

# DUNGEON FANTASY™

POWERED BY GURPS®



## MAGIC ITEMS 2

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

# NEVER ENOUGH LOOT!

Heroes in the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* get up to all kinds of shenanigans, but “killing monsters and taking their stuff” is a fair capsule description. That’s only as interesting as the treasure, of course – and delvers find no riches more fascinating than the *magical* kind.

*Dungeon Fantasy Magic Items 2* provides 44 rare or unique artifacts for the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*. Each gets a full page that includes:

- *Flavor Text*. A poem, quote, saying, or vignette offering clues as to the artifact’s origins, capabilities, or “personality.”
- *Art*. A full-color illustration showing what the thing looks like.
- *Description*. Full rules for the item’s properties, mundane and supernatural . . . and sometimes, its pitfalls.
- *Statistics*. Weight, power-item capacity, and suggested sell price – along with any other details needed to use the artifact in play.
- *Advice*. A few words on how to introduce the item into the campaign and handle it once it’s there.

Because the best magic items are never generic!

*Dungeon Fantasy Magic Items 2* requires the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* or – as that game is “Powered by **GURPS**” – **GURPS**. It isn’t a sequel to *Dungeon Fantasy Magic Items* and doesn’t require that book.



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By Sean Punch

Cover Art and Interior Illustrations by  
Rick Hershey/Fat Goblin Games

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JACKSON  
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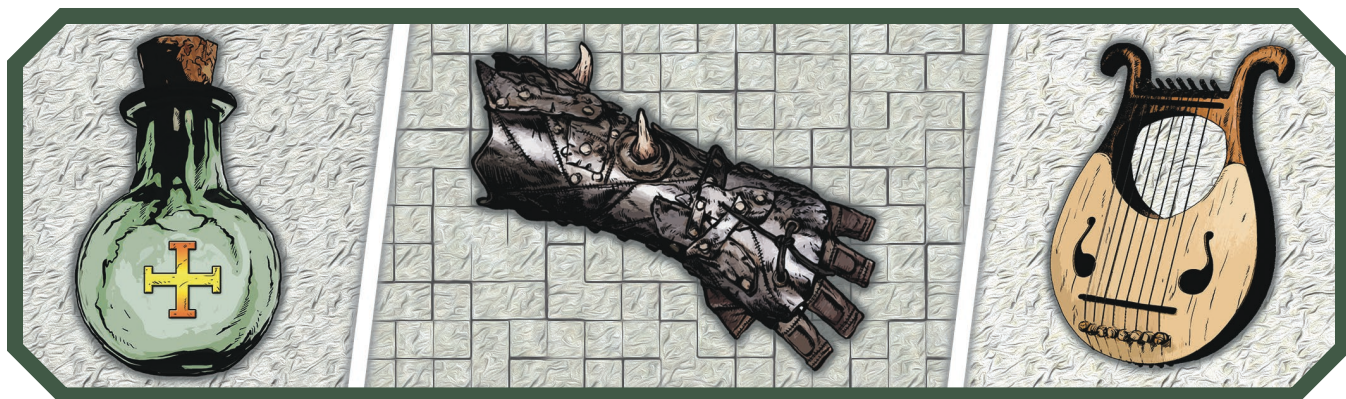
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Written by SEAN PUNCH

Cover Art and Interior Illustrations by RICK HERSHEY/FAT GOBLIN GAMES

**GURPS** System Design ■ STEVE JACKSON  
**GURPS** Line Editor ■ SEAN PUNCH  
**GURPS** Project Manager ■ STEVEN MARSH  
Production Manager ■ SABRINA GONZALEZ  
Director of Sales ■ ROSS JEPSON

Production Artist & Indexer ■ NIKOLA VRTIS  
Cover Design ■ ALEX FERNANDEZ  
& NIKOLA VRTIS  
Prepress Checker ■ SUSAN BUENO  
Page Design ■ PHIL REED & JUSTIN DE WITT

President/Editor-in-Chief ■ STEVE JACKSON  
Chief Executive Officer ■ PHILIP REED  
Chief Creative Officer ■ SAM MITSCHKE  
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Reviewer: Steven Marsh

