bandits, fought off the attackers and, in an attempt to save his life, one of the bandits made up the story. The tale has begun to circulate through the poorer communities of the city and some, such as Button Hughes, have been using the tale to lend credibility to some of their lies. Little do these thieves know that they're simply cementing their position as liars and purveyors of fantasy.

The Orcs have a Great Arcane Cannon (DC 23)

Failed Gather Information Check: "The wizards told me all about it. It's the size of a castle tower and throws magic through the sky like a catapult. Where the magic lands is completely wiped out. I just hope those orcs don't get a chance to use it before the King sends his troops to destroy it."

Source: Sigfrid Glick [male human, Exp 4, 9 hp], avener – stablemaster – of the Royal Academy of Magery. Glick has a common habit of eavesdropping while managing the stables and often shares his "knowledge" with drinking companions.

Successful Gather Information Check: "An orcan *cannon arcana*? My dear sir, even if such a device existed outside of Apprentice Tyurma's mind it would be we at the Academy of Magery who possess such a weapon and, I assure you, not common orcs.

Source: Hamlin Buchler [male Wiz 5, 18 hp], a member of the Royal Academy of Magery and up-and-coming wizardly power in the city. Hamlin is well connected and frequently knows all of importance that is taking place in and around the city.

Follow Up: Apprentice Tyurma is known for dreaming of complex, radical arcane engines of destruction and then sharing his dreams with everyone. Glick, an uneducated man with an imagination, simply warped a discussion he overheard between Tyurma and another member of the Academy into a story with which to frighten others.

The rumor, if not stopped, rapidly gets out of hand until people are clamoring for the army to be sent on a mission to destroy the device. If ten days pass after the time the PCs hear the rumor and it has not been stopped, the people of the city will be beyond reasoning with. A force must be sent to "destroy the weapon" or the commoners will riot, screaming for protection and the destruction of the orcan war machine. The town council may, if they can find a group of adventurers, pay an adventuring party "of great power" to set off on a mission. The town council will make out the party to be much more powerful and experienced than it actually is.

The Moon is Falling (DC 25)

Failed Gather Information Check: "It's falling, I say! Look up at the sky and any fool can see it's closer to us now than it's ever been. All this last week the moon keeps coming closer and closer. We'll all be killed!"

Source: Christel Livingston [female human, Com1, 2 hp], a suggestive whore who is known to drink too much and sometimes "work" for no pay. She's in her mid-30s, has several children at home and on the streets of the city, and is well known to carry a number of diseases.

Successful Gather Information Check: "The moon is not falling. It is entering a new phase that, due to the rotation of our world and the orbit of celestial bodies around us, takes place only once every thousand years. Rather than screaming of impending doom these fools would be better off watching the event as it will not take place again for another thousand years. This is an exciting time for us all, my friends."

Source: Any member of the town council or the Royal Academy of Magery.

Follow Up: For the next month the moon will continue to grow in the night sky until, at the end of the 30-day cycle, it fills a quarter of the sky every night. It will then begin to recede, growing smaller until it finally returns to its normal size and position in the sky.

Terror fills the common folk of the city and countryside with the social disaster reaching its climax the night the moon is closest to the world. Rioting, theft, murder, rape – crimes of all sorts are on the rise as people the world over begin to believe that the moon will crush them all. How the PCs treat this situation, either working to calm the

populace and keep order or joining the crowds, could have long-term impact on their standing in the campaign world. Officials will notice those who work to assist them in an effort to convince the public that nothing terrible is about to occur.

Special Rules: Some DMs may wish to tie the event to game rules. One possibility is that arcane powers grow stronger as the moon grows closer, with save DCs increasing by 1 for every three days of the event (to +10 on the night the moon is closest to the world) and damaging spells causing +1 point of damage for every level of the caster. The exact effects are up to the DM and, for ease of play, it may be wise to state that the event has no impact on game play at all.

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A Dozen Drow Items

by *Michael Hammes*

*Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook*



Introduction

The items in this PDF are inspired by Goodman Games' *The Complete Guide to Drow* available in PDF from rpgnow.com (http://www.rpgnow.com/product_info.php?products_id=326) and there are a number of references made to that product in this PDF. For each reference there is a page number in parentheses that refers the reader to the specific page in *The Complete Guide to Drow* containing the referenced information.

However, **you do not need to own or purchase that sourcebook to make full and complete use of the material in this PDF.** I hope I made that clear.

For more drow secrets, see Philip Reed's *A Dozen Secrets of the Drow*.

All the items in this PDF follow the following format:

NAME: THE NAME
OF THE ITEM.

Appearance: What the item looks like.

Appraise Information: The DC of an Appraise check to determine the item's value as well as background information about the item.

Value: The value of the item within the drow homeland; the value may vary significantly once removed from the homeland as determined by the GM.

Special Rules: Any rules that pertain to putting the item into play.

The Items

BRAND

Appearance: The end of this wrought iron brand has been shaped into the outline of a dagger in the center of which lies an eye.

Appraise Information: DC 13. The drow make frequent use of brands and branding.

Slaves are always branded with the house or family symbol (**p. 48 in *The Complete Guide to Drow***), this brand usually being placed on the left hand.

Brands are also used to mark drow convicted of crimes. Such brands are always placed on the left cheek, a fact that is devastating to a culture that places such a high value on physical

beauty as the drow do (assume that any drow so marked receives a -8 circumstance penalty to all Charisma-based skill checks when dealing with other drow).

It is also rumored that certain cults and secret organizations within drow society use brands to mark members.

This particular brand belongs to house Minulnth, a powerful house renowned for its wizards and weavers of power (**p. 27 in *The Complete Guide to Drow***) whose symbol is that of an eye imposed upon a dagger.

Value: 5 gp (2 gp for materials, 3 gp for workmanship).

Special Rules: None.

DEMON WHIP

Appearance: This fine whip is made of red and black spotted leather that feels smooth to the touch. Taking a closer look, you can see several gouges in the leather as if the creature's skin had suffered deep wounds before being cured.

Appraise Information: DC 20. Wielded by powerful drow keepers (p. 23 in *The Complete Guide to Drow*), a demon whip serves as a goad for these powerful spellcasters to drive their demonic legions into battle.

The mere fact that the whip is made from demon hide gives a good indication of the power possessed by drow keepers.

Value: 60,301 gp (300 gp for masterwork, 1 gp for whip, 60,000 gp for enchantment costs).

Special Rules: A *demon whip* is created from the flayed skin of a living demon in a weeklong magical ritual, at the end of which the demon dies as a portion of its essence is absorbed into the whip.

The *demon whip* bestows the following resistances on its wielder: acid 5, cold 5, electricity 20, fire 5 and also grants the wielder a +4 bonus on all saves against poisons of any kind. In addition, the wielder is able to communicate telepathically with any demon within 50 feet.

Once per week, the wielder may use the *demon whip* to summon a single demon of the type from which the whip is made, the demon serving as if under a *geas/quest* spell. The *demon whip* may summon and control only a single demon at a time.

Strong abjuration; CL 12th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, the flayed skin of a living demon; 60,000 gp.

A *demon whip* is a very poor weapon and few keepers bother to take the exotic weapon proficiency required to use it properly as a weapon. The *demon whip*'s chief usefulness lies in the resistances and abilities it affords its wielder as well as the psychological advantage it gives its wielder when dealing with demons; the *demon whip* grants a bonus equivalent to the wielder's character level to Intimidate checks when dealing with demons.

DRIDER STATUE

Appearance: Carved from black marble that is shot through with gray and silver veins, this small statue depicts a half-drow/half-spider centaur-like creature with eight legs and four arms standing on a mound of bodies. The lower two of the creature's hands each holds a hand axe while each of its upper hands holds a longsword.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The statue and base are quite finely detailed and obviously the work of a master craftsman, although exactly which craftsman is unknown as there is no maker's mark to be found anywhere on the piece (a fact that leads to speculation that the item was not made by a drow but rather a slave craftsman).

The statue depicts Gamakh, the drow god of tyranny and war (p. 6 in *The Complete Guide to Drow*), fact that can be ascertained with a Knowledge (religion) check (DC 20).

Value: 5,310 gp (10 gp for the marble, 300 gp for masterwork quality, 5,000 gp for artistic value).

Special Rules: None.

BEARDED CAP

Appearance: This cluster of palm-sized, pale mushrooms is notable for the small strands that hang down from underneath the mushrooms' caps, giving them a bearded appearance.

Appraise Information: DC 15. Hundreds of varieties of mushrooms and other fungi populate the underdark realms. The bearded cap is a member of the Emenitecae family of mushrooms, which also includes the Deepspore (p. 10 in *The Complete Guide to Drow*).

Like their highly poisonous cousin, the bearded cap is not safe to eat. Called the bearded cap because of the spore-strands that drop from underneath its cap, this mushroom contains a strong paralyzing compound.

Value: 50 gp (50 gp per mushroom; they are hard to find and much sought after) and 2,500 (per dose of Corith's Bite; it takes 50 bearded caps to make one dose).

Special Rules: A single bearded cap has the following properties:

Bearded cap poison, Ingested DC 11, Initial Damage 0, Secondary Damage Paralysis (1d6 minutes); each additional cap eaten increases the DC of the saving throw by 2.

Not content with its natural properties, the blood druids (p. 18 in *The Complete Guide to Drow*) brew a strong contact poison, called Corith's Bite (named after the drow deity favored by blood druids and found on p. 6 in *The Complete Guide to Drow*), from bearded caps:

Corith's Bite, Contact DC 17, Initial Damage Paralysis (2d6 minutes), Secondary Damage Paralysis (2d6 hours).

The blood druids are fond of smearing such poison on their weapons and, once of sufficient level to become immune to poison, on their hands.

MITHRIL MORNINGSTAR

Appearance: This wicked morningstar is very light and appears to be made of dull silver metal. Its handle is etched with the image of a leering spider drooling venom from its lips while the weapon features a total of five thick barbs, each one strong enough to easily punch through armor. Strangely, the weapon feels rather warm to the touch.

Appraise Information: DC 19. This is obviously a superior weapon as evidenced by the craftsmanship. That it is of drow manufacture is obvious from the fine proportions as well as the fact that the weapon is warm, a sure sign that it has absorbed radiation from the dark elves' homeland.

Value: 18,908 gp (8 gp for morningstar, 300 gp for masterwork, 600 gp for mithral, 18,000 for enchantment costs).

Special Rules: This particular weapon is a +2 *radiating mithral morningstar*.

The drow are able to bind the underdark's radiation energies to their weapons to produce *radiating* and *radiation burst* weapons:

Radiating: Upon command, a radiating weapon is sheathed in invisible radiation, noticeable as a field of warmth. The radiation does not harm the wielder. The effect remains until another command is given. A radiating weapon deals an extra 1d6 points of radiation damage on a successful hit. Bows, crossbows, and slings so crafted bestow the radiation energy upon their ammunition.

Moderate evocation; CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor and *produce radiation** or *radiate**; Price +1 bonus.

Radiation Burst: A radiation burst weapon functions as a radiation weapon that also explodes with radiation upon striking a successful critical hit. The radiation does not harm the wielder. In addition to the extra radiation damage from the radiation ability (see above), a radiation burst weapon deals an extra 1d10 points of radiation damage on a successful critical hit. If the weapon's critical multiplier is x3, add an extra 2d10 points of radiation damage instead, and if the multiplier is x4, add an extra 3d10 points of radiation damage. Bows, crossbows, and slings so crafted bestow the radiation energy upon their ammunition.

Even if the radiating ability is not active, the weapon still deals its extra radiation damage on a successful critical hit.

Strong evocation; CL 12th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor and *produce radiation** or *radiate**; Price +2 bonus.

*these spells are drow blood druid spells (p. 37 in *The Complete Guide to Drow*). If you do not have access to that book, or want other types of spellcasters to be able to creature such weapons, use the statistics below:

Moderate evocation; CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, creator must be a drow; Price +1 bonus.

Strong evocation; CL 12th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, creator must be a drow; Price +2 bonus.

If brought above the surface or otherwise removed from the underdark's radiation, *radiating* and *radiation burst* weapons lose their magical properties very quickly:

A *radiating* weapon loses its *radiating* special ability within a week. It thereafter loses 1 point of damage (starting with any magical bonuses) per week until it crumbles to dust.

A *radiation burst* weapon loses its *burst* ability and becomes a *radiating* weapon within one week. Thereafter, it deteriorates as per a *radiating* weapon.

For an explanation of how removal from the underdark's radiation affects other drow magic items see **p. 31 in *The Complete Guide to Drow***.

PRIESTESS' ROBE

Appearance: This fine robe is clearly made for a creature of delicate proportions. Made entirely of silk, it appears to be completely black and shiny on initial glance, but closer inspection reveals that an image has been stitched onto the back of the robe. Outlined in subtle dark gray thin strands of silk, the image a top-down view of a spider, its eight legs stretching across the entire back of the robe.

Appraise Information: DC 13. This robe is made of spider silk and is of the highest quality. The large spider symbol on the robe's back marks this as being the robe of a drow priestess, a worshipper of either Tororthun or the Spider Queen herself (a Knowledge (religion) check with a DC of 20 reveals that Tororthun is the deity).

Value: 400 gp (100 gp for silk, 300 gp for masterwork).

Special Rules: Although the fabric of the robe has to be held at just the right angle in light to reveal the spider sewn into the robe, the symbol is immediately evident to any creature using darkvision.

Although the robe itself is not magical, it is an item dedicated to Tororthun (**p. 7 in *The Complete Guide to Drow***) and any non-drow that dares don it while in the underdark finds the robe to be poisonous to him or her; the strength of the poison is determined by the level of drow priestess to whom the robe belonged (the damage is both initial and secondary damage):

Level	Fort DC	Damage
1-3	10	1d2 Str
4-6	11	1d3 Str
7-9	12	1d4 Str
10-12	13	1d6 Str
13-15	16	1d8 Str
16-18	20	2d6 Str
19+	28	2d8 Str

Note that this poisoning is not a magical ability, but rather a curse from Tororthun herself; the robe disintegrates once it has delivered its poison.

Note that the robe can be handled without harm, even in the underdark, and can be donned safely by a non-drow anywhere outside of the underdark; since it is not a magic item, it does not disintegrate away from the radiation of the drow homeland.

SACRIFICIAL BOWL

Appearance: This large obsidian bowl is some two feet in diameter and appears perfectly smooth, although anyone running his or her hands across the bottom of the interior of the bowl notices faintly etched lines.

Appraise Information: DC 16. Drow religious worship often involves blood and such bowls see frequent use in a variety of rituals.

This is a fine example of the kind, but is not otherwise remarkable and was probably used in minor family ceremonies.

Value: 800 gp (500 gp for obsidian, 300 gp for craftsmanship).

Special Rules: The etched lines on the bottom of the bowl are actually the symbol of the god Angard (**p. 6 in *The Complete Guide to Drow***), which is two hands touching at the fingertips and thumbs and a flaming eye in the center of the triangle thus created. Clergy of Angard use such bowls in divination rituals, allowing the blood to collect in the bottom of the bowl, thus revealing the symbol, which is then used as a focus.

SLAVE COLLAR

Appearance: This finely wrought steel band features a hinge opposite an interlocking clasp. Each half of the clasp is inscribed with one-half of an intricate unanchored web. Closing the clasp reveals a stylized “A” made of thicker strands in the unanchored web’s center.

Appraise Information: DC 18. Drow families keep many slaves and use various types of collars both as a means of identifying a slave’s owner as well as denoting the slave’s status and value to the family; in general, the fancier the collar, the more valuable the slave.

As most slaves are seen as little more than chattel to be used and discarded, the vast majority of slave collars are simple affairs of blackened iron that are welded shut upon the slave’s neck once they have been put into place. Such collars usually have an eyelet that allows a chain to be passed through them; surface dwellers refer to such collars as “dog collars” from reports of drow mistresses and masters leading collared slaves about like dogs.

This particular slave collar, however, is much nicer by far and few slaves would actually warrant the honor of such a collar; the slave this collar was created for was probably a favorite plaything of a drow master or mistress or a valuable asset, such as a craftsman or scholar.

The symbol evident on the clasp is that of house Âthi (a list of individual and house names appears on **p. 5 in *The Complete Guide to Drow***). House Âthi is a house of middle size that is known for its occasional raids on dwarven settlements where its warriors attempt to carry off any dwarven artisans and craftsmen they can lay their hands on.

Value: 15 gp (2 gp for steel, 10 gp for craftsmanship, 3 gp for rarity).

Special Rules: The members of house Âthi refer to this particular type of collar as a *freedom collar*, evidence of the twisted sense of humor the drow have.

At the time of its crafting, the *freedom collar* is usually bound to a particular location, often a forge or a workshop, although it can be bound to any other object, even a mobile one.

Once the collar is placed around the neck of the slave, the slave cannot move more than a certain distance (a maximum of 5-foot radius per caster level) from the location, or object, the collar is bound to. Exceeding this distance causes the magic bound in the collar to be released.

As long as the slave remains within the radius, he or she comes to no harm, but should the slave attempt to move (or be moved) beyond the radius, the collar unleashes a *glyph of warding* or *greater glyph of warding* (depending on the type) upon the slave.

A *freedom collar* can be enchanted with either a *blast glyph* or a *spell glyph*. While one might expect that a *blast glyph* would be the preferred choice, especially since the blast automatically does maximum damage with no save (you can’t dodge an exploding collar on your neck, not even with special abilities such as evasion) and is considered a critical hit if that optional rule is used, the preferred choice is actually a *spell glyph* (a particular favorite is *blindness*) as this does not give the slave the option of suicide and does minimal harm to the valuable slave.

Note that while the slave wearing the collar does not receive a Reflex save under any circumstance, he is allowed to make Will and Fortitude saves against a collar’s effects normally.

Because of its nature, a *freedom collar* disintegrates with the release of its magic. While this might at first seem like a blessing, especially if the slave managed to survive the collar’s effects, a slave without a collar is considered free game even within the confines of the house and can be dealt with in any way deemed appropriate by the drow, or anyone else for that matter, that capture him or her.

Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *glyph of warding*; Price 750 gp.

Moderate abjuration; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *greater glyph of warding*; Price 3,300 gp.

SMOKY QUARTZ GOGGLES

Appearance: This pair of goggles consists of a tight fitting leather straps wrapped around concave pieces of smoky quartz. The goggles are worn by placing the lenses over the eye and then tying the straps behind the wearer's head.

Appraise Information: DC 19. A recent innovation, although whether it is of drow origin or taken from one of the other underdark races is unknown, these lenses make it possible for the drow to combat their greatest weakness and it would not be surprising to see more of these examples appearing.

Value: 205 gp (5 gp for the leather, 200 gp for the quartz lenses)

Special Rules: The drow use such goggles when raiding the surface or moving in other areas where bright light is a constant. Wearing such a pair of smoky quartz goggles cancels out the penalties due to light blindness (see Drow racial traits); while wearing such a pair of goggles, the creature can neither be blinded by sudden exposure to bright light nor is the creature dazzled or otherwise penalized for operating in areas with bright light.

Wearing such goggles in areas of darkness, such as the underdark, reduces a creature's darkvision to one-half (i.e. drow darkvision is reduced to 60 ft.).

SPIDER SILK ARMOR

Appearance: Looking much like a suit of padded armor, this unmarked suit of armor is made of dark blue silk. Sewn patches, a couple of burn marks, and cuts in several places show that the armor has seen extensive previous use.

Appraise Information: DC 18. As spider silk is one of the great resources of the drow, it is used to make almost every item imaginable, including armor.

Spider silk armor provides superior protection to padded armor with no gain in bulk.

This makes spider silk armor particularly popular with the very dexterous drow. Rogues and dark blades (p. 21 in *The Complete Guide to Drow*) appear to be especially drawn to such armor.

As with padded armor, however, the armor can get hot quite quickly and is difficult to keep clean.

Value: 310 gp (300 gp for the silk, 10 gp for the workmanship).

Special Rules: While this particular suit of spider silk armor is not masterwork, and thus cannot be enchanted, masterwork spider silk armor can be enchanted just like any other armor.

A suit of silk armor has the following basic statistics:

Light Armor, Armor Bonus +2, Maximum Dexterity Bonus +8, Armor Check Penalty 0, Arcane Spell Failure Chance 5%, Weight 10 lbs.

SPIDER SILK SLIPPERS

Appearance: This pair of purple silk slippers with thick soft leather soles feels very soft and comfortable. Closer inspection reveals thinning leather soles as well as a small greenish stain and some slight fraying in a couple of places.

Appraise Information: DC 12. Perhaps the most common footwear for moving about the cold stone floors of drow households, silk slippers of all kinds abound.

This particular pair is rather utilitarian, as evidenced by its lack of decoration, and probably belonged to some lower-status male.

Value: 25 gp (20 gp for silk, 3 gp for workmanship, 2 gp for leather soles)

Special Rules: Careful searching of the slippers reveals a small pocket inside each slipper. The pocket is located underneath the top of each slipper and is just large enough to fit a coin-sized item or small piece of paper.

WEB NET WAND

Appearance: The top of this bone wand is carved into the shape of a rearward-facing spider.

Appraise Information: DC 16. As the cult of the spider pervades every layer of drow society it is almost a given that many magic items will feature the spider in some form or another. What is unusual about this wand is that, while the spider is indeed present, it is rearward facing; the head of the spider faces the base of the wand while the spider's abdomen makes up the tip. This is clearly an indication of the wand's function.

Value: 11,250 gp (375 gp x 5th level caster x 3rd level spell; for a full 50 charges).

Special Rules: A *web net* wand is used to cast a more advanced version of the *web* spell:

Web Net

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: Unanchored webs in a 20-ft.-radius spread

Duration: 10 min./level (D)

Saving Throw: Reflex negates; see text

Spell Resistance: No

Like the 2nd level spell *web*, *web net* creates a many-layered mass of strong, sticky strands that shoot out to cover any creatures in the area of effect and trap those caught in them as they settle to the ground. The strands produced by this spell are similar to spider webs but far larger and tougher. Unlike the strands created by the *web* spell, the strands created by a *web net* spell do not need to be anchored (although they can be). Creatures caught within a *web net*, or trying to move through the area of effect, become entangled among the gluey fibers. Attacking a creature in a *web net* won't cause you to become entangled.

Anyone in the effect's area when the spell is cast, or that subsequently attempts to move through the area, must make a Reflex save. If this save succeeds, the creature is entangled, but not prevented from moving, though moving is more difficult than normal for being entangled (see below). If the save fails, the creature is entangled and can't move from its space, but can break loose by spending 1 round and making a DC 25 Strength check or a DC 30 Escape Artist check. Once loose (either by making the initial Reflex save or a later Strength check or Escape Artist check), a creature remains entangled, but may move through the *web net* very slowly. Each round devoted to moving allows the creature to make a new Strength check or Escape Artist check. The creature moves 5 feet for each full 5 points by which the check result exceeds 10.

The strands of a *web net* spell are flammable. A magic *flaming sword* can slash them away as easily as a hand brushes away cobwebs. Any fire can set the *web net's* strands alight and burn away 5 square feet in 1 round. All creatures within the flaming webs take 2d4 points of fire damage from the flames.

Material Component: A bit of spider web.

Drow wizards often carry *web wands* to block passages and *web nets* to cover more open areas. They are especially useful in large-scale battles where they can be used to trap and slow masses of troops as well as animated conveyances (p. 49 in *The Complete Guide To Drow*) and spider ballistae (p. 52 in *The Complete Guide To Drow*).

Minor conjuration; CL 5th; Craft Wand, *web net*; 11,250 gp.

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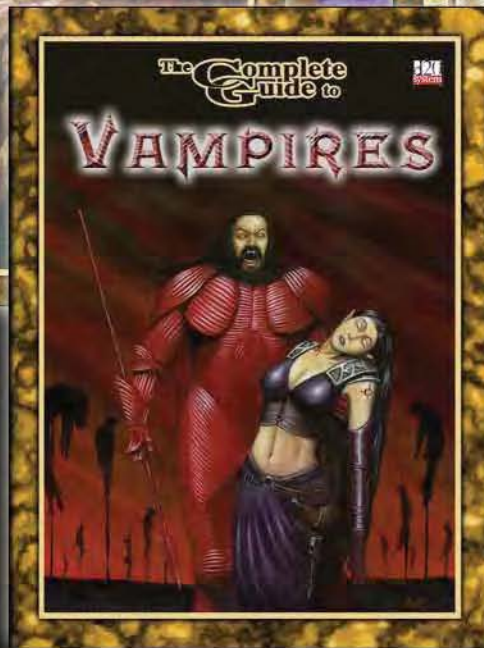
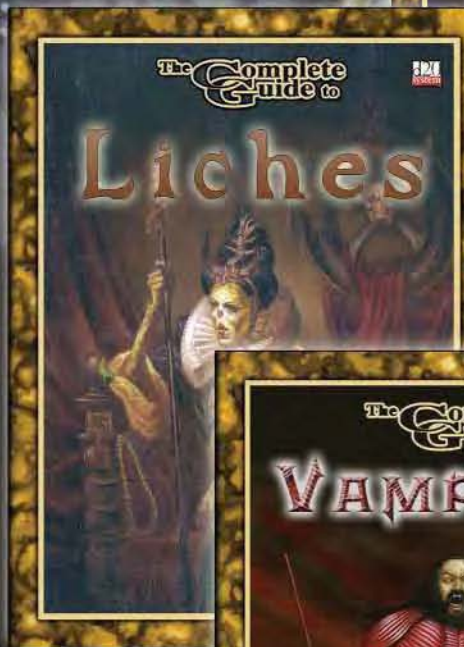
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The Complete Guide

These creature sourcebooks are excellent resources for both fantasy players and DMs! Insightful concept development, combined with new feats, classes, and rules, make each Complete Guide perfectly suited for developing creatures as both characters and monsters. They're suited for use in a single adventure or as the foundation of an entire campaign.



A Dozen Effects of Lingering Spell Energy

by *Philip Reed*

*Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook*



When a spell is successfully cast, the arcane or divine energy released during the process leaves a faint, invisible aura that is ignored by all but the most powerful of spellcasters. This invisible aura is often referred to as *lingering spell energy* by those spellcasters

versed in its existence. The number of spellcasters with knowledge of lingering spell energy is small and, smaller still, is the number of spellcasters who have learned how to tap into this invisible aura of magical power.

Spotting Spell Energy

In the round after a divine or arcane spell is cast all characters within sight of the caster of the spell may make a Spellcraft check (DC 30 + spell level). On a successful check the lingering spell energy is “seen” by the spellcaster. Lingering spell energy appears as a faint, glowing cloud of pure arcane energy and is only spotted by those who make a successful Spellcraft check. This check is a free action and any spellcaster who devotes the entire round to searching for the spell energy gains a +5 bonus to his roll but he also provokes an attack of opportunity from any opponent within 5 feet.

Tapping into Spell Energy

Once the energy is spotted, all who have seen it may attempt to tap into the energy. The energy lingers for 1d4 rounds x the level of the spell cast and tapping into requires the character to be within the ener-

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About The Author

Philip Reed has been working professionally in the roleplaying game industry since 1995. In that time he has worked for such companies as Atlas Games, Privateer Press, and Steve Jackson Games. Today Philip spends his days at home running Ronin Arts, writing and designing new games, and reading whatever books interest him at the time. To learn more about Philip Reed – and Ronin Arts – please visit www.philipjreed.com and www.roninarts.com.

gy's cloud. A spell energy cloud extends a number of feet from the original caster equal to the spell's level.

To tap into the spell energy requires a Spellcraft check (DC 15 + the level of the spell cast). Only one character may tap into the energy from a single cast spell; if more than one character attempts to tap into a single cloud of lingerin spell energy an opposed Spellcraft check must be made. The

highest roller, as long as he equals or exceeds the DC required to tap into the energy, has successfully tapped the spell energy. As soon as lingerin spell energy is tapped the cloud is absorbed into the spellcaster's body. Those who had successfully "spotted" the spell energy now see a faint magical glow surroundin the character that successfully tapped the energy.

Using Tapped Spell Energy

Once the energy is tapped it must be released within one minute or the character may suffer permanent damage (see below). There are a number of ways in which tapped spell energy may be used, a few of which finish out this short PDF. DMs and players are encouraged to create their own new uses for tapped spell energy – as always, the DM has the final say in what is and is not official in his campaign.

To place some control on the use of tapped spell energy, the many uses have been broken down by level of the spell tapped. If creating completely new uses DMs and players should consider the uses presented in this PDF a guide.

NOTE: A spellcaster may not attempt to tap the energy released by these various effects.

ARCANE AND DIVINE LINGERIN SPELL ENERGY

The basic rules introduced in this PDF treat spell energy, no matter the source, the same. DMs and players with an eye for detail and complexity may choose to differentiate between arcane and divine spell energy when using these rules. To do so, just pair like with like. Divine spellcasters can spot and tap into divine spell energy while arcane spellcasters can spot and tap into arcane spell energy. It's actually amazingly simple to implement in a game session but it's an extra level of detail (which is why this is being presented as a variant to the basic system).

DAMAGE FROM UNUSED SPELL ENERGY

If a caster has not released tapped spell energy within one minute (possibly due to be rendered unconscious or otherwise unable to act) there is a chance that the caster will be permanently harmed by the spell energy.

The caster must make a Will save (DC 20 + the level of the tapped spell). If this check succeeds the tapped spell energy has dissipated without harm and is gone forever. If the check fails, the caster suffers 1 point of hit point damage per level of the spell tapped – there is a 5% chance per level of the tapped spell that this damage is permanent.

Sample Effects

Acidic Spit

Level: 1
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Reflex half
Spell Resistance: Yes

By making a successful ranged touch attack, as a free action, the caster spits a glob of acid that inflicts 1d4 points of damage on the target. The targeted creature, if it makes a successful Reflex save (DC 20), suffers only half damage.

Arcane Heart

Level: 3
Range: Touch
Target: Caster
Duration: 30 minutes or until used, see text

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The caster fortifies his soul by completely absorbing the tapped spell energy, as a free action, melding its power with his own innate magical skills. The caster is immune to the effects of energy draining creatures or powers for 30 minutes or until an energy draining effect is thwarted by this effect.

Arcane Surge

Level: 1
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

As a free action you unleash the tapped spell energy in a pinprick of bright white light that shoots forth from your hand and strikes one creature – of your choice – within range. The target of this spell suffers 1d4+1 points of arcane damage.

Arcane Surge, Greater

Level: 8
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

Like arcane surge, except it inflicts 10d8 points of damage on the target.

Aura of Desecration

Level: 4
Range: 10 ft. radius emanation, centered on you
Duration: 5 rounds
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: Yes

As a free action you envelope yourself – and the area around you – in an aura of evil power that effects undead and turning attempts. All turn attempts made within the aura suffer a –4 profane penalty; all undead within the area gain a +1 profane bonus on all attack rolls, damage rolls, and saves.

Condemn

Level: 6
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One divine spellcaster
Duration: 6 rounds
Saving Throw: Will half (see text)
Spell Resistance: Yes

By making a successful ranged touch attack against the chosen target, the target's ability to cast divine spells is eliminated for the spell's duration. This effect severs the spellcaster's connection with his deity for the duration. If the target makes a successful Will save (DC 26) the effect's duration is cut in half.

The target also loses all class abilities related to his divine class for the duration of this effect.

Consume Undead Strength**Level:** 2**Range:** Touch**Target:** One undead creature touched**Duration:** Instantaneous**Saving Throw:** Will negates**Spell Resistance:** Yes

My making a successful touch attack against any undead creature, as a standard action, the caster inflicts 4d4 points of damage to the undead creature. The caster also gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength for a number of rounds equal to the HD of the undead creature successfully damaged by this effect.

Divine Agent**Level:** 5**Range:** Touch**Target:** Caster**Duration:** 10 minutes**Saving Throw:** Will negates (harmless)**Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

The tapped spell energy, as a standard action, transforms the caster into an agent of the gods, granting a +2 enhancement bonus to all attributes and sheathing the caster visible divine energy that blinds all who look at him (Reflex save DC 20 to avoid the blindness effect).

Additionally, upon transformation, a blade of fire appears in the caster's hand (as per the *flame blade* spell) and lasts until the caster releases it or this effect ends.

Immunity to Chaos**Level:** 9**Range:** Touch**Target:** Caster**Duration:** 30 minutes**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** Yes

For the duration of this effect the caster cannot be harmed by any spell, spell-like ability, magic item, or supernatural effect that has the [Chaotic] descriptor.

Mindfeed**Level:** 7**Range:** Touch**Target:** Creature touched**Duration:** Instantaneous**Saving Throw:** Will negates**Spell Resistance:** Yes

By grasping the target's head in your hands, as a standard action, you drain 1d4 points of the target's Intelligence and gain a number of temporary hit points equal to 4x the number of Intelligence points drained. These hit points may raise you above your maximum number of hit points and they remain for 24 hours or until lost to hit point damage.

Ray of Decay**Level:** 2**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)**Effect:** Ray**Duration:** Instantaneous**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** Yes

As a standard action, on his turn, you fire a magical ray. You must succeed a ranged touch attack with the ray to deal 5d4 points of damage to the target.

Temporary Healing**Level:** 0**Range:** Touch**Target:** Caster**Duration:** Variable, see text.**Saving Throw:** Will negates (harmless)**Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

As a move-equivalent action, you may transform the spell energy into 2d4 temporary hit points – add these to your current hit points though you may not go over your maximum number of hit points. These points fade away at the rate of 1 hit point/round.

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A Dozen Gems and Jewels

by Michael Hammes

Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook



Introduction

I don't know why it has taken me so long to create something with gems and jewels. Maybe it's because the campaigns that I run tend to be on the tight-fisted side. In any case, here are a dozen gems and jewels to be added into your campaign and get the ideas rolling.

BINDI GEM

Appearance: This thumb-sized, highly polished, and faceted red gem has been cut to a dome shape. Looking carefully you notice some form of slightly sticky residue on the flat spot.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This gem is a rose-cut red spinel, a less valuable cousin of the ruby.

A successful Knowledge (geography) check (DC 19) identifies the gem as a bindi gem, a small ornamental stone worn in the middle of an individual's forehead in the exotic lands of the far West, where such a gem denotes social status.

At its most basic this means the more valuable the stone the higher the status of the individual (the truly destitute make do with a dot of paint on their foreheads), but the meanings can vary from village to village and region to region and involve everything from religious belief to marital status.

Value: 130 gp (130 gp gem value).

Special Rules: In addition to the mundane bindi gem, there are also magical *bindi gems*. These *gems* permanently fuse to the wearer's forehead by merging with the skin on the forehead. This act does not harm the wearer.

Once fused a *bindi gem* may be removed at any time only by the wearer. Short of direct violence (i.e. literally cutting it out), others can remove a *bindi gem* only upon the wearer's death, when the *bindi gem* automatically separates and falls off.

A *bindi gem* counts as a headband/hat/helmet/phyllactery for purposes of determining magic item wear limits.

Bindi gems are exclusively associated with mental effects (although the DM is certainly free to give them any effects appropriate for his or her campaign).

The most common *bindi gems* increase Wisdom or Intelligence (as a *periapt of wisdom*). Other known *bindi gems* provide bonuses to Will saves (as a *cloak of resistance* but for Will saves only; such stones are one-third the cost of the *cloak*), allow the wearer to *discern lies* (the stone glows softly and the wearer can feel a warm sensation whenever the subject lies), or even fire bolts of telekinetic energy (like *magic missile*).

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BLUE DISK

Appearance: This tiny disk, no more than one-half inch in diameter, is cut from blue, opaque stone and has been polished to a high shine.

Appraise Information: DC 15. A successful Knowledge (geography) check (DC 17) reveals this to be a Shynrya bluestone, a type of blue quartz found only in the forests of the Shynrya elves. While novel and relatively rare, it is still just a piece of quartz.

A further successful Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (arcane) check (DC 18) reveals that the Shynrya elves believe that bluestones calm an individual's mind, allowing the individual to better focus and organize his or her thoughts. Shynrya

Value: 5 gp (5 gp gem value).

Special Rules: At the DM's option, putting a Shynrya bluestone under a caster's tongue allows the caster to cast spells with the divination descriptor as if they were prepared with the Extend Spell feat, though they don't require the higher spell slot.

CLEAR CRYSTALLINE SPHERE

Appearance: This piece of translucent rock crystal, slightly smaller than palm-sized, has been worked into a perfect sphere.

Appraise Information: DC 15. Although it looks interesting, this is nothing more than a well-polished piece of rock crystal.

Value: 60 gp (60 gp gem value).

Special Rules: This item is an *ioun stone* (clear sphere) that, when orbiting its owner, places the individual under a continuous *blur* effect (as per the spell).

Faint illusion; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *blur*; Price 24,000 gp.

DEMON'S EYE

Appearance: This massive opaque ruby, roughly the size of a large man's fist, has been cut into a convex, uncut shape. Holding it up to the light you can faintly make out a bright six-pointed star pattern in its center.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This impressive cabochon-cut stone is possibly the largest stone of its kind known, a fact makes its value is almost impossible to assess as there is nothing to truly compare it to.

Called the "Demon's Eye" because it reminded its first owner of just that, the stone has been in the possession of a surprising number of owners throughout its history, each meeting a horrible fate at the time of the stone's disappearance. As a result, the "Demon's Eye" has developed a reputation for being cursed. Of course, despite its grisly history and the rumored curse, there is never a shortage of individuals vying to possess it.

Value: N/A (due to its uniqueness, it cannot be accurately assessed).

Special Rules: Despite its name and history, the "Demon's Eye" is not cursed. All of the tragic history associated with the ruby is simply due to one factor: greed; there are enough powerful individuals in the world (and throughout the planes) who want to possess what is considered the ultimate jewel that they are willing to do anything to obtain it.

GLOWCRYSTAL

Appearance: This piece of fist-sized yellow crystal looks to have been torn directly from its formation. Although it appears perfectly ordinary, you can make out a faint glow in the crystal's interior.

Appraise Information: DC 15. While the glow is nice, the fact is that this is a rock crystal, nothing more. With some cutting it could be valuable, but as is, it won't fetch much of a price.

A successful Knowledge (geography) check (DC 20) reveals that the crystal is actually a glowcrystal. Glowcrystals "glow" with an inner light that most sages attribute to some sort of faint magical effect from their underground environment.

Glowcrystal formations are found only deep underground where, despite their ability to see in the darkness, many races make use of them for illumination purposes. It is rumored that a number of the more magically inclined underground races "grow" such crystals.

Value: 20 gp (20 gp gem value).

Special Rules: A glowcrystal can be used as a light source. Once removed from its formation, a fist-sized crystal provides bright illumination out to a 30-foot radius and shadowy illumination out to a 60-foot radius. This amount decreases by 5 feet per day (i.e. after two days it provides 20-foot bright/40-foot shadowy illumination). Although it takes many weeks to completely lose its glow, a glowcrystal is useless as a light source after six days.

HEART-SHAPED GEM

Appearance: This small orange-red gemstone has been cut into the shape of a heart.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This is a carnelian of rather poor quality, although the fact that it has been cut into the shape of a heart may have some appeal to those with romantic leanings.

Value: 30 gp (30 gp gem value).

Special Rules: The stone is actually a *gem of charming*. Upon command the *gem* allows its owner to enchant another person as per the spell *charm person* with a one-hour duration. The targeted person receives a Will save (DC 11) to avoid the *gem's* effect.

Although a *gem of charming* can be used multiple times during the day, it can never be used more than once per hour whether the *charm* attempt is successful or not.

Faint enchantment; CL 1st; Craft Wondrous Item, *charm person*; Price 1,800 gp.

MATCHED GEMS

Appearance: This is a pair of honey-colored, oval-shaped, translucent gems, each about one inch in diameter. When held up to the light and rotated you can see a distinct silvery-white streak running across the center that, when the gems are rotated, appears like a cat's eye opening and closing.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The stones are cabochon-cut cat's eye chrysoberyls. The "cat's eye" effect is called "chatoyancy" and is achieved by cutting a chrysoberyl with a "silk" inclusion en cabochon.

Value: 300 gp (300 gp gem value for the pair, 110 gp for each gem individually).

Special Rules: The pair of gems is properly called *wizard's eyes*, although they are often referred to as *cat's eyes*. The magic of the *eyes* works only as a pair; if one gem is destroyed, the magic is lost and the remaining stone becomes a normal gem.

To use the *eyes* their owner must hold one gem to his forehead and concentrate on the other. At that point the *eyes'* owner is able to release the other gem into the air where it turns invisible and acts as the sensor created by the *arcane eye* spell.

Wizard's eyes can be used for a maximum of 30 minutes of concentration per day, divided up into minutes or rounds as the owner chooses. If the sensor is not back in the possession of its owner by the time this use limit is reached the gem turns visible and falls inert to the ground. Until the two gems are brought back together, their magic cannot be reactivated.

Moderate divination; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *arcane eye*; Price 43,000 gp.

POUCH OF GEMS

Appearance: This worn and scraped leather pouch holds over a score of uncut black onyx gems.

Appraise Information: DC 15. There are a total of 23 gems in this pouch. The typical value for black onyx lies between 20 and 80 gp per stone, although there are a couple of larger examples in this pouch whose value approaches 200 gp.

A successful Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) check (DC 13) reveals the fact that black onyx gems are used in a number of necromantic spells. Undoubtedly, the owner of this pouch of gems was up to evil of some kind.

Value: 1,610 gp (1,610 gp gem value for all 23 gems; an average of 70 gp per gem).

Special Rules: Black onyx gems are required for the following spells: *animate dead*, *create greater undead*, and *create undead*. *Animate dead* requires a black onyx gem of at least 25 gp per Hit Die of the undead to be created, while *create greater undead* and *create undead* require black onyx gems of at least 50 gp per Hit Die.

Although the standard rules state that the caster must place “a black onyx gem into the mouth or eye socket”, since most black onyx gems are worth 2d4x10 gp, the DM may wish to amend those spells to provide for the placement of multiple black onyx gems into a single corpse, allowing the gems in this pouch to create more powerful undead.

RUNE-COVERED PIECE OF AMBER

Appearance: This small piece of amber has been cut and polished into a thick disk. The diameter appears to be about one inch while the thickness is also one inch. Upon closer inspection you notice that the top and bottom of the amber disk each have a rune carved into them.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This is a good piece of amber even if it is an unusual cut. The fact that the stone has runes carved into it may reduce its value to a new owner; polishing the runes out reduces the value of the gem to one-half. Anyone that can read and write dwarvish instantly recognizes the runes as being the dwarven runes for “strength” and “war”.

Value: 110 gp (110 gp gem value).

Special Rules: This is a dwarven *weapon stone*. Placing the *weapon stone* against a non-magical or masterwork weapon, either melee or ranged, and speaking the command word embeds the *stone* into the weapon. Once embedded the *weapon stone* gives the weapon a +1 enhancement bonus to attack and damage rolls as per the *magic weapon* spell for as long as the *stone* remains embedded in the weapon. Grasping the *stone* and speaking the command word a second time allows an individual to remove it from the weapon.

If a weapon the *stone* is embedded into is broken (i.e. sundered), the *weapon stone* shatters and its magic is lost. As the *stone* does not turn the weapon into an actual magical weapon, it is no more resistant to damage than an ordinary weapon of its kind.

A *weapon stone* cannot be placed in a piece of ammunition (i.e. an arrow, bolt, bullet, etc.), nor can it be embedded into a magical weapon.

Faint transmutation; CL 1st; Craft Wondrous Item, *magic weapon*; Price 2,000 gp.

SHARPENED CRYSTAL SHARD

Appearance: This large piece of clear crystal has been cut to resemble a crude blade. Testing it, you find that there is nothing crude about the edge it holds.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This is a large piece of rock crystal, or quartz if you prefer. It has been fashioned to the general dimensions of a throwing knife.

A successful Knowledge (geography) check (DC 25) reveals that such crystal shards are employed as weapons by the Kul-hadash, a secretive order of fanatical dwarven assassins known for their predations on the drow.

Value: 35 gp (35 gp gem value).

Special Rules: The crystal shard is called a *kul-hadash* (after the name of the organization) and, when thrown, functions as a +1 *dagger of returning*. Wielding one successfully requires the Exotic Weapon Proficiency (kul-hadash) feat. An individual without this feat not only suffers the usual –4 penalty to attack rolls but also takes 1 point of slashing damage each time the weapon is caught.

When used as a melee rather than a ranged weapon, the *kul-hadash* is simply an ordinary crystalline shard that does damage as a normal dagger.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor or Craft Wondrous Item, *telekinesis*; Price 4,000 gp.

SMOKY QUARTZ CHUNK

Appearance: This palm-sized chunk of dark black quartz is completely unworked. Although at first the crystal appears completely opaque, upon closer inspection you believe you can see the darkness within the crystal slowly roiling.

Appraise Information: DC 15. Dark quartz such as this is one of the few sorts of dark stone to be worked into jewelry and its unusual color makes it more valuable than other forms.

This particular crystal is very dark and should fetch a good price. Of course, in several cultures wearing dark gems is considered a sign of ill fortune or evil, which may make this crystal tough to sell in some localities.

Value: 120 gp (120 gp gem value).

Special Rules: This piece of quartz actually contains a tiny bit of the essence of the Plane of Shadow that has been magically contained within the crystal; it is a minor artifact.

A spellcaster that carries this crystal finds her magic influenced as if she were on the Plane of Shadow itself. This means the following:

Enhance Magic: Spells with the shadow descriptor are cast by the spellcaster as though they were prepared with the Maximize Spell feat, though they don't require the higher spell slots.

Shadow conjuration and *shadow evocation* spells are 30% as powerful as the conjurations and evocations they mimic (as opposed to 20%). *Greater shadow conjuration* and *greater shadow evocation* are 70% as powerful (not 60%), and a *shades* spell conjures at 90% of the power of the original (not 80%).

Impeded Magic: Attempting a spell with the light or fire descriptor requires that the caster succeed on a Spellcraft check (DC 20 + the level of the spell) or the spell fizzles and is lost.

Strong transmutation; CL 18th; Weight 2 lb.

STONE OF TRANQUILITY

Appearance: This thumb-sized rectangular cut and faceted purple gem fairly sparkles in the light.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This is a flawless amethyst and should fetch a nice price.

Value: 320 gp (320 gp gem value).

Special Rules: This is a *stone of tranquility*. When held in the open palm and given the command word the *stone* sheds a soft violet light in a 20-foot radius that acts as a *calm emotions* spell. Creatures within or entering the area must succeed at a Will save (DC 13) to avoid the *stone's* effects.

The *stone's* holder is unaffected by the *stone's* effect. However, any violent actions on the holder's part while the *stone* is active instantly ends the magic and prevents the *stone* from being used again for 24 hours.

In order to release its magic the *stone* must be held in the holder's open palm (or be otherwise openly displayed). Covering it up or removing it, either voluntarily (i.e. closing the palm, putting it back in a pocket) or involuntarily (i.e. having it knocked out of one's hand or spilling it), ends the *stone's* effect, although in this case the *stone's* magic can be reactivated immediately.

Faint enchantment; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *calm emotions*; Price 5,400 gp.

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Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
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A Dozen Holy Books and Divine Tablets



One area that *101 Spellbooks, Tomes of Knowledge, and Forbidden Grimoires* was lacking was in books of a divine nature. Several people have requested a “101” series PDF devoted to holy books and while I don’t think that is currently possible a dozen of such items certainly is. If you do not have *101 Spellbooks* but would like to expand the collection of books available in your campaign it’s highly recommended. You can find 12 of the books from that PDF in *A Dozen Free Spellbooks* available now at www.rpgnow.com.

THE BOOKS

THE BOOK OF HALMAFASA THE HOLY

Appearance and History: This heavy book is constructed of iron sheets that are covered in a rich, heavily shined gold. The pages are all made of the finest white vellum and the writing inside is that of an artist. Numerous illustrations and paintings decorate the borders of this book.

Constructed during the reign of the dark elves and the necromancer kings, The Book of Halmafasa the Holy was instrumental in the destruction of hundreds upon hundreds of undead creatures at the Battle of the Bleeding Raven. It was at that very battle that Halmafasa lost this powerful artifact.

Spells: None.

Special Features: Once per month, when the stars and moons are properly aligned, a good-aligned cleric may read from this holy book. After one hour of reading – and the permanent sacrifice of one experience level – the cleric releases the book’s modified *disruption wave* spell. This spell is cast as if the cleric was 20th level in power and emits in a sphere surrounding the cleric (not just a cone as the spell typically functions).

Value: 45,500 gp.

Weight: 14 lbs.

THE BOOK OF WOUNDING

Appearance and History: Created thousands upon thousands of years ago by a cabal of clerics of death the ancient artifact – known as The Book of Wounding – is a key element in many legendary tales. 40” high and 20” across, this evil tome is constructed of the plates of a black dragon and the pages are made of the wings of a hundred slain red dragons. The manufacture of the book itself is an ancient tale in which the cabal hunted down and slew all of the dragons used in the construction of the book. It is said that the skeletons of the slain dragons are all resting in a long forgotten pit that, if found, also contains much of the treasure of these dragons. If this were true the pit would be a spectacular discovery.

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Spells: None.

Special Features: When the pages of the book are read aloud by a powerful (15th level or higher) cleric of evil its magic's are cast and released upon the world. There are three sections of the book, each with distinct powers, from which a cleric may read.

The Black Blood: This section takes four hours to read during which time the cleric may not be interrupted or he must begin again. At the end of the reading a Spellcraft check (DC 25) must be made by the cleric. Success indicates that the section's power has been unleashed. All those within 1d4 x 100 ft. of the book are struck down by a magical disease that instantly reduces all attribute scores by 2 points for one week. During this time the victims are in terrible pain, their bodies leaking black blood. Only a *cure major wounds* or greater spell can stop this effect.

The Infinite Wound: This section takes one hour to read and requires a successful Spellcraft check (DC 15) at the end of reading. If the check is successful one target touched by the cleric suffers double damage from all bladed attacks that befall him. The target must be touched within 24 hours of reading the section or else the cleric himself suffers this fate. The individual touched suffers this curse for 1d12 months.

The Shattered Bone: This section takes two hours to read and requires a successful Spellcraft check (DC 20) at the end of that time. If successful the cleric is granted the permanent ability to shatter the bones of a target by making a successful touch attack. Targets hit who fail a Fortitude save (DC 15 + cleric's level) immediately suffer 1d10 points of damage and a -2 penalty to all actions until the bones are healed (through natural or magical means), The cleric may make this attack once per day.

An evil cleric reading from the book, whether successful or not, permanently loses 1 Con point for each hour spent reading aloud from the book.

If a good-aligned cleric attempts to read from the book he immediately – and permanently – loses 1d4 levels.

Value: 395,000 gp.

Weight: 56 lbs.

THE CLOSED TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH OF DESPAIR

Appearance and History: This red, leather-bound book is square and 20" on a side, the spine constructed of iron and the parchment pages secured to the spine with loops of metal. The cover is written on in ancient elvish and reads, simply, "despair."

The Church of Despair was a human cult that operated in the largest coastal city hundreds and hundreds of years ago. At the time, the cult was quite public and held frequent meetings in taverns, on the docks, and outside of large, powerful temples. The church worshipped no specific deity but, instead, the idea of despair and their stated "fact" that the world would be destroyed by a god war. When the prophecies date passed without a war the cult fell apart until only a few fanatics remained.

The writing inside this book details the cult's members at the time and clearly states their beliefs.

Spells: None.

Special Features: None.

Value: 125 gp.

Weight: 5 lbs.

THE LIBRARY OF FAITH

Appearance and History: For generations the priests of the god of knowledge copied holy book after holy book in an attempt to compile all of the knowledge of religion into a single, massive tome. The Library of Faith, as this book came to be known in bardic circles, is said to have been completed some four thousand years ago. Packed with the secrets of ancient gods and religious powers, it is said that the book is hundreds of feet on a side and weighs more than a hundred great dragons. Thousands of clerics died in its creation and it is said that their bones, blood, and flesh were incorporated in the ink used in writing the book.

The tales, as bards and storytellers reveal them, tell that upon completion the book was taken deep beneath the earth into a great chamber. The clerics, after communication with their god, decided that the book's information was too great to allow others to

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access. The book is said to have been buried in some secret chamber for generations now, where it is guarded by holy constructs of the god of knowledge.

Many have searched for The Library of Faith but, as of yet, none have ever discovered it.

Spells: Every divine spell in the *Player's Handbook*. It is also likely that the book contains every divine spell from any other *D20 System* book ever published.

Special Features: Reading the book would take thousands upon thousands of lifetimes. All of the book's features are unknown though it is likely that knowledge about anything that has ever been may be found in the book.

Value: Unimaginable. Millions upon millions of gold.

Weight: Unmovable. It would take dozens of strong men just to turn the pages of this tome.

THE LESSER BOOK OF PRAYERS AND HEALING

Appearance and History: This book – weighing 20 lbs. and measuring 20" x 30" – was constructed before the legendary *Prayers and Healing* (see *101 Spellbooks*). Originally known as *Prayers and Healing* it became known to bards and sages as *The Lesser Book of Prayers and Healing*.

The book is manufactured with silver and iron and the pages written on with a silver ink that glows; even in the brightest sunlight the writing's glow can be seen. The cover is embossed with the holy symbol of the god of healing.

Spells: All cure spells in the *Player's Handbook*.

Special Features: Besides the previously mentioned glow, the book may be used to amplify the power of any healing spells cast by a cleric of the same alignment as the god of healing. The healing spell must be cast on the book at which point a wave of energy instantly blasts forth from the book, affecting any character or creature in a twenty foot radius. As long as the character or creature is of good alignment this wave of energy cures the target just as if the cleric had cast the spell directly on it. If a target in

the radius is of evil alignment the wave of energy has no effect on the target.

Value: 45,000 gp.

Weight: 20 lbs.

MANUAL OF BITTER HEALING

Appearance and History: Looking almost like a small, toothy beast, the Manual of Bitter Healing is a fairly recently crafted tome; the book is less than three decades old. The author, Father Dominic the Aged, is still alive and is desperate to reclaim this book. The book is 8" wide and 9" tall and constructed of metal and wood. The front cover is ringed with hundreds of small, sharp teeth (from numerous carnivores and a few humanoids) and the pages are ordinary parchment. The book is, as of now, incomplete. Roughly half of the pages are written in and Dominic the Aged would love to be able to complete this tome before he dies.

Spells: None.

Special Features: Currently, none. If the book is completed it will have the ability to heal all within 20 ft. once per day as if *cure major wounds* had been cast by a 20th level cleric. This will be an automatic feature of the book that can be used by any cleric who reads the entire book once (taking ten hours) and then reads from a small section (taking about 15 minutes) each time he wants to use the book's healing ability. Each time the healing is used the cleric who activates the ability would lose one point of Con.

Value: None. 10,000 gp if it is ever finished.

Weight: 15 lbs.

PRAYER BOOK OF THE FAITHFUL

Appearance and History: Viraxis, the god of secrets and hidden lore, is worshipped to this day. This small book is carried by all of his servants who live in the Temple of Viraxis, also known as the Temple of the Living God. This book includes not only detailed information on the god and his worshippers but also prayer schedules and a crude drawing of the temple. A map and directions identifies the exact location of the temple.

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These books are bound in cheap, brown leather and include roughly 80 parchment pages. Each is identical in terms of content but has been written by many different hands. It is the duty of a new arrival to the temple to create a prayer book by copying another one exactly.

Spells: None.

Special Features: None.

Value: 10 gp. Maybe more if someone is looking to infiltrate the temple.

Weight: <1 lb.

THE SACRED TABLETS OF GRANDFATHER WHITE HANDS

Appearance and History: These seven stone tablets, each 12” by 20” and 3” thick, are carved with the thick, primitive writings of the early orcs. It is said that Grandfather White Hands, the spiritual leader of the orcish “Great Warband,” personally created these tablets for Rwarck Hullgoth – an orcish shaman who lived thousands of years ago – out of respect for Hullgoth’s devotion to Grandfather White Hands and the orcish way of life.

The tablets are weathered and showing signs of age, many of them cracked and faded. One of the tablets is missing the lower quarter; the missing piece rumored to have been lost with Hullgoth was killed by a party of elven raiders. Those who can read orcish can decipher the messages on the tablets.

Spells: Each table contains a single, powerful spell. The broken table is only part of the spell, *miracle*. The spells that are complete are: *Create Greater Undead*, *Destruction*, *Pain Circuit*, *Summon Monster IX*, *Unholy Aura*, and *Wail of the Banshee*.

Special Features: None.

Value: As religious artifacts, each tablet is worth 48,000 gp. The broken tablet, though useless, is still worth 12,000 gp.

Weight: 42 lbs./each. The shattered tablet weighs 29 lbs.

SECRETS OF THE TEMPLE DISTRICT AND THE UNKNOWN DARKNESS

Appearance and History: This little booklet, little more than a 30-page pamphlet of parchment sheets sewn together along one edge, is crafted by hand. The pages are filled with the shaky writing of a man, the text detailing some unknown creatures and cultists operating at night in the Temple District of Freeport. The almost illegible writing, when coupled with the subject matter, render this assuredly a work of the insane.

While made by hand, this booklet is not a unique item. The small marks on the back cover identify it as merely one copy of one-hundred copies created and distributed years ago. There is no doubt to any learned individual that the information in this booklet is no longer applicable to the Temple District.

Spells: None.

Special Features: None.

Value: 18 gp.

Weight: <1 lb.

THE SPIDER QUEEN’S TABLET OF WEBS

Appearance and History: The drow worship a goddess known, simply, as The Spider Queen. This grayish tablet is lightweight and slightly sticky, being manufactured entirely of a spider’s webbing that has been enchanted through the will of the drow goddess. The Tablet of Webs has been a drow artifact for thousands of years and is a treasure item that is lusted after by many men and women of power on the surface world.

Spells: The tablet includes only a single spell, *Web of Fate*.

Special Features: It is said that the Tablet of Webs is a direct communicator to the drow goddess. Anyone who holds the tablet and speaks the goddess’ name aloud has a 1% chance per character level of contacting The Spider Queen. Drow have a +5%

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bonus to this chance. What exactly happens if communication with the goddess is made is best left to the devious, cunning mind of the DM. It need not be said that this contact will likely *not* be beneficial.

Value: 150,000 gp.

Weight: 2 lbs.

THE TABLETS OF DARKNESS, EVIL, AND CONTROL

Appearance and History: At the early stages of time, when magic was new and the foul creatures known as the possessors dominated world after world (see *Possessors: Children of the Outer Gods*), a trio of wizards and sorcerers created three stone tablets. The tablets were meant to summon forth an elder, outer god that would save the mages' world from the terrible possessors. Instead, the tablets brought forth a dark, terrible god of evil that perverted the tablets and consumed the souls of the mages and all those living men and women within one hundred miles of the summoning.

Each tablet is black, rough stone that appears without any markings. When held within magical darkness a bright, blue writing pierces the darkness revealing the spells contained on the tablets.

Spells: Eternal Darkness, Slave Sending, Unholy Aura.

Special Features: None.

Value: 75,000 gp each.

Weight: 32 lbs. each.

TOME OF THE BLESSED LIGHT

Appearance and History: This religious book – hundreds of years old – was created by several elven priests of the god of light. The book was originally constructed to use in battle against the drow and their dark allies the beasts of night but was lost in a raid before its powers could be unleashed. The priests and their protectors were brutally murdered and the book captured in the skirmish.

The tome is small, only 12” square, and light. The covers are built of wood and mithril and the pages are the finest parchment. When opened the book gives off a faint, white light that greatly improves visibility for 10 ft. around it when in a dark place.

Spells: All spells of the sun domain found in the *Player's Handbook*.

Special Features: Other than the light ability described above, none. The book could, when first created, radiate a powerful magic that would inflict 10d6 points of damage to all evil characters and creatures within one mile. Unfortunately, the drow wizards and clerics were able to strip the item of power after it had been captured.

Value: 11,000 gp.

Weight: 4 lbs.

NOTE: This book was written for another project but isn't being used there. I had a little space here so I thought I'd add it in. I hope you enjoy it.

BONUS BOOK! The Prayers of Yig

Appearance: This is a massive book with covers built of wooden planks that have been reinforced with iron bands. The pages inside are all of a thick, rough canvas made of thick jungle leaves that have been left to bleach in the sun. Inside, the text and illustrations are all done in gold and black inks that appear to hover just inches above the canvas sheets. The book gives off a powerful radiance when under the effects of *detect magic*.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This ancient magical tome was used during worship ceremonies to assist the serpent people in communicating with Yig.

Value: 18,000 gp (4,000 gp for the book and its unique construction, 4,000 gp for the knowledge contained within, and 10,000 gp for the age and historical value).

Special Rules: There was a time when the powers of this book enabled the reader to communicate directly with Yig. Unfortunately, as time elapsed, the powers of the book were distorted until it became something other than what it was. Reading passages from the book aloud destroys 1d6 pages and casts *mass cure light wounds* as if by a 20th level spellcaster. The book, when found, will have 10d6x10 pages.

SPELL DESCRIPTIONS

DISRUPTION WAVE

Evocation [Positive Energy]

Level: Clr 7, Sor/Wiz 7

Components: V, S, M/DF

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Area: Cone

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude partial

Spell Resistance: Yes

Disruption wave creates a cone of positive energy that originates from the caster's hands and extends outward toward his opponents. The *disruption wave* harms only undead creatures as it fills them with positive energy, disrupting the negative energy that fuels them.

An undead creature struck by the *disruption wave* must make a successful Fortitude save or be destroyed. If the save is successful, a *disruption wave* still deals 1d8 points of damage per level (maximum 15d8) to the undead creature struck.

Arcane Material Component: A small glass marble.

ETERNAL DARKNESS

Evocation [Darkness]

Level: Clr 5, Darkness 5, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Target: Object touched

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

As *deeper darkness* except that the area of darkness created by the spell is permanent unless removed by *dispel magic* or the application of a *sunburst* spell. An area of *eternal darkness* also suppresses any light spells of lower level and dispels or negates them if cast directly against them.

PAIN CIRCUIT

Necromancy

Level: Clr 7, Treachery 7

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature/5 levels

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This bizarre spell opens a one-way conduit between you and the spell's subjects so that any damage or harmful effects caused to you affect the subjects instead.

One of the spell's subjects (chosen by you) is affected instead whenever you would take damage from an attack, including energy damage (acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic), or would suffer from the effects of ability score loss, death attacks, disease, energy drain, petrification, poison, or polymorphing. The subject is affected by the attack normally and is entitled to a saving throw if the effect allows one; spell resistance (if any) applies to each new spell that is transferred to that subject.

Pain circuit has no effect on mind-affecting or Enchantment spells or effects, or on effects such as possession by *magic jar* that do not fit into one of the above categories.

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When you are subjected to an effect that allows a saving throw, you must attempt a saving throw against it before the effect is passed to a spell subject. You are not allowed to voluntarily fail your saving throw against any harmful effects while this spell is active.

If all of the spell's subjects are slain, the spell ends. If two casters cast *pain circuit* on each other, the spells end immediately with no effect, and both casters take 6d6 points of damage from magical feedback.

Material Component: A forked copper rod.

SLAVE SENDING

Evocation

Level: Clr 4, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 full round

Range: See text

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

As sending except that you can simultaneously send the same message to any and all creatures currently under any mind-affecting spells or powers you have used.

WEB OF FATE

Abjuration

Level: Sor/Wiz 9, Web 9

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)

Targets: One creature/2 levels, all of whom must be within 30 ft. of each other

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: Will negates (see text)

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell creates a mystic connection between the subjects so that all of them share the same fate. Each time one of the subjects takes damage, that damage is divided evenly among all of the subjects of the spell (any remaining damage is dealt to the target of the attack). Forms of harm that do not directly involve hit point loss, such as charm effects, ability damage, energy draining, and *disintegration* are not affected.

Should any subject take enough damage before splitting that would normally require a save against death from massive damage, the damage is split normally, but all the subjects must make the save. If a creature is killed by shared damage or by another effect, it is simply removed from the link, and damage is thereafter divided among the remaining creatures. The link forged by *web of fate* is effective regardless of distance, but it cannot cross boundaries between planes. When the spell ends, subsequent damage is no longer divided between the subjects, but damage already split is not reassigned.

Unwilling creatures who make their saves are not linked by this spell. The caster knows which creatures are subject to the spell and which are not at the time of casting. A caster who is one of the spell's subjects knows the location and status of all others as though using a *status* spell. No subject, not even the caster, may voluntarily leave the link. Individual creatures may be removed from the *web of fate* through *dispel magic* and similar effects, but this removes only creatures targeted by the *dispel magic* effect. Any creature targeted by more than one web of fate spell is involuntarily freed from all such spells.

Material Component: A web dipped in blood.

A Dozen Holy Books and Divine Tablets

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A Dozen Malevolent Treasures

by *Michael Hammes*

*Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook*



Introduction

Much like many actors claim that playing the bad guy is more fun than playing the good guy, so too do I find that making items for use by my PC-opposing NPCs and organizations to be much more fun than coming up with yet another magic item for general use.

Which brings us to this PDF. In this PDF you will find a dozen items of a malevolent nature. What exactly does that mean? For the purposes of this PDF, a good definition of malevolent is “having an evil or harmful influence”. That is, the dozen treasures are items that have an evil or harmful influence upon the greater world around them. As such they are either intended for use only by evil individuals and/or using them always involves harming others.

Given these criteria, the items in this PDF are intended for use by NPCs within the campaign and to act as adventure and campaign catalysts; that’s not to say that the PCs cannot end up using them, but rather that they are intended to provide opposition to the PCs and, in many cases, to be items whose destruction should become one of the PCs’ main goals.

The Treasures

BANNER OF CHEILDURN

Appearance: This plain black silk banner hanging limply from a large black spear has obviously seen better days. It is frayed along its entirety and small tears and holes can be seen all throughout the fabric. Although the banner appears to be entirely black, close examination reveals darker markings within the black of the silk.

Appraise Information: DC 24. This is the Banner of Cheildurn as revealed by a bardic knowledge or Knowledge (history) check (DC 30).

The Banner of Cheildurn was the battlefield standard of the Cheildurn, a tribe of fierce mountain warriors that were said to draw their fabled battle prowess from dealing with Infernal powers. Whether this is true or not, their success on the battlefield cannot be argued with and they were often hired as mercenaries by various warring nations all across the continent.

So telling was their presence on the battlefield that their former employers began to fear that the mountain warriors were growing too strong. Thus, long-time enemies agreed to set aside their differences and devised a cruel plan. Several of them feigned a renewed war and hired the Cheildurn. The Cheildurn, having arrived on the battlefield and engaged their

employers' enemies, suddenly found that their employers had turned on them; surrounded by the armies of seven nations, even the mighty Cheildurn could not hold out and all were slaughtered.

The victorious armies heaped the Cheildurn bodies on a great pyre and placed the banner of the Cheildurn at its top. Fed by the bodies of thousands of Cheildurn warriors, the pyre burned for three days and nights; the flames grew so intense that one could barely look upon them. Those that remained behind to tend the fire would later swear that the banner of the Cheildurn remained atop the pyre, defying the heat of the flames even as they enveloped it, until, at the moment the flames reached their zenith, a giant hand reached up from out of the flames and pulled the banner down.

At about the same time the armies, having marched on the Cheildurns' homeland with the intent of slaughtering all that remained, entered the lands of the Cheildurn and found nothing but empty villages and forts; it was as if the entirety of the Cheildurn had disappeared from the face of the world.

Value: N/A (artifact).

Special Rules: The *Banner of Cheildurn* is a Lawful Evil artifact that bestows four negative levels upon any individual of an alignment other than Lawful Evil that attempts to wield it. This increases by an additional four negative levels every day after the first that the *Banner* remains in the possession of such an individual (i.e. eight negative levels on the second day, 12 negative levels on the 3rd day, etc.).

These negative levels do not result in actual level loss, but they cannot be overcome in any way (including *restoration* spells) while the weapon is wielded; the negative levels bestow all penalties associated with level loss (-1 on all skill checks and ability checks, -1 on attack rolls and saving throws, -5 hit points, -1 effective levels, loss of spells/slots per negative level).

The *Banner of Cheildurn* has the following powers when borne:

Acts as a constant, permanent *blasphemy* at 20th caster level (Will save DC 23).

Once per day the bearer may invoke a *symbol of death* at 20th caster level upon the *Banner of Cheildurn*; the *symbol* is active upon the *Banner* and moves wherever the *Banner* does (Fortitude save DC 24).

The bearer may attack with the *Banner of Cheildurn*, wielding it as if it were a +5 *unholy wounding long spear*.

Continuous *true seeing*.

Any individual that wields the *Banner of Cheildurn* in a battle where the individual's side is victorious and at least 100 enemies are killed automatically and spontaneously assumes the half-fiend template (if he or she doesn't already have that template) at the conclusion of the battle.

Strong various [Evil]; CL 20th.

GOBLET OF KYDAG

Appearance: This undecorated heavy and large goblet has been carved entirely of ivory or bone. There are a number of permanent rust-colored discolorations both on the outside of and within the goblet.

Appraise Information: DC 13. The design of the goblet is nothing special, although the fact that it appears to have been carved from a single piece of ivory or bone is rather interesting; where does one get such a large piece of ivory or bone? Still, it is a simple and rather plain goblet and when that information is combined with the fact that the rust-brown stains are beyond removal, it is difficult to imagine the goblet fetching a decent price, much less someone actually drinking from it.

A successful bardic knowledge or Knowledge (religion) check (DC 34) identifies the goblet as the *Goblet of Kydag*, a great demon whose cult once flourished in

the deep mountains near the lands of the orcs.

The followers of Kydag were renowned for cruelty even amongst their orc brethren, a fact that eventually led to their extermination at the hands of the orcs when the cult's practices (which included the sacrifice of other orcs) ran afoul of the orcish priesthood.

Value: 1 gp (1 gp curiosity value).

Special Rules: Any creature not of the faith of Kydag that touches the *goblet* must succeed at a Will save (DC 18) or be filled with horrible visions of slaughter and death, becoming panicked, dropping the goblet and leaving it as far behind as possible; the panic lasts for 2d4 rounds. Even if the save is successful, the individual is filled with a feeling of constant revolt and is considered shaken for as long as the *goblet* is in the individual's possession.

Those of the faith of Kydag that touch the *goblet* find that it fills them with a feeling of power, granting them a +2 morale bonus on attack and damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. This bonus stacks with any other morale bonuses the creature may acquire.

Strong enchantment [Evil]; CL 20th

MIASMA CLOAK

Appearance: This black silk cloak is of obviously fine workmanship.

Appraise Information: DC 14. This is indeed a fine cloak, although given that it is made of thin silk limits its usefulness to warm weather social occasions.

A successful Knowledge (local or nobility and royalty) check (DC 16) recalls that black cloaks are banned upon penalty of imprisonment within the Barony of Tiana after an assassin wearing a magical black cloak was just barely thwarted from taking the baron's life two seasons ago.

Value: 2 cp (2 cp for the collar).

Special Rules: A *miasma cloak* allows its wearer to surround him- or herself with a *miasma* effect (as the spell, see boxed text) at will. The *miasma* effect reaches out to a radius of 20 feet in all directions and is centered about the *cloak's* wearer; the *miasma* effect moves with the wearer.

A moderate wind (11+ mph) reduces the *miasma* effect's radius by one-half (to a 10-foot radius), while a strong (21+ mph) or greater wind prevents the *miasma effect* from

MIASMA

Conjuration (Creation) [Evil]

Level: Clr 2, Evil 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft. level)

Effect: Evil fog spreads in 20-ft. radius, 20 ft. high

Duration: 10 min./level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

A bank of inky blackness billows out from the point you designate. The fog obscures all sight, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet for any creature not of evil alignment; creatures of evil alignment are unaffected by this spell. A creature within 5 feet has concealment (attacks have a 20% miss chance). Creatures farther away have total concealment (50% miss chance, and the attacker can't use sight to locate the target).

A moderate wind (11+ mph) disperses the fog in 4 rounds; a strong wind (21+ mph) disperses the fog in 1 round.

The spell does not function underwater.

functioning properly (the *miasma cloak* still produces the effect, but the strength of the wind blows it away before it can form; the end effect is that the wearer appears to be smoking with the smoke trailing off in the direction of the wind).

Faint conjuration (evil); CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *miasma* (see boxed text); Price 12,000 gp.

NIGHTMARE ORB

Appearance: This iridescent crystal sphere is about half a foot in diameter and sits upon a plain four-legged wooden stand.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This is an interesting, although not particularly valuable, conversation piece. The sphere itself has been crafted to be perfectly spherical and the little flecks of glass within it are a nice touch, but it is really nothing special. The stand, while perfectly serviceable, should be replaced with something more appropriate to one's decor.

Value: 45 gp (40 gp for the crystal sphere, 5 gp for the stand).

Special Rules: A *nightmare orb* is a *crystal ball* with the ability to once per day inflict a *nightmare* upon a creature that is being scryed.

The base DC of the Will save for the creature to resist the *nightmare* is 17. This is modified as per the *nightmare* spell description. Since the *nightmare* can only be inflicted through the *nightmare orb* if the creature is able to be scryed, the individual with the *nightmare orb* is always considered to have a likeness or picture.

Any *crystal ball* can be enchanted to become a *nightmare orb*. Adding the *nightmare* ability to a *crystal ball* increases the item's market price by 24,000 gp.

Example: A normal *crystal ball* enchanted to be a *nightmare orb* has the following statistics:

Moderate divination; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, *nightmare, scrying*; Price 66,000 gp.

REANIMATOR

Appearance: This scythe is composed of a wickedly sharp, jet-black blade mounted on a gnarled staff of reddish-colored wood. Instead of a maker's mark, the scythe's blade features an etching of a skeleton marionette.

Appraise Information: DC 13. Although a scythe, the macabre decoration suggests that this is not a farm implement. Still, given the sharpness and quality of the blade, it would cut grain quite easily.

Reanimating: A reanimating weapon is imbued with necromantic power. This power makes the weapon evil-aligned and thus bypasses the corresponding damage reduction. A living creature slain by a reanimating weapon (reduced to -10 hit points or below), reanimates the following round as a zombie or skeleton (wielder's choice at the time of death) under the control of the weapon's wielder. There is no limit to the amount of undead that can be created by the weapon, but the wielder can only control a total of 28 HD worth of undead at a time; if this number is exceeded, all newly created undead fall under the wielder's control and any excess undead previously created become uncontrolled.

A reanimating weapon bestows one negative level on any good creature attempting to wield it. The negative level remains as long as the weapon is in hand and disappears when the weapon is no longer wielded. This negative level never results in actual level loss, but it cannot be overcome in any way (including *restoration* spells) while the weapon is wielded. Bows, crossbows, and slings so crafted bestow the unholy power upon their ammunition.

Moderate necromancy [evil]; CL 7th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *animate dead*, creator must be evil; Price +2 bonus.

A successful bardic knowledge or Knowledge (history or religion) check (DC 29) reveals that this scythe is the fabled Reanimator. Crafted by the lich-priest Malyon, it is believed to be the first *reanimating* weapon ever created (see boxed text).

Value: 318 (18 gp for scythe, 300 gp for masterwork quality).

Special Rules: Reanimator is a +3 *unholy reanimating scythe*.

Moderate necromancy [evil]; CL 7th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *animate dead*, *unholy blight*; Price 99,566 gp.

RITUAL SKULL MASK

Appearance: This light wooden mask has been carved into the shape of a leering skull and is covered by a patina of dirt and smoke. A thick leather harness attached to the back of the mask allows it to be fitted over someone's head.

Appraise Information: DC 16. Masks such as these are often rumored employed by a number of secret cults in conducting unspeakable rituals. While a poor copy of an actual skull, it is no doubt quite frightening under the right circumstances.

Value: 25 gp (25 gp artistic value).

Special Rules: Once per round, the wearer of a *ritual skull mask* can *cause fear* (as the spell, 1st level caster, Will save DC 11). This activation of the mask is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Faint necromancy; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *cause fear*; Price 1,800gp.

SABLE GRASP STILETTO

Appearance: This fine thin dagger features a slim 10-inch long quadrangle blade that has been blackened. Its slightly turned down brass crossguard has a bulb design on its tip. The dagger's grip is solid brass and the elliptical brass pommel, which is bolted to the blade tang, features an etching of a black hand. The dagger resides in a simple black leather sheath.

Appraise Information: DC 12. Although part of the general family of daggers, stiletos are designed specifically for the purpose of puncturing flesh and armor. They are thin yet strong, able to concentrate the wielder's force onto a very fine point and are capable of causing serious wounds.

This particular stiletto is of masterwork quality and, except for the presence of the etching of a black hand on the pommel, would make anyone a fine secondary weapon.

This symbol, readily identified with a Knowledge (history, local, or nobility and royalty) check (DC 18), is the mark of the Sable Grasp, a secretive cabal of assassins that terrorized the kingdom for many years. It was rumored that the cabal's leader was none other than the Duchess of Nalocia herself, whose swift ascendancy through the ranks of the nobility mirrored that of the rise of the Sable Grasp itself. However, these rumors were never confirmed.

Value: 302 gp (2 gp for the stiletto, 300 gp for masterwork workmanship).

Special Rules: A *Sable Grasp stiletto* is a +2 *punching dagger* that allows its wielder to use a *destruction* effect (as the spell, save DC 20) upon a creature punctured by the blade once per day. The wielder can decide to use the power after she has struck. Doing so is a free action, but the *destruction* effect must be invoked in the same round that the *stiletto* strikes.

Strong necromancy; CL 13th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *destruction*; Price 45,202 gp

SAINT OLAEB'S PUZZLE BOX

Appearance: This small box, roughly two inches wide by three inches long and two inches deep, is made of hardwood and features an intricate inlaid scene depicting stylized demons (or is it devils?) dancing upon a mound of corpses. There is no obvious way to open the box.

Appraise Information: DC 17. This is a very fine puzzle box, even if the image is a bit disturbing. Like all puzzle boxes, the idea is to open the box by moving (and occasionally removing) various sections of the box in the proper order.

Value: 32 gp (32 gp for this particular box).

Special Rules: This particular puzzle box is a cursed artifact. Crafted in secret by the renowned gnomish puzzlemaker Orwyl the Sly, the box was enspelled by Saint Olaeb and used to trap Cicunabe, a mighty balor demon within its confines.

However, the might of the demon was not to be denied and through the centuries it has slowly weakened the wards that hold it within the box. Now when any individual handles the box he or she must succeed at a Will save (DC 28) or fall under the balor's *dominate monster* ability (the only power the balor may manifest outside of the puzzle box at this time). Once it has control of the individual, the balor will then force the individual to try and solve the puzzle box.

Solving the puzzle box is extremely difficult (in fact, it is almost impossible), requiring a full day's work and a successful Disable Device check (DC 45) to accomplish (the balor will attempt to assist the individual through the Aid Another action). Should the individual fail, the balor in its fury will keep forcing the *dominated* creature to try (renewing its domination when necessary) until it either succeeds, breaks free, or dies trying (either of old age, starvation, thirst, etc.).

Note that *Saint Olaeb's Puzzle Box* is an artifact and as such impervious to any mortal attempts (magic, force, etc.) to open the box in any way other than solving the puzzle.

Should the puzzle box be opened, the balor will "thank" its rescuer and then take its vengeance upon the wider world.

Strong abjuration; CL 20th

SHACKLES OF AGONY

Appearance: Rusted and pitted, the most prominent feature of this pair of cruel iron shackles is a finger-thick, wickedly barbed

spike that traverses the entire diameter of each shackle's interior.

Appraise Information: DC 13. Shackles are a common tool used all over the world as a means of securing prisoners; while ordinary shackles are uncomfortable enough in and of themselves, the creator of this pair clearly intended to be exceptionally cruel.

When affixed upon the wrist, the iron spike of each shackle will penetrate through the wrist of the offender undoubtedly causing continuous pain for as long as the shackles remain on.

Value: 2 gp. (2 gp for the shackles)

Special Rules: *Shackles of agony* are found in the vilest of evil temples; they are usually used to secure sacrificial victims or prisoners by binding them in agony.

Aside from the very real pain of having the *shackles* emplaced, unholy energy courses through the victim continuously, wracking him or her in unholy pain. This renders the victim helpless, as he or she is unable to do anything but suffer in anguish.

A victim can shake off the effects of the pain by succeeding at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 17). However, the victim is still shaken (-2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill and ability checks) from the constant onslaught of unholy energy for as long as the *shackles* remain on his or her wrists.

Furthermore, even if successful, the saving throw must be repeated every 10 minutes with failure causing the victim to lapse back into helplessness. Once relapsed into helplessness, the victim may attempt further saving throws to overcome the pain (although he or she must wait at least 10 minutes before trying again), but for each relapse the DC of the Fortitude save increases by 1. The pain affects victims of any alignment.

Any character of non-Evil alignment that so much as touches the *shackles* feels an incredible stab of pain, crying out and being stunned for 1d4 rounds if he or she fails a Fortitude saving throw (DC 17); succeeding at this save still leaves the individual shaken for 1d4 rounds. This does not affect evil char-

acters, who instead feel a strong desire to use the shackles on someone.

Moderate necromancy; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, vial of unholy water, *symbol of pain*; Price 11,250 gp.

THAR'NAR, THE

Appearance: This leather-bound tome has been stained a lurid red. The cover and pages are held together by dried sinew and the pages, which are covered with rust-colored symbols, appear to be made out of some unusual translucent leather.

Appraise Information: DC 21. Succeeding at a bardic knowledge or Knowledge (religion) check (DC 31) identifies the book as the Thar'Nar.

According to legend, the leather covers of this book are made of ghoulish skin stained a lurid red, the cover and pages are bound with a dried mohrg tongue, and the pages themselves are made from the flayed and preserved skins of zombies. The writing consists of letters of the Infernal tongue written in dried blood.

The Thar'Nar is the prized treasure of the Cult of Thar 'Nar. Thar 'Nar, also known as the Accursed One, was rumored to have granted the book that bears his name to its followers after a weeklong orgy of sacrifice.

The book served as a source of power for the cult for five generations, allowing them to spread their evil taint over much of the nearby lands and to eventually raise an army of the dead numerous enough to challenge even the Empire's forces.

Yet the cult had miscalculated and, after their undead forces were crushed by the Alliance of Six at the Battle of Cold Ford, the remnants of the cult fled to their hidden fortress deep in the Darkmist Mountains. There they set about rebuilding their strength, something they would assuredly have done if not for a brave band of adventurers, the famous Seven of Six, who penetrated into the heart of the enemy's aerie and crushed the cult, killing their high priest and bringing down the Temple of Thar'Nar itself.

Although they spent over a week searching through the rubble after their victory and found many a treasure, the Seven of Six failed to find the Thar'Nar.

Since the time of the Temple's fall and the destruction of the cult of Thar'Nar, the power of the Accursed One has been at ebb. Although there is the persistent rumor of the rise of the cult in the Northern Barbaries, and every so often someone claims to have found the Thar'Nar, neither rumor can be confirmed.

Value: N/A (artifact).

Special Rules: Anyone attempting to read the Thar'Nar finds it to be written in an archaic version of the Infernal tongue and requires a Speak Language (Infernal) check (DC 17) to properly comprehend.

The book is filled with vile prayers and entreatments to Thar 'Nar as well as delineations of the tenets of the faith of the Accursed One, including instructions for rituals and a calendar of sacred times and days.

Although the Book of the Damned once possessed greater powers, the fall of the Cult of Thar'Nar has had far-reaching consequences and the book now only has the following powers (all powers are at the 20th caster level):

animate dead 1/day

create undead 1/week

create greater undead 1/month

The listed powers are available for use by anyone capable of reading the Book of the Damned and following the prayers within.

Invoking any of these powers is an Evil act and any reader of a non-Evil alignment must succeed at a Will save any time he or she invokes one of these powers (the Will save DC is 14 for *animate dead*, 19 for *create undead*, and 22 for *create greater undead*).

Failing the Will save automatically moves the reader's alignment to Evil (i.e. Lawful Good or Lawful Neutral becomes Lawful Evil, Chaotic Neutral or Chaotic Good becomes Chaotic Evil, etc.; pure Neutral becomes Neutral Evil).

This effect can only be reversed through the destruction of the Thar'Nar and the receiving of an *atonement* spell cast by a cleric of the reader's original faith of 21st level or greater.

At the GMs option, these powers may only be employed at specific times significant to the Cult of Thar 'Nar. If this option is used, *animate dead* can only be activated at sundown, *create undead* at sundown on the cult's Sabbath, and *create greater undead* at sundown on the day of the new moon.

Strong necromancy [Evil]; CL 20th

TRAITOR'S COLLAR

Appearance: This heavy hinged iron collar with a clasp and eyelet is pitted with rust and dented in several places.

Appraise Information: DC 12. Judging from the circumference of this collar, it is obviously meant to fit about an individual's neck. Add to this the fact that the collar has an eyelet through which a chain can be passed, and you can only come to one conclusion: this collar is meant to be worn by a criminal or slave. Whatever its intended use, it is in poor shape and, given its rust and roughness, likely to cause serious discomfort and injury if actually placed around someone's neck.

Value: 2 cp (2 cp for the collar).

Special Rules: A *traitor's collar* is bestowed upon those individuals that have been deemed traitors but are too valuable to be executed; they are obviously quite rare.

Once emplaced about the traitor's neck, the *collar* acts as a permanent *geas/quest*, compelling the individual to never betray those he serves again. Should the traitor be inclined to commit treachery again, the collar instantly slays the individual by *shrinking* itself about the individual's neck, effectively decapitating him or her (no saving throw).

Strong enchantment; CL 12th; Craft Wondrous Item, *geas/quest*, *shrink item*; Price 72,000 gp.

UNHOLY RELIQUARY

Appearance: This small rectangular box is some six inches wide by four inches long and three inches deep. It is made entirely of amber surrounded by a framework of gold. Looking through the amber you can see what appears to be a piece of rolled-up parchment. There appears to be no obvious way, such as a hinge or clasp, to open the box.

Appraise Information: DC 23. That this is a reliquary is obvious. But exactly what reliquary it is can only be determined by a successful bardic knowledge or Knowledge (religion) check (DC 28).

The reliquary contains a portion of a page from the Schyroud, a legendary evil tome of tremendous power whose pages of human skin were written upon in the blood of the innocent and bound by the bones of Saint Loton. The tome was destroyed in the Great Cataclysm, although it was rumored that portions of it survived. Judging by the existence of this reliquary, those rumors were correct.

Value: N/A (minor artifact).

Special Rules: Any non-Evil creature that possesses the *reliquary* receives one negative level per day that the *unholy reliquary* is in his or her possession (i.e. two negative levels the second day, three negative levels the third day, etc.). These negative levels do not result in actual level loss, but they cannot be overcome in any way (including *restoration* spells) while the weapon is wielded; the negative levels bestow all penalties associated with level loss (-1 on all skill checks and ability checks, -1 on attack rolls and saving throws, -5 hit points, -1 effective levels, loss of spells/slots per negative level).

The *reliquary* grants an evil divine spellcaster the ability to cast his or her spells at +1 caster level; this effect stacks with any other abilities or effects granting bonuses to caster level, such as that provided by the Evil domain granted power. Furthermore, once per day an evil spellcaster is able to invoke *dispel good* at the 20th caster level.

Strong abjuration [Evil]; CL 20th

A Dozen Malevolent Treasures

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A Dozen Masterwork Weapons

Introduction

While every adventurer lusts after magical weapons, which can be distressingly common, one category of weapons that is often neglected is that of the masterwork weapon.

According to the standard rules, the masterwork weapon is a finely crafted weapon that bestows a +1 enhancement bonus to attack rolls and also serves as the basis for the creation of magical weapons. Boring.

Let's take a look at what the word "masterwork" means. It means the same as "masterpiece", which in turn means:

1. An outstanding work of art or craft.
2. The greatest work, as of an artist. Also called **masterwork**.
3. Something superlative of its kind: *a masterpiece of political ingenuity*.