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# STEVE JACKSON GAMES



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## ABOUT THE *DUNGEON FANTASY* ROLEPLAYING GAME

The *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game* is compatible with **GURPS**. Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of players of these and all its games. We can be reached by email at [info@sjgames.com](mailto:info@sjgames.com). Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Resources that we provide include:

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# INTRODUCTION

Though sanctimonious heroes (okay, holy warriors) accept perilous quests to advance the cause of Good, let's be honest: For most delvers, the object of adventuring is to grow rich and powerful. Coins and jewels provide a path to wealth, while character points are the surest route to power, but *magic items* promise a little of both.

*Dungeon Fantasy Adventurers* offers stock magic items such as potions, scrolls, and low-powered weapons. *Exploits* and *Spells* add possibilities, but still fairly generic ones – mostly bigger plusses, and enchantments that ape the spells of the party's magic-users. Things get more interesting in *Magic Items*, whose offerings *don't* always work exactly as expected, and sometimes carry entirely new magic; there are also rare artifacts that are anything but "stock" or "generic."

*Magic Items 2* picks up where *Magic Items* leaves off, presenting a collection of rare – often *unique* – artifacts for adventurers to loot from chests, pry from dead hands, earn as rewards, or even buy (if they're wealthy enough). Why? Because you can never have enough treasure!

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

*Magic Items 2* strives to provide detail, but you'll need *Adventurers* for the stats for basic objects; an extraordinary sword *is* still a sword, and appreciating what makes it special requires familiarity with the ordinary version. There are also many references to other rules in that book, and to *Exploits* and *Spells*. *Magic Items* *isn't* necessary, though it's handy for comparing prices and capabilities. *GURPS* players can use everything "as is" – the few differences are mostly matters of terminology.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985 and ended up as *GURPS* Line Editor in 1995. In that capacity, he has written, edited, or contributed to some 150 *GURPS* releases, revised the game into its fourth edition (2004), and been a regular contributor to *Pyramid* magazine. From 2008, he has served as the lead creator of the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* series, which led to his design of the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game*, released in 2017. Sean has been a gamer since

1979, but devotes most of his spare time to Argentine tango (and occasionally tending bar). He lives in Montréal, Québec with *son amour*, Geneviève.

## UNDERSTANDING THE ITEMS

Everything in this collection uses the same format:

**Name:** What traders, sages, wizardly tomes, and so on call the item. The GM might want to change this – *especially* if the players have access to this book!

**Flavor Text:** A poem, fictional quote, maxim, or piece of (completely optional) game-world history – or a vignette involving the adventurers from *Delvers To Go!* and *Adventurers*, pp. 119-120 – that reveals something about the artifact's origins, nature, or powers.

**Description:** Detailed rules and game stats for the item.

**Sell Price:** The suggested payoff for selling the thing if found as treasure. *Not* a good indication of power – townsfolk routinely over- or undervalue goods that are more or less valuable to ordinary people. Nor is it what delvers would *pay* for the artifact; if the GM puts it up for sale, the price might be much higher! Where such matters are particularly interesting, notes are provided.

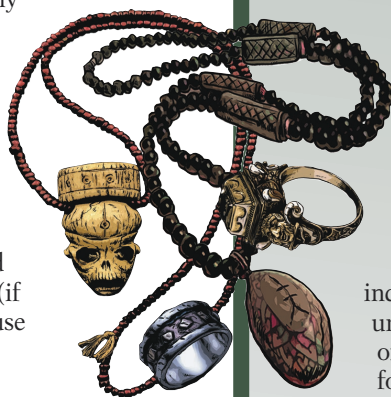
**Weight:** Given even for light objects that might fairly be assigned negligible ("neg.") weight, for GMs who track encumbrance down to the last coin to keep delvers honest.

**Power-Item Capacity:** How many FP the item holds if designated as a power item (*Adventurers*, p. 115). Generally calculated from mundane value, but there are exceptions – and the capacity of some artifacts depends on the user or how the FP are spent.