So, when a PC buys, steals, finds, or otherwise obtains a masterwork weapon (or a magical weapon for that matter), it should be an occasion worthy of remembrance. After all, these are the kinds of weapons that are given names and passed down through the generations; while almost everyone can buy a dagger, not everyone can buy a masterwork dagger, and very few people indeed ought to have a magical dagger.

Of course, this rarely happens, and even when a PC gains a masterwork weapon, it is only seen as a stopgap until a magical weapon can be found. This is not surprising.



*Requires the use of the
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A Dozen Masterwork Weapons

In a game system as focused on magic and modifiers as d20 fantasy, it is not hard to realize why masterwork weapons get lost in the shuffle. After all, the next *+3 keen wounding longsword* is probably just around the corner. And therein lies the great flaw.

Pages and pages, and entire sourcebooks, are devoted to magical weapons, while masterwork weapons scarcely rate more than a couple of paragraphs in the standard rules. Thus it becomes a natural assumption on the part of the GM and the players that magical weapons are much more important than masterwork weapons.

Yes, I know, magical weapons are far more powerful and expensive, which is precisely why they should be even more rare and dear than masterwork weapons. Yet it often happens that a PC will find ten magic weapons before ever finding a masterwork weapon when the exact opposite ought to be true.

Now, if you've bought this PDF then you are obviously interested in getting something more on masterwork weapons than the few paragraphs found in the standard rules, perhaps even in making them a greater part of your campaign. Well, you've come to the right place.

ROLE-PLAY ALERT

Whether you use the items in this PDF as the masterwork weapons they are or convert them to magical weapons, the discovery of such a weapon should be a memorable occasion for the PCs. If the PCs sift through a treasure horde, tossing *+2 daggers* and *thundering warhammers* into their treasure sacks for sale at a later date to the less fortunate, and then continue to search for something more powerful, then it is probably already too late.

But if not, then by all means take the time to create a little description of such a weapon. Whether you employ the descriptions in this PDF directly or simply use them for inspiration, by describing the weapon beyond "It is a masterwork rapier" you will perk the players' interest in the weapon; the weapon becomes more significant, more special.

Of course, if you then proceed later on down the line to hand out other "memorable" weapons like candy, then you have undone all of your good work to that point; once the weapon has been made more significant you need to reinforce that significance.

The chief way of doing this, whether it is masterwork or magical, is not to allow other weapons in the game to outclass the PC's weapon unless such weapons are wielded by truly powerful, once-in-a-lifetime foes, or are legendary arms that require quests of extreme danger to recover.

Remember, no matter how fancy the description of a PC's masterwork warhammer or *+1 longsword*, if everyone else in the party or everyone the PCs meet has a *+2 weapon* then the weapon is hardly special and you've wasted your time. Thus if you do decide to make masterwork weapons significant, make sure that only about one in 100 people has a masterwork weapon (and only about 1 in 100 of those is a magical weapon).

The other way to reinforce the significance of the PC's weapon is to make reference to it within the larger game. While this can be as elaborate as a series of adventures that focuses on the previous owner of the weapon trying to get the weapon back, or even how the PCs managed to obtain the weapon in the first place, it doesn't need to be anything so complicated.

Something as simple as having an NPC fighter in the local inn remark how nice the weapon is (and perhaps asking to hold it) does a lot to establish the significance of the PC's weapon. Maybe a stranger offers to buy the weapon right there in the street, upping his offer to twice the weapon's listed gold piece value before giving up. Or when the PC draws his weapon in combat, his foe(s) hesitate(s) a moment as he recognizes that the PC has a superior weapon.

Of course, the old saw of having a rogue come by to try and steal the PC's weapon also goes a long way toward making the weapon important and, if the rogue succeeds, can lead to an adventure or two.

A Dozen Masterwork Weapons

While this PDF does not expand on the rules of what a masterwork weapon is, largely because the d20 system is complicated enough without adding yet more weapon rules, but also because what distinguishes the masterwork weapon from the ordinary weapon is not so much a rules mechanic but rather an appearance, a feel, and a history. All this you will find in this PDF.

The Weapons

Here you will find the dozen weapons you have been looking for. As you read the descriptions you will undoubtedly find a number of reasons why each of these weapons is special as well as a number of ideas for your game in general. Feel free to use them as you see fit and remember that these work equally well whether you keep the weapons as masterwork or decide to make them magical.

BANNER SPEAR

Appearance: This spear has seen heavy use as its haft is broken in half and its point dented. A red and blue cloth banner, its edges frayed and the image of a rampant golden stallion covered in mud, is attached just below the spearpoint.

Appraise Information: DC 14. While standards such as this one are carried by cavalry forces the world over, this particular standard belonged to the 3rd Cavalry Regiment, also known as the Golden Stallions, that was lured into the ambush that became the Glenview Pass Massacre.

Value: 502 gp (2 gp for the spear, 300 gp for masterwork workmanship, 200 gp historical value).

Special Rules: The spear is broken, although it can be repaired to masterwork quality at one-half the cost (and one-half the time) of crafting a new one.

That is not to say that this is all that the weapons in this PDF can be used for. Remember, masterwork weapons serve as the basis for magical weapons and nothing prevents you from taking the Sisters of Mercy Dagger and making it a +2 *returning poisonous dagger* instead of just an “ordinary” masterwork dagger.

BATTLEAXE OF THE BROTHERHOOD

Appearance: The blade of this fine battleaxe features an etching of a rampant swan atop a set of roiling waves. The solid oak handle features a cross-wound lanyard wrapping. A heavy end chain that can be draped over the wielder’s wrist completes the picture.

Appraise Information: DC 15. Masterwork battleaxes such as this one are presented to Initiates of the Brotherhood upon their successful completion of the Tests of Passage. Although of one design, each Battleaxe of the Brotherhood is personalized with symbols signifying its owner, in this case Rhoill of Swansea.

Value: 310 gp (10 gp for the battleaxe, 300 gp for masterwork workmanship).

Special Rules: Although the end chain does not influence disarm attempts, it does prevent the wielder from having the battleaxe fall on the ground and out of his reach should he be disarmed. The defender may recover the battleaxe as if he were drawing the weapon; recovering the battleaxe is a move-equivalent action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity and, if the attacker has a base attack bonus of +1 or greater, he can combine the recovery of the battleaxe with a regular move.

A Dozen Masterwork Weapons

DWARVEN STANDARD ISSUE SHORTSWORD

Appearance: Well-balanced, honed to razor sharpness, and purely functional, this shortsword has obviously seen much combat as, despite the best maintenance efforts of its previous owner, nicks and discolorations cover the blade. The pommel bears the rune of the Netherill clan and the number 1425.

Appraise Information: DC 13. While most non-dwarves picture the bearded ones wielding hammers, the fact is that light piercing weapons such as shortswords are much more functional in the tight spaces under the earth. Turned out by the hundreds at the hands of the fabled weaponsmiths of clan Nethermountain, these shortswords are common in the dwarven realms but prized elsewhere. Research of dwarven army records show this particular sword, #1425, to have been issued to Delver Company, 3rd Hammer of the Deepguard. It was undoubtedly lost during the company's final stand in Three Pillars Cavern.

Value: 310 gp (10 gp for the shortsword, 300 gp for masterwork workmanship. The stated value applies only to the weapon outside of the dwarven lands; in dwarven lands the shortsword is worth 100 gp, although being property of the Army it is subject to impoundment).

Special Rules: The weaponsmiths of the Nethermountain clan have so refined their techniques of making superior weapons that producing a dwarven standard issue shortsword (masterwork shortsword) takes them about a third of the time of an ordinary craftsman (use the value of 100 gp instead of 310 gp when making Craft (weaponsmithing) checks to determine the time it takes a Nethermountain craftsman to create such a sword). Whether they are as efficient with other weapons is a closely guarded secret.

GREATSWORD OF JUSTICE

Appearance: The blade of this plain masterwork greatsword has the phrase "Justice Always" engraved into it and its pommel features an engraving of a scale. The sword is meticulously maintained, although close inspection shows the blade to hold no edge.

Appraise Information: DC 12. Every court in the land has a Sword of Justice, a ceremonial weapon that is carried into the court by the Sergeant-At-Arms during the opening ceremony that precedes the opening of the court for the day; the Sword of Justice represents the court's jurisdiction in matters concerning life and death. There is only one Greatsword of Justice, however, and that is the one at the King's Court in the capital. It is brought forth only when the High Court is in session, a rare occurrence that requires the full Assembly of Peers. It is extremely plain in design on purpose, the better to contrast with the rich colors worn by the Assembly of Peers and to remind everyone that justice is not swayed by displays of wealth or power.

Value: 350 gp (50 gp for the greatsword, 300 gp for masterwork workmanship. The symbolic value is purely subjective).

Special Rules: Although the Greatsword of Justice does not hold an edge, it is in all ways a masterwork weapon and can be given an edge by anyone with the Craft (weaponsmithing) skill; this takes four hours. Even without an edge, the Greatsword of Justice can be used as a weapon, doing 1d8 points/x3 worth of bludgeoning damage.

GENTLEMAN'S RAPIER

Appearance: The basket hilt of this fine rapier is gold-plated and the blade features decorative scalloped etching. A couple of nicks and gouges on the basket hilt that expose the steel underneath, as well as the weapon's keen edge, reveal this rapier to have been more than decoration. The weaponsmith's mark, a W made of crossed swords, is impressed into the blade.

A Dozen Masterwork Weapons

Appraise Information: DC 12. The standard sidearm for any individual who can afford it, this particular rapier is a fine example of the art. Combining excellent functionality with an understated flair, the weapon undoubtedly belonged to a gentleman-about-town or one of the lesser country gentry. The weaponsmith's mark is that of Willyiam of Tern, a renowned crafter of rapiers and other sorts of swords.

Value: 320 gp (20 gp for the rapier, 300 gp for masterwork workmanship).

Special Rules: None.

HALBERD OF THE DUCAL GUARD

Appearance: A fine example of a halberd, the haft is made of bleached oak and the blades feature decorative diamond-shaped holes. A pair of two-foot long streamers, one yellow and the other purple, hang from the halberd's head.

Appraise Information: DC 14. Nobles with enough status, and money, like to equip their personal guard with the best arms and armor possible and the Duke of Mobry, whose colors are purple and yellow, is no exception. Each member of his 20-man strong personal guard is equipped with a halberd such as this and, while the halberd's ceremonial purpose is largely played up, it makes a very effective weapon in the hands of the trained specialists that comprise the Duke of Mobry's personal guard, as the assassin Ghankim the Sly discovered.

Value: 310 gp (10 gp for the halberd, 300 gp for masterwork workmanship).

Special Rules: None.

HOBGOBLIN WARLEADER'S MACE

Appearance: The ball of this black, solid iron heavy mace has been poured in the shape of a skull. Wicked spikes some three inches long protrude from the skull, including its eyes. Although difficult to discern, blood spots cover the mace. Much easier to notice are the pieces of flesh hanging from three of the spikes' tips. A sweat-stained leather thong is affixed to the bottom of the handle.

Appraise Information: DC 13. This represents the height of hobgoblin weapon manufacture and artistry, combining functionality with intimidation. The tribe's leader, who is the only individual who can commission such an item, limits its awarding to only the fiercest and most loyal warriors as a means of recognizing achievements and/or conferring the status of warleader upon them. As a result, weapons such as this are the prized possession of their owners and the only way to separate such a weapon from its owner is to pry it from the owner's cold, dead fingers.

Value: 305 gp (10 gp for the mace, 300 gp for masterwork workmanship).

Special Rules: The leather thong on the handle's end does not influence disarm attempts; it prevents the wielder from having the mace fall on the ground and out of his reach should he be disarmed. The defender may recover the mace as if he were drawing the weapon; recovering the mace is a move-equivalent action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity and, if the attacker has a base attack bonus of +1 or greater, he can combine the recovery of the battleaxe with a regular move.

ILSDNAL'S LONGBOW

Appearance: Totally unadorned, this nonetheless magnificent composite longbow, crafted from alternating layers of dark-wood and bone, is strung with a bowstring the thickness of a man's index finger.

A Dozen Masterwork Weapons

Appraise Information: DC 20. This bow belonged to the ranger Ilsdnal, a hero reputed for both the strength of his arm as well as accuracy of his bow. Called “Trollreaver”, the bow is reputed to have the strength to fire through half an inch of steel and no one but Ilsdnal could string it. Thought lost when Ilsdnal disappeared in the Reaving Wood during the Bitter Winter, its reappearance brings hope to those living in the shadow of the Wolf Riders.

Value: 1,430 gp (130 gp for the composite longbow, 300 gp for masterwork workmanship, 1,000 gp for history).

Special Rules: Ilsdnal’s Longbow is a masterwork longbow that can only be strung, and fired, by someone with a minimum Strength of 20. The bow confers a +5 Strength bonus to the damage of its arrows and sends them on flights that have a range increment of 120 feet (instead of the standard 110 feet).

JESTER GUILD HAND CROSSBOW

Appearance: Looking much like a toy, this hand crossbow is decorated with splotches of red, yellow, blue, green, and white. Despite its toy appearance, a handful of scratches that reveal the fine walnut stock along with the fact that the bow has obviously been well maintained reveal it for the deadly weapon that it is.

Appraise Information: DC 18. In its day, few people ever got to see a Jester Guild crossbow and lived to tell the tale. Produced by Sayril’ the legendary weaponsmith of Guild Jester up until his assassination, the destruction of Guild Jester during the Night of the Long Knives means that there are currently thought to be no more than a half-dozen or so of these exquisite crossbows remaining in existence.

Value: 850 gp (100 gp for the hand crossbow, 300 gp for masterwork workmanship, 450 gp for historical value).

Special Rules: As with most such weapons, the danger lies not in the bolt itself but in what the bolt is coated with. For Guild Jester, that was a specially developed poison known as Grinning Death for the way it froze the dead victim’s visage into a rictus.

Poison	Type	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage	Price
Grinning Death	Contact DC 21	3d6 Con	3d6 Con	6,500 gp

NOBLE’S HUNTING CROSSBOW

Appearance: This light crossbow features a wooden stock with a steel bow. Doubtless a masterwork piece, the bow’s stock is made of walnut and features a cherry- and ash-inlaid pastoral scene showing a pheasant flying up out of a meadow. The bow is obviously well maintained as the wood is highly polished and the steel bow features a light sheen of oil.

Appraise Information: DC 15. A bow of this sort is commissioned by a noble as a personal hunting arm and, although it is in every way a masterwork light crossbow, is much too valuable to risk in combat.

Value: 835 gp (35gp for the crossbow, 300 gp for masterwork workmanship, 500 gp for artistry).

Special Rules: None.

ORC MORNINGSTAR

Appearance: Covered in lurid rust-red streaks from rust spots on the weapon’s head, this morningstar is clearly meant to evoke terror. The heavy oak haft has almost a score of notches and two spike points on the head have been knocked askew, no doubt the result of having delivered a heavy blow. The only other feature of note is a large gouge near the haft’s bottom.

A Dozen Masterwork Weapons

Appraise Information: DC 16. This morningstar is not of orc manufacture since, as far as is known orc metallurgy and weaponsmithing cannot produce a weapon of such quality. The gouge on the weapon's haft is undoubtedly where the maker's mark has been gashed away. Despite its neglected state, it is nevertheless a masterwork weapon.

Value: 310 gp (10 gp for the sword, 300 gp for masterwork workmanship).

Special Rules: Due to its neglected state, the weapon is quite likely to be mistaken at initial glance for a common morningstar (it could be picked up for a song from an ignorant weapons dealer). If picked up the weapon's qualities begin to suggest themselves as the morningstar, with the balance and weight being almost ideal, just feels good when held in hand.

SISTERS OF MERCY DAGGER

Appearance: The sharp and slim blade, along with the rest of this delicate steel dagger, has been carbonized to give it a dull, gray sheen. Along with its rather fine proportions, the fact that the pommel is shaped like a rose in full bloom gives it an overall feminine look.

Appraise Information: DC 22. Little known except for in the circles of those who require their services, the Sisters of Mercy, whose symbol is a black rose with daggers for thorns, are an order of exclusively female assassins whose reputation for lethality makes them almost legendary. Thus finding such an item is a mixed blessing at best, for while it means that one probably survived an attempt, the fact is that the Sisters of Mercy do not cease until their contract is fulfilled.

Value: 302 gp (2 gp for the dagger, 300 gp for masterwork workmanship).

Special Rules: The Sisters of Mercy truly deserve their lethal reputation and anyone who picks up this dagger bare-handed finds that their deadly touch is far-reaching indeed. The hilt of dagger, as are all weapons wielded by the Sisters of Mercy, was soaked in Nitharit poison that, although weakened by age and exposure to air, can still kill (Contact DC 10 (due to age), Initial Damage 0, Secondary Damage 3d6 Con). Despite the fact that the Sisters regular build up their members' immunity to Nitharit and other poisons through random exposure, even they wear gloves when wielding their weapons.

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A Dozen More Unusual Armors

by Philip Reed

Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook



For those of you that already own *A Dozen Unusual Armors*, you've got some idea what to expect from this short PDF. If you're new to the *A Dozen . . .* series, or just don't have *A Dozen Unusual Armors*, this PDF details 12 shields, helmets, and suits of armor that are ready to be dropped into your next campaign session. These items may be used as standard equipment and added to the equipment lists in the *Player's Handbook* or, and what I recommend, they may be slowly introduced as treasure or rewards.

Just as with those suits of armor presented in *101 Mundane Treasures*, *Another 101 Mundane Treasures*, and various other Ronin Arts releases, these dozen suits of "armor" are not at all magical in nature. While many of them are constructed from magical creatures the suits of armor themselves are not considered magic items. Rather, these are all unique, non-magical treasures that add a little history and wonder to your next game session.

The armors in this PDF were all constructed from monsters that can be found in Inner Circle Games' *Denizens of Avadnu*. How I missed this creative, valuable resource of monsters for so long is beyond me – I'm usually a lot more in touch with the *D20 System* publishers and community. I was overjoyed to find a new book of OGC monsters packed with imaginative creatures and beautiful artwork. I highly recommend that you hit the Inner Circle Games website at www.icirclegames.com and grab *Denizens of Avadnu*. Be sure to let them know Phil sent you!

AGRAUKITH HALF-PLATE

Appearance: This light suit of armor, constructed of red and yellow insectoid plates, and decorated with a large metal eye on the armor's left chest plate. The armor is in perfect condition and includes a lance rest and heavy, metal spikes on the shoulders.

Appraise Information: DC 18. The agraukith are a race of insectoid humanoids that are found in jungles and forests. The exoskeleton of an agraukith is commonly used in the construction of shields and, sometimes, the exoskeletons of several agraukith are fashioned into a suit of armor. This particular suit of half-plate is of masterwork construction. The eye on the left chest of the armor is made entirely of platinum.

Value: 795 gp (600 gp for the half-plate, 150 gp for masterwork, 15 gp for the eye symbol, and 30 gp for the agraukith exoskeleton).

Special Rules: As masterwork armor, the armor check penalty of agraukith half-plate is reduced by one. 25 lbs.

ARGILL HELM

Appearance: This metal helm, painted blue-green, is decorated with a heavy made of thick, organic tendrils that have been carefully preserved. The helmet is extremely heavy and, when worn, quite frightening to view. The inside of the helmet is lined with padded cloth. All that shows of the wearer is the eyes and a gruesome, skull-like mouth is carved into the helmet.

Appraise Information: DC 22. This one-of-a-kind helmet was built three decades ago from the head of an argill, a monstrous creature found in marshlands. Built for an evil warlord, Darkoseck the Hatefilled, the helmet was lost when Darkoseck was killed at the Battle of Shadow's End. While it is possible that other argill helms have been constructed, this particular one can be identified as the original by Darkoseck's mark – a skeletal dragon's skull wreathed in gauntlets – on the inner band.

Value: 704 gp (4 gp for the helmet, 200 gp for the argill's tentacles, and 500 gp for the unique nature of this item).

Special Rules: When worn, all Spot and Listen checks are made at a –3 penalty. Wearing the helmet for any length of time is tiring and puts a great deal of strain on the wearer's neck. After one hour of wearing the helmet, all Strength and Constitution checks suffer a –2 circumstance penalty. Wearing the helmet provides a +2 equipment bonus to Intimidate checks.

AUTOMENTAL SUIT

Appearance: This massive suit of plate armor, constructed from light stone and metal, is covered in glowing runes. On each shoulder is mounted a red gemstone that pulses brightly once every few seconds. The suit's helmet completely conceals the wearer's face and is carved to resemble a young man with a strong, firm jaw. The plates and overall design of the suit are carved to match the musculature of a powerful man.

Appraise Information: DC 18. This suit of plate armor is constructed from the remains of a destroyed automental. The automental is a magical construct made of granite and sandstone built as a mindless warrior. These constructs are very rare, very powerful, and difficult and expensive to construct. Few armorsmiths have the skill and patience to construct an automental suit – only four of these suits are known to exist. It is said that the pulsing light is the life essence of the destroyed automental. The gemstones are rubies.

Value: 5,675 gp (1,500 gp for full plate, 150 gp for masterwork quality, 25 gp for each ruby, and 4,000 gp for the automental components).

Special Rules: As masterwork armor, the armor check penalty for an automental suit is reduced by one.

DOOMWEAVER GAUNTLETS

Appearance: These “mitten” style gauntlets are purple-black in color and wrapped in red velvet. Anyone touching the gauntlets must check for Constitution damage (see below). There are no identifying marks or features.

Appraise Information: DC 16. These gauntlets are constructed from the hide of an adult doomweaver, a four-legged insect found deep underground. The gauntlets are of masterwork quality and are quite dangerous to handle without gloves or some type of protection. Over 150 years ago, a master craftsman living amongst the drow constructed numerous shields, suits of armor, and other protective items from the shells of doomweavers. Many of these items are still lost somewhere in dungeons the world over and most have lost their decaying ability. There's a 90% chance that any doomweaver equipment found will not feature the decay ability (described below).

Value: 2,258 gp (8 gp for the gauntlets, 150 gp for the masterwork construction, 600 gp for the doomweaver shell used in the construction of the gauntlets, and 1,500 gp for the still-functioning decay ability).

Special Rules: The gauntlets are infused with the doomweaver's decaying ability, allowing the wearer to deal Constitution damage to any opponent touched. On a successful touch attack, the creature touched must succeed on a DC 11 Fortitude save or suffer 1d4 points of Constitution damage. The “mitten” style of the gauntlets forces a –4 circumstance penalty on all Dexterity checks.

ENGULFER BARBUTE (HELMET)

Appearance: This heavy helmet, the front open in the shape of a “t,” is a light green in color, covered in yellow and black specks. The helmet feels fleshy to the touch and is lined with rough, brown leather that is sewn to the helmet with thick, black leather strings. The helmet has a faint, offensive odor that can be detected from a range of roughly ten feet.

Appraise Information: DC 16. A barbute is a common form of helmet but this twisted, disgusting item is unusual in that it is made from the flesh of a slain vacuous engulfer. The vacuous engulfer is a tall, vicious-looking aberration with four legs and four mouths. These beasts are rarely encountered though they are prized by wizards (the mouth of an engulfer is an excellent component for constructing bags of holding). Who would have created this terrible helmet, and why, is unknown.

A successful DC 25 Knowledge (history) check reveals that complete armors made of slain vacuous engulfers were popular almost a thousand years ago, worn by members of an evil cult known as the Soldiers of Despair. The cult was destroyed by the actions of a party of paladins tasked with eradicating all members of the Soldiers of Despair. Rumors persist to this day that this cult still exists, in a limited form, and is working toward the day in which they are once again powerful enough to openly operate.

Value: 254 gp (4 gp for the helmet and 250 gp for the raw materials; a collector of antiquities would pay up to 4 times this amount for a full suit of engulfer armor).

Special Rules: When worn, all Spot and Listen checks are made at a –3 penalty.

HAKLAA PAVISE (SHIELD)

Appearance: This form of tower shield, larger than the typical tower shield, is constructed entirely of a blue-black material that, while as strong as iron, feels entirely organic – almost like the shell of a beetle. A groove runs down the center of the shield, on the inside, and two heavy chains – known as guiges – inside the shield are used to wear the shield on the character’s back.

Appraise Information: DC 16. The shield is constructed from the shell of a haklaa, a 10 ft. tall bipedal beast that resembles a giant, aberrant beetle. The creature’s arms end in massive, natural blades. The shell of a haklaa is extremely durable and many armorsmiths craft high-quality armor from the creature’s heavy, blue-black shell. This shield is reinforced with strips of iron that run vertically along the inside of the massive shield.

Value: 530 gp (30 gp for the tower shield, 150 gp for masterwork construction, and 350 gp for the haklaa shell used in the shield’s construction).

Special Rules: While a pavise, like a tower shield, may be used as total cover, its true purpose is to protect archers during battle. The groove running along the inside of the shield is used, along with a stake, to secure the shield in front of the archer during battle. Removing the pavise from the character’s back, and positioning the shield and stake, requires a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. Once positioned, the shield provides the Bowman with total cover, though the protected character’s attacks are unaffected by the shield. A pavise is otherwise identical to a tower shield.

KULUMAR "LEATHER" ARMOR

Appearance: This blue-colored suit of leather armor is heavily damaged, with huge gashes in the chest and back. The suit is spotted with black patches where it was burned by fire at some undetermined time in the past. Metal rings on the armor's chest and shoulders are the only visible decoration. The suit's gloves are equipped with four black claws.

Appraise Information: DC 16. This suit of armor is made from the dried flesh of the kulumar, an extraplanar aberration native to the plane of shadow. The flesh is cut into strips and then stitched to a cloth backing that is reinforced with traditional leather. These suits are highly prized by assassins and thieves due to the natural hiding abilities granted by the materials used in the suit's construction. A single slain kulumar can be used to create two medium-sized suits of armor. The metal rings, eight in all, are made of steel. They are used in climbing – the wearer runs rope through the rings to assist in climbing and to ensure that he does not fall.

Value: 391 gp (10 gp for the armor, 250 gp for the kulumar flesh, 12 gp for each steel ring, and 35 gp for the claws). This particular suit is damaged beyond repair and worth only 131 gp (the value of the rings and claws).

Special Rules: The suit radiates the kulumar's natural ability to hide; wearing the suit grants a +2 equipment bonus to *Hide* checks. The claws in the suit's gloves provide the wearer with a +2 equipment bonus to *Climb* checks. The rigid nature of the kulumar flesh used in the suit's construction increases its armor check penalty by one.

OOZESUIT

Appearance: This highly unusual looking suit of armor shimmers and shifts, dripping and flowing down the wearer's body. It is tacky to the touch and nearly transparent, revealing a plant-like suit beneath it's greenish, shimmering form. A heavy cloak fabricated from plants and covered in this bizarre

substance allows the wearer to completely enshroud himself in this strange suit of armor.

Appraise Information: DC 25. An ooze-suit is made almost completely from the remains of a slain ooze, usually an ooze-crawler. A suit of armor is fashioned from specially treated leaves that are left to dry beneath the summer sun for three months. The leafsuit is then submerged in the remains of an ooze during a lunar eclipse and, by morning, the suit has taken form. The ooze-suit continually leaves a trail of slime and, even if not destroyed in combat, its armor bonus is reduced by 1 for each year that elapses since its creation.

Value: 750 gp.

Special Rules: An ooze-suit, when attacked, loses part of its durability. Each time a character wearing an ooze-suit is successfully attacked he must succeed a DC 12 Reflex save or the suit's armor bonus is reduced by 1. Once the armor bonus is reduced to 0 the suit decomposes and is worthless. An ooze-suit cannot be repaired.

Armor Bonus: +4

Maximum Dex Bonus: +8

Armor Check Penalty: 0

Arcane Spell Failure Chance: 5%

Speed: 30 ft./20 ft.

Weight: 10 lbs.

PLAGUESUIT

Appearance: This full-body suit of armor is sickly green in color and speckled black. It is held to the wearer's body with thick straps of the same material; each strap fastens with an iron buckle. The suit is tight-fitting and dangerous looking.

Appraise Information: DC 18. The plaguesuit is an unusual suit of armor crafted from the flesh of a plague bringer, an obese, monstrous humanoid that carries disease. These suits are made for evil assassins that operate in the City of Dread – wearing a plaguesuit is a symbol that paladins see as a sign of evil (they'll attack plaguesuit wearers on sight).

Value: 500 gp (25 gp for the armor, 150 gp for masterwork quality, and 275 gp for the plague bringer's flesh).

Special Rules: The plaguesuit retains a decreased version of the plague bringer's disease aura ability. Every round a creature breathes the air within 10 ft. of someone wearing a plaguesuit, that creature has a 35% chance of contracting cackle fever (Fortitude DC 12). Other than this disease ability, the plaguesuit is statistically identical to studded leather armor. As masterwork armor, the armor check penalty of a plaguesuit is reduced by one.

SHIELD OF THE DARKEST BELOW

Appearance: This small shield is a dark, burnt-orange in color. Ridges down the shield's center are the only decorative element. Leather straps inside the shield secure it to the wearer's forearm.

Appraise Information: DC 12. Armor and shields constructed from the shells of the hexachela, a small crustacean found in mountainous regions, are fairly common since the material is so easy to work with. Drow and other races living beneath the surface world are known to use these shields, as are adventurers and explorers.

Value: 24 gp (9 gp for the shield and 15 gp for the hexachela shell).

Special Rules: None. Other than the materials used in its construction, this shield is identical to a light, steel shield.

SWARMSUIT

Appearance: When found this is a small, steel vial filled with a greenish paste. When encountered in use, a swarmsuit appears as a mass of insects swarming over the wearer's body. A swarmsuit makes a constant, buzzing hum that can be heard up to 50 ft. away.

Appraise Information: DC 25. This paste is made of ground up ranzeptera, a type of vermin that carry a blood-burning toxin. Swarmsuits are very rare and valuable.

Value: 950 gp.

Special Rules: A typical vial of the substance is good for 1d4+1 applications. It takes

2d6+5 rounds for a significant number of ranzeptera to swarm over the user's body into a cloud thick enough to function as a swarmsuit – until that time has past, the swarmsuit's armor check and arcane spell failure penalties are in affect but it does not grant an armor bonus. There is a 25% chance that a significant number of insects will not be within range of the paste's odor for an effective swarmsuit to form.

A swarmsuit remains functional until the wearer suffers 30 points of damage at which point the insects scatter. The suit will dissipate and cease to exist one hour after its formation. When the insects scatter, they inflict 1d4 points of damage to the wearer.

Anyone making a successful melee attack against a swarmsuit wearer suffers 1 point of damage and is subjected to burning fever: Fortitude DC 12, incubation period 1 hour, damage 1d3 Constitution and 1d3 Wisdom.

Other than already mentioned effects, a swarmsuit is statistically identical to leather armor.

TRAKZAHIDE CHAIN SHIRT

Appearance: This long, knee-length chain shirt is dark brown in color and marked by the symbol of a white, open eye painted on the chest. The chainmail is in excellent condition.

Appraise Information: DC 16. This chain shirt is constructed to small rings forged from the hide of the trazka, a lizard-like creature with a thick, plated hide. The trazka's hide is commonly used in the construction of armor but it is rare that an armorsmith takes the time to cut individual rings from the hide in order to construct chainmail or a chain shirt. The white open eye is the symbol of Viktor Cowper, a nobleman that ruled several centuries ago. This shirt was manufactured for Cowper who wore it only during ceremonies.

Value: 575 gp (100 gp for the armor, 300 gp for the trazka hide, 150 gp for masterwork quality, and 25 gp for the historical value).

Special Rules: As masterwork armor, the armor check penalty for this chain shirt is reduced by one.

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A Dozen Musical Instruments

*Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook*



by Michael Hammes

Introduction

In most campaigns, bards are generally the only characters that have instruments. While this makes sense for the way the roles of characters are conceived, the fact is that music in the greater world is not limited to bards.

From the sailor playing a jig for his fellows to break the monotony of a long journey, to court and common musicians giving concerts, to a farmer singing to lead his flock, music is everywhere in the world.

This PDF brings forth a dozen musical instruments, both magic and mundane, handy for inclusion in an adventure or campaign while also expanding the selection available beyond those listed in the Perform skill.

BONE DULCIMER

Appearance: This pale white dulcimer at first looks to be made of bone, but close inspection reveals it to be made of highly bleached wood. This impression is furthered by the hammers, which in addition to being crafted from bleached wood, are also shaped to appear as bones. A bleached leather

neckstrap allows one to carry the instrument and play it while walking.

Appraise Information: DC 20. This rather unique instrument was commissioned by the 14th Duke of Rheib from the renowned craftsman Patres of Aileton. While a high quality dulcimer, what truly makes this particular instrument unique is its bone-like appearance. Although some historians have tried to ascribe dark connotations to the instrument's appearance, which unfortunately has been picked up by the populace as a whole, Patres' journal shows it to have been commissioned for the annual Day of the Dead celebration (this holiday appears in *A Dozen Holidays and Festivals*, but the GM can simply ascribe any meaning he or she wishes to this day or substitute an appropriate holiday of his or her own campaign). It was this instrument that the Duke played for many years as he led the people in their procession to the temple.

Value: 620 gp (20 gp for the instrument, 100 gp for masterwork quality, 500 gp collector's value).

Special Rules: The bone dulcimer adds the standard masterwork instrument +2 competence bonus to Perform (percussion instruments) checks.

DRAGOON SIGNAL HORN

Appearance: This small curved brass horn features a large mouthpiece and large opening. It is highly polished and, although it has a small dent and some scratches, appears to be

ROLE-PLAY ALERT!

Although when one thinks of music and the Perform skill the bard is the class that tends to come to mind, both the monk and rogue have Perform as a class skill. However, that fails to cover the gamut of what classes would have a legitimate reason to have the Perform skill as a class skill, and a GM interested in opening up the existing character classes may wish to allow every class to gain the Perform skill as a class skill. In this way, a player can gain a rank or two in a skill that has almost exclusive role-play use (except for the bard) without having to use double the points.

Below are listed some appropriate Perform skills for the various classes:

Barbarian - Perform (oratory); barbarian cultures are known for their oral histories and story-telling abilities.

Bard - Perform (any); no further explanation needed.

Cleric - Perform (oratory, sing); the chanting and singing of prayers is a major part of almost every world religion and what is a sermon but a form of oratory?

Druid - Perform (any); much like clerics, druids tend to use music in their ceremonies and prayers and it would not be amiss to assume a druid knows how to keep himself company through music.

Fighter - Perform (oratory, percussion instruments, sing, wind instruments); from marching songs that cover the miles or remind the soldier of home, to the lone bugler, to full-blown military bands, fighters have a variety of ways of learning about music.

Monks - Perform (any); music and the other performance arts are an excellent tool for meditation and introspection.

Paladin - Perform (oratory, sing); as the cleric.

Ranger - Perform (oratory/sing, wind instrument); aside from the portable and durable flutes and pipes, animal calls are a useful skill.

Rogue - Perform (any); lets her make a living between gigs and also provides a cover.

Sorcerer - Perform (any); the high charisma required of the sorcerer makes them natural showmen.

Wizard - Perform (oratory, singing); verbal spell components, long chants, memorization tools.

GMs should keep in mind that, with the exception of the bard, the Perform skill is a role-playing, not adventuring, skill and should make an effort to reward those players who choose to spend their valuable points in pursuit of the arts by making the skill relevant to the greater campaign.

An interesting way to do this is to allow Perform to have the same power as Diplomacy in terms of changing people's attitudes; after all, if music can soothe the savage beast, surely a good tale told or a heart-rending song sung can get the stand-offish locals to be a bit more friendly to the PCs.

in good shape. A leather cord is wrapped near the mouthpiece and a pair of brass eyelets is attached to the bottom curve of the horn.

Appraise Information: DC 12. Signal horns are a common means of battlefield communication in virtually any army. Signal calls are developed for such commands as "advance", "retreat", "charge", "return", etc.

This particular horn is crafted in the Valoorn style and, although the specific unit it belonged to cannot be identified as the pennant that once hung from its brass rings is missing, the compact curved shape means that it probably belonged to a dragoons unit (Valoorn cavalry that is equally capable of fighting on horseback or foot).

Value: 10 gp (10 gp for the instrument).

Special Rules: None.

DWARVEN ALPHORN

Appearance: This long and large wooden horn, roughly as long as two dwarves are tall, is bound with three iron rings. The horn itself is covered in detailed carvings while the iron rings are etched with dwarven runes. The whole thing weighs about 20 pounds.

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Appraise Information: DC 16. Almost never seen outside of the deep valleys of the dwarven mountain realms, where it is the pride of its dwarven shepherd owner, an alphorn such as this is a rare find indeed. Made from the hollowed-out halves of a single sawn-apart log, such an instrument is considered a brass instrument even though it is made of wood since it uses no reed.

A good alphorn produces a perfect pitch over three octaves and its sound is easily heard for miles around, especially in the mountains where it can reverberate off the stone walls as it floats across the valleys.

Traditionally, a shepherd sounds his alphorn at sunrise to wake the animals for their daily journey to the meadows and again at sunset to calm the animals for their return journey and to let his family know he is coming home.

Each valley and community, and often the individual shepherds, has its own particular melodies. On many evenings the various shepherds will take turns playing their melodies one after the other as they guide their flocks from the meadows back to the valleys. Often this happens in several go-rounds that merge into an impromptu concert. To those who hear the tones it is a sign of not only that the day's work is done but also that all is well and as it should be.

Alphorns are also sounded in times of festivities (such as weddings, funerals, etc.; for a greater list see *A Dozen Holidays and Festivals*), to honor important visitors, and to relay important news; the dwarves use a series of long and short notes to relay such messages. This last aspect is especially important in times of danger or war and the legendary dwarven ability to swiftly prepare their defenses rests in a large part on the use of alphorns to sound the alarm.

This particular alphorn is decorated with detailed carvings depicting bucolic scenes of the dwarven shepherd life (a shepherd leading his flock, a range of mountains with meadows, etc.), while the iron rings can be read by anyone that can speak dwarven and contain prayers to the dwarven gods entreating them for safety, a healthy flock, and fair weather.

Value: 35 gp (35 gp for the instrument).

Special Rules: While this horn is obviously portable, all surface dwarven communities have an alphorn of a larger size (the largest are said to be up to 10 dwarves long) that they use for the same purposes the shepherd uses his horn.

The typical shepherd is a dwarven commoner with usually one or two ranks in Perform (wind instrument); the large community alphorns are almost always played by dwarven bards, who can use the massive range of the instruments to great effect.

FINGLAIN'S FIDDLE

Appearance: Polished to a high, glossy bronze, this fiddle appears to be in excellent shape. A closer examination reveals that the chin rest and tuning pegs are well worn, suggesting many years of use.

Appraise Information: DC 13. Perhaps the most popular instrument in existence, at least away from court, the fiddle is beloved for the range of emotions it can convey. This particular fiddle is well made and well maintained and should provide its owner with many wonderful hours of playing

Value: 135 gp (35 gp for the instrument, 100 gp for masterwork quality).

Special Rules: *Finglain's fiddle* is an instrument of masterwork quality that grants a +2 competence bonus to Perform (stringed instruments) checks. Unfortunately, *Finglain's fiddle* is also cursed. Any time its player rolls a 20 on her Perform (stringed instruments) check, or any time a bard uses the *fiddle* to play bardic music (i.e. *fascinate*, et. al.), she must succeed at a Will save (DC 18).

If the save is successful, the player gains an additional +4 (for a total of +6) competence bonus on her Perform (stringed instruments) check for the duration of the piece or use of the bardic music. But if the save is failed, the curse takes effect.

The curse of *Finglain's fiddle* forces the player to immediately begin playing and dancing a sprightly jig. This happens no matter what the player was playing originally (if it was a bard using bardic music, the effect is instantly lost and the attempt still counts as one of the uses of bardic music for that day).

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More importantly, the player finds herself unable to stop playing and dancing (she can perform no other physical actions, including the casting of spells with somatic components, while under the curse, although she may speak and think freely); her body is no longer under the player's volition and will keep playing and dancing until she literally plays and dances herself to death.

For every hour spent playing *Finglain's fiddle* while under the curse, the player permanently loses 1d4 points of Constitution and, once she reaches 0, she dies. Of course, most players never last that long as the *fiddle* has an uncanny ability to dance its player into the way of danger i.e., bounce her head off a tree branch, dance her off the nearest cliff, waltz her into a dire bear's den, cause her to jump into the nearby lake, have her leap under the wheels of a rolling coach, spring onto the spear of an enemy, etc.

The player can be physically restrained, but this is difficult to do as the curse provides the player with a +10 circumstance bonus on Escape Artist checks and on grapple checks made to resist or escape a grapple or to escape a pin. The curse also provides the player with SR 20 for avoiding any magical attempts to restrain the player (i.e. *hold person*).

Remove curse has no effect on the *fiddle's* curse, but a *break enchantment* spell has a chance to release the player if the caster succeeds at a caster level check (DC 25). A *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish* spell instantly releases the player from the *fiddle's* curse.

Those who are freed from *Finglain's fiddle* may have a desire to destroy the fiddle, but this is no easy task (the GM should create a way to destroy the *fiddle* that requires an adventure or two).

GREAT DRUM OF MEREGRIN

Appearance: This massive drum is some 6 feet in diameter and rests sideways on a sturdy, four-legged frame. Two heads are stretched across the drum's ends and held in place by tightly coiled ropes. Three iron handles, in four sets, have been driven into each side of the drum to undoubtedly allow the massive instrument to be lifted.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The halflings are famous for their elaborate drumming and have developed several spectacular styles of the form, raising percussion to its highest art. Many find it amusing that such a small people would be able to produce such a big sound, but there is nothing like witnessing a halfling daiko clan at work, bodies pounding and sweating in a rhythm that only they seem able to create.

The Great Drum of Meregrin is the centerpiece of the Meregrin shrine and, even to those that are not halflings, it is a very large and impressive drum. Carved from a single piece of sacred elm, the entire drum is beautifully varnished and features a gold-leaf holy symbol of the halfling god of weather. The entire drum weighs some two-and-a-half tons and its booming sound can be heard, and felt, several miles away.

Value: Priceless (the drum is a minor artifact; if the GM wishes, the drum can be a masterwork drum with a value of 10,000 gp due to rarity and importance).

Special Rules: The *Great Drum of Meregrin* is a minor artifact that radiates a constant *hallow* effect. Although it can be played normally, the *Great Drum* may be struck in certain rhythms (known only to the priests of Meregrin) that can produce the following effects (all effects are at 20th caster level):

-*control winds*; requires Perform (percussion instruments) skill check (DC 15).

-*control weather*; requires Perform (percussion instruments) skill check (DC 17).

-*elemental swarm* (air elementals; unlike the spell, the drummer cannot lose control of these elementals to someone else); requires Perform (percussion instruments) skill check (DC 19).

Strong conjuration and summoning; CL 20th.

All clerics of Meregrin receive the Perform (percussion instruments) as a bonus class skill.

INLAID HURDY-GURDY

Appearance: Although dirty from disuse, you can see that this simple hurdy-gurdy (everything is contained within the box) is made of dark wood inlaid with lighter wood in geometric pat-

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terns that complement the airholes. A couple of the keys have been broken and a large crack is evident on one end of the box. Opening up the box you see that most of the strings are dried out and fraying, a couple broken, and that some of the tangents are broken off as well.

Appraise Information: DC 15. Also known as a “wheel fiddle”, the hurdy-gurdy is very popular among the common folk for the playing of dancing music. This particular instrument was, at one point, a fine instrument. However, neglect and misuse have damaged the internals as well as some of the keys and tangents and, given the crack that the box has, it is questionable as to whether it will play again.

Value: 7 gp (7 gp for the instrument as is; in good condition, it would be worth 55 gp: 30 gp for the instrument and 25 gp for the inlay work).

Special Rules: This hurdy-gurdy can be restored to good condition by a Craft (musical instrument) check (DC 15) for the cost of 25 gp. A *mending* spell will repair the crack, but the strings, keys, and tangents will still need to be replaced, and the whole instrument tuned.

A hurdy-gurdy requires the Perform (keyboard instruments) skill to play.

LADY'S PSALTERY

Appearance: This instrument, composed of a soundbox with soundholes and metal strings held in place by pegs, is crafted with fine proportions and is a bit smaller than most of its kind.

Appraise Information: DC 14. This psaltery is the work of the well-known human craftsman Esheshor, whose signature is the rose-shaped soundhole evidenced here. Given the smaller proportions, especially notable in the spacing of the strings, this was probably crafted for a lady at court.

Value: 27 gp (27 gp for the instrument).

Special Rules: While a nice instrument, it is not a masterwork instrument. Because of the narrow spacing of the strings on the box, human males over 5'6" (or any other creature with

similarly sized or larger hands) that try to play the instrument suffer a -2 competence penalty to their Perform (string instruments) check.

MAGISTRATE'S BELL

Appearance: This is a solid and heavy brass bell with a stout oak handle. The body of the bell bears the embossed seal of the city.

Appraise Information: DC 13. Many public officials that have to make public announcements and proclamations, such as beadles or town criers, preface such actions with the ringing of a bell much like this one.

Value: 19 gp (19 gp for the instrument; it is illegal for anyone other than an official of the city to own such a bell).

Special Rules: A *magistrate's bell* is used by city and circuit judges to announce that court is in session or to take control of an unruly audience. Although it is usually rung as an ordinary bell, at any time when the command phrase is invoked (usually a phrase on the lines of “We will now hear the truth”) and the bell is subsequently rung a *zone of truth* (as per the spell) is created. An unwilling target may attempt a Will save (DC 13) to resist the *bell's* effects.

Faint enchantment; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *zone of truth*.

MASTERWORK LUTE

Appearance: Made of finely burnished pine, the fact that this is a fine instrument is evident to even the most unschooled eye. Surprisingly light for its size, the lute appears almost too delicate to play.

Appraise Information: DC 19. Truly an exceptional instrument of its kind, the fine proportions of this lute mark it as being of elven design. Although completely unadorned, as the elves prefer to let such instruments speak for themselves, the careful eye can discern the maker's mark by looking through the sound hole. This particular instrument comes from the workshop of Muthien Talloak, one of the greatest lute makers of all time.

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Value: 3,175 gp (75 gp for the instrument, 100 gp for masterwork quality, 3,000 gp for the fact that it is a “Muthien”).

Special Rules: Although most masterwork instruments such give a +2 competence bonus to Perform checks, Muthien’s work is so fine that his lutes grant a +4 competence bonus to Perform (string instruments) checks.

ORC MARCH LEADER’S BAGPIPE

Appearance: The bag of this bulky and heavy bagpipe is colored with cracking bright rust-red paint. The blowpipe, single drone pipe, and chanter are carved from bone, yellowed with age and inscribed with various crude runic symbols in the same rust-red color found on the bag. Connected with a ring to the blowpipe is a rusted foot-long iron chain from whose end dangles a polished, jawless skull.

Appraise Information: DC 13. When the barbarian orc tribes march to war, they do so to the skirl of mighty bagpipes carried by their march leaders. This bagpipe is a fine example of the kind, with its bag made from a large boar’s stomach, pipes from humanoid bone, and a dangling gleaming skull. As with all orcish bagpipes, the single drone pipe limits its notes to the very low end of the scale.

A successful Knowledge (local) skill check (DC 14) reveals the bagpipe to belong to the White Skull tribe, while a successful Speak Language (orc) skill check (DC 13) allows one to read the runes on the pipes, which read: “Arm-bone of human fighter who caught my axe in his head” (blowpipe), “Leg-bone of Gnarsh One-Tooth who cheated me at dice” (drone pipe, too big to be orcish, probably ogre), “Thigh-bone of elven wizard whose skull I crushed” (chanter).

Value: 10 gp (10 gp as an instrument).

Special Rules: Due to its construction, this orcish bagpipe requires a minimum Strength of 16 (and all orcish bagpipes require a minimum Strength of 14) to play effectively; anyone with less strength suffers a penalty to their Perform (wind instru-

ments check) of -1 for every two points of Strength they are below 14 (i.e. -1 at Strength 12-13, -2 at Strength 10-11, etc.).

Most orcish march leaders are barbarians who have taken some ranks in the Perform (wind instrument) skill, but a select few are bards.

These bards are particularly effective in driving the orc hordes into battle as, instead of *inspire courage*, they receive the *battle skirl* special ability. *Battle skirl* is identical in all ways to the *inspire courage* bardic music except that instead of relying on the bard’s singing voice it takes advantage of the greater range of the bagpipe. This allows an orcish bard to affect larger masses of his fellows than other bards.

SHAWM OF MADNESS

Appearance: Carved from black walnut and polished to a high, dark and glossy shine, this shawm is definitely a quality instrument. A metal band around the bell reinforces the strength of the instrument, but like the instrument, is otherwise unadorned.

Appraise Information: DC 14. This instrument is certainly a masterfully crafted shawm and would be a fine addition to anyone’s wind instrument collection.

Value: 120 gp (20 gp for the basic instrument, 100 gp for masterwork quality).

Special Rules: When a *shawm of madness* is played by someone who succeeds at a Perform (wind instruments) check (DC 15), the shawm creates an atonal melody that pulls the minds of living creatures into madness. Anyone within a 15-foot radius of the *shawm* that hears this cacophany must succeed at a Will save (DC 14) or be affected by *confusion* as per the spell.

The *confusion* remains for as long as the instrument is played and any creature that is within the radius must succeed at a Will save every round it is within the radius. Once the tune stops, or the creature moves out of the radius (either because the instrument moves away or because of the effects of the *confusion*), the effect wears off in one round.

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Faint enchantment; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *confusion*; Price 15,000.

Due to the size of the shawm and its sturdy construction, it has occasionally been used as an impromptu weapon to settle disputes between musicians. A shawm has the following statistics when used as a weapon:

Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
1d3	1d4	x2	5 ft.	2 lbs.	Bludgeoning

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WANDERER'S FLUTE

Appearance: This colorful flute is painted with alternating rings of bright green and blue. The entire instrument is just over a foot long and is simple in the extreme, featuring a mouth hole and six finger holes.

Appraise Information: DC 10. Light and portable, a wanderer's flute is probably the single most popular instrument for travelers to while away a long and lonely journey. This particular flute, although colorful, is a typical example of the kind that can be bought in virtually every major town and city.

Value: 3 gp (3 gp for the instrument).

Special Rules: None.

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A Dozen Necromantic Machines

by James Maliszewski

Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook



The folk of most lands view trafficking with the dead, never mind the undead, to be a dark and unwholesome art, best left unstudied. There's good reason to support this view. Necromancers rarely use their abilities to help their fellow man. Indeed, they are far more likely to use the dead as a means of gaining and exerting power over the living. Consequently, only the most amoral individuals regard them as anything less than villains of the worst sort and enemies of civilization itself.

Whether as evidence in favor of or against such an assessment, many necromancers (and clerics of gods of death and the dead) have created magical devices that allow others to utilize the dead and undead for their own purposes. As its name suggests, *A Dozen Necromantic Devices* describes a dozen magic items that draw on the power of death or the undead to function. The DM can place them as treasure found in an ancient tomb or underground lair or as items in the hands of NPCs. Naturally, player characters can use them, although several are sufficiently sinister in their purpose that doing so might give them an equally sinister reputation. On the other hand, many simply use evil undead as the means to create an effect that can just as easily be turned against evil as against good. Indeed, one is specifically created for that very purpose.

As with all new magic items, the DM would be wise to consider carefully which of the following items he allows into his campaign. In most cases, these necromantic devices are not unduly powerful so much as having a distinct "mood" that might be inappropriate for some campaigns. The dread exoskeleton, for example, is a suit of mechanical armor made from the bones of an undead skeleton. In some campaign settings, this item might appear silly or cartoonish, while in others it'd be completely

appropriate. The similar issues arise from several other items as well, since they turn magic, specifically necromancy, into a "technology" and that might counter the tone of campaigns where magic is wholly mysterious and otherworldly in character. Of course, with a little bit of work, mostly cosmetic in nature, all of these necromantic devices can be made more enigmatic in nature. After all, *A Dozen Necromantic Devices* is intended to enhance existing campaigns, not disrupt them.

Chattering Skull

Appearance: An intact humanoid skull secured on a metal post, which is itself secured to a block of polished wood. Metal fasteners are attached to the skull's jaws.

Appraise Information: DC 12. The skull is indeed a humanoid skull, polished and cleaned. The metal post is made from silver, while the wood is oak.

Special Rules: The skull is a divinatory device that allows its owner to *speak with dead*, as per the divine spell of the same name. The chattering skull functions exactly as if it were under the effects of *speak with dead*, except that its duration is permanent. Thus, the owner can ask any number of questions of the skull and at any time.

Faint necromancy; CL: 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *speak with dead*; Price: 60,000 gp.

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Devouring Engine

Appearance: A large scorched black tube, covered at one end and open at the other. The open end is surrounded by rib-like protrusions, while the rest of the tube is dotted with other bone-like shapes. From within the open end, a faint blue fire burns and an acrid odor emits from within. The entire device is mounted on six cast iron wheels and there is a handle on the back to allow a user to push it.

Appraise Information: DC 20. The tube is made from cast iron, just like the wheels. The bony protrusions are not actual bones but rather metal that has been magically warped by unholy energies. The fire within the device is not natural and the smell that emits from it is that of burning flesh and bone.

Special Rules: Used as a weapon of war, the devouring engine is capable of trapping the essence of living creatures within the cast iron tube, converting it to arcane energy that can be used to power spell-like abilities usable by the owner of the engine. To trap the essence of a living creature, the engine must be aimed directly at the target, which has a range increment of 80 ft. The user then makes a normal ranged attack against the target. If successful, the target must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save or die instantly.

Aslain creature's essence is trapped within the engine's tube and cannot be raised or resurrected, but a *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish* spell frees it, as does destroying the devouring engine. A devouring engine can hold only one essence at a time.

The trapped essence provides the engine with enough arcane power to use five spell-like abilities for each Hit Die or level of the trapped creature. As this energy is expended, the essence fades away until it evaporates completely. The trapped essence gains one negative level for every five times the devouring engine's user activates one of its spell-like abilities. When the essence's number of negative levels equals the creature's total Hit Dice or level, the essence is destroyed. If an essence is freed, the restored creature must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save for each negative level or lose that level permanently.

Once per round, the user of a devouring engine can activate one of the following abilities: *confusion* (DC 17), *control undead* (DC

20), *ghoul touch* (DC 15), *lesser planar ally*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 14), *spectral hand*, *suggestion* (DC 16), *true seeing*. The caster level of these abilities is 18th. The user can no longer activate these abilities once the trapped essence has been completely destroyed.

Strong necromancy and enchantment; CL: 15th; Craft Wondrous Item, *confusion*, *control undead*, *create greater undead*, *ghoul touch*, *lesser planar ally*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *spectral hand*, *suggestion*; Price: 210,000; Weight: 500 lb.; Hardness: 10, Hit Points: 78.

Dread Exoskeleton

Appearance: An oversized skeleton whose skull and ribcage have both been fitted with hinges and whose arms and legs have integral metallic rings just above each major joint. The joints are themselves bound by a blackish, tarry substance that is soft to the touch and bends with great flexibility. Finally, the pelvis has been reshaped so that its bottom portions slope more sharply toward the front of the skeleton.

Appraise Information: DC 12. The skeleton is exactly as it appears: the bones of a dead creature, crafted into a suit of armor and enchanted. The substance found in the joints is an alchemical concoction called caoutchouc (see sidebar).

Special Rules: The dread exoskeleton functions as +2 full plate. In addition, the wearer gains cold resistance and heavy fortification.

Faint necromancy; CL 5th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Creator must have ranks in Craft (Alchemy); Price: 68,650 gp.

Caoutchouc: A yellowish, amorphous, elastic material obtained from the milky sap of various tropical plants and combining it with sulfur in the presence of heat. It is then pigmented, finished, and otherwise modified to create a variety of items, most especially joints and seals. To create 1 lb. of caoutchouc requires a successful Craft (Alchemy) check against a DC of 15. That much of the material sells for 10 gp on the open market.

Ghast Stone

Appearance: A mottled purple stone with dark black flecks in it, small enough to fit into the closed palm of a human being.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The stone is made of no known material but exhibits certain qualities like that of ossified flesh. The stone also has an unpleasant odor to it that can be detected if held closely to the nose.

Special Rules: Upon impact with the ground, this stone explodes and issues a cloud of gas that fills a 10-foot cube. Living creatures within the cube must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same ghast stone's gas for 24 hours. A *delay poison* or *neutralize poison* spell removes the effect from a sickened creature. Creatures with immunity to poison are unaffected, and creatures resistant to poison receive their normal bonus on their saving throws. The gas cloud lasts only one round before it dissipates.

Moderate necromancy; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *create undead*; Price: 1650 gp per stone.

Ghost Trap

Appearance: A large wrought iron lantern, standing three feet tall. In the center of the lantern is a blood red candle, held in place by a network of wires, one of which extends outward to a small taper-like wand.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The lantern is made of ordinary iron, while the wires and wand are made of copper. The candle is not merely blood red but in fact made from human blood suspended in beeswax.

Special Rules: The ghost trap acts, as its name suggests, as a snare for ghosts and any other incorporeal undead. Any such undead that comes within 60 ft. of a ghost trap must make a successful Will save against DC 30 minus the Hit Dice of the undead or be drawn irresistibly into the trap. Any undead creature so trapped remains within the device for as long as it exists or until its user releases it. Time passes within the trap and the undead remains conscious and aware of itself and anything it can sense

with its own abilities. A ghost trap can hold only one undead creature at a time, but it may be used again and again.

Strong conjuration; CL: 17th; Craft Wondrous Item, *trap the soul*; Price: 136,000 gp.

Ghoul Stone

Appearance: A mottled purple stone, small enough to fit into the closed palm of a human being.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The stone is made of no known material but exhibits certain qualities like that of ossified flesh. Prolonged touching of the stone induces mild numbness in the creature that touches it, although it is not a serious condition.

Special Rules: Upon impact with the ground, this stone explodes and issues a cloud of gas that fills a 10-foot cube. Those within the cloud must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves have immunity to this paralysis. The cloud lasts only one round before it dissipates.

Moderate necromancy; CL 12th, Craft Wondrous Item, *create undead*; Price: 1800 gp per stone.

Grail of Zombies

Appearance: A large brownish metal vat, standing six feet high and resting on six claw-shaped feet. The feet are arranged in a regular pattern around the vat's base. The surface of the vat is covered with all manner of strange symbols, as well as a network of tubes that connects to a freestanding column, approximately four feet tall. The column is made of the same brown metal as the vat and is surmounted by a flat metal panel covered with dials and gauges.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The vat and column are made from grave steel (see sidebar), an unusual metal found beneath some of the most ancient cemeteries and necropolises in the world. The tubes are made of thick, yet oddly flexible glass—the work of a glazier without equal. The dials and gauges are made of glass and ordinary steel.

Special Rules: When filled with embalming fluid and one hundred powdered skulls, this device triples the effectiveness of

Grave Steel

Grave steel is a rare and magical dull brownish metal. When worked into steel, it becomes the perfect material from which to fashion weapons and armor to use against the undead. Armor made from grave steel is just as heavy as those made from normal materials, spell failure chances for armors and shields made from it are decreased by 10%, maximum Dexterity bonus is increased by 1, and armor check penalties are likewise decreased by 1. Nonarmor or nonshield items made from grave steel weigh the same amount as those made from normal steel. Note that items not primarily of metal are not meaningfully affected. (A longsword is affected, while a spear is not.)

Weapons or armors fashioned from grave steel are treated as masterwork items with regard to creation times, and the masterwork quality does affect the enhancement bonus of weapons or the armor check penalty of armor, as normal.

Grave steel's true benefit comes when a crafter creates magic weapons with the *bane (undead)* quality. Good or neutral spellcasters who do so may add the quality for only +1 bonus as opposed to the usual +2. Neutral and evil spellcasters may do the same when adding the *bane (humanoids)* quality.

Grave steel has a hardness of 10 and 20 hit points per inch of thickness.

Item	Market Price Modifier
Light armor	+1,000 gp
Medium armor	+3,000 gp
Heavy armor	+8,000 gp
Shield	+1,000 gp
Other items	+400 gp/lb.

the spell *legion of zombies*. That is, the user of the grail can create 3d4 zombies per caster level and these zombies have double the normal Hit Dice for their kind. If the grail is placed on unhallowed ground, it creates 4d4 zombies per caster level. However, the process to create these zombies takes 24 hours and cannot be interrupted during that time, lest the unholy brew be spoiled. At the end of the 24 hour period, the zombies crawl out of the grail one by one, in defiance of logic.

Strong necromancy; CL: 13th, Craft Wondrous Item, *legion of zombies* (see sidebar); Price: 171,000 gp.

Legion of Zombies

Necromancy

Level: Clr 7, Sor/Wiz 7

Components: V, S, M, F/DF

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: A circle 40 ft. in diameter

Effect: Creates zombies

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: No

Spell Resistance: No

You create a small army of zombies, which claw their way out of the earth at the end of the round and attack opponents as you direct. *Legion of zombies* creates 1d4 zombies for each of your caster levels; these zombies appear in a circle roughly 40 feet in diameter, with the caster at the center. They have double the normal Hit Dice of zombies. They can be turned or rebuked normally, but their circular formation means that several turning attempts are usually required to cover all of them. If cast in an *unhallowed* graveyard or catacombs, the number of zombies increases to 2d4/level.

Material Component: One hundred powdered skulls.

Arcane Focus: A war horn looted from a grave.

Life Sensor

Appearance: A thick pane of dark glass set into a reinforced wooden frame. Attached to the underside of the glass is a metallic box with a handle, as well as a crank on one side.

Appraise Information: DC 12. The glass is just as it appears, although it is made with a higher than normal amount of carbon. The box is made from steel, as are the handle and the crank.

Special Rules: The user of the life sensor notices and locates living creatures within 60 ft., just as if he possessed the blindsight ability. The user also senses the strength of their life force automatically, as if he had cast *deathwatch*. The life sensor requires no power other than turning the integral crank and functions so long as the crank is turned.

Faint necromancy; CL: 3rd, Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *deathwatch*; Price: 9000 gp.

Mohrg's Tongue

Appearance: A short metallic handle inscribed with strange symbols. At one end is a clawed nub made from a purplish, cartilaginous material that nevertheless feels moist to the touch and gently writhes when it comes into contact with living flesh.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The handle is indeed fashioned from metal, although it is not unusual in any way. The symbols on its surface are written in Draconic and are the command words to activate the device. The claws of the nub appear to be made of bone, while the purple flesh is ossified intestinal tissue, albeit of an unusual variety.

Special Rules: Activating this device causes the clawed nub to extend up to a distance of 5 feet, attacking any target that gets in its way. Any target hit by the nub must make a successful DC 17 Fortitude save or become paralyzed for 1d4 minutes.

Moderate necromancy; CL 18th, Craft Wondrous Item, *create undead* ; Price: 108,000 gp.

Mumia Powder Sprayer

Appearance: An elaborate oversized bellows whose two wooden handles are wrapped in dirty linens. The top of the bellows has a small mechanical device that looks much like a clock, except that its center is lidded. Beneath the lid is a circular slot into which can be placed a small vial of brownish powder.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The bellows's metallic components are of masterwork quality, as are its wooden handles. The linens are of fine make, but old, and are saturated with sand. The mechanical device is a dial of some sort, while the brownish powder in the vial is mumia powder, a substance made from cremating specially embalmed corpses.

Special Rules: The sprayer shoots a small projectile that, with a successful hit exposes the target to the supernatural disease mummy rot. Anyone so exposed must make a successful DC 16 Fortitude save after 1 minute or lose 1d6 points of Con and 1d6 points of Cha. Unlike normal diseases, mummy rot continues to deal damage every minute thereafter until the victim reaches Constitution 0 (and dies) or is cured as described below.

Mummy rot is a powerful curse, not a natural disease. A character attempting to cast any conjuration (healing) spell on a creature afflicted with mummy rot must succeed on a DC 20 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the afflicted character.

To eliminate mummy rot, the curse must first be broken with *break enchantment* or *remove curse* (requiring a DC 20 caster level check for either spell), after which a caster level check is no longer necessary to cast healing spells on the victim, and the mummy rot can be magically cured as any normal disease. An afflicted creature who dies of mummy rot shrivels away into sand and dust that blow away into nothing at the first wind.

The mumia powder sprayer requires vials of mumia powder to function. Each vial costs 375 gp and is available only from necromancers and others who practice the dark arts. The sprayer has a range increment of 20 ft. Reloading the device is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

Moderate necromancy; CL 15th; Craft Wondrous Item, *create undead* ; Price: 90,000 gp.

Shadow Flask

Appearance: A thick metallic tube approximately six inches long and cold to the touch. If tapped, it resonates as if it were partially hollow. Likewise, shaking the tube creates a sloshing sound. One end of the tube possesses a hook made of the same material as the tube itself. The length of the tube is covered in strange symbols.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The tube is fashioned of mithral, but is otherwise not unusual. The strange symbols are written in Draconic and are in fact some sort of binding spell. A successful Spellcraft check (DC 13 if using *read magic* and DC 23 if not) reveals the spell to be *magic circle against evil*.

Special Rules: The flask is designed to be hung on a belt or harness. When so worn and the command word is spoken, the wearer gains a +2 enhancement bonus on Listen and Spot checks and a +4 enhancement bonus on Search checks. In addition, the wearer gains a +4 enhancement bonus on Hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In brightly lit areas, he takes a -4 penalty on Hide checks. If the flask is shattered, whether intentionally or not, it releases a shadow, who will attack the nearest creature to itself, with good-aligned creatures being its preference.

Strong necromancy; CL: 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *magic circle against evil*; Price: 34,800 gp.

Spectral Harness

Appearance: A set of leathery blue belts, with metal buckles and joints, which can be worn by any Small or Medium creature. The wearer slips the collection of belts over his head and around his arms and then secures them across his back, chest, and waist. The leather is extremely supple, yet cold to the touch.

Appraise Information: DC 20. The material from which the harness is made is not in fact leather but rather distilled and cured ectoplasm, an extremely rare material. The buckles and joints are steel.

Special Rules: When worn, the harness makes the wearer and all that he has on his person incorporeal. This incorporeality ceases once the wearer removes the harness. Likewise, the harness is ineffective in natural sunlight. While wearing the harness, animals of any sort will not willingly approach within 30 ft. of the character. If forced to do so, they become panicked and will remain panicked so long as they are within 30 ft. of the wearer.

Strong transmutation; CL: 13th; Craft Wondrous Item, *etherealness*; Price: 182,000 gp.

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A Dozen Necromantic Spells

by *Philip Reed*

*Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook*



As is no surprise, the necromancer is one of my favorite villains. Charged with power over the undead, necromancers are an excellent opponent for heroic adventurers, the vile spellcasters taking advantage of negative energy to create an army, enslave opponents, and inflict terrible, horrific pain. No matter the campaign setting, a necromancer proves valuable whenever the DM feels the need to subject his players to the horrors of death.

A Dozen Necromantic Spells presents (more than) twelve spells a DM can use to augment the arsenal of spells an NPC necromancer has at his disposal. From low level spells that transform a target's skin into the flesh of the dead to higher level spells that instantly crucify an unlucky target, the spells in this PDF are primarily written to evoke atmosphere. While a DM may open these spells to use by player character spellcasters, it is my opinion that these spells are best suited for use by NPC villains. Perhaps, after they have defeated a necromancer and stolen his spellbook, the PCs can gain access to some of these spells but I feel that the spells will retain their sense of magic longer if they never enter the listing of spells available to player characters.

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The Spells

AGONIZING CONFRONTATION

Necromancy [Evil, Fear, Mind-Affecting]

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will half, see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell rips the target's spirit from his body, splitting the target into a living, corporeal creature and an incorporeal ghost. For the spell's duration the target's spirit hangs over his body, taunting him. The targeted creature suffers 2d4 points of Wisdom damage (half damage on a successful Will save) and remains shaken for the spell's duration (no save is allowed to resist this effect).

The spirit cannot be targeted or affected by any means, magical or mundane.

CORPSE FLESH

Necromancy [Evil]

Level: Clr 2, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 minute/level (D)

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell transforms the targeted creature's skin into dead flesh, the skin withering and dying within a split second and inflicting 2d4 points of Charisma damage. Once the spell ends the target's flesh reverts to live flesh but remains scarred, the scars slowly healing (as the Charisma damage is healed).

CORPSE STORM

Necromancy [Evil]

Level: Clr 8, Sor/Wiz 7

Components: V, S, DF/M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Area: 100 ft. radius spread

Duration: 1 minute/level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

The affected area is bombarded by a rain of corpses – four corpses per level of the caster – that spin and swirl in the air, carried by a black cloud of negative energy. Characters and creatures within the affected area are panicked for as long as the spell persists and suffer 3d6 points of bludgeoning damage each round as they are knocked around by the mass of corpses. All panicked characters and creatures in the affected area are treated as cornered (by the flying bodies) and may only use the total defense action until the spell ends.

When the spell expires the corpses drop to the ground, breaking into numerous bloody, broken bits. The entire affected area, and all adjacent squares, is treated as difficult terrain as anyone entering the area must move through the scattered body parts.

Material Component: The head of a good-aligned cleric.

XP Cost: 500 XP.

CRUCIFY FOE

Necromancy [Evil]

Level: Clr 6

Components: V, S, DF/M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: Reflex negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The ground erupts beneath the feet of the chosen target as a mass of bony arms shoot up

from the earth, grasping at the target. If the target fails a Reflex save the bones grab him and lift him into the air, gripping him tight as the skeletal monstrosity instantly takes the shape of a crucifix. The crucifix holds the target helpless, draining the life from his body by inflicting 1d2 points of Constitution drain each round. At the spell's expiration the target drops to the ground, prone and exhausted.

Material Component: A rusted nail extracted from a crucifix.

CRUCIFY FOE, MASS

Necromancy [Evil]

Level: Clr 9

Target: One creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

This spell functions like *crucify foe*, except that it affects multiple creatures.

DEATH'S LINGERING SHADOW

Necromancy [Evil]

Level: Clr 6, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 hour/level (D)

Saving Throw: Will partial, see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell binds a cloud of dark, negative energy to the targeted creature, the cloud following him for as long as the spell persists. For the spell's duration the target brings pain and suffering to wherever he goes. All characters and creatures within a number of feet of the target equal to 5 times the caster's level suffer 1 point of Constitution damage each minute that they remain within the target's proximity. Additionally, any hit point damage dealt to characters or creatures within the affected area, including the target of the spell, is doubled for the spell's duration.

Once the spell ends the subject is fatigued and suffers a number of points of Constitution drain equal to one-half the caster's level.

If the spell's subject makes a successful Will save when the spell is first cast the duration is reduced to half.

This spell may only be canceled by *break enchantment* or *remove curse*.

FEIGN DEATH

Necromancy

Level: Clr 3, Drd 3, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S, DF/M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 10 min./level (D)

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Feign death allows you or a single creature you touch to fall into a cataleptic state that resembles death. While in this state, the subject can hear, smell, and taste, but cannot feel or see. The subject need not eat, breathe, or drink while affected by this spell.

Any damage suffered while in this state is halved. Additionally, the subject is immune to paralyzing and mind-affecting effects, energy drain, and poison (so long as initial and secondary damage both occur while the subject is affected by *feign death*; if secondary damage occurs after the spell has ended, the subject is affected by the poison normally).

Material Component: The finger of a corpse.

FEIGN DEATH, MASS

Necromancy

Level: Clr 6, Drd 7, Sor/Wiz 6

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Targets: One creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

This spell functions like *feign death*, except that it affects multiple creatures.

FUSE SKELETAL REMAINS

Necromancy

Level: Clr 2, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: 2 minutes/level (D)

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

You summon skeletal remains from beneath the ground, hundreds of bones shooting forth from the dark soil and flying toward your chosen target where they pierce his body, fusing directly to his skeleton. Instantaneously the spell's target is transformed, encased in a shell of skeletal fragments that increase his size category by one step, provides him with a thick, bony shell of armor that grants the target with DR one-half caster level (round down)/–, and provides the target with a +2 size bonus to Strength. Once the spell expires the subject is fatigued and suffers 1 point of damage for each minute that the subject was affected by the spell.

For the duration of this spell the target's type changes to undead.

GATHER CORPSES

Necromancy

Level: Clr 1, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft. level)

Target: One corpse/level

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell calls out to the dead, causing one corpse per caster level that is within range to levitate into the air on a cloud of negative energy. These corpses move toward your position at the rate of 5 ft./round, each one dropping into a square adjacent to you as soon as they reach you. As long as a corpse does not enter a square adjacent to your position it will continue to follow

you, moving in as direct a path as possible. The instant a corpse enters a square adjacent to your position – or the spell ends – the corpse drops to the ground and remains there, still dead.

GHOSTLY OVERRUN

Necromancy

Level: Clr 3, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 30 ft.

Area: Cone-shaped burst

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

A cone of black, negative energy flies forth from your hands, instantly transforming into a dark cloud of incorporeal warriors that charge all characters and creatures within the affected area. These ghostly warriors attempt *unavoidable* overrun attacks on all affected characters and creatures, each attempt made as if the caster were physically there, making the overrun attempt himself, plus the benefit of the Improved Overrun feat.

If the ghostly warriors are successful in their overrun attempt, knocking an opponent prone, they fade into nothingness just a few feet beyond their target's prone form. For each overrun attempt that fails, the ghostly warriors rebound back and slam into the caster, dealing 1d6 points of nonlethal damage as the caster's body absorbs the ghostly energy.

NECROMANCER'S TOUCH

Necromancy

Level: Clr 7, Sor/Wiz 8

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 minute/2 levels

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

You bestow upon the creature touched the ability to *animate dead*, as per the spell for a number of times equal to your caster level, for the spell's duration. When the spell expires any skeletons or zombies created by the targeted creature immediately fall under your control, the limit of undead that you may control increasing by 4 HD per level of the creature targeted by the effect of *necromancer's touch*. Undead created by the target of *necromancer's touch* crumble to dust 24-hours after their creation, at which point the total number of HD of undead that you may control reverts to normal.

Material Component: The hand of a slain necromancer.

REALIGN THE HEAVENS

Necromancy [Evil, Fear, Mind-Affecting]

Level: Clr 9, Sor/Wiz 9

Components: V, S, XP

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: See text

Target: See text

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: Will partial, see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

During the dark of night, by stretching your hands to the sky and releasing this powerful spell into the heavens, you tap into the plane of negative energy, releasing a vast cloud of death that grabs the very stars and the moon and shifts their positions. All who look up into the heavens for the duration of this spell are immediately affected as if you had cast *fear* on them. Additionally, evil gains the upper hand for as long as this spell persists – all evil-aligned characters and creatures beneath the affected sky gaining a +4 profane bonus to attack and damage rolls while all good-aligned characters and creatures suffer a –6 penalty on all saves, and attack and damage rolls.

XP Cost: 1,000 XP.

SPECTRAL SYMBIOSIS

Necromancy

Level: Clr 6, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S, DF/F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This spell binds a spiritual force to the targeted character or creature for the spell's duration, during which time the subject appears as a terrible, spirit-like version of himself (though the subject *does not* become an incorporeal creature). The targeted character or creature gains a +2 inherent bonus to any three abilities (target's choice) and possesses a fear aura that affects all characters and creatures that come within 30 ft. of the subject. Those that enter the fear aura's area of effect must make a successful Will save (DC 10 plus the caster's level) or be affected as though by the *fear* spell from a sorcerer of the caster's level.

Arcane Focus: A handful of dirt from a grave.

Special thanks to Mark Gedak for assistance in proofing and balancing these spells.

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A Dozen Planar Gates and Storms

by *Philip Reed*

If you've already enjoyed the various planar gates Ronin Arts has published over the past year (in *A DM's Directory of Demiplanes, Six Planar Gates*, and *Six Living Planar Gates*) welcome back! Those of you that are new to Ronin Arts (or our planar gates) should already know that this PDF details twelve gates – three of which are actually storms – that can be used to transport the player characters in your group to other planes of existence.

There really isn't a lot that I can say at this time. I hope you enjoy the twelve entries in this latest PDF.

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Philip Reed has been working professionally in the roleplaying game industry since 1995. In that time he has worked for such companies as West End Games, Privateer Press, and Steve Jackson Games. Today Philip spends his days at home running Ronin Arts, writing and designing new games, and reading whatever books interest him at the time. To learn more about Philip Reed – and Ronin Arts – please visit www.philipjreed.com/php and www.roninarts.com.

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LEARNING ABOUT THE GATES

At the DM's option, the player characters may make a *Knowledge (the planes)* check in order to determine exactly what they know about the various planar gates presented in this PDF. Each of the gates described herein includes a *Knowledge (the planes)* DC against which the character must roll. The exact understanding of a particular gate depends on the character's roll. Consult the following table.

DC	Knowledge
Base	Has heard of the gate.
+5	Knows the history of the gate.
+10	Knows where the gate is located.
+15	Knows how the gate operates.
+20	Knows where the gate leads.

NOTE: Planar storms are also treated as gates and use the above information for purposes of *Knowledge (the planes)* checks.

Planar Storms

In *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (L. Frank Baum, 1900) the main character, Dorothy, is transported to the magical Land of Oz by a tornado. This one particular incident is not alone in Oz lore, storms and natural events frequently collect characters from our world and deposits them in Oz. The idea of storms powerful enough to transport travelers between worlds and dimensions is fascinating and, oddly enough, well suited to fantasy roleplaying campaigns. After some thought and too many scrapped notebook pages (some days the bad ideas flow much faster than the good), I determined that planar storms are just an unusual type of planar gate. With that in mind, I hope that you enjoy the following planar storms.

DARKHAIL

Knowledge (the planes) DC: 16

This powerful, destructive storm unleashes a rain of black hailstones, each typically the size of a man's fist, that are far more deadly than natural hailstones. Darkhail storms are rare, occurring only when a breach occurs in the fabric that sep-

arates the Material Plane from the Elemental Plane of Night. As the Plane of Night intrudes on the Material Plane – the black, inky substance of Night leaking into the atmosphere of the once-normal world – the two planes temporarily meld into one, the localized bond generating powerful thunderstorms that are heralded by the appearance of a black cloud of darkhail.

A darkhail storm obscures all sight, including darkvision, beyond 10 feet. Creatures 10 feet away have concealment (attacks by or against them have a 20% miss chance) Characters, creatures, or objects that are in the open when a darkhail storm strikes suffer 1d4 points of damage each round. Additionally, the sound of falling darkhail makes Listen checks more difficult (–6 penalty). There is a 15% chance that a regular downpour of hail will accompany a darkhail storm – this reduces visibility to 5 ft. and increases the storms damage to 1d4+1.

There is a 2% chance (each minute) that any character, creature, or object struck by one of these hailstones will be automatically transported to the Plane of Night. Unlike normal hail, darkhail does not collect on the ground but instead fades away within a few seconds (1d2 rounds) of impact with any character, creature, object, or the ground.

NECROBURST

Knowledge (the planes) DC: 25

Generated only during powerful storms, and then only if a creature or character of immense power (CR 15+) with a connection to negative energy is slain during the storm, a necroburst is a type of heavy thunderstorm that is completely saturated with negative energy. The rains, the wind, the lightning strikes, are all charged with negative energy.

During a necroburst, wind speeds are severe (30 to 50 mph) and visibility is cut by three-quarters, heavy rains impose a –4 penalty on Spot and Search checks, and frequent lightning strikes inflict 1d10 8-sided dice of electricity damage to random targets once per minute. Additionally, for every minute that a living character or creature is within a necroburst a successful DC 25 Fortitude save must be made or the affected character gains one negative level.

During a necroburst the Material Plane and Negative Energy Planes are in perfect harmony and at any point during the storm a character or creature may step from one plane into the other (as a free action).

A necroburst typically lasts for 2d4 minutes, though the thunderstorm from which it spawned will usually continue for an hour or more after the necroburst ends.

SHADOWSTRIKE

Knowledge (the planes) DC: 20

This unusual form of lightning originates when the Plane of Shadow bleeds into a Material Plane world, either through powerful magic or some sort of natural accident. At the exact moment of contact the two planes coterminous though this connection typically remains open for only a few short seconds. A shadowstrike can occur whether a thunderstorm is taking place on the Material Plane world or not – the presence of a storm has no effect on a shadowstrike.

Shadowstrikes, for some unknown reason, are drawn to living entities – excluding those that are native to the Plane of Shadow – and never impact an object or item that does not possess life. Undead, constructs, and other similar creatures are immune and will never be hit by a shadowstrike.

Whenever a shadowstrike impacts a random character or creature the affected target suffers 1d6 4-sided dice of electricity damage and must make a successful (DC 15 + the amount of damage suffered) Fortitude save or be stunned for 1d6 rounds. Additionally, there is a 15% (+ the amount of damage suffered) chance that the affected character or creature is instantly transported to a random location on the Plane of Shadow.

TIMELESS TORNADO

Knowledge (the planes) DC: 18

Everyone knows how terrifying and dangerous a tornado can be. Those funnels of wind and debris that terrorize anything in their path sometimes connect with the Plane of Time, forming a larger, more powerful funnel cloud that grabs objects from a Material Plane world and hurtles them into the Plane of Time.

A timeless tornado functions a lot like a normal tornado. The storm extinguishes all flames, all ranged attacks are impossible (even with siege weapons), and Listen checks are impossible. Characters that are in close proximity to a timeless tornado who fail a DC 30 Fortitude save are sucked toward the tornado. Those who come in contact with the actual funnel cloud are picked up and whirled around for 1d10 rounds, taking 6d6 points of damage per round, before being violently expelled from the tornado into a random location in the Plane of Time (where they are stunned for 1d4 minutes). A timeless tornado, larger and more powerful than a normal tornado, has a rotational speed reaching 500 mph and moves forward at an average of 60 mph (roughly 500 feet per round). A timeless tornado uproots trees, destroys buildings, and causes other similar forms of major destruction.

Planar Gates

ALAREEACH'S BREATH

Knowledge (the planes) DC: 20

Between two threatening cliff faces on a specific material plane world the winds whisper their secret knowledge. Rocky outcroppings allow travelers to descend into this terrifying crevice from the mountain peaks high above the uneven terrain. Those climbing down the easternmost cliff face during the twilight hour pass from this world to a sprawling planar metropolis known as Aeternity. Only by climbing down this particular cliff face at this time of day does the gate function – climbing up or attempting to use this gate at any other time has no effect.

This gate came to be known as Alareeach's Breath centuries ago and the knowledge of its naming is known to few. Those succeeding a DC 30 Bardic Knowledge check know that Alareeach was a human fighter lost in this crevice when he descended the cliff face in search of his companions. Those standing above the fighter, securing the rope with which he was descending the cliff, watched in awe as the winds whipped through the crevice and consumed Alareeach. It is said that the fighter blew away much like the desert sands during a powerful wind. Planar travelers that

know of this gate have frequently described the experience of passing through the gate as feeling as if they were being blown away by a powerful, storm-force wind.

SAFEHOUSE OF THE AGENTS OF THE DARKENED SILK

Knowledge (the planes) DC: 20

The Agents of the Darkened Silk is a small organization tasked with the responsibility of protecting the current gateway to Shadownsilk, a planar city that exists on the very edge of the Plane of Shadows. The gateway to Shadownsilk is the shadow of a man – one man each generation – and it is that man that the agents protect (see *Six Living Planar Gates*).

The organization has safehouses hidden throughout the world, scattered amongst cities and towns and a few even hidden in mountains along heavily traveled routes. Inside each safehouse is a closet-sized room that acts as a gateway to Shadownsilk. To activate this portal an individual need only enter the closet, close his eyes, and turn around six times. When his eyes are reopened the planar traveler will find himself in a similar safehouse that the organization keeps in Shadownsilk. From that safehouse a traveler may return to the world of the Agents – each closet on the material plane world has a corresponding closet in the Shadownsilk safehouse.

The safehouses are well protected at all times. Strangers attempting to gain access to any one of the safehouses will find themselves soon embroiled in a violent battle.

THE CHAMBER OF STOLEN SOULS

Knowledge (the planes) DC: 20

Deep beneath the earth, hidden in the center of a great labyrinth, protected by extraplanar beings charged with allowing only those with the correct password to access it, is the Chamber of Stolen Souls. This 20 ft. square room, adorned with elaborate carpets and tapestries and sealed by a heavy, metal door, is a one-way portal to the negative energy plane. Any who enter the room, close the

door, and go to sleep will awaken on the negative energy plane.

The password, known to all of those who succeed their Knowledge (the planes) check, is “sleepless domain” in an ancient demonic dialect that is no longer spoken. The exact number and power the chamber’s guards fluctuates (the DM should scale these guards so that any battle with them is a very difficult encounter for the PCs) with time but those that are there will fight to the death to keep outsiders from entering the room.

The door swings open instantly when the password is spoken. If the password is unknown, and the guards defeated or distracted in some manner, the door’s break DC is 35. There are no visible locks to pick.

THE CRUEL WINE

Knowledge (the planes) DC: 15

In *The Whispered Journey*, an inn found on the outskirts of one of the largest cities on a typical world, a drink may be purchased that has the power to transport one to Godpit, a demiplane where forgotten deities go to die. Though it cannot be acquired without asking specifically for it, a bottle of “Cruel Wine” costs 25 gold and is quite tasty, definitely worth the coin. If the drinker has a companion, and the two stare into each other’s eyes as they each take a drink of the wine, they will be instantly transported to Godpit. This feature of the wine is only functional if the wine is consumed within the inn.

The owner of *The Whispered Journey*, Knute Messina [**male human, Exp 3, 11 hp**], knows of the wine’s special ability and is restocked once a month by an unknown traveler from another plane of existence. Messina attempted to learn the motives of the wine seller and spent numerous years agonizing over the source and purpose of the wine but he’s since made peace with the question and, for the most part, ignores it. Messina never offers the wine to travelers but is always quick to deliver a bottle when it is asked for by name. Messina keeps his supply, a dozen bottles, locked within a chest (DC 30 lock) in the back room. He is careful to send any who order the wine into a private room so that they may take advantage of the drink’s special feature without upsetting his more mundane and less traveled customers.

THE GRAVE OF KARTA OBSASHO

Knowledge (the planes) DC: 22

Several miles outside of a quiet, lonely village there stands a single, unmarked grave. Little more than a mound of dirt these days, this grave is a valuable secret to those that travel between the numerous planes of existence, as the grave itself is a portal to other worlds. Once the grave was marked by a beautiful, ornate headstone of marble and iron, the name of the grave's occupant proudly engraved in the expensive stone. Unfortunately, thieves snatched the headstone several decades ago and since that time the grave has been left to its own devices. Miraculously the native vegetation has not overgrown the resting place of the once powerful Karta Obsasho.

Obsasho, the legends tell, was a great wizard known throughout the planes of existence as a wise, gentle man. Obsasho devoted his life to the pursuit of knowledge and protection of the innocent and, through magic and divine blessing, lived to be hundreds of years old. The man met his match in battle with a great demon prince, sacrificing his own life to save the lives of thousands of commoners. Unfortunately for the wizard's image and memory, though, those same people whose lives that he saved blamed him for the destruction of their homes and refused to give the man a funeral and tomb befitting a hero. It was the coin on one merchant that paid for the headstone that once decorated the wizard's grave.

Obsasho was buried with most of his belongings though some, such as his sword and pipe, were sold by those that he saved. Spell components, scrolls, spellbooks, and minor magical trinkets were all thrown into the grave with the remnants of the wizard's body. As the man's body decomposed, the lingering arcane power of Karta Obsasho merged with the power inherent in the numerous items that he was buried with until, some hundred years after his death, the power grew so great that it opened a portal to a minor demiplane known only as the Great Corpse (see *A DM's Directory of Demiplanes*). To use this portal a planar traveler must stand atop the grave during a full moon and turn around three times. Once doing so the traveler is instantly transported to the demiplane but when he arrives he finds that one random item that he was carrying has vanished, never to be seen again.