**Treasure!:** Thoughts on using the item in the game. This might be as simple as "Sell it at shops!", or as detailed as the skeleton of an encounter or adventure. Often includes advice on controlling the artifact in the delvers' hands.

Each artifact has an illustration showing what it *might* look like. The GM can change this! An item could be bigger or smaller, or more or less fancy. Powers may move to a weapon of a different type, from one piece of armor to another, etc., where that makes sense.

Where an artifact introduces a new creature, item, spell, or whatever, this appears in a nearby text box – not in the description.



# AMAZING BACKPACK

"There I was, facing a giantess – alone. I was in a real pickle," Jag said, sipping the wine his companion had paid for.

"And then?" asked his youthful mark, wide-eyed.

"Then," Jag continued, "I remembered my Amazing Backpack."

A dour fellow with an eye-patch cut in, "So I suppose you whipped out a Sword of Giant Slaying, won the battle, and came here to brag?"

"Oh, no. A bottle of mead," Jag replied. "Giants love it, but they're too ungainly for beekeeping. She didn't dare smash the bottle."

"Wow, that was lucky!" the boy exclaimed.

"Sort of. She demanded the pack, too, but I escaped with my life – and a story," Jag concluded.

"One that means you need never prove the pack ever existed," snorted Eye-Patch.

The Amazing Backpack is an ordinary-looking pack that emanates wizardly magic. Despite its generic appearance, it's arguably the most famous of "legendary" artifacts: All rolls to identify it are at +5!

Once per minute, someone can reach in and pull forth a random object. This remains for a minute unless consumed sooner, and then vanishes. A minute after it was produced, a new item can be drawn. Thus, it's impossible for two articles from the pack to coexist.

Though objects from the pack aren't permanent, their effects – drunkenness, healing, nourishment, markings made, fires set, etc. – endure normally. Using a tool from the pack for a task that normally takes longer than a minute means accepting haste penalties (*Exploits*, p. 6). If you sell goods from the pack, you have one minute to flee your soon-to-be angry customer!

Roll 1d, 1d on this table when pulling from the pack. Luck allows rerolls; Serendipity lets you choose! Wearables are sized to the person drawing. Multiple items are (loosely) bundled, and 1d/2 rounds up.

- 1, 1 – Alchemist's Matches (tin of 50)
- 1, 2 – Arrows (5d projectiles)
- 1, 3 – Blade (1d: 1-3, large knife; 4-5, long knife; 6, shortsword)
- 1, 4 – Boots, Light Leather (DR 1)
- 1, 5 – Bottle, Quart (1d: 1, mead; 2, wine; 3, beer; 4-5, water; 6, empty)
- 1, 6 – Brass Knuckles (pair)
- 2, 1 – Caltrops (1d packs)
- 2, 2 – Chalk (1d sticks)

- 2, 3 – Chemicals (1d: 1-2, acid; 3-4, glue; 5-6 visibility dust – 1d/2 doses)

- 2, 4 – Clothing (full outfit)

- 2, 5 – Cord, 3/16" (10d yards)

- 2, 6 – Crossbow Bolts (5d projectiles)

- 3, 1 – First Aid Kit

- 3, 2 – Gloves (1d: 1-4, light leather, DR 1; 5-6, heavy leather, DR 2)

- 3, 3 – Grapnel (with 20' of 3/8" rope)

- 3, 4 – Grenade (1d: 1-2, alchemist's fire; 3-4, liquid ice; 5-6, oozing doom – one dose)

- 3, 5 – Hand Mirror

- 3, 6 – Herbs (1d: 1-3, garlic; 4-6 wolfsbane – 1d doses)

- 4, 1 – Holy Symbol (*blessed* on 6 on 1d)

- 4, 2 – Holy Water (1d/2 doses)

- 4, 3 – Iron Spikes (1d spikes)

- 4, 4 – Light Cloak

- 4, 5 – Lockpicks (basic-quality)

- 4, 6 – Monster Drool (1d doses)