THE PIT OF UNIMAGINABLE TRAVEL

Knowledge (the planes) DC: 18

In the lowest level of a terrible, legendary dungeon there exists an unnatural pit that splinters a single chamber, looking more like an open wound than a natural chasm. Known to planar travelers as the Pit of Unimaginable Travel, this opening into the ground is lined with a black, ooze-like substance that makes standing near the pit's edge hazardous (a successful DC 25 Reflex save is required each minute when standing in any square adjacent to the pit, failure indicates that the individual has fallen into the pit).

A lesser ooze demon (see box on next page), which was bound to this specific chamber by an unknown greater deity, protects this planar gate. The deity is punishing the demon for past misdeeds. The ooze demon is forever cursed and cannot be permanently destroyed – once killed the ooze demon's corpse instantly decomposes and merges with the substance surrounding the pit and the demon reappears 2d4 rounds later at a random point along the edge of the pit.

Anyone falling into the pit falls through a dimensional portal into a random plane or demiplane, as determined by the following table:

Roll 1d20	Destination
1	The ethereal plane
2	The astral plane
3	The plane of shadow
4	The plane of fire
5	The plane of air
6	The plane of water
7	The plane of law
8	The plane of chaos
9	The plane of dreams
10	The plane of earth
11	The negative plane
12	The positive plane
13	A planar city (DM's choice)
14	An unknown demiplane
15	An identified demiplane
16	A plane of destruction
17	A plane of ice
18	A plane of peace
19	A plane of mechanical life
20	The plane of time

DEMON, LESSER OOZE

Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Extraplanar)

Hit Dice: 3d8+9 (22 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 18 (+8 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 18

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+6

Attack: Slam +6 melee (1d6+3 plus 1d4 acid) or bite +6 melee (1d6+3) plus 1d4 acid

Full Attack: Slam +6 melee (1d6+3 plus 1d4 acid); or bite +6 melee (1d6+3 plus 1d4 acid) and 2 claws +4 melee (1d4+1 plus 1d6 acid)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Acid, summon demons

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/cold iron or good, darkvision 60 ft., demon traits, immunities, outsider traits, SR 12

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills: Escape Artist +6, Hide +6, Intimidate +6, Listen +14, Move Silently +6, Search +6, Spot +14, Survival +6 (+8 following tracks)

Feats: Blind-Fight, Multiattack

Environment: Abyss

Organization: Pair, gang (2-5), or mob (6-11)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: 4-9 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

From a distance, this monster looks like a humanoid with a long, crocodilian snout,

razor-sharp teeth, and long talons. Closer inspection reveals the creature's true form; a single entity of swirling black and gray oozes in the shape of a humanoid.

Ooze demons appear as a combination of ooze and demon. Lesser ooze demons stand about 7 feet tall.

All ooze demons speak Abyssal.

Combat

Lesser ooze demons charge into combat and pound their enemies with their fists, or bite with their sharp teeth. They rely on their acid to fell their foes and depend on their damage reduction and spell resistance to protect them from harm. Ooze demons usually flee if the battle goes poorly, though if under the command of a more powerful demon (such as a greater ooze demon leading a squad of lesser ooze demons into battle), they do not retreat and always fight to the death.

An ooze demon's natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as chaotic-aligned and evil-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Acid (Ex): A lesser ooze demon's acid dissolves only flesh. Any melee hit deals acid damage.

Summon Demons (Sp): Once per day, a lesser ooze demon can attempt to summon 1d2 lesser ooze demons with a 35% chance of success.

Immunities (Ex): Because of their ooze-like nature, ooze demons are immune to paralysis, polymorph, and stunning. They have no discernable anatomy and are therefore immune to critical hits and cannot be flanked.

Skills: Ooze demons have a +8 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

This particular gate functions in one direction only; anyone using the Pit of Unimaginable Travel must find another way to return from whichever plane of existence they arrive at.

THE TOUCH OF ZOHAR JAHARA MAHDI

Knowledge (the planes) DC: 24

Zohar Jahara Mahdi, personal servant to the King of a small, frequently forgotten country, has worn gloves since he was a young child. The thin, aging man is quite common in appearance and manner and is often overlooked by those around him, including his fellow servants. It is not at all unusual for Mahdi to be standing in the same room as his fellows and for one of them to wonder what has become of the King's personal servant.

This is exactly as Zohar Jahara Mahdi wishes it to be.

Ever since he was three years old, when he first held the small steel sphere that is locked away in the King's treasure chambers, Mahdi has been a cursed man. The sphere, an unknown artifact that possessed the ability to transport people to the Elemental Plane of Shadows, once carried an intelligent mind looking for escape from its steel prison. Mentally calling to any that would come; the intelligence inside the sphere was surprised when a small child heard the unspoken summons. The sphere wasted no time in transporting its intelligence to the new host, though.

The intelligence is now trapped within Mahdi's body, unable to communicate with the outside world or control the servant's body.

Anyone that Mahdi touches with his bare hands is instantly transported to the Elemental Plane of Shadows. Mahdi knows not where people go when he touches them, only that he causes those he touches to disappear. He has managed to keep this terrible secret since he first discovered the curse – by causing his very mother to vanish – and Mahdi never removes his gloves when others are nearby. In the fifty years since he was cursed Mahdi has accidentally used his power on roughly twenty people, but never intentionally.

It is only the touch of Mahdi's hands – and not any other part of his body – that transports people to the Plane of Shadows.

TRAVELER'S ARCH

Knowledge (the planes) DC: 15

This 30-foot tall arch, constructed entirely of mithril and steel, is currently laying face down buried beneath 20-feet of sand in the western deserts. Known only as the Traveler's Arch, this planar gate was once guarded by the Astarozhnost, a mercenary company in the employ of a lesser deity. The Astarozhnost stood guard before the gate for thousands of years, protecting it from invasion and destruction and assisting legitimate travelers in using the gate to journey to their chosen destinations, before a host of demons broke through, destroying the mercenaries and stealing the gate. As the demons hurried across a calm plain the deity that had employed the Astarozhnost sent a massive sandstorm to destroy the demons, turning the entire landscape into a desert within seconds.

Today the gate still functions, snatching unsuspecting people that walk over the area in which the gate is buried and hurtling them to a random plane (use the same table as for the Pit of Unimaginable Travel).

If adventurers could unbury the gate and return it to its standing position they would be in possession of a powerful, valuable object. Unfortunately, unburying the object would alert every deity and planar power of the gate's recovery, sparking a battle for the right to control the planar gate.

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by Michael Hammes

A Dozen Plants and Herbs

Introduction

While looking through the standard rules, I realized that there is not much mention of herbs and plants in general. Considering that flora is all around us, and plays a very important part in our lives, I figured it wouldn't be a bad idea to add a little to the lexicon of plants and herbs that exist with the d20 fantasy world.

The format is a bit changed from most of the other Dozen collections:

Appearance: This is a brief description of what the plant or herb looks like.

Knowledge (nature): This gives the DC for correctly identifying the given plant or herb. If the Knowledge (nature) check

is failed then the individual is either unable to identify the plant at all, or comes to some sort of wrong conclusion ("Yeah, those berries are safe to eat").

Qualities: These are the specific game-related qualities that the plant or herb possesses.

CORNUCOPIA FRUIT

Appearance: This trunk of this eight-foot tall tree looks very fibrous and coarse. A canopy of large dark green fern-like leaves spreads out from the tree's top. Large globular orange fruit, some as big as a dwarf's skull, hang down from this canopy.

Knowledge (nature): DC 16. Growing in tropical and subtropical lands (anywhere with sufficient heat and humidity), the cornucopia fruit tree is not actually a tree but an herbaceous plant, as it has no wood in it at all. It grows a false trunk from an underground stem, which, although it looks woody, is actually quite soft and fleshy. A large flower spike composed of numerous flowers emerges from the plant in spring. The flowers bend down throughout the next couple of months, becoming the fruits by mid-summer. After the fruits have ripened, the stem dies and is replaced the next year by another from the underground stem.

Qualities: The fruit from the cornucopia tree is particularly rich and filling, tasting much like banana bread. A single coconut-sized piece of the fruit provides all the food and water required to sustain a human for 24 hours.

ROLE-PLAY ALERT!

The use of these plants and herbs are another way to make the campaign world more real by adding yet another wrinkle of flavor. Give the PCs several pieces of Cornucopia Fruit before they set out from the village, have the local innkeeper suggest some Imbiber's Joy for the hung-over PC, or have the local peasants put fresh sprigs of Martyr's Blood over their doorways and window lintels as soon as some evil threat is mentioned.

DREAM WEAVER

Appearance: This six-petaled flower has almost translucent purple petals. Small thorns grow from its dark green stem, their color going from dark green close to the stem to dark purple at their tip.

Knowledge (nature): DC 17. The dream weaver can be found in the forests and near glades in all temperate climates, as it prefers shade and the moisture common in forests. Consistent with its name, it blooms only at night.

Legend has it that the dream weaver are actually the tears of the Nido, goddess of the moon, shed when her mortal lover was killed by her jealous husband Solus, god of the sun.

Qualities: When blooming, the smell of the dream weaver's scent has a hypnotizing effect on any creature that comes within 30 feet of the flower. A creature must succeed at a Will save (DC 13) or find itself *fascinated*, unable to tear itself away from the pleasant smell; it simply sits down and, as long as nothing disturbs it, will remain until it dies from thirst and starvation.

FATE'S KISS

Appearance: This is obviously not a normal flower. Although it looks like a tulip, its petals are a soft velvety gray in color.

Knowledge (nature): DC 20. This rare flower grows only near religious sites or other places where the use of divination magic is widespread. Although a magical plant that appears to feed on magic, (it radiates a faint divination aura when *detect magic* or other such magic is used on it), it is still a plant and requires soil in which to grow.

Qualities: Picking the flower allows the creature doing so to receive the benefit (or is it curse?) of an *augury* (as per the spell). The creature must query the flower within one round of picking it and the Fate's Kiss reveals the answer immediately after the question is asked. Failure to query the flower within one round of picking it causes it to shrivel up and turn to dust immediately.

If the result of the *augury* is weal, the plant opens its petals. If the result is woe, the petals immediately shrivel up and die. If the result is both weal and woe, the plant begins to open its petals, but then they shrivel up and die. If the result is nothing, the plant remains as it is.

No matter what, the flower may answer only one *augury* and, once it has done so, it slowly dries out, turning to dust within 24 hours.

FIREFLY PLANT

Appearance: The buds on this sparse shrub glow with a soft green light that gives the entire bush an almost spectral appearance.

Knowledge (nature): DC 13. Growing in swamps, fens, stream banks, marsh borders, and other places with frequent standing water, this small, thinly branched shrub has blue-greenish twigs. A sparse cover of elliptical, green-white leaves that alternate along the stem grows along with elliptical furry buds that glow with an inner phosphorescence. The buds last from late winter to early spring, when they turn into greenish flowers that last until late summer or early fall.

Qualities: The key quality of the firefly plant is its phosphorescence. Each bud and flower gives off faint phosphorescence, with the flowers being slightly brighter. The phosphorescence provides no practical light, but it is easily noticeable in the dark up to a distance of 30 feet for a single bud or flower. The most common color of the phosphorescence is green, but blue and violet also occur.

Residents of the swamp often use these buds to mark locations, or wear them on their clothes when traveling in a large group at night.

IMBIBER'S JOY

Appearance: This herb, as tall as a man, looks much like a big piece of parsley, with small white flowers growing in three compound clusters on the end of the splitting stem.

A Dozen Plants and Herbs

Knowledge (nature): DC 15. Growing in the cool, damp meadows and valleys of low mountain ranges, Imbiber's Joy grows some 5 to 8 feet in height.

When in bloom, which the plant is during midsummer, its leaves are yellow in color, giving way to pale yellow, fingertip-sized, oblong fruits in late summer.

Qualities: Brewing the leaves of the plant is recommended for creatures suffering from the effects of excessive alcohol consumption (since there are no standard rules for intoxication, the GM can create whatever effects he or she desires, from removing the nausea of a hangover to removing any penalties associated with being drunk).

More than occasional use of Imbiber's Joy, however, can cause the creature to develop distaste for alcohol. Any creature that uses Imbiber's Joy more than one time per week must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 15 +1 for each additional use of the herb beyond the second in one seven day period). Failure means that the creature has developed an adverse reaction to consuming alcohol, causing it to immediately reject (i.e. spit up) any alcohol that it tries to drink. Whether this effect is temporary or permanent is up to the GM.

MARTYR'S BLOOD

Appearance: This wildflower has paired oval pale green leaves with translucent spots. Blood-red five-petaled flowers top the branching erect stem.

Knowledge (nature): DC 15. Martyr's Blood is a perennial herbaceous wildflower that blooms in uncultivated ground, often near woods, hedges, or other growth which shelters it from constant sun. The flowers bloom in mid- to late-summer and are followed by small round crimson seeds that have a resinous smell when crushed.

Martyr's Blood derives its name from the legend of Saint Cilihud, the Martyr. It is said that the flower sprang into existence from the drops of blood shed by Saint Cilihud after the treacherous Bishop Vendakin struck him down as he tried to stop the mad cleric from summoning the avatar of Cruak the Many in the Deep Wood.

Qualities: Freshly picked Martyr's Blood acts as a ward to repel evil spirits. If displayed prominently on someone's person it acts as a continuous *protection from evil* spell.

When used as a material component it doubles the duration of any Abjuration [Good] spell (i.e. *dispel evil*, *holy aura*, *magic circle against evil*, *protection from evil*). It does the same when its leaves are used as an ingredient for potions based on those spells or in inks to inscribe such spells on scrolls.

Note that the wildflower must be fresh in order to provide its effect; under normal conditions the flower can be considered fresh for one week before losing its potency, both as a ward and as a material component/ingredient.

NEEDLER

Appearance: This cactus, about the height of a man, has hundreds of wicked-looking needles with black tips.

Knowledge (nature): DC 19. A needler is the bane of desert dwellers. Although it feeds itself by preying on small animals, the fact that it is mindless means that it will attack anything that it senses, firing its poisonous needles in every direction.

Qualities: A needler has the following statistics (see next page):

A Dozen Plants and Herbs

NEEDLER

	Medium Plant
Hit Dice:	2d8+6 (15 hp)
Initiative:	+0
Speed:	10 ft. (2 squares)
Armor Class:	13 (-1 size, +4 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 13
Base Attack/Grapple:	+3/+12
Attack:	Needles +6 ranged (1d6 + poison)
Full Attack:	Needles +6 ranged (1d6 + poison)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Poison, spikes
Special Qualities:	Blindsight 30 ft., camouflage, plant traits, resistance to cold 10 and fire 10
Saves:	Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 10, Dex 20, Con 16, Int —, Wis 13, Cha 9
Environment:	Temperate deserts
Organization:	Solitary or patch (2–4)
Challenge Rating:	2
Treasure:	1/10th coins; 50% goods; 50% items
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	3–5 HD (Medium); 6–10 HD (Large)
Level Adjustment:	—

A needler is a carnivorous mobile plant that looks much like a cactus. A needler's shallow roots act like little feet, moving the needler along at a respectable pace for a plant; it can withdraw these roots from the ground, or a victim, and re-plant them as a move-equivalent action.

A needler has the same lifecycle as a cactus, blooming with red flowers in early spring and growing burgundy fist-sized seeded fruit by early fall. The only way to tell a needler from

cacti surrounding it is by a large air hole on the needler's top. This air hole is covered by an inward-opening flap that allows the needler to draw in the air required to fire its needles, but does not allow that air to escape in any other way.

Once it has killed its prey, the needler moves over the corpse and plants its roots into the victim, drawing forth the nutrients. A needler always moves on once it has finished digesting its victim. A handful of corpses of its victims, mostly small animals and vermin, can usually be found to mark the progress of a needler.

Combat

A needler always attacks in the same way:

It stands motionless until prey comes within range, then attacks by shooting a fusillade of poisonous needles. Because of its limited detection range, it does not pursue fleeing prey unless the prey's movement rate is as slow, or slower, than the needler's.

Blindsight (Ex): A needler has no visual organs but can ascertain all foes within 30 feet using sound, scent, and vibration.

Camouflage (Ex): Since a needler looks like a normal plant when at rest, it takes a DC 20 Spot check to notice it before it attacks.

Anyone with ranks in Survival or Knowledge (nature) can use one of those skills instead of Spot to notice the plant.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 12, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Con. The save DC is Constitution based.

Spikes (Ex): With a sudden intake of air, the needler is able to loose a volley of hundreds of needles as a standard action (make a single attack roll for everyone within a 30 radius of the plant). This attack has a range of 30 feet with no range increment. Any creature with a natural armor bonus of +3 is immune to this attack as the needles are unable to penetrate such thick skin. A needler can make up to four such attacks in a 24-hour period.

A Dozen Plants and Herbs

PEASANT'S HOPE

Appearance: This waist-high shrub has thin, oval leaves, white flowers, and bright blue berries the size of large peas.

Knowledge (nature): DC 11. Peasant's Hope is a shrub that grows wild most anywhere and also takes well to cultivation. It grows from 3 to 6 feet in height with thin, oval, lanceolate leaves. It blooms in late summer and the berries arrive in fall to early winter, a fact that makes the shrub stand out when all other vegetation is leafless.

Popular myth has it that Peasant's Hope is a gift from the goddess of hearth and home given to the peasant Allydra, who took the goddess in and fed her when she was disguised as a diseased crone.

Qualities: The bark and fresh fruit of Peasant's Hope are traditionally gathered prior to the first autumnal frost. Because of its varied uses in herbal and folk medicine, Peasant's Hope provides a +4 chemical bonus to any Heal checks for long-term care (see the Heal skill).

SWEETBERRY BUSH

Appearance: This prickly bush is filled with ripe purplish-black berries the size of a man's thumb.

Knowledge (nature): DC 14. A sweetberry bush can be found in all temperate climates. The bright purple flowers that bloom in late spring herald the fruit of a sweetberry bush, which ripens in mid- to late-summer.

The fruit of the sweetberry bush is indeed quite sweet, a fact that makes it very likely to be eaten by those ignorant of its poisonous qualities.

Qualities: The berries of the sweetberry bush are quite poisonous: Ingested, Fortitude DC 13, 1d2 Con/1d6 Con.

WIZARD'S TEMPTATION

Appearance: This small plant, about a foot high, consists of a single stem bearing seven finely toothed leaves.

Knowledge (nature): DC 14. Wizard's Temptation grows in rich woods along mountains throughout the world. It is most easily recognizable by the fact that its stems invariably have exactly seven finely toothed leaves. The plant grows a single rounded cluster of white flowers that bear purple berries in late summer.

The main focus of the plant is its root, which is relatively large and fleshy. It is oblong, pale yellow to pale brown in color, and adds a ring annually; the root tastes like bitter licorice.

Qualities: After chewing on a thumb-sized piece of root for one minute the creature must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 13). Success means that the root provides the creature with enhanced mental acuity (although the creature does become a bit excited and jumpy) and grants a +4 enhancement bonus to Intelligence for one hour. Failure means that the creature becomes *confused* (as per the spell) for the same amount of time.

Note that taking more than one dose of Wizards' Temptation per day increases the difficulty of the saving throw by 2 for each additional dose (i.e. DC 15 with 2 doses in a 24-hour period, DC 17 with three doses, etc.).

WYRMROOT

Appearance: This plant is some two feet tall with woody stems covered by fine hairs. The leaves are green on top and white on bottom and the flowerheads are also greenish-white.

Knowledge (nature): DC 13. Wyrmsroot grows in wild meadows and other uncultivated open spaces in temperate to cold climates. The plant blooms from mid-summer to early fall and the leaves and flowers have an extremely bitter taste, although the root is much less so.

Qualities: The dried herb, that is the leaves and tops but not the root, is harvested when the plant is in flower and then dried; it is this portion that has medicinal properties. When the flowers are brewed as a tea it acts as purgative and diuretic, a rather messy method but one that rids the body of all manner of toxins. It can do this in one of two ways; the selection is up to the GM:

A Dozen Plants and Herbs

The first method is that wrymroot tea provides a +4 chemical bonus to any Heal checks or saving throws against poisons if drunk by the creature. The alchemical bonus provided by the tea lasts for half an hour once the tea is imbibed. Because the tea takes a full quarter of an hour to brew, it is a good idea to have some tea available beforehand if this method is to be used.

Wrymroot tea can be stored in a stoppered container for up to four weeks, losing one point of bonus for every week it is stored (i.e. so wormroot tea brewed two weeks prior to being used bestows only a +2 alchemical bonus to the Heal check or saving throw).

In the second method, wrymroot tea restores lost ability damage due to poisons at double the normal rate. This requires drinking a single dose of wrymroot each day. Doing this doubles the rate of ability score damage recovery, i.e. 2 points per night of rest (8 hours) and 4 points per day of complete bed rest. Drinking more tea does not speed up this process.

THE PROBLEM WITH THE POISON RULES

In the real world, most poisons affect a creature over a period of minutes, if not hours or days; there are very few poisons that act immediately. Unfortunately, the standard rules for poison don't allow for that sort of progressive administration. That is why there are two options given for how wrymroot can work.

If the GM uses the primary option, then wrymroot becomes a slightly weaker version of the antitoxin found in the standard rules equipment list and provides a means of avoiding a poison's effect in the first place.

If the GM uses the second option, wrymroot becomes a method of treating the poison rather than preventing it. This is more in line with how most people would imagine an herbal remedy for poison would work and is my preferred option.

While it is tempting to have wrymroot be capable of both effects, this does not really make logical sense and should be avoided by the GM.

These same effects can be attained by chewing on, and ingesting the dried herb. This is difficult, however, due to the extremely bitter nature of wrymroot; when brewed as a tea the wrymroot is bitter but palatable, but when eaten raw, the creature must succeed at a Constitution check (DC 15) or spit the wrymroot up immediately. Naturally, if the creature is unable to ingest the wrymroot it cannot gain its benefits. If the creature manages to successfully ingest the pure wrymroot, it is nauseated for one hour unless it succeeds at a further Constitution check (DC 20).

Because of its bitter nature, spreading dried wormwood around one's home is a good way to keep out rodents and insects.

XIALPUL'S STING

Appearance: This small, shrubby tree is some ten feet in height. It is covered with brownish-green oval leaves and appears to bear no flowers or fruit.

Knowledge (nature): DC 18. Xialpul's Sting grows only in tropical rain forests. The tree can grow up to twenty feet in height. Once picked, the leaves deteriorate very quickly in the damp jungle atmosphere, which makes their export and cultivation elsewhere almost impossible.

The natives of the rain forest call the tree Xialpul's Sting in honor of their god of war and use its energizing properties to offset the effects of long marches through the wilderness.

Qualities: Chewing on the leaves has a stimulating effect and grants the individual chewing them a +1 circumstance bonus to all Fortitude-based saving throws and skill checks while the leaves are being chewed. Note that the individual must be actively chewing on the plant's leaves (the potency of one leaf lasts for ten minutes of chewing) in order to benefit from this bonus, as the effect wears off almost immediately (within 1d4 rounds of the leaf losing its potency or being spit out).

Once picked, the leaves retain their potency for one week, after which they have dried out too far to have any effect.

A Dozen Plants and Herbs

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A Dozen Pockets Picked

by *Michael Hammes*

*Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook*



Introduction

Maybe it's just me, but something was lost when they got rid of the Pick Pockets skill. Oh sure, Sleight of Hand covers that skill and then some, but it's a matter of emphasis; Pick Pockets just sounds cooler. While, ironically, in all the campaigns I've run few pockets were ever picked, when they were, it was always with some crucial plot point or adventure hook in mind. It was as a tribute to this aspect of my campaigns that I wrote this PDF, which contains a dozen items that can be found in someone's pocket (or purse, if they are wearing hose) and that, with a little work on the DM's part, can lead to adventures of their own.

BUILDING MAP

Appearance: This yellowed piece of parchment has been folded several times. Once unfolded, it reveals a carefully drawn

and detailed map of a three-story building along with some symbols and notes.

Appraise Information: DC 15. While one can instantly see that this is the map of a building, the question is of which one. Until that fact is discovered, the value is impossible to assess; it could be worth quite a bit or nothing.

Value: 10 gp (10 gp to the Thieves' Guild; they always appreciate good maps and will have no trouble figuring out the building it belongs to).

Special Rules: The building on the map is the home of one of the city's most prominent merchants and politicians. The DM is encouraged to have the players discover this through trial-and-error by having them go around the city, or it can be resolved with a Knowledge (local) check (DC 18), which can either point the PCs in right direction ("Let's see, three stories, obvious private residence, it's got to be in the Merchants' Quarter") or (DC 25) can give them the correct answer outright.

ROLE-PLAY ALERT

It seems that so many adventures and campaigns focus on the PCs obtaining, questing for, recovering, discovering, etc. magical items and artifacts. And while there is nothing specifically wrong with this approach, it can get tedious at times and misses out on the fact that in many instances, it is precisely the mundane and unexpected items that lead to adventure; after all, just what exactly does that brass key fit and why was it found clutched in the hand of the dead man?

While the title of this PDF reads "A Dozen Pockets Picked", that does not mean that the items herein cannot come into the PCs' possession through other means. These items could be found in a desk, be slipped into a PC's pocket (in a reverse of the whole pick-pocket idea), found at the scene of a crime, fall out of someone's pocket, or simply be lying out in the open (a street, a grassy field, the woods, etc.); the important thing about these items is not necessarily how they are obtained or where they are found, but rather to what adventure they will lead.

The symbols on the map denote the routes of the guards, and the locations of the traps and valuable items to be found in the house while the notes contain detailed information on the house's staff, focusing specifically on the guards, and give further information on the kinds of traps and items to be found. How accurate the information is, and who provided it, are unknown.

BROWN PACKET

Appearance: This palm-size packet of wrapped heavy brown paper is tied together with coarse twine. Opening the package reveals a severed finger; an ornate ring still sits on the finger.

Appraise Information: DC 14. While the finger is worthless, the ring does have some value as it features a decent-size bloodstone set into a gold band that is highlighted with a delicate wave pattern.

Value: 360 gp (50 gp for the bloodstone, 10 gp for the gold, 300 gp for overall artistic value).

Special Rules: The ring and attendant finger belong to a minor local official that was recently kidnapped and is being held for ransom; the packet was being delivered as proof that the kidnappers not only have the official, but also that they mean business.

COIN PURSE

Appearance: This hefty coin purse is filled to the brim with gold coins.

Appraise Information: DC 10. While it is always nice to have a coin purse, in the case of these coins, they are counterfeit. This fact is readily noticeable to someone with the Appraise skill (DC 12) since the coins have been poorly stamped. It can also be determined simply scratching the coin's surface or weighing a coin since the gold plating on a number of these coins is rather thin.

Value: 157 gp (157 gold coins).

Special Rules: Knowingly trying to pass off counterfeit coins is a serious offense in the city (since the city operates the only official mint and they like to keep control of the

money supply) resulting in jail time or the loss of a hand (DM's choice); those fortunate enough to convince a judge that they did not know the coins will merely have all their coins (counterfeit and not) confiscated.

DEAD RAT

Appearance: No doubt about it, this is a dead rat. Dozens of scabs cover an emaciated, ruptured body and you immediately get the sense that something is not right here.

Appraise Information: DC 20. While anyone can instantly see that this is a dead rat, of far more interest is what caused the rat to die. The scabs and rupturing of the body defy the knowledge of all the local healers and one can only hope that whatever malady befell this animal does not spread.

Value: N/A (it's not even worth eating).

Special Rules: This particular rat died of a new (at least in the local area) and terrible variant of the common filth fever disease.

Disease Name: N/A

Infection DC: Injury (flea bite) 19

Incubation: 1 day

Damage: 1d6 Dex, 1d6 Con

HUNK OF CHEESE

Appearance: This is a fist-sized hunk of hard, yellow cheese. It smells quite good, but before you contemplate taking a bite, you notice a small glint in the cheese. Scraping the surface near the glint reveals a good-sized diamond.

Appraise Information: DC 12. This is a hunk of "Scraper" cheese, a local cheese that is held in front of a fire, where it bubbles up into a crisp, golden texture that is then scraped (hence the name) onto potatoes, soup, etc. The diamond is, unfortunately, rather flawed, but still worth more than many people will make in a lifetime.

Value: 500 gp, 1 cp (1 cp snack value for the cheese, 500 gp for the diamond).

Special Rules: The local Thieves' Guild is using wheels of cheese, a famous local export, to move various questionable goods out of the city right under the eyes of the

local constabulary. It appears, however, that in this instance someone got the wheels mixed up and it is quite likely that a cheese shop somewhere in the city is sitting atop a fortune in gems, gems that the Thieves' Guild will want back rather badly.

PAWN CHIT

Appearance: This small wooden chit, perhaps one inch wide by two inches long, bears the number 137 on one side and the name of a local pawnshop on the other.

Appraise Information: DC 12. This is a pawn chit that can be used to retrieve whatever item or items belong to lot 137 at the mentioned pawnshop. Thus, it's actual value depends entirely on what the contents of lot 137 are.

Value: N/A.

Special Rules: Presenting the chit does garner the presenter whatever items are in lot 137 of the pawnshop, along with whatever troubles or company those item(s) bring.

PERSONAL NOTE

Appearance: The writing on this small paper note shows signs of having been hurriedly scribbled; it reads "Meet me at the Old Man tonight - J.Q."

Appraise Information: DC 10. It is a simple note, nothing more, nothing less.

Value: N/A.

Special Rules: The "Old Man" that the note refers to is the statue of the town's founder located in Market Square, a fact revealed by a successful Knowledge (local) check (DC 11). The initials "J.Q." could stand for Jona Quisten, a notorious local criminal that the local authorities are trying to locate in connection with the murder of a minor noble six days ago; these facts too can be revealed by a successful Knowledge (local) check (DC 13).

POUCH OF SILVERY INGOTS

Appearance: This leather pouch has seen better days; it is dusty and scraped in a number of places. Contained within are almost a score of thumb-sized bright silvery nuggets.

Appraise Information: DC 16. Although easily mistaken upon first glance for silver, any jeweler will quickly realize that these nuggets are not silver, but rather platinum (whether that information is shared with the individuals bringing the nuggets for evaluation is another matter).

Value: 470 gp (470 gp for what is almost a pound of platinum).

Special Rules: There are no known deposits of platinum in the area; whoever discovers a deposit of platinum (and can defend it from others), will be very wealthy indeed.

RETRIEVER STONE

Appearance: This beautiful cut oval stone is shiny black with a six-rayed white star in the center.

Appraise Information: DC 18. This is a black star sapphire, and quite a nice one actually; it should fetch a handsome price from a jeweler and would make a really nice ring for someone.

Value: 1,200 gp (1,200 gp for the stone as is).

Special Rules: This star sapphire is actually a *retriever stone*. A *retriever stone* does not have to be a jewel, although it commonly is, nor does it actually have to be a stone at all; it can be almost any other item of value.

A *retriever stone* is an item often included in treasure hordes by the servants of powerful demons (usually necromancers or clerics). A *retriever stone* is attuned to the specific individual that it is bestowed upon and only that individual may handle that particular *retriever stone* safely.

If the *retriever stone* comes into the possession of another individual that individual, and any others that handle the stone, can shortly expect a visit from an actual retriever

(or some other appropriate monster selected by the DM) as it seeks to return the stone to its rightful owner.

The summoned retriever appears wherever the stone currently is and, once it has dispatched the stone's current owner and sent his or her soul to the nether plane, it sets about killing all those that handled the stone previously (thus early handlers may have some warning of their impending fate). Should the retriever assigned to the *retriever stone* be destroyed, the *stone* shatters into useless dust and any handlers still living are safe from further pursuit.

Note that returning the stone to its rightful owner does not halt the pursuit of the retriever.

Strong abjuration; CL 18th; In effect, this is a minor artifact and cannot be created; Price n/a.

TORN PAGE

Appearance: This page of fine parchment is ragged on one side, suggesting it has been torn from a book or tome. Strange symbols and notations cover the page.

Appraise Information: DC 17. The strange symbols and notations are actually magical writings that can be deciphered with a successful Spellcraft check (DC 20 + spell level) or *read magic* to reveal a spell. As to what the spell is worth, that is largely a function of how bad someone wants it, but in general a new spell is worth about what it costs to place it into one's spellbook.

Value: 100 gp (100 gp per page).

Special Rules: The page (or pages depending on how the DM handles spellbooks) is actually a page torn from a local wizard's spellbook and contains a new spell or an existing one that the PCs do not yet have.

UNHOLY SYMBOL

Appearance: This medallion is carved from blackened ash. It features a wheel upon which lays a roughly carved stick figure, its limbs twisted cruelly in among the wheel's spokes.

Appraise Information: DC 17. A successful Knowledge (religion) check (DC 22) reveals this medallion to be the symbol of the Cult of Karkaz, a small but vile group of demon worshippers that believe their power is enhanced through the torture, mutilation, and killing of the innocent.

Value: N/A (no individual in their right mind would want anything to do with this symbol).

Special Rules: After a recent rash of disappearances and mutilation killings led to the discovery of a local cell of the Cult of Karkaz, known members have been hunted down mercilessly and the cult has been outlawed throughout the kingdom under penalty of death; anyone caught carrying a symbol of Karkaz is automatically assumed to be a member of the cult and faces the ultimate penalty (death by beheading followed by burning of the body and spreading of the ashes in the local river).

WANTED POSTER

Appearance: This slightly yellowed and torn piece of rough parchment is obviously a wanted notice; it carries a description of a band of criminals and mentions a sizable reward.

Appraise Information: DC 10. This is the typical wanted notice posted by the local authorities when they are having trouble tracking down certain criminals. In this case, it is a group known as Redbeard's band, which has been waylaying travelers on the main road. As usual, the descriptions are rather broad, probably owing to a number of eyewitness accounts, but it shouldn't be too difficult to find three ruffians since one of them is a half-orc and they are led by a large, heavy-set red-bearded man bearing a prominent scar on his cheek.

Value: 500 gp (500 gp for capture of all the criminals; 200 gp for Redbeard and 100 gp for each of his three associates).

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Special Rules: The problem with wanted posters is that they only have descriptions of the criminals, not actual illustrations; this can result in mistaken identity, especially in the case of lone criminals.

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A Dozen Sailing Ship Enhancements

by Philip Reed

*Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook. This product utilizes updated
material from the v.3.5 revision.*



Within the pages of this PDF you will find twelve magic items designed for the use of sailing ships. This is a PDF that was difficult for me to write and required more research than any other product in the “A Dozens . . . ” series I have written (to date). Why, you may ask, did I put myself into a position to work on a subject I had little previous knowledge of? This PDF – free, you may have already noticed – is the result of a recent online contest. I donated a free, custom PDF to the prize winner and this was the requested subject.

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About the Author

Philip Reed has been working professionally in the roleplaying game industry since 1995. In that time he has worked for such companies as West End Games, Privateer Press, and Steve Jackson Games. Today Philip spends his days at home running Ronin Arts, writing and designing new games, and reading whatever books interest him at the time. To learn more about Philip

Reed – and Ronin Arts – please visit www.philipjreed.com.

Adamant Entertainment’s Corsair

Where mechanics for sailing ships were required, I consulted Adamant Entertainment’s *Corsair* PDF. *Corsair* is an excellent addition to your D20 System resource collection and can be found at www.adamantentertainment.com (or use the coupon at the end of this PDF). Special thanks are extended to the Adamant family for their permission to reference *Corsair*.

ANIMATED OARS

Appearance: These wooden oars are black in color and ringed with bright, metallic strips at about the level at which they would be gripped when rowing.

Appraise Information: DC 16. These magical oars, once locked into place on a small or tiny ship, immediately activate.

Value: 10,000 gp.

Special Rules: Upon someone speaking the command word, the oars spring to life and the ship begins to move without any physical effort. The oars follow the commands of the individual that is closest to them at any time and will stop, start, slow, or speed up depending on spoken orders. The ship gains no increase in speed or ability.

Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*; Price 10,000 gp.

ARCANE ANCHOR

Appearance: This heavy anchor stands over five feet tall, is a deep bronze in color, and amazingly lightweight. The most surprising feature of this anchor is that it is without a rope or, for that matter, any means of fastening a rope to it. Elvish writing can be found on both sides of the anchor.

Appraise Information: DC 18. These magical anchors, rare outside of the ships of the elves of the coast, function without a rope and are highly prized by captains and ship's owners that manage to acquire them. The elvish writing reads, simply, "stop the ship."

Value: 11,250 gp.

Special Rules: This magical anchor is tied to its ship by an arcane energy field – the anchor and ship may never be separated by more than 1,000 feet. The anchor must be registered to a ship, a complex ritual involving a spellcaster of at least tenth level and five hours. A second ritual, requiring half the time, separates the anchor from its chosen ship. Only the wizard that originally registered the anchor to a ship may separate it.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *telekinesis*; Price 11,250 gp.

BOWSPRIT OF WAR

Appearance: This length of wood is mounted to the prow of a ship and extends significantly forward of the ship's main hull. The bowsprit is primarily used to anchor the ship's forestays. This particular bowsprit is painted blue and made of a durable, heavy wood. The tip is wrapped in dark, black metal.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The symbol of a shield engraved into the metal of the bowsprit identifies it as a piece of the *Harpy*, a giant warship of colossal size that was destroyed in battle over 100 years ago. Legends and tall tales today tell of the ghostly *Harpy* still sailing the sea route between the northern and southern coastal

trade cities, stopping to assist those under attack by pirates. Careful study and research (requiring 2 weeks) reveals this item to be an actual component of the lost *Harpy* – this is a valuable collectible.

Value: 26,400 gp.

Special Rules: The bowsprit of war, once mounted on a ship of medium size or larger, provides that ship with a +4 to ramming attacks and increases the ship's effective size by one for purposes of determining ram damage. Colossal ships outfitted with a bowsprit of war inflict double damage. Additionally, the bowsprit of war prevents ships from locking together – the ships are assumed to instantly break free of the ram.

Moderate abjuration; CL 13th; Craft Wondrous Item, *freedom of movement*, *greater magic weapon*; Price 26,400 gp

ENCHANTED CANNONBALL

Appearance: This particular cannonball looks like any other cannonball – it's a large metal sphere made of iron. The only indication that something may be different about this particular cannonball is the deeply engraved arrow that has been carefully painted white.

Appraise Information: DC 14. It is not an uncommon practice for wizards and other spellcasters in coastal cities to craft magical cannonballs. Though expensive, many a ship's captain has found it useful to have a small cache of enchanted cannonballs on board – just in case. After all, you can never be too sure of what you'll encounter while sailing the open ocean.

Value: Varies by degree of enhancement.

Special Rules: Enchanted cannonballs are available with enhancements ranging from +1 to +5. Additionally, any effect that can normally be applied to arrows, cross-bow bolts, or other types of ammunition may also be applied to cannonballs. Enchanted cannonballs are constructed by use of the Craft Arms and Armor feat.

FEAR GUARD-SHAPED FIGUREHEAD

Appearance: This massive, wooden figurehead – carved to resemble the upper torso, head, and outstretched arms of a hooded humanoid bearing a giant sword – is designed to be mounted on the prow of a ship. Many ships of medium size or larger mount a figurehead – the carved sculptures are seen as a mark of wealth and, for some sailors, a good luck charm.

Appraise Information: DC 16. This particular figurehead has been carved to resemble a fear guard, an evil incorporeal undead that relies on fear and strength to protect areas of intense evil. Figureheads such as this one were common aboard the fleet of the Necrotelkar Armada, a massive naval force controlled by necromantic masters. The Necrotelkar Armada ravaged the western shores for decades before they were wiped out by a powerful – some say divine-forced – storm. These figureheads are valuable to collectors and few of them exist today (most are somewhere at the bottom of the ocean, still mounted to the lost ships of the Necrotelkar Armada).

Value: 240,000 gp.

Special Rules: This minor artifact envelops the ship to which it is attached in a field of evil that functions as per the *unholy aura* spell. Some figureheads – not this one, though – are so heavy and bulky that they detract from the ship’s speed and maneuverability.

Strong necromancy; CL 18th.

GUNWALE OF DEFLECTION

Appearance: This single, wooden plank is designed to be affixed to the top planking of a sailing ship (the ship’s gunwale). This “whale” is painted orange and is neatly cut.

Appraise Information: DC 15. As ship-to-ship combat became more common, spellcasters were called in to assist in protecting the ship a crew from harm. The gunwale of

deflection, while a simple idea by the standards of most magic items, became extremely useful as cannon were introduced to combat at sea.

Value: 25,000 gp.

Special Rules: Just one gunwale of deflection mounted to the ship protects everyone on the ship from ranged attacks directed from that side of the ship. Everyone so protected gains a +5 enhancement bonus to AC against ranged attacks that are fired at the protected side of the ship. A ship may mount a gunwale of protection on each side.

There likely exist gunwale’s that offer a lower enhancement bonus – such items would, of course, cost less.

Moderate abjuration; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *protection from missiles*; Price 25,000 gp

KEEL OF UNEARTHLY STRENGTH

Appearance: This massive beam of wood is fashioned for use as the keel of a sailing ship. The keel is the single beam upon which a ship’s hull is built. This particular keel is average in appearance.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This keel is an enchanted beam. Magical keels are not unusual amongst the larger, more experienced sailing cultures and many ships are constructed around an enchanted keel.

Value: 72,000 gp.

Special Rules: The keel of unearthly strength increases a ship’s Structure Dice and Hardness by 25% (round up). Additionally, the ship’s AC is increased by 2. A keel of unearthly strength must be built to the specific measurements of the ship it is designed for. A keel of unearthly strength, once used in the construction of a ship, is permanently bonded to that ship’s hull. Attempting to remove the keel from the ship and construct a new ship completely eradicates the keel’s enchantment.

Strong transmutation or conjuration; CL 12th; Craft Wondrous Item, *ironwood* or *wall of iron*; Price 72,000 gp

LIVING MAST AND SAIL

Appearance: This towering mainmast, resembling a tree more than a typical ship's mast, is covered with dozens of branch-like yardarms and a massive, leaf-like sail. Upon closer examination the mast *is* a tree, the roots extending through the ship's hull and stretching into the waters beneath.

Appraise Information: DC 20. A living mast has never been found by itself and every attempt to separate one from its ship has led to the death of the mast. The mast, yardarms, sails, and rigging are all living and, surprisingly, the mast remains healthy and alive as long as the roots are in water (fresh or salt-water makes no difference). Living masts were created centuries ago by the druid circle of Seadefense, a coastal village that was completely destroyed during a powerful hurricane. Few of these living masts exist today.

Value: 66,000 gp.

Special Rules: The speed and maneuverability of a ship equipped with a living mast are increased by 25% (round up). It is said that some living masts – and the ships to which they are attached – are a type of treant that has chosen to take to the sea in search of adventure. Such tales have never been proven but, if true, could lead to an interesting adventure during which the player characters partner with a treant ship to right some horrible wrong.

Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *liveoak*; Price 66,000 gp

RESILIENT HULL

Appearance: Except for a perfectly white plank, the ship's hull appears perfectly normal.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The white plank on the ship's hull has been enhanced with an instantly activating *delay sinking* spell (see box). This is a popular enchantment with captain's that do not have the funds to keep a high-level wizard employed at all times.

Value: 4,550 gp.

Delay Sinking

Abjuration

Level: Sor/Wiz 7

Components: V,S,M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Targets: One ship touched

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

You are able to call up invisible barriers of arcane force that effectively plug holes in the hull of a sinking ship for a short period of time. Crewmen are then able to effect longer-lasting repairs in the hope that their ship might safely reach port. A ship under the effect of this spell stops sinking for the duration of the casting, at which time, if no repairs have been made, it begins to sink again.

Special Rules: The instant the ship's structure reaches zero the effects of *delay sinking* (see box) kick in, though the spell's duration is doubled. The resilient hull plank is good for only a single activation and must be replaced once used.

Strong abjuration; CL 13th; Craft Wondrous Item, *delay sinking*; Price 4,550 gp

SAILS OF SPEED

Appearance: This massive sailcloth is completely average in appearance. It is decorated with a large, red star on both sides.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This sail is a common magic item found on ships operating along the southern shores of the largest continent of the world.

Value: 9,000 gp.

Special Rules: A sailing ship – no matter its number of sails – that replaces at least one sail with this magic item has its speed increased by 10 ft. A ship that mounts multiple's of this type of sail gains no extra benefit.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *expeditious retreat* or *longstrider*; Price 9,000 gp

SELF-REPAIRING SAILS

Appearance: This sailcloth is made of a thick, heavy material that resists attempts to harm it with any weapon short of an enchanted one. The sailcloth has no marks or distinguishing features.

Appraise Information: DC 16. This sail is a type of magic item found in areas in which magic is common. The sail, when damaged, will slowly repair the damage. A self-repairing sail will continue to execute repairs until the ship's speed is reduced to 25% at which point the enchantment is destroyed and the sail must be completely replaced.

Value: 7,500 gp.

Special Rules: Any damage to sails (see *Corsair* for detailed rules on damaging sails),

God's Favor [Ship]

The ship is magically defended.

Prerequisite: A Cleric in the crew, performing regular rituals on board.

Benefit: The ship itself gains the ability to roll Saving Throws against magical attacks. The ship's saving throw is equal to that of the ship's Cleric.

is repaired by the magical sails. Repairs – completely automatic and not requiring any outside intervention – require one minute per foot of speed lost to damage.

Moderate transmutation; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, *mending*; Price 7,500 gp

TRUSTED WHEEL

Appearance: This heavy, 80" ship's wheel is carefully crafted and in perfect condition. The ends of the wheel's spokes are perfectly polished and wrapped in strips of black leather. Ornamentation – consisting of strips of silver and twenty black gemstones – complete the wheel's elegant appearance.

Appraise Information: DC 18. This atypical wheel is of the type usually constructed for only the wealthiest of nobles. The wheel may be mounted in place of any regular ship's wheel on a sailing ship of medium size or larger.

Value: 100,000 gp.

Special Rules: The ship automatically gains the feat, God's Favor (see box), without the need of a cleric). The ship's saving throw is equal to that of the spellcaster that crafted the particular trusted wheel. Additionally, all Profession (sailing) checks made by anyone currently using the wheel gain a +4 enhancement bonus.

Strong transmutation; CL 17th; Craft Wondrous Item, *wish*; Price 100,000 gp.

A Dozen Sailing Ship Enhancements

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A Dozen Shields

by Michael Hammes

Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook



Introduction

Everybody needs a good shield, or at least that's what I've been told. In any case, the title of this PDF says it all; you'll get exactly twelve shields of both a mundane and magical nature, no more, no less. Having said that, let's get on to the goods, er, shields.

BLAZING SHIELD

Appearance: This quality light steel shield shimmers and sparkles in the light with a faint red iridescence.

Blazing: This enchantment can be applied to any shield except a buckler.

On command, a blazing shield is enveloped with crimson flames. The flames do not harm the wielder. Any creature within 10 feet of the shield suffers 2d4 points of fire damage while creatures past 10 feet but within 20 feet suffer 1d4 points of fire damage. The blazing shield deals its fire damage on its bearer's turn at the beginning of each round to all creatures in the area.

If used to attack (i.e. shield bash) the shield deals 1d6 points of additional fire damage on a successful hit.

Strong evocation; CL 12th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *wall of fire*; Price +2 bonus.

Appraise Information: DC 13. This excellent shield is truly a find. Not only is it of great quality, but also the iridescence evident in the metal, which is strongly suggestive of fire, just adds that certain something.

A successful Craft (weaponsmithing) check (DC 12) suggests that the shield is of dwarven manufacture, but a more successful check (DC 20) reveals that it is actually of fire giant manufacture, which is quite similar.

Value: 25,159 gp (9 gp for the shield, 150 gp for masterwork quality, 25,000 gp for enchantment costs)

Special Rules: The shield is a +3 *blazing light steel shield*.

BONE SHIELD

Appearance: This square shield is made entirely of bones held together by rope. You can see noticeable gaps between the bones.

Appraise Information: DC 10. This shield was surely crafted out of desperation or a severe lack of resources. While dried bone such as this is effectively as hard as wood, the fact is that the gaps between the bones reduce the protection afforded by the shield quite significantly and I wouldn't be surprised if it fell apart the moment it was used. A successful Heal check (DC 20) identifies the bones as humanoid.

Value: N/A (there's a reason no one makes shields out of whole bones).

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Special Rules: The shield is equivalent to a light wooden shield with a hardness of 5 and 7 hit points in every aspect, except that its poor construction means that anytime it absorbs a blow (that is, the bearer is not hit) the shield takes the weapon's damage minus its hardness.

How do you determine when the bone shield was struck? Well, an easy way is to assume that any blow that the bearer is aware of (so no backstabs or surprise attacks; the bearer must not be flat-footed) and that misses the bearer hits the shield.

Of course, if you want to make things a little more complex you can assume that the shield blocks two thirds (1-4 on a d6) of such blows. But this does require rolling a d6.

Even more complex is adding in the idea of Dexterity and other dodge bonuses. In this case, the shield blocks any blow that the bearer is aware of and misses him but would have hit his flat-footed AC (his AC without any Dexterity or dodge bonuses).

Example: Ivar the Desperate has the bone shield. Ivar is wearing chainmail and bearing the bone shield and has a Dexterity bonus to his AC of +1.

Ivar's AC is 17, 16 while flat-footed.

If Ivar is stabbed in the back, or otherwise surprised, then he can't bring up his shield so that particular attack does not strike the shield. If, however, he is aware of the attack and able to react to it and it misses but would have hit his flat-footed AC of 16 then the shield was hit by the blow (he instinctively used it to block). If the attack misses but would have hit AC 17, then the miss is due to his Dexterity (he completely avoided the blow thanks to his quickness).

Of course, you can still throw in that d6 at this point . . .

COVERED SHIELD

Appearance: What looks to be a large steel shield has its face covered by a piece of black silk. Taking a closer look at the shield, you notice that the silk is not simply draped over the shield, but is actually an integral part of the shield, being riveted in several places to the shield's rim.

Appraise Information: DC 12. Yes, that is definitely a shield under that piece of black silk. Looks to be of good quality too. Let's see what's under there . . .

Value: 172 gp (2 gp for the silk, 20 gp for the shield, 150 gp for masterwork)

Special Rules: The black silk covers a permanent (per the spell *permanency*) *symbol of death* (as per the spell). The *symbol* is inactive for as long as it is covered. Once uncovered, the *symbol* works as per the spell until it is disabled (either magically or by covering it up) or has affected its maximum number of hit points, at which point it becomes inactive for 10 minutes before it can be triggered again.

DRAGONHIDE SHIELD

Appearance: This shield large shield shimmers with green iridescence. It is made of the hide of a large reptile stretched across a wooden frame and, although quite light, feels very strong.

Appraise Information: DC 13. This is an absolutely gorgeous shield to look at and would make a truly stunning decorative item above someone's fireplace. That being said, a successful Knowledge (nature) check (DC 13) reveals that the shield is made from the hide of a green dragon.

What is most unusual about the shield is its lack of magical enhancements, since most individuals that go through the trouble of slaying a dragon usually have the ability to have such a shield enchanted. Perhaps it was just a display item, or perhaps something unexpected happened to it.

Value: 2,300 gp (300 gp for the shield, 2,000 gp for rarity)

Special Rules: Dragonhide shields are as hard as steel shields, but only as durable wood (hardness 10, 10 hit points/inch of thickness). All dragonhide shields are masterwork shields. A dragonhide shield costs twice the cost of a standard masterwork shield to produce (+300 gp) and weighs one-half of what a wooden shield of equal size weighs (rounded up).

Example: A dragonhide heavy shield would have a shield bonus of +2, an armor check penalty of -1, an arcane spell failure chance of 15%, and weigh 5 lbs.

FOUL SHIELD

Appearance: This beat-up heavy steel shield features a nasty barbed spike jutting from its boss. The shield has been blackened and painted with lurid red lines and splotches. For added effect it looks to have been encrusted with all manner of foul material.

Appraise Information: DC 11. This is a rather crude shield, undoubtedly of humanoid origin. Its previous owner no doubt believed that by blackening the shield with soot and contrasting that with bright red it would look even more fearsome to his opponents.

More worrisome by far than the shield's color is the wicked spike that adorns the shield's boss, or rather, what is on the spike.

Judging by the smell and look, it appears that the shield's previous owner was fond of increasing the lethality of his shield by using it as his toilet.

Value: 10 gp (10 gp for the heavily used shield, after it has been cleaned).

Special Rules: As is, anyone that is injured by the shield spike must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 12) or contract filth fever.

HIDE SHIELD

Appearance: This oblong shield is nothing more than a layer of thick hide that has been stretched and allowed to harden across a stick framework. A stylized deer has been drawn on its front and a set of bird feathers tied with a thong hang from the shield's top.

Appraise Information: DC 15. Hide shields such as this are a common sight on the Plains of Anang where trees and metals are scarce. While obviously light, it is doubtful that it can stand up to the rigors of prolonged battle against more advanced arms.

A successful Knowledge (nature) check (DC 14) reveals the hide to have come from a plains deer.

Value: 1 gp (1 gp for the shield)

Special Rules: A hide shield provides as much protection, armor check penalty, and arcane spell failure chance as a wood or steel shield of its size. Most hide shields tend to be light, but this does not have to be the case since such shields can be made of multiple hides stretched across the frame. While

a hide shield has the same number of hit points as a wooden shield of its size, its hardness is only 2.

INTERPOSING SHIELD

Appearance: Although dirty and scratched, this is obviously a quality light steel shield.

Appraise Information: DC 11. This is a fine shield despite the fact that it has evidently been in its share of battles, but it is nothing that some

Interposing: This enchantment can be applied to any shield except a buckler.

As a standard action, an interposing shield can be loosed to remain between its bearer and one opponent, providing its protection to its bearer while restricting the ability of the opponent to reach the shield's bearer.

Once loosed, an interposing shield moves to remain between its bearer and the designated opponent, providing its normal armor bonus (i.e. a +2 *interposing light steel shield* provides a +3 armor bonus) to its bearer.

Nothing can fool the shield – it sticks with the designated opponent in spite of darkness, invisibility, polymorphing, or any other attempt at hiding or disguise. The shield does not pursue an opponent, however.

Any creature weighing 1,000 pounds or less that tries to push past the shield is slowed to half its normal speed. The shield cannot reduce the speed of a creature weighing more than 1,000 rounds, but it still affects the opponent's attacks.

For all maneuvers and effects that target items, the interposing shield is considered wielded or attended by its bearer. The interposing shield does not take up any additional space beyond that taken up by its bearer.

The interposing shield accompanies and guards its bearer everywhere, whether he moves by physical or magical means. If the bearer has an unoccupied hand, he can grasp and retrieve the shield and redirect it to a new opponent as a move action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Moderate evocation; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *interposing hand*; Price +2 bonus.

buffing and polishing won't fix. The design is nothing unusual and, despite its quality, it could have come from almost anywhere in the local area.

Value: 16,024 gp (9 gp for the shield, 15 gp for masterwork quality, 16,000 gp for enchantment costs)

Special Rules: This shield is a +2 *interposing light steel shield*.

REDSTORM SHIELD

Appearance: This heavy steel shield has been immaculately maintained and polished as befitting an obviously masterwork shield. A bright red boss in whose center appears a golden upright sword offsets the bare steel of the shield itself.

Appraise Information: DC 13. This is indeed a fine shield and its previous owner obviously maintained it very well, which is not much of a surprise considering that it belonged to a member of the Redstorm order of the LG god

Dancing (Shield): This enchantment can be applied to a light or heavy shield, but not a tower shield or buckler.

As a standard action, a dancing shield can be loosed to defend its bearer on its own. It protects its bearer for 4 rounds, providing the same level of protection as if its bearer were still wielding it, and then drops.

While dancing the shield cannot be used to make attacks (i.e. shield bash). For all maneuvers and effects that target items, the dancing shield is considered wielded or attended by its bearer. The dancing shield does not take up any additional space beyond that taken up by its bearer.

The dancing shield accompanies and guards its bearer everywhere, whether he moves by physical or magical means. If the bearer has an unoccupied hand, he can grasp and retrieve the shield as a free action prior to it dropping. Once retrieved, the shield cannot dance again for 4 rounds.

Strong transmutation; CL 12th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *animate objects*; Price +2 bonus.

Jusrar (whose domains include Law, Good, and War); this information is revealed with a successful Knowledge (religion) check (DC 18).

The Redstorm order is known for its battle prowess, serving as both protectors of the Church Militant of Jusrar as well as the church's elite troops when going into battle.

Value: 36,170 gp (20 gp for the shield, 150 gp for masterwork quality, 36,000 gp for enchantment costs).

Special Rules: This shield is actually a +2 *dancing heavy steel shield*.

REED SHIELD

Appearance: This crude diamond-shaped shield is made entirely of forearm-thick bundles of reeds. Upon closer inspection you can detect a musty odor emanating from it.

Appraise Information: DC 11. The lizard-folk of the Chanmak Marshes are known to make use of shields such as this for personal protection, something a successful Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check will reveal (DC 14). Although certainly crude in appearance, a reed shield such as this is surprisingly effective in combat, able to ward off blows as effectively as any wooden or metal shield.

Of course, the fact that it is made out of dried reeds places a premium on keeping the shield dry and, even under the best of circumstances, a shield such as this will not last more than a couple of years before it needs to be replaced. Given the smell that this particular shield is giving off, it appears that rot has already begun.

Value: 5 sp (5 sp for the shield).

Special Rules: A reed shield is equivalent in all respects, including hardness, hit points, shield bonus, etc. to a wooden shield of its appropriate size. A reed shield is a bit of a fire hazard and the shield automatically catches fire whenever it is exposed to fire damage greater than its hardness of 5 (that is, if it takes even 1 point of fire damage). Once alight, a reed shield will burn to nothing in 1d4 rounds. A burning reed shield does 1d6 points of fire damage to its bearer per round the shield is held and also adds this damage to any attacks with the shield.

IRONWOOD, GREATER

Transmutation

Level: Drd 7

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 minute/lb. created

Range: 0 ft.

Effect: A *greater ironwood* object weighing up to 5 lb./level

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

As *ironwood* except that the wooden item's transmutation is permanent.

Material Component: Wood shaped into the form of the intended *greater ironwood* object.

THISTLE SHIELD

Appearance: This fine, round, and surprisingly light shield is made of a dark wood. The battle-scarred front has the image of a thistle upon it in green and purple.

Appraise Information: DC 12. This is indeed a quality shield, obviously the work of a master of the craft. A successful Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (religion) check (DC 19) will recall that the thistle is the symbol of the druids of Sydisle, an order that tends and protects the sacred wooded island of Syd (or Sydisle) against all non-druids.

Value: 157 gp (7 gp for the shield, 150 gp for masterwork quality).

Special Rules: This particular shield is a masterwork heavy wooden shield that is carrying a *greater ironwood* enchantment. As a result, it is equivalent in all respects to a +1 *heavy steel shield*.

As an alternate to using the *greater ironwood* spell, the DM can allow such a shield to be created using Craft Magical Arms and Armor and the *ironwood* spell; this is equal to a +1 enhancement for purposes of cost determination.

THYSOLEAN BUCKLER

Appearance: This quality buckler is nondescript, being nothing more than unadorned steel.

Appraise Information: DC 19. Despite its lack of adornment, this is most definitely a masterwork piece. Taking a close look near the buckler's edge, one can see the maker's mark. A successful Craft (armorsmithing) check (DC 14) identifies the mark as that of Itraros, a well-known dwarven armorsmith from Thysolea.

Value: 20,165 gp (15 gp for the buckler, 150 gp for masterwork quality, 20,000 gp for enchantment costs)

Special Rules: The buckler is ensorcelled with a permanent *lesser globe of invulnerability* (as per the spell, centered on the shield) that can be invoked by its bearer upon command. While active, the *lesser globe of invulnerability* prevents any 3rd level or lower spells from affecting the buckler's bearer and all those within a 10-foot radius of the buckler.

Moderate abjuration; CL 10th; Craft magic arms and armor, *lesser globe of invulnerability*; Price 20,000 gp

WING-XA FIGHTING SHIELDS

Appearance: This is a set of two identical round, light steel shields. Each shield has been painted yellow and features the top-down image of a green turtle in its center.

Appraise Information: DC 13. The shields are certainly of serviceable quality, but what makes them more interesting is the fact that they are a matched set. Adding this knowledge to the turtle symbol and a successful Knowledge (geography) check (DC 21) reveals that these shields once belonged to the Shield Warriors of Wing-Xa, a group of warriors renowned for their use of matched pairs of shields, rather than weapons, in battle.

Value: 18 gp (9 gp for each shield)

Special Rules: Using two shields gains the warrior the armor class bonus of both shields (but also the combined armor check penalties and arcane spell failure chances).

Fighting with two light shields is like fighting with two off-hand weapons. Furthermore, by taking the Improved Shield Bash feat, the warrior does not lose the armor class bonus of either shield in combat.

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A Dozen Traveler Items

by *Michael Hammes*

*Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook*



Introduction

In line with the other Dozen series releases, this one tackles a subject that is not often touched upon: travel. And yet, PCs spend more time on the road than they do battling monsters.

So, I decided to write up a dozen items that would be of interest and/or handy to adventurers traveling on the open road (or the forest track, the desert wastes, etc.). And here we go.

BROAD-BRIMMED HAT

Appearance: This very broad-brimmed hat is made of plain gray felt and features a leather drawstring. The hat's rather crumpled appearance and the large sweat stain on the interior suggest that it has seen some use.

Appraise Information: DC 11. Although people of status and power, i.e. nobility and the wealthy, would never be caught dead wearing such hats, the fact that they are worn by peasants only attests to their efficacy in all types of weather. Not only does the broad brim shield one from the sun, the hat's material is water-repellent and the drawstring keeps the hat on one's head in all but the fiercest weather.

Value: 1 gp (1 gp for the hat when new).

Special Rules: While a very handy item, such a hat is indeed a peasant hat and anyone wearing such a hat will be treated accordingly, at least initially.

COURIER SATCHEL

Appearance: This fine leather bag with a long shoulder strap features a coat-of-arms prominently displayed upon its front.

Appraise Information: DC 13. While a backpack is the storage item of choice for most travelers, the satchel is preferred for those on short journeys or who need frequent access to the items they are carrying. A successful Knowledge (local) check (DC 15) reveals the coat of arms to be that of the Barony of Charmaign, suggesting that the satchel probably belonged to one of the barony's couriers.

Value: 2 gp (2 gp for the satchel when new).

Special Rules: A courier satchel inevitably contains documents of importance. While they are usually standard business documents, such as harvest yields, weekly status reports, etc. having to do with the administration of government, occasionally more sensitive documents do find their way into a courier's satchel.

In most places, interfering with a courier on business is considered tantamount to interfering with the courier's employer directly and is punishable to the same degree (i.e. death).

EVERFULL WATERSKIN

Appearance: This is the classic, kidney-shaped goatskin waterskin with a wooden cap and spout bearing the initials "E.R."

Appraise Information: DC 11. Amust for any traveler, this waterskin is able to hold a gallon of water (or other liquid). The initials are undoubtedly those of the previous owner, who is unknown.

Value: 1 gp (1 gp when new).

Special Rules: This is actually an *everfull waterskin* that continuously refills when water is drawn or poured from it. Although called an *everfull waterskin*, the actual amount the bag

can produce per day is limited by the level of its creator (2 gallons of water every 24 hours per level).

Faint conjuration; CL 1st+; Craft Wondrous Item, *create water*; Price 500 gp/CL

A *true everfull waterskin* is able to produce unlimited quantities of water (although the water can only pour or be drawn out as fast as its spout will allow).

Faint conjuration; CL 1st+; Craft Wondrous Item, *create water*; Price 2,000 gp/CL

FINE BOOTS

Appearance: This fine pair of leather boots is made of soft, supple leather. They have obviously been well taken care of, for although the soles show signs of significant use, the leather of the boots show little sign of scuffing or wear.

Appraise Information: DC 12. These are indeed excellent boots. The boots are made of calfskin while the soles are of the highest quality cowhide leather; they look extremely comfortable.

Value: 20 gp (20 gp for the boots when new).

Special Rules: These boots are truly very comfortable and a character wearing them is able to travel further in a day than one wearing standard boots; a character wearing these fine boots can walk 12 hours per day before becoming subject to a Constitution check (DC 10, +2 per extra hour) for forced march.

GOLD-PLATED DINING KIT

Appearance: This dining kit, contained in a leather bag with drawstring, features a plate, cup, knife, fork, and spoon. Each of the items is gold-plated and has a coat-of-arms etched into it.

Appraise Information: DC 13. Obviously this set once belonged to a noble traveler, the Earl of Donnityne to be exact as revealed by a successful Knowledge (nobility) check (DC 17).

Value: 9 gp (1 gp for a standard dining kit, 2 gp for the gold-plating, 5 gp for the overall quality; the full service would be worth some 450 gp).

Special Rules: There are a couple of interesting points about this particular kit. The first is that it is extremely rare for items of such value to exist as an individual set; usually such items are part of a greater dining service (usually for six or eight). Furthermore, such services are usually stored in chests or wicker baskets; by placing the items in a leather bag (which, by the way, does not match the set), the owner assures that the items will be scratched.

As a result, given the recent history of the Donnityne family, it is quite likely that this set belonged to the second son of the Earl who ran away from home some two months ago to seek his fortune. Since the family is still offering the substantial reward for locating the young lad, one can only assume that he is still missing.

MYSTERIOUS STONE

Appearance: This smoothly polished palm-sized stone has an arrow carved into it.

Appraise Information: DC 10. It's a stone. Perhaps it was someone's good luck charm.

Value: N/A.

Special Rules: The stone is actually an *infallible compass*. To use it, the stone is held in the owner's outstretched palm while the owner concentrates on finding north. Then, as the owner turns, the stone begins to vibrate the closer it gets to north.

Although this particular example is a stone, an *infallible compass* can look like almost anything, from a divining rod that pulls the hands in the direction of north to a tip-less arrow that is balanced on a finger and always spins to point north.

Faint divination; CL 1st; Craft Wondrous Item, *know direction*; Price 500 gp.

PORTABLE HUT

Appearance: This fist-sized sphere of solid yellow glass feels smooth and cool to the touch.

Appraise Information: DC 12. Obviously an object of art, or perhaps some glassblower's practice, it has little useful purpose beyond looking pretty.

Value: 5 gp (5 gp for the glass).

Special Rules: By placing the *portable hut* onto the ground and speaking the command word, it grows and creates an unmoving, opaque sphere of force on the spot within 1 round. The sphere is identical to that created by the *tiny hut* spell i.e. it has a 20-foot radius and up to nine other Medium creatures beside the owner can fit inside; the only difference being that the color of the sphere is fixed by the *portable hut's* crafter at the time of its creation.

Minor evocation; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *tiny hut*; Price 10,000 gp

REVERSIBLE CLOAK

Appearance: This wool cloak, complete with large hood, has been died a patchy brown on one side and white on the other side.

Appraise Information: DC 11. Is there a traveler that does not own a cloak? Arguably the single most useful item for any traveler, a cloak does everything from provide shelter to ward off rain to protect one's identity. This particular cloak, although featuring an interesting set of colors, is no different from the one you can purchase in any town market.

Value: 1 gp (1 gp for the cloak).

Special Rules: The brown side provides a +5 circumstance bonus to Hide checks in woodland and rural environments while the white side provides a +5 circumstance bonus to Hide checks in snow environments.

ROAD PASS

Appearance: This brass plate, perhaps some 6 inches square, bears the inscription "The bearer of this plaque is to be accorded all courtesies and is exempt from any and all tolls". A coat of arms sits in the upper right hand corner while a large dent sits in the lower left.

ROLE-PLAY ALERT

The value of an item like the road pass described above relies on the DM setting the proper background during play. If the roads in the campaign world are treated much like our modern highways, where anyone can get on them to anywhere, then a road pass has little value.

However, if the roads are more like actual medieval roads, then a road pass has tremendous value. Keep in mind that one uses such a road with the permission of the ruling authority. As such, patrols will often question suspicious individuals or groups (and what is more suspicious than an armed band of adventurers?), and that is if they are honest. If the patrols are less than honest, then they often harass travelers and attempt to extort funds from them. A road pass usually makes one immune to such treatment.

Worse are the border crossings and toll points. Here people wait for hours to pay tolls to bored guards, often have their possessions searched, and are checked against descriptions of known criminals (and woe to someone that matches the description). If the guards are not honest, then there is also the matter of a bribe to consider lest the PCs find themselves cooling their heels in the local jail. Again, a road pass avoids those issues completely.

Of course, the DM shouldn't simply place a road pass into the PCs' hands. Rather, the PCs should experience some of these joys of travel (and many others, such as surly town guards, innkeepers that overcharge for lousy food and dirty lodgings, etc.) as they begin their adventuring careers. Then, when they become more famous and they are finally issued a road pass because they are on a vital mission, they will truly value such a treasure.

Appraise Information: DC 15. While traveling on the highway is usually a much safer and faster prospect than tramping through the countryside, it is not without its annoyances. Way stations, patrols, and border tolls take time and money and are as much a nuisance as help (especially when those manning them are less than honest).

To keep important individuals from such petty annoyances, many governments and municipalities issue road passes which enable their bearer to avoid such hassles on their journey (at least in areas controlled by the issuing authority).

In this case, the road pass was issued by the city of Markutenberg, and entitles its bearer to avoid questioning by patrols as well as to avoid any tolls on the roads owned by the city as well as the gate tolls at the city's gates.

Value: 2 cp (2 cp for the material, but the pass is much more valuable for what it does).

Special Rules: Illegal possession of such a pass, or counterfeiting of the same, is often cause for the harshest penalties (i.e. death).

RUCKSACK OF HOLDING

Appearance: This is a nice rucksack. Despite the fact that it has obviously seen some use, the leather is water-stained and there are several scratches to be seen, it is in excellent shape.

Appraise Information: DC 12. This is obviously a rucksack of superior quality, one need only look at the thickness of the leather and the strong stitching, and even though it is not new, it should last many more miles.

Value: 3 gp (2 gp for the rucksack, 1 gp for superior quality when new).

Special Rules: This is actually a *rucksack of holding*. It is identical in all respects to a *bag of holding*, i.e. it comes in four types and opens into a non-dimensional space.

The chief advantage of this item over a *bag of holding* is that it leaves both an individual's hands free.

Moderate conjuration; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *secret chest*; Price 2,500 gp (Type I) to 10,000 gp (Type IV)

STAFF OF PROVISIONING

Appearance: This stout oak walking staff is polished to a high shine. Its bottom features a dull metal tip and, strangely enough, its top is carved into a spoon.

Appraise Information: DC 12. A walking staff such as this is a most useful, if common, item. Since it can be used for everything from providing secure footing to vaulting over small streams to self-defense, no serious traveler is ever without one. The spoon decoration is rather unusual; only its creator is likely to know its significance.

Value: 1 gp (1 gp for the staff).

Special Rules: The staff is a *staff of provisioning*. It allows use of the following spells:

Create water (1/3 charge; three uses equal one full charge)

Purify food and drink (1/3 charge; three uses equal one full charge)

Create food and water (1 charge)

Moderate conjuration; CL8th; Craft Staff, *create water*, *purify food and drink*, *create food and water*; Price 15,750 gp.

TRAVELER'S JOURNAL

Appearance: This leather-covered book has seen much use. Water spots stain the leather and bleed into the pages where they smear the writing. The pages are dropping from the binding in several places and overall the book looks as though it is about to fall apart. While much of the information appears to be lost, you can make out several drawings of creatures and plants.

Appraise Information: DC 15. Since most people travel for business, not pleasure, traveler's journals are rare beyond those kept by merchants to tally their accounts. Thus a journal such as this, although it is quite damaged, is a valuable find, especially since it appears that the author was well traveled.

Value: 3 gp (2 gp for the rucksack, 1 gp for superior quality when new).

Special Rules: A traveler's journal is an excellent DM device for introducing new monsters, new locations (lost treasure hoards, lost temples, etc.), local legends, maps, etc.

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A Dozen Troubling Rumors

*Requires the use of the
Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook*



by Philip Reed

A roleplaying session, to be truly interesting and enjoyable, requires the DM be ready to drop the smallest detail into place just as if it had always been there and the campaign world were a real, living place. While I consider many of my PDFs well-suited to providing DMs with lots of fine details that go a long way toward bringing a campaign alive there is one area I feel has been neglected by myself and other publishers: background noise.

By background noise I am referring to inconsequential events, characters, and locations that all work together to add another layer of depth to any campaign. In short, anything that can be used in descriptive text – and in discussions between PCs and NPCs – so that the players get the sense that the campaign is larger than them; while the adventurers may have recently vanquished the horrible minotaur of the southern caves a nobleman was accosted by thieves on the north road and One-Thumb Arnold – the local rat catcher – took ill with cackle fever and the area now faces a growing rat problem.

With this in mind I present *A Dozen Troubling Rumors*. I hope that you find a way to work at least a few of these rumors into your D20 System fantasy campaign.

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Philip Reed has been working professionally in the roleplaying game industry since 1995. In that time he has worked for such companies as West End Games, Privateer Press, and spent almost five years as an employee of Steve Jackson Games. Today Philip spends his days at home running Ronin Arts, writing and designing new games, and reading whatever books interest him at the time. To learn more about Philip Reed – and Ronin Arts – please visit www.philipjreed.com and www.roninarts.com.

USING THE RUMORS

This PDF is intended solely for the DM. Players who suspect that their DM may have a copy of this PDF would do best to close this file now and find something else to peruse.

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A Dozen Troubling Rumors

The rumors in this PDF may be sprinkled liberally in a campaign either as written or modified by the DM. DMs should always be prepared for the situations, characters, and locations discussed in any rumor to leap to the forefront of the game session; you never know what bit of information the players will grab and run with.

When in any tavern, inn, coffeehouse, or similar establishment where men and women gather, select a rumor (or two or three) from this PDF and have each player make a *Gather Information* check and then check the roll against the chosen rumor(s).

Each rumor follows the format:

Rumor Heading (Gather Information DC)

Failed *Gather Information* Check: If the check is failed this is what the PCs hear. A section of this entry is to be read aloud to the players though many DMs will choose to paraphrase the information (especially if any of it needs to be tweaked to better fit the campaign). This entry also discloses the source of the rumor.

Successful *Gather Information* Check: If the check succeeds this is what the PCs hear. Again, this entry is intended to be read aloud and gives the source of the rumor.

Follow Up: If the PCs choose to investigate the rumor this information will help the DM to prepare for what could happen.

THE RUMORS

And now, with introductory text and instructions out of the way, let us dive into the meat of this short PDF.

A Handsome Reward is Offered for . . . (DC 10)

Failed *Gather Information* Check: “Didja hear, mate? Old man Marlborough’s lost his dad’s sword and is offerin’ 100 gold to any man that can return it. I hear Marlborough’s went and sold it to them dwarves that were tradin’ in the market last week and now ‘es tryin’ ta fool his insurance men. I reckon ain’t a one a us gonna get no reward for a sword that’s been in dwarf hands

for a week.”

Source: Edgar Ellis [male human, Com1, 2 hp], a young dock worker who walks with a limp and is bald. Ellis dresses in filthy breeches and tunic and wears wooden clogs.

Successful *Gather Information* Check: “What I’ve heard is that Lord Marlborough was tricked by those filthy dwarven traders that were terrorizing the market last week. Marlborough says that he’ll pay 50 gold to any man brave enough to confront the dwarves and take his father’s sword from those foul midgets.”

Source: Harold Bonelli [male human, Exp 3, 10 hp], owner of Bonelli’s Wine Shop. Harold Bonelli dresses in a threadbare supertunic that was, at one time, quite elegant and dark breeches with leather-soled booties.

Follow Up: The dwarven caravan consists of 20 dwarves – a mixture of merchants and guards (exact strength should be determined based on the strength of the PCs) – assorted pack mules, and a wagon. The dwarves recognized Marlborough’s sword as one forged hundreds of years ago in their own kingdom and offered Marlborough 100 gp for the weapon (which is easily worth 500 gp). Marlborough foolishly accepted the proposal and just yesterday learned of the sword’s true worth. The dwarves are not willing to give up the sword without a fight but if they appear to be losing the battle – or the minute any of their number is slain – they will surrender and attempt to escape with their lives.

The Platinum Tower Serves Warm, Foul Tasting Ale that Tastes like Piss (DC 11)

Failed *Gather Information* Check: “You don’t wanta go in there, lad. That joint serves nothing but the worst drinks and their ale is no better than warm dog piss. No, a wealthy fella such as you would be a lot happier at The Serpent’s Tongue and it’s not too far a walk. You’ve never been? Well, for a few copper I could lead ya there meself.”

Source: Button Hughes (male human, Com3, 6 hp), a man in his 50s wearing an old robe and sandals.

A Dozen Troubling Rumors

Successful Gather Information Check: “Be wary of any man or woman directing you to an establishment known as “The Serpent’s Tongue.” No such place exists in the city and many a fine man has found himself surrounded by a gang of thieves after following a lonely beggar to this imagined tavern.”

Source: Any member of the city watch.

Follow Up: PCs that fail their Gather Information check and choose to follow Button Hughes will find themselves surrounded by a gang of thieves (3 for each member of the party). The thieves are not brave and will run at the first sign of blood on any of their own.

One-Thumb Arnold is Sick (DC 12)

Failed Gather Information Check: “Arnold got them shakes from spendin’ too much time with the rats. Now we’re all a gonna pay for it since them rats are buggerin’ each other so fast that there’s a million of ‘em under us right now. Truth! Me “friend” Jacob, he’s the one works in the sewers, barely escaped from them last night.”

Source: Harriet (the Whore) [**female human, Com 1, 1 hp**], an ugly young woman that gets by in ways best not mentioned in the presence of one of such noble stature as yourself.

Successful Gather Information Check: “One-Thumb Arnold’s been a plague on this city ever since he took up the rat catcher practice five years ago. He’s as dishonest as they come and the rats he catches are his very own! See, he trains ‘em and sets ‘em loose in a shop then comes along and “catches” them. Now Arnold’s gone and bred too many of them rats and they’re out of his control. I hear he’s hiding in the cellar of his sister’s house and letting on some story that he’s sick. Ain’t so. He’s just scared to face the mess he’s made.”

Source: Michael the Bloodless [**male half-elf, Clr2, 11 hp**], adventurous cleric of war. Reddish hair, fair complexion, dressed in robes and armed with a mace.

Follow Up: One-Thumb Arnold is, in fact, hiding in his sister’s cellar. Hundreds of rats are loose in the city and the “rat catcher” is afraid he’ll be identified as a coward if it gets out that he’s too scared to face such a large number of rats. While these are simply ordinary rats, many of them are carrying disease and if they’re not wiped out quickly the city will face a horrible epidemic.

Fighter Coming out of Retirement (DC 12)

Failed Gather Information Check: “Rochester’s gonna fight Cain! I seen the han’bill meself just yesterday when I was at the Goose and Gallop. Whata fight it’s gonna be! I’m headed out to beg me a few coppers so I can see the fight. Or maybe one so noble as yerself might give this old soldier a handful of coppers so he can see the fight and have a bowlful ‘a beer?”

Source: Johnson [**male human, War6, 33 hp**], a one-armed beggar. Years ago Karl Johnson was an elite soldier in the army of a neighboring country. An unfortunate accident lost Karl his arm and his will to fight. For over 30 years now Karl has moved from city to town to village, all the while begging for his scraps of bread and the occasional drink.

Successful Gather Information Check: “I’ve already got my ticket. Cost 2 gold but it’s worth it to see Cain come out of retirement and whoop this young upstart Rochester. I seen Cain fight a decade ago when he was in his prime and it was an excellent battle. If you hurry over to Evans’ Tavern you can get in on the wagering; Evans is giving 10:1 odds on Cain.”

Source: Rynn Acha [**male dwarf, Exp5, 18 hp**], a weapon-smith well respected and admired in the city.

Follow Up: The fight takes place and as long as there is no interference or foul play Cain does, indeed, win the bout. Of course, several unsavory individuals will go out of their way to influence the fight so it may just be up to the PCs to halt any wrongdoing (or, if I know players, it’s just as likely they’ll have their own wrongdoings to orchestrate).

A Dozen Troubling Rumors

The Gentleman Bryce has been Assaulted by Thieves (DC 12)

Failed Gather Information Check: “Hatcher took it on himself to check his lands north a the city last week and got what was comin’ to him. Dirty thief has been robbin’us common man blind every day for two score years and it’s time someone laid inta him. Hell, I’ve thought a doin’ the same thing to him meself ever since my pap lost the horse to that “gentleman.”

Source: Nathan Skrogs [male human, Com2, 5 hp], a middle-aged man with a receding hairline and dressed in tattered robes. Skrogs is barefoot, armed with a club, and sometimes works in Smithfield’s Chocolate House (see *A Dozen Documents and Papers* or www.philipjreed.com) as a rough.

Successful Gather Information Check: “Yes, I heard gentleman Martin was attacked a few weeks ago. What my sister told me – and she’s a friend of Miriam Martin – is that the good gentleman was returning from his cottage in the country when a gang of roughs ambushed him and his bodyguard. Both barely escaped with their lives and now Martin’s looking for some gentlemen to accompany him on an expedition to exact revenge on those terrible thugs.”

Source: Green Robinson [male human, Exp4, 15 hp], a wealthy draper (a draper is a merchant that specializes in cloth) who frequently sells his wares from the back of a well-kept wagon.

Follow Up: Hatcher Martin is indeed looking to hire men so that he may punish those who attacked him. Martin will pay 10 gold to any man that will ride with him early next week. The thieves – six in total – have already heard that Martin is looking to punish them and have fled to a nearby city or large town. Once Martin determines that the rogues have fled the area he’ll offer a reward of 100 gold to any man who brings him the leader of the thieves – dead or alive.

That Whore’s Got What’s Coming to Her (DC 14)

Failed Gather Information Check: “Mary sure was a pretty whore but she and Jack Hall were up to no good running that buttock and twang. The only sad thing is she’s gonna swing from a rope before anyone gets the secret of where her and Jack had their booty hid. My wife – she’s a maid for that scoundrel mon-eylender Matthews – heard Matthews talking about the hundreds of gold and jewels Mary and Jack had hidden away.”

NOTE: A “buttock and twang” is an old practice in which a prostitute and thug would work together to lure unsuspecting gentlemen to dark alleys where they would relieve the man of his possessions.

Source: Ageb Brown [male human, Com3, 6 hp], a pawn-broker dressed in clean tunic and breeches. Brown is a fanatic when it comes to cleanliness.

Successful Gather Information Check: “Yeah, I’ve heard the talk about that whore and her man having wealth hidden somewhere in the city. What I heard, from Jack Hall’s mum no less, is that the pair didn’t have a cent to their name. Everything the stole went to Jack’s habit with the drugs and it’s that awful addiction that got him killed.”

Source: Roger Hunt [male human, Exp6, 21 hp], chandler (a candle maker) who runs The Moon’s Candles, a small shop just outside of the common market. Hunt is tall, lean, and in his 40s. He dresses well for a man of middle class and is a widower.

Follow Up: There is no money or riches to be found. Player characters that investigate the matter will learn that Jack was killed when one of their marks got the best of him and Mary nearly died in the struggle. She was grabbed by the town watch and instantly sentenced to death.

A Dozen Troubling Rumors

A Nearby Dungeon (DC 14)

Failed Gather Information Check: “It’s just a day to the south by foot, seen it with me own eyes. We were there doing some mining for the city when we uncovered the entrance. Some of our boys went into the dungeon but me and the others wouldn’t have anything to do with it and we fled just as fast as we could when we heard screams inside the dungeon. You look like a strong enough warrior. How about I draw you a map to the dungeon and you give me enough coin for a bottle?”

Source: Wilson the Dirty [**male halfling, Com2, 4 hp**], a middle-aged halfling who makes his living digging trenches, out-houses, cellars – anything that needs dug.

Successful Gather Information Check: “It appears to be a long-forgotten tomb, probably a few thousand years old. Those men who were lost inside should have never entered a freshly uncovered dungeon. The city leaders are just now trying to decide if they should send men in to investigate the tomb or just cover it back up with earth and rock. If you’re a man in search of treasure I’d say you’ve probably got a week before the city makes their decision and does something. Though who knows what course of action those fools will decide on.”

Source: Clark Turner [**male human, Com5, 10 hp**], a barber who owns a small stall in the common market. Turner has friends on the city council and is well connected to local events.

Follow Up: If the player characters learn of the dungeon from Wilson and choose to investigate they’ll quickly find that their map is worthless. It isn’t that the halfling was trying to cheat them; just that he isn’t very educated and doesn’t have a clear idea of where he was working. If the PCs decide to descend into the dungeon you’ll need a map and the area planned. Any one or two-level dungeon would do though there’s no reason the DM couldn’t decide that this is the entrance to some vast, campaign-shattering dungeon complex.

The Dock Laborers will Strike (DC 14)

Failed Gather Information Check: “Strike? That’s a bloody lie! Me dad’s a dockman and he told me there’s no way they’ll be strikin’. What I heard is some troublemaker’s goin’ round tellin’ these strike rumors so the captains will take their ships and cargo to the south and leave us without.”

Source: Keyhole [**male human, Com1, 1 hp**], a boy of about 12. If pressed, Keyhole lets on that his given name is Joshua and he’s called Keyhole because of his skill opening locked doors.

Successful Gather Information Check: “I can guarantee there will be a strike in less than a week. For too long the tobacco and coffee merchants have been taking advantage of us men and we’ve had enough. Why, just last month they cut our wages in half. We’ll see how fat those lousy merchants get when their merchandise is left rotting on a boat.”

Source: Webb [**male human, Com3, 6 hp**], a man in his 30s dressed in worn clothes and quite sunburned. Webb works as a dock laborer.

Follow Up: Sure enough, in one week the dock laborers go on strike. Within days the strike turns bloody as the dock workers clash with scabs and the town watch are called in to put down the resulting riots. The price of most goods in the city slowly begins rising, at first by a few copper pieces and then a few silver pieces. The violence and escalating prices will continue until the strike is resolved in some manner. Perhaps the player characters are called upon to assist one side or the other or, perhaps, by the city council that need men willing to do what must be done to end the strike.

A Dozen Troubling Rumors

Goblins Advance (DC 15)

Failed Gather Information Check: “I should ‘ardly have believed it when me boy told me but housecarl Reginald confirmed it. It’s gonna be bad news for us all if that tribe of goblins reaches us.”

NOTE: A housecarl is a royal bodyguard; in this case Reginald is a bodyguard to the Marquis Murray, a lower nobleman assigned to defend the western edge of the kingdom.

Source: Collins Parmer [**male human, Com3, 7 hp**], a quiet woodcutter that comes into town only once a week so that he may sell firewood and enjoy a pint of brew at one of the local taverns.

Successful Gather Information Check: “That’s right. The scouts returned just this morning and have confirmed that there are over two hundreds goblins fast approaching the city. I set out in the morning with my fellows so that we may crush these foul beasts before they reach our city gates and besiege us. The kind thing for one such as you to do is buy a soldier a drink since tomorrow I may die defending your life.”

Source: Davis [**male human, War5, 27 hp**], a mounted infantryman in the king’s army.

Follow Up: Whether the PCs take part in the battle or not the goblins will be devastated and quickly routed. For weeks afterward reports of goblin ambushes will filter into the city and eventually the local authorities will post a bounty of 10 gold pieces for each goblin head delivered to their offices.

A Great Disaster is Coming (DC 20)

Failed Gather Information Check: “The gods are coming to smite us all! Deacon Chrin has warned us all for years and now it’s a gonna happen. Please, for the love of all that’s holy, stop your evil ways and join us in prayer. We must cleanse this city of evil so that the gods may spare our existence.”

Source: Kate Haupt, [**female human, Com2, 5 hp**], a large, overweight woman married to a well-to-do businessman. Kate likes to dress in red or blue dresses and has long, black hair. She’s in her late 30s and the years – and motherhood – have not done her features or frame a kindly service.

Successful Gather Information Check: “That Deacon Chrin proclaims death and destruction every year. Nothing has ever come of it and I guarantee that nothing ever will. Please, don’t bother me with trivial nonsense. If you’ve business to conduct let us retire to that empty table and discuss matters of import.”

Source: Kent Matthews [male human, Exp4, 13 hp], a usurer (or moneylender). Matthews conducts his business in any number of taverns and coffeehouses in the city and does not have his own shop. Matthews frequently hires thugs and thieves to collect on loans.

Follow Up: Matthews is right and absolutely nothing happens. For weeks followers of Deacon Chrin make life difficult for everyone as they try to stop people from living normal lives. The occasional fight breaks out as do riots on one cloudy night when the Deacon’s followers believe the apocalypse is descending upon them.

Shortage of Supplies (DC 20)

Failed Gather Information Check: “Buy what you can! The ships aren’t comin’ into port for months now that the sea’s swallowed them whole. And the land caravans ‘ill never reach us ‘fore the goblins capture and destroy them. The lady Mills, she lives right down my street, seen it in a dream. Get outta me way, I’ve got to get in supplies ‘fore they’re all taken!”

Source: Henrietta Samnn [female halfling, Com1, 2 hp], a thin, frail-looking halfling woman dressed in a dark linen robe and red leather skirt.

Successful Gather Information Check: “While that crazy witch is nothing more than a fraud I’ve got it on good authority that she’s spreadin’ her stories so that the merchants can raise prices. Mark my words: in less than a week all of this noise will be over and that witch will be swinging from a rope.”

Source: Roger Hunt [male human, Exp6, 21 hp], Chandler (a candle maker) who runs The Moon’s Candles, a small shop just outside of the common market. Hunt is tall, lean, and in his 40s. He dresses well for a man of middle class and is a widower.

A Dozen Troubling Rumors

Follow Up: Martha Mills is a fraud, always tricking the common folk out of their coin. She approached several local merchants and they put together the plan to drain people of their money by increasing prices for a week or so. The plan works perfectly for an afternoon but then the truth surfaces and Mills is grabbed and hung (unless the PCs can stop the murder). The merchants involved in the scam are too powerful to be affected (again, unless the PCs intervene).

A Wizard has Cursed the City (DC 25)

Failed Gather Information Check: “It’s that awful sorcerer Kelust, yeah, him that lives in that tower. I tell ya, that horrible man’s hated us all for years and it’s certain his magic’s gonna kill us just as soon as we fall asleep. I woke up this mornin’ with an awful toothache and once I heard the news that the wizard was a cursin’ us I knew it must his doin’ that set my tooth to achin’ so.”

NOTE: To learn all about Kelust and his tower please look to *Forbidden Arcana: Kelust’s Tower*. You can find this PDF at www.rpgnow.com or www.roninarts.com.

Source: Gordon Richards [male human, Com3, 8 hp], a known freebooter (a common term for a thief) about 30 years of age and not trusted by many within the city.

Successful Gather Information Check: “It is utterly preposterous, this talk of Kelust cursing the city. Why, I’ve had the good fortune of visiting Kelust in his home on many an occasion and the man harbors do ill feelings toward the city or her people. This is merely some foul rumor being spread by those too dimwitted to respect the arcane arts and those who master those same arts.”

Source: Asule the Trickster [male elf, Wiz6, 18 hp] a wizard dressed in leather armor and carrying a black, wooden staff.

Follow Up: Kelust is most certainly not cursing the city and this rumor, like all other lies, will quickly fade away. As long as the rumor is fresh in the folk’s minds, though, mentioning Kelust in anything but a negative manner may cause trouble for the PCs.

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Introduction

Unique suits of armor are a staple of most fantasy fiction and, over the past thirty years, fantasy roleplaying games. Recently, even computer RPGs have included unique suits of armor that players struggle to claim. This short PDF presents a dozen unique – or very rare – suits of armor, each one anxiously awaiting its chance to join your campaign.

Just as with those suits of armor presented in *101 Mundane Treasures* and *Another 101 Mundane Treasures*, these dozen suits of armor (a few are actually shields and one is a helmet) are not at all magical in nature. While many of them are constructed from magical creatures the suits of armor themselves are not considered magic items. Rather, these are all unique, non-magical treasures that add a little history and wonder to your next game session.

Please note that many of the suits of armor in this PDF were fashioned from creatures taken from a pair of excellent *D20 System* products. While license restrictions keep me from mentioning these products by name I can recommend that you turn to the OGL section of this PDF and look closely at Section 15. Both of the books listed there deserve to be on the shelf of every gamer. If you do not own them I encourage you to check them out – I promise you will not be disappointed with the quality of the products.

A Dozen Unusual Armors



BRITTLE SHIELD

Appearance: This item looks like a very thin shield constructed of a black, beaten metal. The leather straps on the shield are rotten and require replacing and a huge gash rips through the center of the shield, light showing through it when it is held up to the sun or a flickering torch. An upraised fist is crudely painted on the front of the shield.

Appraise Information: DC 14. This is a fairly common small shield made of light steel. It was the property of the barbarian Ulhoff and is worth some small amount to a collector of historical arms and armors.

Value: 65 gp (65 gp for the historical value of the shield and no value for the small light steel shield since it is damaged). Repairing the shield will destroy its historical value.

Special Rules: As it currently is the shield is worthless in battle, providing no shield bonus.

ELEGANT GORGET

Appearance: A finely detailed steel gorget – a piece of armor worn around the neck

– this particular item is decorated with silver studs and five red gemstones. Beautiful scrollwork engravings cover the gorget.

Appraise Information: DC 12. While not well suited to the battlefield, noblemen at court frequently wear gorgets such as this. The gemstones are near-perfect rubies.

Value: 87 gp (5 gp for each ruby, 2 gp for the gorget, and 60 gp for the craftsmanship of the item).

Special Rules: Armor Bonus +1 (but only against called shots to the neck), 1 lb. Additionally, a garrote cannot be used against someone wearing a gorget.

FEAR GUARD'S SHIELD

Appearance: A round wooden shield with leather straps and covered with several spikes, this large shield has odd runes carved along the back of it. The shield feels light, too light, and has an almost ethereal quality to it.

Appraise Information: DC 25. It is quite difficult to properly identify this shield and to pinpoint the reason for its odd lightness.

Known amongst sages and bards as a fear guard's shield, this particular shield is created when one of the incorporeal undead known as a fear guard is slain in the vicinity of a wooden shield. At such a time there is a 2% chance that the fear guard's essence will cling to the shield, forever changing it.

Value: 503 gp (500 gp for rarity and 3 gp for the shield).

Special Rules: Beyond the light weight (1 lb.) and odd aura, this shield is identical to any heavy wooden shield.

GELID SHELL ARMOR

Appearance: This suit of full plate armor enshrouds the wearer in overlapping plates of white mottled silver that looks something like sections of a monstrosly large insect. The helmet's jaw is adorned with a pair of dull silver mandibles and the visor is shaped so that the wearer's head appears beetle-like in appearance. The suit has a few dents and scratches but is, for the most part, pristine.

Appraise Information: DC 18. Crafted from the carapace of the gelid beetle, a medium-sized magical insect that resides in cold forests, this suit of full plate armor is grotesque, almost monster-like in appearance. While this suit does not possess any magical abilities there are known to be several suits of gelid shell armor that project a magical cold aura that harms anyone foolish enough to come close to the armor.

This particular suit of armor – worn over thirty years ago by the paladin Aravall – was

crafted to help the paladin defend the goddess of the frozen plains. It is told that Aravall fell in battle with the evil magma lords of the deep earth, defending his goddess' honor up until the very end. Where the suit has been in the time since Aravall's death is completely unknown.

Value: 3,200 gp (1,500 for full plate armor, 1,000 gp for the gelid beetle carapace used in the construction of the armor, and 700 gp for the craftsmanship and rarity of the suit).

Special Rules: Except for the odd appearance and value, this suit of armor is in all other ways identical to standard full plate armor.

KEDIAVUDD'S CHAIN SHIRT

Appearance: A long, steel chain shirt, this armor extends down to the wearer's mid-thigh and includes several black straps that are used to secure it to the wearer's body and to fasten a helmet so that it can be easily slipped from the wearer's head.

Appraise Information: DC 14. Kediavudd Martange, a respected paladin who led several religious orders decades ago, wore a shirt such as this and the white shield painted on the armor's chest identifies it as a shirt from that era. While it is doubtful that Kediavudd himself wore this chain shirt all such items from that era are now known as Kediavudd's chain shirt.

Value: 100 gp.

Special Rules: None.

NECROMANCER'S SHIELD

Appearance: This small, black shield is constructed entirely of bones. The shield is in good repair and shows little sign of use.

Appraise Information: DC 18. This evil shield has been constructed of the bones of various undead creatures. Such shields are valuable to necromancers since they grant the user an increased level of power when casting necromantic spells. Some full suits of armor constructed of the bones of the undead are known to exist though they tend to be rare. See *A Dozen Unusual Materials* for information on creating your own suits of armor from the bones of undead creatures.

Value: 357 gp (250 gp for the bones used in the shield's construction, 100 gp for the craftsmanship, and 7 gp for the shield).

Special Rules: Constructed of the bones of undead creatures, this special shield grants arcane or divine spellcasters the ability to cast necromancy spells at one caster level greater than their actual level. In all other ways this shield is treated as if it were a heavy wooden shield.

NUCKALAVEE SHIRT

Appearance: When worn on the torso, this armored shirt gives the wearer the appearance that he has no skin, internal organs, muscles, and raw, meaty flesh taking the place where a shirt or armor would normally be seen. Those

weak of stomach are likely to vomit upon witnessing a nucklavee shirt.

Appraise Information: DC 18. The nucklavee is an evil creature of the forests and some evil warriors find it exciting to hunt and slay these powerful beasts. Taking the flesh of the creature, warriors sometimes have the beast's hide fashioned into a horrific-looking armored shirt. Working with the hide of a nucklavee is quite difficult and there is a 75% chance that the creature's skin will be destroyed during the crafting process, rendering the flesh unusable. Few craftsmen willingly attempt the creation of a nucklavee shirt since failure often pushes the warrior awaiting the shirt to murder the craftsman.

Fifty years ago the human warrior Crazdock the Thirsty wore a nucklavee shirt for a brief time. Finding the shirt uncomfortable Crazdock passed it on to one of his lieutenants. Crazdock's Shirt, as it has come to be known, is identifiable by the red eye painted on its chest.

Value: 1,210 gp (1,100 gp for the nucklavee hide, 100 gp for the construction, and 10 gp for leather armor). Crazdock's Shirt would be worth an additional 1,000 gp.

Special Rules: Other than its disgusting appearance, a nucklavee shirt is treated as if it were a suit of leather armor.

PROSCRIBER'S HELM

Appearance: This full helmet, adorned with a thick spike and a fully enclosed visor, is pitch black in color and shines brightly beneath the mid-day sun. It is extremely heavy.

Appraise Information: DC 20. The helmet of a slain proscriber, an outsider charged with punishing clerics that displease their gods, sometimes remains behind when the entity is destroyed. This particular helmet is in immaculate condition and is quite valuable.

Value: 2,500 gp.

Special Rules: If worn, the weight of this helmet forces the wearer to struggle to maintain balance, strength, and even stamina. All Dexterity, Strength, and Constitution checks suffer a -4 circumstance penalty when the helmet is worn.

SLAUGHTERSUIT

Appearance: This pale, almost white suit of leather-like armor was crafted years ago from the flesh of a swarm of evil slaughterfords. The slaughterford is a rare undead creature with sharp blades in place of hands and a thin, weak-looking build. Horrific creatures to behold this suit of armor gives the wearer the appearance of one of these foul creatures, the suits' arms even ending with the wicked-looking blades.

Appraise Information: DC 20. This suit of masterwork leather armor is one of many such suits that were created for the assassins' guild known as The Blackest Sign. Members of the guild frequently donned slaughtersuits before setting off a mission and even wore the suits to formal functions. For dozens of years rumors of wicked, undead assassins spread across the lands, each barely breathed tale heightening the power of The Blackest Sign. This particular suit is damaged but could be repaired by a skilled craftsman.

Slaughtersuits are rarely seen in use these days, most of the suits having been destroyed when The Blackest Sign was wiped out. Some still surface in markets or in the treasure hoard of a dragon or evil wizard. Assassins today would be honored to own a slaughtersuit.

Value: 860 gp (500 gp for the slaughterford skin used in the armors construction, 150 gp for masterwork quality construction, 200 gp for uniqueness, and 10 gp for leather armor). If repaired - Craft (Leatherworking) DC 25 - the suit would be worth an additional 1,000 gp.

Special Rules: Expertly using these weapons requires Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Slaughtersuit Blades). The weapons inflict 1d8 damage and are treated as longswords for all other purposes. A true master slaughtersuit wearer will also have Two-Weapon Fighting. A slaughtersuit differs from leather armor in that a suit weighs 22 lbs. Has an armor bonus of +3, a maximum dex. bonus of +5, and an armor check penalty of -1. Slaughtersuits are identical to leather armor in all other ways (specifically, arcane spell failure chance and speed).

THREE-QUARTER FIELD ARMOR

Appearance: Very similar in appearance to full plate, this suit of armor is constructed of the finest steel and decorated with silver, gold, and platinum trim. The gauntlets are mitten-like in construction and the full helm's visor is so narrow that it is difficult for the wearer to see clearly. The weight and ornamentation of this

particular suit of armor makes it suited to formal functions and not very useful in a fight.

Appraise Information: DC 12. The expert artistry of this armor, coupled with the components used in its manufacture, make this a particularly valuable suit of armor.

Value: 15,000 gp (2,500 gp for the armor, 2,500 gp for the beautiful construction, and 10,000 gp for the materials used in its manufacture).

Special Rules: Wearing this armor into battle is not recommended. Armor Bonus: +1, Maximum Dex. Bonus: -, Armor Check Penalty: -7, Arcane Spell Failure Chance: 60%, Speed (30 ft.) 10 ft., (20 ft.) 5 ft., 75 lbs.

TROLL HELM AND ARMORED TUNIC

Appearance: This particular item is fashioned from a rock troll and appears much like an armored shirt with a cruel-looking hood. The hood, a helmet made of the rock troll skin and decorated with the rock troll's face, covers most of the wearer's head making listen and spot checks slightly more difficult than if the hood was not worn (-1 equipment penalty to such checks). The helm and armored tunic is in excellent condition.

Appraise Information: DC 20. This rare item is rarely seen outside of the underground societies of the world. Drow warriors sometimes wear troll helms and armored tunics, as do deep dwarves and other subterranean races.

Even less common are the items fashioned from two-headed trolls. These horrible-looking suits use both heads of the troll, one of the heads sitting upon the wearer's shoulder. Armored tunics made from two-headed trolls are never available for medium-sized or smaller races.

Value: 550 gp (400 gp for the troll skin and head and 150 gp for the craftsmanship and rarity of the item). An armored tunic made of a two-headed troll is worth an additional 500 gp.

Special Rules: Armor Bonus +5, Maximum Dex. Bonus +3, Armor Check Penalty -4, Arcane Spell Failure Chance 40%, Speed (30 ft.) 20 ft., (20 ft.) 15 ft., 35 lbs. The two-headed version is identical except that it weighs 48 lbs. and the penalty to spot and listen checks is increased to -2.

WINGED ARMOR

Appearance: This leather shirt is covered in massive black feathers and includes two large black wings that hang from the back. The armor laces up the front and when properly worn covers the wearer's entire torso and arms making him almost look like a giant, winged creature. The leather is lined with a rich, soft cloth that is red in color.

Appraise Information: DC 12. This odd armor is made from the feathers of a corpse rook. These large magical beasts look like three-headed ravens and are quite rare. The armor does not grant the wearer any flight capabilities and is more formal than functional.

Value: 470 gp (400 gp for the feathers used in the armor's construction, 60 gp for the artistry of the work, and 10 gp for leather armor).

Special Rules: For the most part, this suit is identical to leather armor. The only differences, in addition to the value (see above) are the weight (40 lbs.), the Maximum Dex. Bonus (+2) and the Chance of Arcane Spell Failure (45%).

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A Dozen Unusual Articles of Clothing

by Philip Reed

*Requires the use of
the Dungeons &
Dragons® Player's
Handbook*

Readers of *101 Mundane Treasures* and *Another 101 Mundane Treasures* have written me on occasion to request more articles of clothing that they may use in their game sessions. From my research and discussions with many players I've determined that there is actually a very small number of

clothing options for *D20 System* players when it comes to non-magical clothes. Certainly we can all flip open the *Player's Handbook* and purchase a "noble's outfit" or "peasant's outfit" but where's the fun in that? I prefer to select articles of clothing with a bit of story and interest to them. It's with this in mind that I sat down to write *A Dozen Unusual Articles of Clothing*. The items presented in this PDF, when combined with the clothing found in *101 Mundane Treasures* and *Another 101 Mundane Treasures* go a long way toward giving player characters (and even NPCs) some quite interesting clothing options.

GARMENT COLORS

In our world, during the Middle Ages, the colors of clothing had some loose meaning. DMs may choose to incorporate the basic idea that only members of a few specific professions and social classes wear some colors. The following listing is a small suggestion for colors and who may wear them. DMs may choose to create their own listings based on the availability of dyes and level of skill in their individual campaign worlds.

Gold and White: These colors may only be worn by royalty.

Purple: Royalty and upper nobility may wear purple.

Scarlet, Orange, Dark Blue, and Crimson: Worn by the wealthy and nobles.

Blue, Green, Slate, and Yellow: These colors may be worn by anyone.

Black: Clergy, wizards, mourners, scholars, and the elderly typically wore black.

I am working on creating enough materials in order to put together a second volume to follow *The Book of Unusual Treasures*. If there is some mundane or magical treasure – or type of treasure – you would like to see me work on please don't hesitate to e-mail me. My e-mail address can be found on my website.

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A Dozen Unusual Articles of Clothing

DARK COWL OF THE NECROMANCER

Appearance: The gorget and hood of this cowl are fashioned of a dark, leathery material that is almost stiff and rigid. The gorget is further reinforced with red patches of thick leather, providing the wearer's shoulders with with limited protection in combat (armor bonus +1). The cowl is masterfully manufactured, the components stitched together with a neat, steady hand.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The material used in the creation of this cowl is the remains of a slain skin cloak (a horrible undead creature created from the skin of a deceased necromancer). While wearing this cowl is not an evil act it is most certainly not the act of a good-aligned character and anyone who recognizes the material used in the manufacture of the cowl will likely instantly assume the wearer to be a vile, evil individual.

Value: 177 gp (1 gp for the cowl, 46 gp for the masterful construction of the garment, and 130 gp for the skin).

Special Rules: In addition to the previously mentioned armor bonus, any evil-aligned spellcaster wearing this cowl may – once per day – cast one necromantic spell of his choice as if it were under the effect of the *Heightened Spell* metamagic feat. This is a natural property of the skin cloak material and the cowl does not radiate magic when under the effect of the spell *detect magic*. In addition, the cowl does not affect the casting of any spells and it does not affect movement. **Weight:** 3 lbs.

ELEGANT LIRAPIPE HOOD

Appearance: This cowl-like garment, complete with gorget made of red silk, features a remarkably long hood of black silk. The fine silk of the garment is sewn to a linen backing.

Appraise Information: DC 14. The lirapipe hood is worn as like cowl or cape, with the long back section of the hood wrapped loosely around the neck and shoulders of the wearer. Some men and women prefer to wrap the excess cloth around their heads, much like a turban.

Value: 30 gp (25 gp worth of silk and 1 gp for the lirapipe hood, and 4 gp for the craftsmanship of the garment).

Special Rules: None. **Weight:** 1 lb.

LADY'S EXPEDITION GORGET

Appearance: This gorget, made of red leather, was created for the adventurous lady. The lower edges of the gorget are adorned with small red gemstones and a dozen silver spikes. The gorget covers the woman's breasts and shoulders and is intended to be worn over a light armor (such as leather) or a tunic. This gorget offers the wearer minimal protection in battle (armor bonus +1 – may be stacked with any armor that grants a +2 or lower armor bonus). While a man could wear this item its cut and design marks it a woman's garment. The image of a falcon is embroidered into the back of the garment.

Appraise Information: DC 13. This is a rather elaborate gorget, designed over 100 years ago for the Lady Chamalise, an adventuress best known for her role in the defeat of the Demon Army of Magnaka the Wicked. The falcon was the lady's chosen image and she had it added to all of her possessions. The gemstones – 10 in all – are small, flawless rubies.

Value: 316 gp (1 gp for the gorget, 10 gp for the leather and materials used in its construction, 20 gp for each ruby, 5 gp for the silver spikes, and 100 gp for the historical value of the garment).

Special Rules: This item has no effect on movement or the casting of spells. **Weight:** 1 lb.

LEGALMAN'S CHAPERON

Appearance: This hat is made of silver-colored silk and black linen. The black linen is bunched up and wraps around the head while the silk covers the top of the head and drapes down one side and the back of the wearer's head.

Appraise Information: DC 15. Chaperons like these are worn primarily by lawyers, judges, and lower-ranked politicians. Such men often wear a silk robe of black or silver.

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Value: 13 gp (12 gp worth of silk, 1 gp for the chaperon).

Special Rules: None. *Weight:* 1 lb.

NOBLEMAN'S GREAT COAT

Appearance: This heavy, leather coat is a rich, deep black in color and adorned with silver and gold buttons and silver studs. The coat is double-breasted and hangs to the floor when worn by most humans (or other medium-sized characters). The coat is heavy enough to provide the wearer with protection in combat and against the coldest temperatures.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This finely tailored coat is a work of art, crafted hundreds of years ago by the tailor Xorove Tylen. Tylen's garments are some of the finest articles of clothing ever made and are prized possessions of the truly wealthy. The coat has 12 silver buttons, 18 gold buttons, and 40 silver studs.

Value: 796 gp (2 gp for each gold button, 5 sp for each silver button, 1 sp for each silver stud, 10 gp for the coat, and 750 gp for being a Tylen).

Special Rules: The coat is treated like leather armor and the wearer receives a +2 circumstance bonus to Fortitude saves vs. [cold]. *Weight:* 10 lbs.

NOBLEMAN'S SUPERTUNIC

Appearance: This fashionable, blue silk tunic is little more than a large sheet of silk stitched to a light leather backing. A hole is cut from the center for the head and the tunic simply hangs over the wearer, the sides open. Some noblemen draw the supertunic closed with a belt. Fine embroidery around the neck and a pattern of small, brass studs provide the garment's only decoration. When worn this garment hangs down to the wearer's knees.

Appraise Information: DC 15. The silk, craftsmanship, and brass studs are the valuable components of this article of clothing. The thread used in the embroidery is a fine, golden thread available only in the most glorious of the ancient elven cities.

Value: 75 gp (5 gp for the tunic, 15 gp worth of silk, 10 gp for the brass studs, and 45 for the elven thread and quality of the embroidery).

Special Rules: Supertunics are quite popular with both the wealthy and noble and also with rogues (the billowing mass of fabric makes the perfect material with which to conceal pick pocket and sleight of hand attempts – a character gains a +2 equipment bonus to *Sleight of Hand* checks when wearing a supertunic).

SILK HOUPPELANDE

Appearance: This silk gown is a deep crimson in color and includes a dark black leather belt and a high collar that is stiffened with short lengths of leather. When worn the gown reaches to the wearer's knees. The image of a shield and spear is embroidered on the right chest of the gown.

Appraise Information: DC 12. This elegant clothing is quite common amongst the wealthy. The shield and spear emblem embroidered on the houppelande is the symbol of the Bitterfast family. The Bitterfast family is best known for their trade caravans and practice as moneylenders. An undertunic and breeches are typically worn with a houppelande.

Value: 25 gp (15 gp worth of silk, 2 gp for the leather belt, and 8 gp for the artistry of the embroidered symbol and fine stitching of the gown).

Special Rules: None. *Weight:* 3 lbs.

SILKEN TIPPETS

Appearance: Two three-foot long sections of black silk, each a mirror image of the other. Each piece is sewn to form a tunnel of silk and they are decorated with embroidered patterns – white thread – depicting great dragons in flight. Straps made of red silk hang from one end of the tunnel.

Appraise Information: DC 14. These tippets are worn at the elbows by finely dressed women and are purely ornamental. Tippets typically trail along the floor and are only worn to the

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most extravagant of events. Men sometimes wear tippets though they are most often seen on the wealthiest of women.

Value: 25 gp for the pair.

Special Rules: Much like supertunics, tippets can assist a rogue in sleight of hand attempts – +1 equipment bonus to *Sleight of Hand* checks.

TANGTALSKIN DOUBLET

Appearance: This finely tailored tunic is crafted from a thick, fine brown fur-covered skin that's sewn to a leather undertunic. The front of the tunic is adorned with golden buttons and stuffed in order to make the wearer appear more masculine and broad-shouldered. The inside of the undertunic is lined in soft, purple-colored velvet.

Appraise Information: DC 18. While the doublet is a fairly common type of tunic, this particular tunic is covered in the skin of the ferocious tangtal, a magical feline beast that lives in the deep forests of the west. These creatures are quite rare and their fur valuable to tailors and furriers. There are 12 gold buttons on the outfit.

Value: 241 gp (2 gp for the doublet, 2 gp for each gold button, 65 gp for the craftsmanship and artistry of the garment, 10 gp worth of velvet, and 140 gp worth of tangtalskin).

Special Rules: None. *Weight:* 6 lbs.

THUNDERSHRIKE CLOAK

Appearance: This long, flowing cloak hangs to the ground and fastens at the neck with a gold chain and small hook. The cloak is covered in large, gray and red feathers and is lined with black velvet. The cloak is in excellent condition and has obviously been well taken care of.

Appraise Information: DC 16. The feathers are those of a young thundershrike, a massive eagle-like magical beast. The chain is constructed of the finest quality gold available and, overall, the garment is a fabulous work of art deserving of the wealthiest of men or women.

Value: 587 gp (1 gp for the cloak, 15 gp worth of velvet, 11 gp for the chain, 460 gp for the thundershrike feathers, and 100 gp for the superb craftsmanship of the cloak).

Special Rules: The wearer of this cloak receives a +2 circumstance bonus to Fortitude saves vs. [electricity] and a +1 bonus to Fortitude saves vs. [cold]. The cloak is quite heavy and is treated like leather armor for all other purposes (armor bonus, arcane spell failure, etc.). *Weight:* 10 lbs.

VELVET BREECHES

Appearance: These red velvet pants are designed to be form fitting fully enclose the wearer's legs and feet and are tied at the waist with a thin cord. The soles of the feet are covered in leather so that the wearer need not wear shoes. These elegant breeches bear the symbol of a crescent moon along the outside of the right leg.

Appraise Information: DC 12. These are the pants of a wealthy landowner or merchant and are intended to be only worn inside or to elaborate social functions. The symbol on the right leg is that of the Latiyohy family, a noble family that was eradicated over one hundred years ago.

Value: 17 gp (1 gp for the breeches, 10 gp for the velvet, 1 gp worth of leather, and 5 gp for the craftsmanship of the pants). A collector of Latiyohy memorabilia would likely pay twice that amount.

Special Rules: None. *Weight:* 2 lbs.

VELVET PELISSE

Appearance: This blue velvet robe is trimmed with bands of yellow silk that run around the edges of the neck and arms of the garment. The robe is an artistic work, the stitching near perfect and quite delicate. The interior of the robe is lined with a thin, gray fur that makes it quite comfortable to wear (though a little warm during summer months).

Appraise Information: DC 16. This is one of the robes worn by the Society of Enchanters, a guild of good-aligned wizards

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operating in a large city to the south. The color of the silk used as trim denotes the rank of the wearer, with yellow being the color of a middle rank wizard. White trim is used for apprentices, blue for low-ranked wizards, green for higher ranked wizards, and black for members of the Council of Enchanters, the governing body of the Society of Enchanters. The fur is taken from the skin of a corpsespinner, a large, magical spider found

deep beneath the earth. The Society of Enchanters will go to great lengths to deal with anyone wearing one of these robes that is not a member of the guild; they take their reputation seriously and do not wish to see it harmed.

Value: 35 gp (1 gp for the robe, 20 gp worth of velvet, 2 gp worth of silk, and 11 gp for the corpsespinner fur).

Special Rules: None. **Weight:** 3 lbs.

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A Dozen Unusual Bracers and Gauntlets

by *Philip Reed*

*Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook*



There are days when my imagination shifts and, without warning, I find myself writing a new entry in the *A Dozen . . .* series. Unfortunately, it has now been several months since writing a new PDF for this series has been really worth the investment in time. With that said, I'm afraid that this may very well be the final dozen; the end of a series.

If I see a shift in the market, and demand for more releases in this series reaches a point that I'm convinced to try writing a new release, then it's very possible that the series will return (after all, I really enjoy writing these). For now, though, I must redirect my efforts to projects that will earn me a living wage.

I want to thank all of you that have been with the *A Dozen . . .* series since the first release. It is your encouragement and support that allowed the series to grow to over 40 individual PDFs.

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Philip Reed has been working professionally in the roleplaying game industry since 1995. In that time he has worked for such companies as West End Games, *Scrye Magazine*, and Steve Jackson Games. Today Philip spends his days at home running Ronin Arts, writing and designing new games, and currently constructing a teardrop trailer. To learn more about Philip Reed – and Ronin Arts – please visit www.philipjreed.com and www.roninarts.com. The official Ronin Arts fan forum can be found at www.raforums.com.

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The Items

BONENEEDLE GAUNTLETS

Appearance: Each one of these dull gray, mitten-style metal gauntlets ends with a row of spikes that look a lot like the teeth of some creature or other. The inside of the gauntlets are lined with thick, yellow blubber that feels cool against the wearer's skin when the gauntlets are worn. Rust is forming along the edges and joints of the gauntlets – this is making them stiff and difficult to flex.

Appraise Information: DC 18. These gauntlets were made from the teeth and hide of a boneneedle, a twisted aberration that looks like a bag of flesh with spidery legs. Boneneedle gauntlets were once popular with the Circle of Despair, an assassins' guild that once operated across the southern lands but ever since the guild's destruction these items have been seen less and less frequently.

Value: 480 gp (5 gp for the gauntlets, 150 gp for masterwork quality, 225 gp for the materials used in the item's construction, and 100 gp for the collectible value).

Special Rules: These gauntlets are treated like spiked gauntlets. Additionally, the spikes (which were made from the teeth of a boneneedle) carries a toxic poison that forces anyone struck to make a successful DC 12 Fortitude save or suffer 1d4 points of Constitution damage. The mitten nature of these gauntlets forces a -4 circumstance modifier on all Dexterity checks.

BRACERS OF THE THIEF

Appearance: At a first glance, these appear to be plain, ordinary leather bracers without any markings at all. Upon closer inspection, though, concealed pockets hidden on the inside of the bracers present a skilled thief with an excellent place to hide small items that might just happen to fall into his hands. Careful, masterful construction enables the wearer to conceal up to a half-pound of small items inside each bracer.

Appraise Information: DC 12. This is a very common item, popular with rogues and thieves that specialize in pick pocketing unsuspecting citizens. Rumors of magical versions that act much like a bag of holding persist but if anyone has actually found such an item they've never shown it around to their peers.

Value: 18 gp (3 gp for the bracers, 15 gp for the masterful construction).

Special Rules: These bracers grant the wearer a +4 equipment bonus on Sleight of Hand checks.

CEREMONIAL GAUNTLETS OF THE DRAGON

Appearance: These clamshell gauntlets are shaped like the heads of dragons, making the wearer appear as if each one of his arms ends in a dragon's head. Available in as many different colors and designs as there are types of dragons, this particular set is fashioned after a red dragon. The gauntlets are made of steel and silver that has been painted and the eyes of each dragon are small red gemstones.

Appraise Information: DC 15. These ceremonial gauntlets are worn by followers of any number of dragon cults scattered across the lands. The eyes are rubies and the craftsmanship put into the items is astounding – each gauntlet is a work of art. Oftentimes these gauntlets are transported in a specially-made case, but the case for this particular set is missing.

Value: 392 gp (2 gp for the gauntlets, 150 gp for masterwork quality, 10 gp for each ruby (4), and 200 gp for the item's collectible value and unusual nature).

Special Rules: The clamshell design of these gauntlets forces a -10 circumstance modifier on all Dexterity checks.

CLERIC'S GAUNTLETS OF HOLY MIGHT

Appearance: These mitten-style steel plate gauntlets, each one of which includes an extended wrist guard, are bright silver in appearance and adorned with the symbol of the god of war. The gauntlets are lined with leather and cloth and a chain hanging from each one allows the wearer to lock a weapon to each gauntlet.

Appraise Information: DC 15. First created over 5,000 years ago, on another plane of existence, these holy gauntlets radiate a divine glow. Over the years the gauntlets have absorbed the divine power of clerics and paladins that have worn them and today the gauntlets enhance the wearer's ability to turn undead.

Value: 1,658 gp (8 gp for the gauntlets, 150 gp for masterwork quality, and 1,500 gp for the special quality of the item).

Special Rules: Imbued with the holy force of over a thousand clerics and paladins, these gauntlets grant a good-aligned character a +2 sacred bonus on turning checks. Evil-aligned characters that wear these gauntlets suffer 1 point of Constitution damage each hour until the gauntlets are removed – an evil-aligned character that is slain by this Constitution damage cannot be resurrected. The mitten nature of these gauntlets forces a -4 circumstance modifier on all Dexterity checks.

FISTS OF THE BLOOD WIGHT

Appearance: These twisted, evil-looking gauntlets are manufactured from pieces of flesh that are stitched together and wrapped over a frame of bones. The color of dead skin, these fingered gauntlets end in sharpened claws that constantly drip blood.

Appraise Information: DC 18. Created from the remains of a blood wight, a large undead creature created when a creature bleeds to death on unholy ground, this item most commonly used by blackguards, evil clerics, and assassins. The gauntlets smell of death and the

blood never ceases to drip from the claws, even though there is no obvious source for the endless dripping of blood.

Value: 1,252 gp (2 gp for the gauntlets, 500 gp for the flesh of the blood wight, and 750 gp for the item's unusual nature and rarity).

Special Rules: These gauntlets grant the wearer a claw attack (1d6 points of damage). Additionally, anyone struck by this claw attack continues to bleed, losing 1 hit point each round until the bleeding stops (requiring a DC 16 Heal check or a *cure* spell). A good-aligned character or creature wearing these gauntlets suffers 1 point of Constitution damage each day.

GAUNTLETS OF THE ANGELIC CHOIR

Appearance: These bright white, metallic gauntlets shimmer in the sunlight and even at night gleam beneath even the faintest light sources. Each gauntlet is decorated with a large, metal feathered wing that extends two feet out from the gauntlet and a row of five blue gemstones.

Appraise Information: DC 20. Created from the armor of a fallen angel, these gauntlets were first worn by the paladin Xerkathia when he led an assault upon the demons of the Unwanted Plains. Slain in battle, Xerkathia's items were carried away by his followers who used them in future battles against evil. Over the past hundred years these gauntlets have been discovered and lost almost a dozen times – it is as if some unusual aura of luck is bound to the items.

Value: 603 gp (3 gp for the gauntlets, 25 gp for each blue sapphire (10), 100 gp for the materials used in the item's creation, 150 gp for masterwork quality, and 100 gp for the item's collectible value).

Special Rules: The weight of the gauntlets restricts the wearer's agility, imposing a -2 penalty on all Dexterity checks. The wings provide the wearer with limited protection in combat; the gauntlets are treated like bucklers during combat.

GAUNTLETS OF THE GRAVE

Appearance: Created entirely of stone, these clamshell gauntlets do not allow the wearer to move his fingers when they are worn – clamshell gauntlets are intended primarily for use when wielding polearms. Arcane runes decorate the gauntlets and each one features different markings. The gauntlets are lined with fur, making them comfortable (but warm) to wear.

Appraise Information: DC 20. Carved from the headstone of a grave, each gauntlet still radiates an aura of death. Gauntlets such of these are most often used by skeletons and other undead soldiers – few living creatures are willing to wear items such as these.

Value: 127 gp (2 gp for the gauntlets, 50 gp for the materials, and 75 gp for the item's unusual nature).

Special Rules: The wearer of these gauntlets radiates a fear aura in a 10-ft. radius; characters or creatures that enter this area must make a successful DC 15 Will save or be affected by a *fear* spell (caster level 10th). The clamshell design of these gauntlets forces a -10 circumstance modifier on all Dexterity checks.

GAUNTLETS OF THE OOZE CHAMPION

Appearance: These mitten-style gauntlets are constantly shifting in shape, the cool iron-like material used in the item's construction constantly dripping and warping, almost perfectly mimicking the actions of a gray ooze or similar creature. When worn, the gauntlets slowly seep down the wearer's arms . . . within a few seconds the gauntlets have fused with the wearer's body and can only be removed if hot water is poured over them.

Appraise Information: DC 25. This unusual item is part of a set – the armor, helm, and shield of the Ooze Champion are still missing – that was lost thousands of years ago when an extraplanar entity known only as the Ooze Champion died in battle. These gauntlets were

built by a powerful ooze lord, a now-deceased race of humanoid, super-intelligent oozes that dominated several different demiplanes scattered across the known and unknown planes of existence. It is said that there were hundreds of Ooze Champions but historical records can only find specific information on the one that has been dead for thousands of years.

Value: 2,502 gp (2 gp for the gauntlets and 2,500 gp for the item's rarity and unusual nature).

Special Rules: When worn, these gauntlets provide the wearer with the ability to control oozes; treat as an evil cleric's ability to rebuke and command undead. The mitten nature of these gauntlets forces a -4 circumstance modifier on all Dexterity checks.

HARD, SPIKED BRACERS

Appearance: Built of iron, these heavy bracers are decorated with dozens of sharp spikes. Leather straps and metal buckles secure the bracers to the wearer's wrists but, unlike most bracers, these extend too far down the wearer's wrist for gauntlets to be worn in conjunction with the bracers. There are no marks or writings on the exterior of the bracers but anyone looking along the edge of the inside will find dwarven runes.

Appraise Information: DC 15. Built by dwarven armorsmiths for the human warrior Happkey, these bracers were designed specifically to assist the wearer in close quarters combat. The spikes can be used to wound an opponent or, with practice, to snatch an opponent's weapon away during battle.

Value: 103 gp (3 gp for the bracers, 100 gp for the materials and collectible value).

Special Rules: The wearer may choose to accept a -2 penalty on attack rolls when making a melee attack and, if the attack is successful, the bracers increase the attack's damage by 3 points. If the wearer attempts to grab an item held or carried by an opponent, after he has worn the bracers for at least one month, he gains a +2 bonus on the disarm attempt (during that first month these bracers provide no bonus to disarm attempts).

SEPULCHRAL FINGER GAUNTLETS

Appearance: These heavy iron gauntlets are dull and faded, obviously ancient and well worn, and each hand features full fingers that grant the wearer full use of his hands. Connected to each gauntlet, securely mounted directly to the back of the wearer's hand, is a thick, dagger-like spike. Shorter bony metallic spikes decorate the wrist guards.

Appraise Information: DC 20. These gauntlets were once the hands of a sepulchral guardian, an unusual type of construct created from the remains of dead humanoids that are encased in iron. A series of ancient runes along the palm of each gauntlet identifies the maker as Dervkal Stoneskin, a once-famous dwarven armorsmith (that just happened to be a loyal follower of a long-dead demon prince). The gauntlets are of masterwork quality but are otherwise quite normal in function.

Value: 255 gp (5 gp for the spiked gauntlets, 150 gp for masterwork quality, 100 gp for the unusual materials used in construction and the item's collectible value).

Special Rules: +1 enhancement bonus on all attack rolls (masterwork).

SKULL BRACERS

Appearance: These black leather bracers are reinforced with steel strips that are carefully concealed by the leather covering. Decorating the edges of each bracer are a dozen small metal studs, each one carved in the shape of a skull. Leather strings can be drawn tight and tied to secure the bracers to the wearer's arms.

Appraise Information: DC 15. This is a common item frequently worn by evil rogues and assassins. There are no markings or distinguishing features to separate these bracers from the hundreds of identical sets that can be found in almost any city in the land.

Value: 4 gp (3 gp for the bracers, 1 gp for the construction and decoration).

Special Rules: None.

SPELLCASTER'S BRACERS

Appearance: Made of cloth and leather, these black bracers are quite ordinary in appearance and there is little reason that anyone would look twice at them. Those that do take the time to examine them, though, discover that each one includes a small pocket that runs up the inside of the wearer's arm. By flicking his wrist, the wearer can cause any one, small item that is held inside the pocket to drop down into his open hand.

Appraise Information: DC 12. These bracers were designed specifically for the spellcasters that rely upon material components.

Special Rules: Created for spellcasters, these bracers allow a caster to reduce the casting time of a spell that requires a single, small material component by one step. This feature may be used only once, and then the bracer's pocket must be reloaded with another spell component.

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A Dozen Unusual Doors

by Philip Reed

Dungeons are packed with corridor after corridor and room after room, all connected by a countless number of wooden, iron, stone, or otherwise normal doors. At times these doors are trapped, turning a dull encounter with a door into a potentially disastrous encounter.

The twelve doors that follow are not standard dungeon dressing pieces but neither are they traps waiting to be sprung. These unusual doors, manufactured by the dwarven craftsman Belkarath Mountaincrawler, are valuable treasures, each one custom-made for one of the dwarf's clients. Belkarath Mountaincrawler, dead some eighty years now, made a name for himself as a builder of unusual architecture and furniture, many pieces of which are now in palaces, museums, or lost somewhere in the campaign world.

DMs should consider using these doors sparingly – a possible way to introduce one of these doors to your campaign is to have an important NPC hire the adventurers to enter a dungeon and retrieve a Mountaincrawler original. Your players may question the logic behind dragging a door from a forgotten dungeon to a town but, if they're anything like my players, they'll jump at the chance to earn "easy" money.

Ronin Arts' "*A Dozen . . .*" series is a popular one with D20 System fans. Be sure to look over the entire line of products available in this series . . . over 20 and climbing!

CLICKING DOOR

Description: This metal door is, from all outward appearances, a typical iron door that's just a little thicker than the average door. The interior of the door is hollow and filled with numerous mechanical devices that are constantly clicking and whirring, increasing the Listen DC by 10 for anyone attempting to hear what is happening on the other side of the door. The door must be wound once a day in order to keep the gears functioning; the mechanism winds down after 24 hours.

Typical Thickness: 3 in.

Hardness: 6

Hit Points: 30 hp

Break DC: 22 (Stuck), 24 (Locked)

Value: 300 gp

DOOR OF BELLS

Description: This wooden door, lightweight and frail, has a dozen 4" circles cut into it allowing anyone to see what's on the other side of the door. In each circle is mounted a small, silver bell that chimes when the door is opened. A strong wind will also sound the bells.

Opening the door without setting off the bells requires a DC 35 Sleight of Hand check.

Typical Thickness: 1 in.

Hardness: 3

Hit Points: 14 hp

Break DC: 17 (Stuck), 19 (Locked)

Value: 250 gp

DOOR OF THE DEEP

Description: This strong wooden door is reinforced with the armored skin of the twisted "eye of the deep" aberration. One side of the door, typically the side facing out to the public, has the eye of the deep's eye and mouth mounted on it, the entire design built around terrorizing visitors. Many of these doors are a deep red in color and designed so that the creature's mouth is open, revealing its many teeth.

Typical Thickness: 4 in.

Hardness: 12

Hit Points: 80 hp

Break DC: 32 (Stuck), 34 (Locked)

Value: 1,200 gp

DRAGONSKULL DOOR

Description: Made from the bones of dragons and decorated with the skulls of young wyrmlings, these doors were made popular during the dragon wars of the last century. Dragon slayers the world over delivered the skeletal remains of their kills to Mountaincrawler and his assistants so that dragonskull doors, a very prestigious war trophy, could be manufactured.

Mountaincrawler never supplied his own materials for the construction of these doors and, due to the differences in the various slain dragons, each door is unique in appearance.

The information below is for a standard dragonskull door. Extremely rare doors, twice as thick and sturdy as this example, have been encountered – such doors are easily worth four times the amount stated below.

Many, many royal members consider it a true honor to have dragonskull doors installed in the public areas of their homes. Most of these doors were single door designs though a few double doors have been encountered.

Typical Thickness: 2 in.

Hardness: 5

Hit Points: 25 hp

Break DC: 24 (Stuck), 26 (Locked)

Value: 400 gp

DWARVEN TREASURY DOOR OF BLESSED STONE

Description: This stone door, thicker and heavier than most stone doors found in castles or dungeons, is easily identified – both sides of the door feature the sculpture of a dwarven face carved out of the stone. Mountaincrawler used these doors to express his respect for his ancestors and carved the sculptures in honor of his family history – each face is that of an important member in Mountaincrawler’s family chain. Dwarven priests blessed each door though it has now been so many years that the magical effect of the blessing has worn off of the doors.

Typical Thickness: 5 in.

Hardness: 10

Hit Points: 65 hp

Break DC: 30 (Stuck), 30 (Locked)

Value: 575 gp

EMERALD AND STEEL DOOR

Description: Slightly taller and wider than a standard dungeon door, the emerald and steel doors manufactured by Mountaincrawler were originally constructed for the temple guarded by the paladin Kediavudd Martange. A dozen doors were built and delivered, each one carried to the temple by a stone giant slave of the dwarven kings of old. These doors are mostly solid

steel and are covered with six emerald sheets on each side. The locks are of an outstanding quality – the keys are long lost.

Typical Thickness: 2 in.

Hardness: 10

Hit Points: 60 hp

Break DC: 32 (Stuck), 35 (Locked)

Value: 900 gp

GLOWING DOOR

Description: Manufactured from sheets of glow steel, a strange metal found deep underground, this heavy door gives off a faint light at all times. Glowing doors were used as the exterior entrances to dwarven strongholds. Glowing doors are easily found, many of them available in large city marketplaces.

Typical Thickness: 2 in.

Hardness: 12

Hit Points: 60 hp

Break DC: 29 (Stuck), 32 (Locked)

Value: 160 gp

KING’S JEWEL DOOR

Description: Mountaincrawler is known to have crafted seven of these doors during his career. Each door, made of stone mined deep in the Underdark, is reinforced with adamantine bands wrapping completely around it. Set into the stone, and the metal, are dozens of valuable gemstones – the exact selection of gemstones used varies between the doors. The door’s lock is a metal sculpture of a shield, the keyhole in the exact center of the shield.

At this time, the location of only one of these doors is known – the other six remain lost and waiting to be found. The owner of the one known door, Gerald Hutchinson, has offered a reward of 2,000 gp per door delivered to him. Hutchinson hopes to find all seven doors and have them installed in his castle.

Typical Thickness: 4 in.

Hardness: 8

Hit Points: 60 hp

Break DC: 30 (Stuck), 30 (Locked)

Value: 2,000 gp

MOUNTAINCRAWLER'S DOOR No. 9

Description: This heavy wooden door, 8 feet tall and constructed of thick planks secured together with iron bars, is decorated with twelve small rubies and the carved image of a hammer. This door was one of Mountaincrawler's most popular doors, its functionality and strength increased by iron rods running crosswise through the planks. Of all of Mountaincrawler's unusual doors, this is the most commonly seen design.

Typical Thickness: 2 in.

Hardness: 6

Hit Points: 30 hp

Break DC: 25 (Stuck), 27 (Locked)

Value: 225 gp

OBSIDIAN DOOR

Description: This frail door is manufactured from volcanic glass plates that are mounted to an iron frame. It is almost possible to make out details through the dark glass (DC 30 Spot check to determine the rough layout of the room on the opposite side of the door) though it's easier for most just to smash their way through the door. Obsidian doors are usually found with chips and slight imperfections – a perfect obsidian door would be worth twice the value listed below.

Typical Thickness: 1 in.

Hardness: 2

Hit Points: 10 hp

Break DC: 15 (Stuck), 15 (Locked)

Value: 175 gp

REINFORCED IRON DOOR

Description: Though most of Mountaincrawler's door designs were strange or ornamental in nature, he did make a few door designs that were a lot more average. This iron door is reinforced with additional metal bars that run horizontally across the door and a stone center. Many of these doors featured a mounted sculpture or some other form of ornamentation but this particular door is quite plain looking.

Typical Thickness: 2 in.

Hardness: 14

Hit Points: 80 hp

Break DC: 32 (Stuck), 34 (Locked)

Value: 120 gp

WINGED DOOR OF OPPRESSION

Description: For a decade, Mountaincrawler was held by the vile necromancer Ziramond, and forced to construct doors for the necromancer's foul fortress. Carefully watched by the necromancer's minions, Mountaincrawler's attempts at sabotage frequently failed. Once freed by his people, Mountaincrawler led an assault on the fortress and managed to destroy the necromancer, his followers, and most of the evil doors.

This one door, standing seven feet tall and decorated with the preserved wings of a giant bat, is the one that managed to get away. Today it is a highly sought after treasure, worth more than any other known work of the master craftsman.

Except for the cosmetic features, this door is otherwise identical to a common stone door.

Typical Thickness: 4 in.

Hardness: 8

Hit Points: 60 hp

Break DC: 28 (Stuck), 28 (Locked)

Value: 6,000 gp

A Dozen Unusual Phylacteries

by Philip Reed

Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook



Inspired by a thread on EnWorld (visit www.enworld.org for all your d20 and OGL discussion needs), *A Dozen Unusual Phylacteries* presents twelve different lich's phylacteries, each one designed to inspire a DM. Before diving into the phylacteries, I'd like to take a moment to present the text on phylacteries as it appears in the SRD.

An integral part of becoming a lich is creating a magic phylactery in which the character stores its life force. As a rule, the only way to get rid of a lich for sure is to destroy its phylactery. Unless its phylactery is located and destroyed, a lich reappears 1d10 days after its apparent death.

Each lich must make its own phylactery, which requires the Craft Wondrous Item feat. The character must be able to cast spells and have a caster level of 11th or higher. The phylactery costs 120,000 gp and 4,800 XP to create and has a caster level equal to that of its creator at the time of creation.

The most common form of phylactery is a sealed metal box containing strips of parchment on which magical phrases have been transcribed. The box is Tiny and has 40 hit points, hardness 20, and a break DC of 40.

Other forms of phylacteries can exist, such as rings, amulets, or similar items.

It is the last line – “*Other forms of phylacteries can exist, such as rings, amulets, or similar items.*” – that is of importance to this PDF. If a lich's phy-

lactery may be something other than a sealed metal box, why would a lich waste its time on such a dull, obvious phylactery? After all, the phylactery is the foul creature's most important connection to immortality. It just stands to reason that the lich is going to invest some time, effort, and creativity into the creation of its phylactery. As a DM, though, you likely don't have the amount of free time that you'd like to devote to the creation of a phylactery. That's where *A Dozen Unusual Phylacteries* comes in.

Enjoy!

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Philip Reed has been working professionally in the roleplaying game industry since 1995. In that time he has worked for such companies as West End Games, *Scrye Magazine*, and Steve Jackson Games. Today Philip spends his days at home running Ronin Arts, writing and designing new games, and currently constructing a teardrop trailer. To learn more please visit www.philipreed.com and www.roninarts.com. The official Ronin Arts fan forum can be found at www.raforums.com.

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The Phylacteries

AN UNMARKED GRAVE

The phylactery of the dark creature known as Usk'dynn, a once-human sorcerer of great power, is an unmarked grave. The grave, filled with scraps of parchment upon which Usk'dynn scribed his lifeforce, is located in a quiet cemetery several miles from a lonely, oft-overlooked village to the east of one of the world's largest cities. The cemetery houses over fifty corpses, twenty of which lie in unmarked graves. Usk'dynn selected this particular cemetery because, unknown to others, it is the resting place of his mother (whom he slew in a fit of anger at the tender age of 6).

Over the past few months, the dark evil permanently embedded within Usk'dynn's phylactery has started to have strange effects on the cemetery. Once each month, during a full moon, a wave of negative energy blasts forth from the phylactery, rippling through the ground and causing minor tremors within ten miles of the unmarked grave. Each time this energy is released a nearby corpse is animated, becoming either a zombie or a skeleton depending on how much time has passed since the corpse was laid to rest. Today there are a dozen undead creatures in the cemetery, each still in its grave but slowly clawing its way to the surface. What will happen when these undead break free of their graves, and how much longer the phylactery can continue to expel this dark power, is anyone's guess.

To destroy the phylactery the grave will need to be dug up and the scraps of parchment scattered to the wind.

THE BLACKHEART SHIELD

This small metal +2 shield is a deep black in color and decorated with a red circular symbol surrounded by arcane writing. Perfectly normal in appearance, the shield is actually the phylactery of Erinau Talvaaq, a half-orc cleric that sacrificed his chance at eternal happiness for the

power of lichdom. Talvaaq was present during the shield's construction and inscribed the secrets of his lifeforce on two separate steel plates that were fused together to create the shield, sealing the secrets between the two metal plates.

Known as the Blackheart Shield, this vile object soon became an item of legend as it was carried into battle by Talvaaq's most powerful minions. The shield is in constant communication with the lich and no matter how much distance is between them, when the shield is grasped by anyone Talvaaq can see through the eyes of the shield's bearer. Additionally, the shield acts as a conduit for Talvaaq's spells – the lich can cast any spell as if he were standing in the exact location as the shield's current position.

The Blackheart Shield is immune to damage and can only be destroyed by bringing it into direct contact with Talvaaq's body. For that reason, the lich never willingly comes within 10 miles of the shield though it is possible that brave heroes will find a way to return the shield to its creator.

CHAMBER OF ETERNAL LIFE

Sinister Nalgauth, once a cleric of the god of pain and misery, traded away his entire family for dark power granted directly from his deity. Nalgauth, in his madness and greed, pushed things too far and challenged his god to combat, losing in a split second event that few would describe as a battle of any sort. Sinister Nalgauth was not destroyed in the battle but he was battered and beaten, the god laughing at the weakness of his once-servant before throwing Nalgauth into the nether realms of nothingness. In order to regain his power and strength, Sinister Nalgauth swore his allegiance to a demonic entity that he met in the nether realms and then used that power to become a lich. Today, Nalgauth's sole purpose is to build an army powerful enough to slay the god of pain and misery.

During the procedure that changed him into a lich, Nalgauth managed to tap into a small demiplane – a single chamber from which nothing but

solid darkness emanated – that to this day remains hidden behind a veil of tangible lies. The lies appear as a swirling mass of shadows, almost liquid-like in nature, in a closet in the lich's buried fortress. The only way to destroy the phylactery, which is actually a small stone cube standing on an altar in the demiplane chamber, is to bring the cube back into the lich's fortress and touch it to Nalgauth's forehead. The cube is tied to the demiplane, though, and if it is on the material plane for more than 10 rounds without touching the lich's forehead it automatically teleports back to its resting place.

The phylactery drains the Strength and Constitution of anyone touching or carrying it, inflicting 1 point of drain to each attribute each round that it is held (no save allowed).

CLOCKWORK CROW ON THE HORIZON

Far removed from the challenges of the material worlds there exists Clock, a demiplane made entirely of clockwork contraptions. Clock, created when the ancient gods of the *mechanus* (see *Construct Mechanus* and *Possessors*) infused a perfect sphere with sentience, has modeled its denizens in its image so that not only is the land itself made of clockwork machines but also the creatures that inhabit it are clockwork entities. Today, this lawful neutral plane does all it can to remain outside of the conflicts of the numerous planes, preferring a solitary existence to a life of constant war.

Unfortunately for Clock, planar hunters sometimes invade the demiplane in search of sport and slave labor. Bolkthrad Dangha, a powerful human wizard, paid such hunters to bring him a clockwork crow so that he could meld his lifeforce into its form, granting him an always moving, never tiring phylactery to better keep him safe after his transformation into a lich.

The Clockwork Crow on the Horizon, as it is called by bards and sages, constantly flies toward the setting sun, never tiring and never setting down to rest. Within the construct's body is Dangha's lower jaw, sacrificed as the wizard turned himself into a lich. Dangha has not seen his phylactery since it was released but he worries little about its state, comfortable in the

thought that such a small, always moving object will be most difficult to locate (especially since Dangha used powerful magic to surround the clockwork crow in a field of arcane energy that makes it almost impossible to detect).

DEAD TREE

When a dark elf wizard (now called the Unnamed Destroyer) turned to lichdom he sought out a hiding place for his phylactery, searching the world over for a location that he could be confident would never be found. After months of searching, and dozens of slain minions, the Unnamed Destroyer discovered a well-concealed druid's grove far from any type of civilization. Under cover of night the Unnamed Destroyer entered the grove, quickly slaying the guardian and its summoned animal defenders.

Today the grove is all but destroyed, the beautiful green plants and quiet animals replaced by black, crumbling roots and rotting corpses. All that remains standing in the grove is a single, dead tree, the Unnamed Destroyer's hidden phylactery. Unfortunately for the lich, the grove no longer looks natural and it is starting to attract the attention of powerful druids and rangers. As the Unnamed Destroyer prepares forces to defend the tree it is only a matter of time before someone is sent to investigate the cause of the grove's twisted, foul state.

To destroy the phylactery the tree will need to be destroyed, most likely by setting it on fire (though chopping it down and hacking it into pieces should also do the trick).

GAUNTLET OF TERRIBLE PAIN

Crafted from the right arm of a destroyed iron golem, the phylactery of Kalran the Sleepless appears as a gauntlet that can be worn by most Medium humanoids. Kalran the Sleepless wears the gauntlet at all times, though, so that he can both ensure its safety and take advantage of the item's special properties.

When worn, the gauntlet grants its wearer a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength, a fear aura identical to that of a lich (if the wearer already possesses a fear aura the ability's range is

extended to 200 ft. and it affects creatures with 10 or fewer HD), and the spell-like ability to cast *finger of death* twice each day as a 20th-level caster.

The gauntlet can be destroyed both by reducing it to 0 hit points or by chopping off the arm of whomever is wearing it (at which point the gauntlet explodes in a burst of negative energy that inflicts 10d8 points of damage to all good-aligned characters and creatures within 100-feet and grants 20 bonus hit points to every undead creature within the affected area).

SEVER ARM [CRITICAL]

You critical hit can cut off an enemy's arm.

Prerequisites: Str 16, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (Slashing Weapon), Weapon Focus (Slashing Weapon).

Benefit: Upon confirmation of a critical hit you may forgo additional damage in favor of cutting your opponent's arm off. The target must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 HD + Str modifier) or his arm is severed. If the opponent fails the save, he drops whatever he is holding, is stunned for one round, and loses the use of that arm for any action. The target then suffers 2 points of Constitution damage each round from blood loss until he is healed with a *cure critical wounds* or a Heal check (DC 23) is applied to stop the bleeding. A severed arm can be reattached with a *regenerate* spell. Obviously, if your opponent does not have arms, this feat cannot be used against them. This feat only works against a creature of no more than one size category larger than you.

Critical Feats were first introduced by Reality Deviant Publications in *Critical Feats*, a PDF collection of 40 feats designed to add more variety to your critical hits.

THE LEANING CRUCIFIX

Before he became a lich, Drokest was once crucified by his enemies and left to die on a makeshift crucifix after he and his unholy forces lost the Battle of Stars. It was only through the efforts of his loyal followers that the sorcerer survived, though the event filled him with a deep, overwhelming fear of his own death. Many decades later, when Drokest was a feeble man near-death, the sorcerer delved into the art of lichdom, creating for himself a phylactery out of a crucifix (so that he would always be reminded him of his earlier failure).

For centuries the phylactery stood unguarded, alone in the caves beneath the Field of Desperation, completely safe from all that would strive to bring about the destruction of the evil lich. Only through a bad stroke of luck was the secret of Drokest's phylactery discovered, the elven ranger known as Helka Verkthia learning of the secret from a former servant of the lich. Through spies and agents spread throughout the land, Drokest learned of the betrayal just in time to reach the caves beneath the Field of Desperation just as the ranger and his allies were preparing to destroy the phylactery. The battle was fierce, with powerful magic and quick steel quickly destroying many of the lich's undead minions. At the last possible instant, just as the ranger and his allies were pulling the crucifix down, Drokest managed to defeat the invaders, slaying all of them in a powerful burst of arcane energy that cost the lich an arm and an eye. Unable to repair the damaged phylactery, the crucifix has remained near-destruction for decades – the smallest force could now completely destroy the lich.

The phylactery has been reduced to hardness 15 and has only 17 hit points. In its damaged condition it has no special abilities and, in fact, causes the lich constant pain – Drokest suffers a –2 penalty to all die rolls due to the weakened nature of his phylactery and the constant drain the item inflicts upon him. Drokest has attempt to repair the phylactery on many occasions but so far all of his efforts have been for nothing – the crucifix remains damaged.

STANDING STONES OF AMA'KALVESK

Several centuries ago the Witch King Ama'Kalvesk made an unholy pact with an extraplanar entity known only as Fog. In return for his soul and the souls of one thousand of his followers, Ama'Kalvesk was granted near-divine power which he used to enslave tens of thousands. At the battle of Righteous Reborn, the Witch King was slain, but not before he used his powers to turn hundreds of enemy soldiers into misshapen standing stones. Scattered across the ancient battlefield, today these stones are little more than a reminder of the terror once inflicted upon the lands by the Witch King.

At least, that is all they were until the once-great paladin Chartl turned from his path and set off on the path of evil. As he aged, Chartl the Fallen took action to turn himself into a terrible lich, eventually transforming one of these ancient stones into his phylactery, hollowing out the center of the stone and inscribing arcane sigils that still today trap his lifeforce safely within the enigmatic, arcane standing stone. Anyone that comes within 25-feet of the phylactery must make a successful DC 30 Will save or be shaken for as long as they remain within the stone's area of influence. Anyone of a good alignment actually touching the stone, with their hands or a weapon, immediately suffers 3d6 points of negative energy damage – no save allowed – while undead and those of an evil alignment gain a +4 morale boost to attack, damage, and saving throws for 2d10 rounds.

The phylactery can be destroyed by directly damaging it (though anyone using a weapon on the phylactery must contend with the effects described above) or if an elf maiden kisses the standing stone when the noonday sun is directly overhead.

THE SEVEN CHESTS OF DESPAIR

The lich Thomosther Beidrill was, in life, a powerful wizard known the world over for his skills as a creator of arcane objects. It should come as no surprise that when it came time to

construct his phylactery Beidrill invested all of his skills into the task, creating a powerful, confusing set of items designed to make the act of interfering with his phylactery so dangerous that even the most foolish would ever attempt such a thing.

Beidrill built seven chests, each one two feet square and locked (DC 35). Unfortunately for those that would attempt to open the locks, each chest is trapped (CR 7 *blade barrier* trap) and, worst of all, each chest is magically tied to the others so that any time that the chests are more than 2-feet apart a second trap (CR 7 *acid fog* trap) is set off (the chests are immune to the effects of the traps). The bits of paper and bone that hold Beidrill's lifeforce are held within only one of the seven chests at any time but a powerful, permanent teleport spell transports the paper and bone randomly between the seven chests once each minute – to destroy the phylactery all seven chests must be completely destroyed.

Beidrill's phylactery has no unusual effects.

EVIL DMs TAKE NOTE

Particularly cruel DMs may wish to make the seven chests even more dangerous, most likely by using a different trap in each chest. For those of you that really want to have fun with your players, Mark Gedak recommends making the chests teleport back to each other the instant one is set down. (This could make it especially difficult to steal any one of the chests.)

TOME OF DARK SECRETS

The lich Arrak of Beladriss created his phylactery from one of his arcane tomes, a 3-foot tall book built of wood and steel and packed with over 100-pages (each one made from the flesh off of a human's back). The first twenty pages of the tome are devoted to the arcane text that binds Arrak's lifeforce, while the remaining pages are,

at first glance, blank. Only under the light of a new moon does the text on the pages become visible – each page is a secret of power that can be read to gain temporary abilities. Anyone reading a page of the book (requiring fifteen minutes to properly study the text) that makes a successful DC 30 Will save gains a special ability for 1d4+1 days (the exact abilities hidden within the book can be anything the DM wishes to grant Arrak). If this Will save fails, though, the reader suffers 1 point of Wisdom drain, 1d4 points of Intelligence drain, and permanently loses 2d6 hit points.

Arrak of Beladriss keeps the tome hidden in his private library where it rests with hundreds of other books. To permanently destroy the phylactery the first twenty pages must be torn out – one by one – and each one burned separately. If the book is destroyed in any other way it returns, intact and unharmed, within 2d4 days of its supposed destruction.

TOWER OF SOLID STONE

In the jungle of the southern wastelands there stands a crimson-colored tower without doors or windows (the only entrance was a tunnel beneath the surface). Fashioned from a single piece of rock thrust up from the ground below, the tower is said to have been painted in the blood of the slaves that carved it. For over a thousand years this tower was used by the servants of a demonic lord as a staging ground for their assaults on material plane denizens and it wasn't until a band of paladins, clerics, and other holy warriors lay siege to the tower for sixty years. While the demonic servants were eventually driven from the world, the tower had become a thing of power that could not be destroyed.

Recently, the lich Honnarmet has turned the tower into his phylactery. By completely filling the tower with unconscious bodies, and sealing them into place with *flesh to stone*, Honnarmet has safely entombed his lifeforce within a tower of solid stone, resulting in a phylactery that is more durable than most (Colossal size, 300 hit points, hardness 50, and break DC 65). While destroying the tower through brute force is one option, it could also be eradicated by scrubbing all of the blood from its surface (a task that would

take several thousand man hours of time).

For as long as the tower stands, all evil-aligned and undead characters and creatures within sight of the tower are energized by its presence, gaining a +6 profane bonus to attack and damage rolls and +2 turn resistance. Additionally, the tower unleashes a destructive burst of negative energy once each hour, the energy inflicting 5d6 points of negative energy damage to any good-aligned characters and creatures within one-mile of the tower. Even if the tower is destroyed it will retain this negative energy burst ability – the dark power of the tower has seeped into the ground and is now a permanent feature of this location.

THE TWISTED STAFF

What was once a *staff of necromancy*, already an item of evil power, was rebuilt by the Bringer of Suffering as his phylactery; the vessel within which he concealed his lifeforce when he became an agent of evil and greed. The process strengthened the staff's power, enabling it to recharge quickly and easily (whenever the staff comes into contact with a good-aligned character or creature the target must make a successful Will save or suffer 1d4 points of Constitution damage – the staff gains a number of charges equal to the level of the affected subject) and also infusing it with six more necromancy spells (*control undead*, *finger of death*, *symbol of weakness*, *horrid wilting*, *energy drain*, and *soul bind*), each of which uses 5 charges.

The Bringer of Suffering keeps his staff with him at all times and as long as it is within his grasp he gains 50 bonus hit points, a +10 profane bonus to AC, a +6 profane bonus to all saving throws, and his fear aura affects characters and creatures with 8 or fewer HD.

Destroying the staff releases a brutal blast of negative energy that causes the Bringer of Suffering's fear aura to permanently bind itself to whomever destroyed the staff. This fear aura ability can only be removed through divine intervention.

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A Dozen Unusual Weapons

by Michael Hammes

Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons®
Player's Handbook



Introduction

You can never have enough weapons to choose from, at least that's what I'm told. So this PDF presents a dozen weapons, both mundane and magical, that are a bit astray of the norm (even if they may initially appear as though they are just another one of some common kind). So, without further ado, here they are.

BALL AND CHAIN

Appearance: This item is nothing more than an iron ball connected to a sturdy iron chain, which in turn is attached to a circular handle wrapped in leather.

Appraise Information: DC 19. A favorite of the Aarsykan arenas, the ball and chain is considered to be a highly specialized, and entertaining, gladiatorial weapon. Few sights compare to the violent beauty of a trained ball and chain fighter as he swings a pair of the weapons in constantly varying, dizzying, and fluid circles and arcs.

Value: 4 gp (4 gp for one ball and chain; they are usually sold as a set.)

Special Rules: A ball and chain has the following statistics:

Type: Exotic Light Melee Weapon

Cost: 4 gp

Dmg (S): 1d4

Dmg (M): 1d6

Critical: x2

Range Increment: 20 ft.

Weight: 3 lb.

Type: Bludgeoning

A ball and chain grants a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls made to disarm an opponent (including the opposed attack roll to avoid being disarmed if such an attempt fails).

At the DM's option, the ball and chain can also be a take-off on the spiked chain, except that instead of spikes and causing piercing damage, it has metal balls and causes bludgeoning damage.

BARDIC BLADE

Appearance: This finely crafted short sword has been fashioned with delicate proportions. As you examine it more closely, you notice that the blade has been etched with the image of a lute next to the creator's mark.

Appraise Information: DC 22. A successful Craft (Weaponsmith) check (DC 20) reveals the creator's mark is that of Danyel of Baley-on-Reve, a renowned weaponsmith. The lute itself may be the mark of some other individual, most likely a bard, but it is too common a symbol to identify precisely which one. The blade is obviously of masterwork quality while the delicate proportions seem to suggest a custom fit for a female owner.

Value: 22,310 gp (10 gp for short sword, 300 gp for masterwork, 22,000 gp for enchantment costs).

Special Rules: The weapon is a *bardic blade*. Although this particular *blade* is a short sword, other known bardic blades include daggers, longswords, and rapiers.

This particular *bardic blade* is a +2 *harmonic short sword* (see **Harmonic Weapons** boxed text). Once per day, when wielded in combat by a bard with at least 3 ranks in a Perform skill, the bard may alter the *bardic blade*'s hum to inspire courage in his or her allies as the bardic music ability.

Altering the *blade*'s hum is a standard action; the bard "tunes" the *blade* to produce the inspire courage effect. Once tuned, the hum of the *blade* inspires courage at the wielding bard's level (i.e. +2 morale bonus at 8th level) as long as the bard wields the *blade* in combat (meaning the bard is actively using the blade to attack, or defend, against foes; in general, this means for the length of the encounter) and for 5 rounds thereafter. This use of the *bardic blade* does not count against a bard's daily limit on bardic music performances.

Moderate evocation; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *shout*, *greater shout*, or

sound burst, creator must be a bard with at least three ranks in Perform; Price 22,310 gp; Cost 11,310 gp + 880 XP.

BLACK PUDDING BLADE

Appearance: Superficially, this unusual weapon looks much like a large serrated dagger, except that the blade appears to be made of a black, glistening metal while the handle is made of glass.

Appraise Information: DC 24. Crafted in the weapon laboratories of the drow, black pudding blades first came to light on the surface world when the assassin Kul'tharsi employed one to slay King Doral XII in his bedchamber after having used the blade's caustic abilities to eat through the exterior wall of the king's bedchamber. Since that time several other black pudding blades have surfaced, always in the hands of lone assassins.

HARMONIC WEAPONS

I always found it strange that the standard rules didn't have rules for sonic energy-based weapons except for thundering, which for some reason does 1d8 points of sonic damage when flaming burst, icy burst, and shocking burst cause 1d10 points of fire/cold/electricity damage. In any case, here they are:

Harmonic: Upon command, a harmonic weapon is enveloped in sonic energy and gives off a constant, faint hum. The sonic energy does not harm the wielder. The effect remains until another command is given. A harmonic weapon deals an extra 1d6 points of sonic damage on a successful hit. Bows, crossbows, and slings so crafted bestow the sonic energy upon their ammunition.

Moderate evocation; CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor and *shout*, *greater shout*, or *sound burst*; Price +1 bonus.

Harmonic Burst: A harmonic burst weapon functions as a harmonic weapon that also explodes with sonic energy upon striking a successful critical hit. The sonic energy does not harm the wielder. In addition to the extra sonic damage from the harmonic ability (see above), a harmonic burst weapon deals an extra 1d10 points of sonic damage on a successful critical hit. If the weapon's critical multiplier is x3, add an extra 2d10 points of sonic damage instead, and if the multiplier is x4, add an extra 3d10 points of sonic damage. Bows, crossbows, and slings so crafted bestow the sonic energy upon their ammunition.

Even if the harmonic ability is not active, the weapon still deals its extra sonic damage on a successful critical hit.

Strong evocation; CL 12th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor and *shout* or *greater shout*; Price +2 bonus.

Value: 30,315 gp (25,000 for enchantment costs, 315 for masterwork, 5,000 gp for rarity).

Special Rules: A *black pudding blade* is effectively a +2 *scimitar* that deals an additional 2d6 points of acid damage on a successful hit. The weapon deals 21 points of damage per round to wooden or metal objects, but the weapon must remain in contact with the object for 1 full round to deal this damage.

Moderate evocation; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *hold monster*; one cubic foot of black pudding; Price 25,315 gp; Cost 12,815 gp + 1,000 XP.

DYLURVIAN GAUNTLET

Appearance: This steel gauntlet is unusual in the fact that it features a series of sharp blades extending from the top and forearm portions of the gauntlet.

Appraise Information: DC 17. Worn by the Dylurvian palace guards, also known as

the King's Grasp, during the reign of Cartor the Reviled, these gauntlets have become a reviled symbol of oppression and fear. Used freely to inflict horrific injuries upon prisoners and the innocent alike, most of these gauntlets were destroyed after the overthrow of Cartor. Open possession of such a gauntlet, or even one similar in style, in Dylurvia will earn its wearer fear and hatred, if not outright hostility.

Value: 5 gp or 105 gp (5 gp for the gauntlet, 100 gp to a collector)

Special Rules: A Dylurvian gauntlet is equal in all respects to a spiked gauntlet except that it causes slashing instead of piercing damage.

GRENYBLE FIGHTING STICKS

Appearance: These hard wooden batons are about the length of a man's forearm. They are completely bereft of decoration and look like nothing more than a pair of dowels.

CAUSTIC WEAPONS

I always found it strange that the standard rules didn't have rules for caustic (acid-based) weapons. In any case, here they are:

Caustic: Upon command, a caustic weapon is sheathed in acid. The acid does not harm the wielder. The effect remains until another command is given. A caustic weapon deals an extra 1d6 points of acid damage on a successful hit. Bows, crossbows, and slings so crafted bestow the acid energy upon their ammunition.

Moderate evocation; CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor and *acid arrow*, *acid fog*, or *glyph of warding (acid)*; Price +1 bonus.

Caustic Burst: A caustic burst weapon functions as a caustic weapon that also explodes with acid upon striking a successful critical hit. The acid does not harm the wielder. In addition to the extra acid damage from the caustic ability (see above), a caustic burst weapon deals an extra 1d10 points of acid damage on a successful critical hit. If the weapon's critical multiplier is x3, add an extra 2d10 points of acid damage instead, and if the multiplier is x4, add an extra 3d10 points of acid damage. Bows, crossbows, and slings so crafted bestow the acid energy upon their ammunition.

Even if the caustic ability is not active, the weapon still deals its extra acid damage on a successful critical hit.

Strong evocation; CL 12th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor and *acid arrow*, *acid fog*, or *glyph of warding (acid)*; Price +2 bonus.

Appraise Information: DC 18. In the Duchy of Grenyble weapons are allowed only in the hands of the nobility and their retainers; weapons, especially for the peasantry, are outlawed under penalty of death. As a result, the peasants have had to rely on other weapons for defense. As in most countries, the peasants' best weapons are their tools. However, in addition to such implements as the pitchfork, grain flail, the walking staff (quarterstaff), and sickle, the peasants of Grenyble also have developed the art of fighting with sticks such as these.

These particular sticks are made from cured walnut and are both hard and light. Easily concealed in a shirt or pair of trousers, these sticks are unlikely to get noticed by the increasingly paranoid Grenyble nobility or their henchmen.

Value: N/A (they're sticks, after all)

Special Rules: A Grenyble fighting stick has the following statistics:

Type: Simple Light Melee Weapon

Cost: N/A

Dmg (S): 1d3

Dmg (M): 1d4

Critical: x2

DISEASED WEAPONS

Diseased: Upon command, a diseased weapon becomes capable of inflicting a horrible disease upon any creature it strikes. The disease does not harm the wielder. The effect remains until another command is given. A diseased weapon inflicts the disease placed into it at the time of its creation (as per the *contagion* spell; saving throw varies by disease) in addition to its standard damage on a successful hit. Bows and crossbows so crafted bestow the disease upon their ammunition.

Moderate necromancy; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *contagion*; Price +2 bonus.

Range Increment: 5 ft.

Weight: 1 lb.

Type: Bludgeoning

Although a single stick can be used, most sticks are used in pairs.

HAMMER OF VILTHUS

Appearance: This warhammer looks to be in sorry shape. Discolored and pitted metal is highlighted by large spots of rust while the leather handle is covered in not one, but two kinds of mold.

Appraise Information: DC 23. This horrible weapon is one of a set of 13 crafted by the high priest of Vilthus, demigod of disease. Given to loyal members of the church, it is thought that today eight of the hammers are lost to the ages, two are in the hands of private collectors, and three are in the hands of members of the Church of Vilthus.

Value: 18,312 gp (18,000 gp for enchantment costs, 300 gp for masterwork quality, 12 gp for warhammer).

Special Rules: A *Hammer of Vilthus* is a +1 diseased warhammer (see the **Diseased Weapons** boxed text).

Moderate necromancy; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *poison*; Price 18,312 gp; Cost 9,312 gp + 360 XP.

HAND CROSSBOW WITH FOLDING BLADE

Appearance: This fine hand crossbow features etchings of songbirds sitting on branches. More interesting is the fact that a thin triangular blade has been attached on a locking pivot to the bottom of the crossbow.

Appraise Information: DC 17. Judging by the quality and fine decoration, this particular crossbow was most likely owned by a wealthy individual or noble and used for birding. A Craft (weaponsmithing) check (DC 13) reveals that the attachment itself, while quite ingenious and most likely of gnomish or dwarven manufacture, is a latter addition.

Crossbow	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Type
Hand	6 gp	1	1d2	18-20/x2	Piercing
Light	7 gp	1d2	1d3	18-20/x2	Piercing
Heavy	9 gp	1d3	1d4	18-20/x2	Piercing

Value: 456 gp (100 gp for the hand crossbow, 300 gp for masterwork quality, 50 gp for the etchings, 5 gp for the mechanism, 1 gp for the blade)

Special Rules: Folding blades such as this may be attached to any crossbow according to the table above.

It is also possible to attach such a blade using a fixed post (i.e. much like a bayonet). In such a case the blade is either held on the side of the crossbow with a sleeve or brackets, or carried on the crossbowman's person. In this case, reduce the cost by 5 gp for each crossbow.

Unfolding the blade is equivalent to drawing a weapon. Folding the blade, or attaching/detaching a separate blade, is equivalent to sheathing the weapon.

Due to the awkward nature of wielding a blade attached to a crossbow, it requires an Exotic Weapon Proficiency to wield effectively (each crossbow with blade is considered a separate type of weapon for the purposes of assigning this feat). A hand crossbow with extended blade is considered a one-handed exotic melee weapon while a light or heavy crossbow is considered a two-handed exotic melee weapon.

HOLY WATER SPRINKLER

Appearance: The top of this light mace features several evenly spaced holes. Taking a closer look you notice that the top of the mace is actually a removable lid.

Appraise Information: DC 17. While (un)holy water sprinklers are a standard feature of many a church's rites, this particular sprinkler is obviously meant for more serious business as it is quite sturdy and hefty.

Value: 10 gp (10 gp weapon cost)

Special Rules: This particular holy water sprinkler is equal in all respects to a light

mace except that it is capable of holding a vial of holy water within its hollow top. Thus, it is useful both as a ceremonial tool as well as a combat weapon.

Although holy water is generally thrown in vials, the holy water sprinkler can be used to sprinkle holy water upon an adjacent creature. This can be done in one of two ways. The first is to directly hit the creature, in which case the holy water adds its damage (see below) to the damage inflicted by the sprinkler.

The second is to simply sprinkle the holy water on the creature. Treat this as a ranged touch attack that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Any undead creature or evil outsider splashed by a holy water sprinkler takes 1 point of damage (one flask of holy water is good for a total of 8 splashes).

MANCATCHER

Appearance: This rather strange polearm features a pair of curving iron prongs with inward-facing spikes. The ends of the prongs are relatively flexible and almost touch.

Appraise Information: DC 17. Although difficult, if not impossible, to use in actual combat, a mancatcher is a favorite of many a city watchman as, once it has been placed about an individual's neck, it gives its wielder almost total control of that individual.

Value: 10 gp (10 gp weapon cost)

Special Rules: A mancatcher stick has the following statistics:

Type: Exotic Two-Handed Melee Weapon

Cost: 10 gp

Dmg (S): 1d4*/special (see below)

Dmg (M): 1d6*/special (see below)

Critical: x2/x3

Range Increment: N/A

Weight: 10 lb.

Type: Bludgeoning/Piercing

*This damage assumes that the mancatcher is being used in melee combat; i.e. is not being placed about someone's neck.

The purpose of a mancatcher is to render an individual harmless and compliant. This is achieved by slipping the iron prongs about the individual's neck. At that point, with the spikes facing in to the individual's throat, the individual has two choices: do what the wielder tells him (or her), or risk having the spikes penetrate his (or her) neck with predictably negative consequences.

The mancatcher is not designed to be used in direct combat with another individual since it relies on hitting a precise area (if you have called shot rules, feel free to adapt this weapon to work with them, although even then it should be very difficult) and the individual would have little trouble defending this area; the only way to place a mancatcher about an individual's neck is with the individual's cooperation (consider it the medieval version of "Here, put these cuffs on."), rendering the individual pinned or helpless, or catching the opponent flat-footed. Putting a mancatcher about an opponent's neck is a melee touch attack.

Once caught in the mancatcher, however, the opponent is effectively at the wielder's mercy. The wielder can control the movements and actions of the individual caught in the mancatcher by gently pressing the

weapon's spikes into the individual's neck; this usually results in compliance. In general, such damage is considered painful but superficial. Should the wielder be intent on inflicting serious harm, however, he or she may use a standard action to deliver a modified coup de grace (essentially, the wielder yanks or pushes the spikes into the trapped individual's neck).

As with a standard coup de grace, the attack automatically hits and scores a critical hit (use the values after the slash in the weapon's statistics). If the defender survives the damage, he or she must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or be immediately reduced to -1 hit points and start bleeding to death. Because the location of the coup de grace cannot be chosen, a rogue does not get to add his (or her) extra sneak attack damage.

An individual can attempt to remove the mancatcher. This requires a Strength check (DC 13) to pull the prongs far enough apart to allow the mancatcher to be slipped over the individual's head. The only problem is that the wielder will obviously try to prevent this. Thus, unless the wielder is particularly inattentive (and alone) or somehow caught off-guard and doesn't notice the trapped individual placing his (or her) hands over the prongs, the trapped individual will find himself in a heap of trouble.

INJECTING A LITTLE REALITY

I can appreciate the attempt made in the standard rules to cover every possible combat scenario. But the fact is, it simply cannot be done; there cannot be enough rules written that someone does not find an exception.

One such exception is the mancatcher and its modified coup de grace. While I have done my best to use the existing rules to convey how a mancatcher works, the fact is that what is needed in dealing with this weapon is a little common sense. And the easiest way to do that is to imagine oneself in the grasp of such a weapon. I don't know about you, but if someone were to place a bunch of spikes around my neck, I would get very compliant very quickly.

Yes, I know the PCs are awesome heroes with all kinds of hit points, but the fact is that no matter how good you are, there are situations from which you simply cannot escape, and the mancatcher is designed to be one such situation; that is why it cannot be put on someone when they are actively involved in combat, but once it is on, it is virtually impossible to escape without sustaining severe injury or death.

The easiest way to deal with this situation is to have the wielder and the trapped individual fight for control of the mancatcher using opposed Strength checks, or trip checks, or disarm checks (however the DM feels is appropriate) with the mancatcher's wielder gaining a +4 leverage bonus over the trapped individual on any such checks. Only if the trapped individual wins can he or she attempt a Strength check to escape. Of course, if the trapped individual loses the check, he or she suffers the modified coup de grace (let's face it, struggling with sharpened spikes surrounding your neck is not a good idea; one false move, one slip by either person, and it's all over for the trapped individual).

If a mancatcher is used in combat, treat it as a rather awkward polearm with the individual suffering a -4 to all attack rolls (unless the individual was crazy enough to take the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat for it).

SHARRAK'GNAH

Appearance: This massive double axe is truly impressive. Each of its two axe-heads is razor-sharp and jet-black while the haft is made of a very lightweight and hard dark wood.

Appraise Information: DC 22. Crafted by the mighty orc warlock Tar'nar'griy and blessed by the Great Shaman of the Orcs, the haft of Sharrak'Gnah (literally: Dark Reaver) is fashioned from the darkwood heart of an elven Lifetree while the axe-heads are crafted from the melted adamantine armor of King Thorak, the fallen head of clan Stonehammer.

Value: 177,060 gp (60 gp for the double axe, 300 gp for masterwork quality, 176,700 gp for enchantment costs).

Special Rules: Sharrak'Gnah is a +3 *blood-bound vorpal orc double axe* that bestows *true seeing* upon its wielder. Upon command the Sharrak'Gnah sheathes itself in *deeper darkness*, an effect that does not trouble its *true seeing* wielder.

Having been dedicated to the orcish pantheon, Sharrak'Gnah can only be wielded by

someone of orcish blood; to anyone else, the weapon appears as nothing more than a masterwork orc double axe

Strong various; CL 18th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *circle of death*, *deeper darkness*, *keen edge*, *true seeing*; Price 177,060gp; Cost 88,860 gp + 7,329 XP.

BLOOD-BOUND WEAPONS

A *blood-bound* weapon reveals its magical powers only to, and thus can only be properly wielded by, those who have the proper blood (racial or direct line of descent) from the race or individual for whom the weapon was originally created; only a member of the race (half-blood or full blood) or a direct descendant of the individual for whom the weapon was originally created may make full use of such a weapon, for all others a *blood-bound* weapon functions as an ordinary masterwork weapon.

Moderate enchantment; CL 7th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *bleed*, a vial of blood from the individual or race for whom the weapon is being created; Price +1 bonus.

SCORPION BLADE

Appearance: The gold and gem-studded cross-guard of this razor-sharp silvery scimitar is in the shape of two scorpions; the scorpions face the blade and their stinger-tipped tails curve outward.

Appraise Information: DC 22. This fabulous weapon once belonged to the Master of the Cult of Tanguyt, a vicious cult of assassins that preyed mercilessly upon the Desert Kingdoms for several centuries from their mountain bases; waking to find a dagger placed upon one's pillow (the cult's sign) was enough to shake all but the stoutest hearts.

Fortunately, the cult is believed wiped out by the forces of Anwar Khan, who besieged

TOXIC WEAPONS

Toxic: Upon command, a toxic weapon is covered in poison. The poison does not harm the wielder. The effect remains until another command is given. A toxic weapon deals poison damage (1d10 Con/1d10 Con, save DC 16) in addition to its standard damage on a successful hit. Bows and crossbows so crafted bestow the poison upon their ammunition.

Moderate necromancy; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *poison*; Price +4 bonus.

and destroyed every one of their known mountain fortresses as his mighty horde conquered the Desert Kingdoms. Nevertheless, it would unwise for the possessor of this weapon to flaunt his or her find.

Value: 108,315 gp (98,000 gp for enchantment costs, 300 gp for masterwork quality, 15 gp for scimitar, 10,000 gp for rarity).

Special Rules: The scorpion blade is a +3 *toxic scimitar* (see the **Toxic Weapons** boxed text).

Moderate necromancy; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *poison*; Price 98,315 gp; Cost 49,315 gp + 1,960 XP.

TWO-BLADED SWORD

Appearance: This interesting weapon appears to be two longswords joined together at their pommels. In fact, upon closer inspection, it appears that the two swords are separable.

Appraise Information: DC 18. If one sword is good, two must be better. This was no doubt the precept that gave rise to the two-handed sword. This particular specimen is even more exotic than normal weapons of its kind since the two blades are in fact separable; the pommels of the two blades interlock allowing the sword's owner to either fight with both blades attached or separated.

Value: 150 gp (100 gp for the two-bladed sword, 50 gp for the interlocking pommels)

Special Rules: When attached, the sword functions exactly as a two-bladed sword. Separating the two pommels produces two blades equivalent to longswords. Separating the pommels is equivalent to drawing a weapon; attaching the pommels is equivalent to sheathing a weapon.

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