- 5, 1 – Musical Instrument (1d: 1-3, whistle; 4-5, horn; 6, bagpipes)

- 5, 2 – Nageteppo (1d: 1-3, flash; 4-6, smoke – 1d/2 nageteppo)

- 5, 3 – Oil, Lantern (1d/2 pints)

- 5, 4 – Potion (1d: 1-3, minor healing; 4-5, pain; 6, major healing – one dose)

- 5, 5 – Rations (1d meals)

- 5, 6 – Rope, 3/8" (3d yards)

- 6, 1 – Scribe's Kit

- 6, 2 – Throwing Darts (1d/2 projectiles)

- 6, 3 – Tool (1d: 1, crowbar; 2, file; 3, hatchet; 4, mallet; 5, saw; 6, tongs)

- 6, 4 – Trap-Finder's Kit (good-quality)

- 6, 5 – Whetstone (*dwarven* on 6 on 1d)

- 6, 6 – Wooden Stakes (1d stakes)

The Amazing Backpack seems stuffed to capacity and cannot carry further gear. It requires mana to function.

*Sell Price:* \$30,000.

*Weight:* 43 lbs.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 2 FP.

## Treasure!

*Backpacks R Us.* The Amazing Backpack is heavy and hazardous. While it's worth *trying* for garlic, holy water, or stakes against a vampire, you might get a pinafore – and a healing potion is useless if nobody needs it within the minute. It's hard to imagine it "breaking the game," so rather than use it as treasure, the GM might consider *selling* it. Locating the right magic shop should be a quest, of course!



# ANELLACCIO

*"I did a proper analysis. The ring's protection is equivalent to plate armor," Uncle Seamus reiterated. Again.*

*"This gash says otherwise," retorted Puddin'. "I have a perfectly good mail vest that's stopped slashes just like that. I'd have worn it, too. But no – we **had** to be subtle, so all I had was a stupid ring that didn't work."*

*Ælin found the discussion tiresome. "Because you had it on your finger. It's a **beard** ring."*

*"Oh, fine," sniffed Puddin', "a stupid **sexist** ring. Or racist. I'm a gnome gal, not a dwarf dame." She pointed at her face. "No beard."*

*"It'll work fine in yer' hair, too, precious," grumbled Ælin.*

Rings are customarily worn on fingers – or less often, toes. There are other options. Some designs are intended to secure beards or ponytails. When those are magical, they usually affect the wearer's hair or *head*.

Anellaccio is one such ring. It does absolutely nothing if worn on a hand, foot, tail, or other extremity. To function, the wearer must thread hair on their head through it, though this can be a beard (or part of one), an impressive moustache, or any number of hairdos: braid, ponytail, topknot, etc. Only someone bald like an egg is out of luck.

Worn correctly, Anellaccio works powerful magic on the bones of the wearer's head: They literally become steel (although the enchantment prevents rust, metal toxicity, and the like). The entire head – the *skull* and *face* hit locations, from the front and back – acquires DR 6. For the skull, this *replaces* the usual DR 2. The eyes aren't protected, nor are the nose, ears, lips, etc. if someone restrains the wearer and tries to slice them off. The hair is, though – anyone attempting to cut it without removing the ring had better use wire-cutters.

This DR is remarkable for several reasons:

- There's no helmet to hinder the wearer's senses (*Adventurers*, p. 108), trigger a huge reaction penalty for metal full-face protection (*Adventurers*, p. 110), or count as encumbrance.

- If the wearer *does* don a helmet, its DR adds to this DR 6 without incurring the DX penalty for layered armor (*Adventurers*, p. 109).

- The magic isn't just another Armor spell or Fortify enchantment – it transforms the wearer! The user can benefit from those effects *as well*, but as usual, only their largest DR bonus counts. The *head* gets no extra DR from an iron-skin amulet (*Adventurers*, p. 118), which does essentially the same thing, but all other body parts still get +3 DR from that item.

A further perk of having a head full of metal is that the *teeth* are steel. This resembles expensive gnomish dental work (no reaction penalty or Unnatural Features), but makes biting

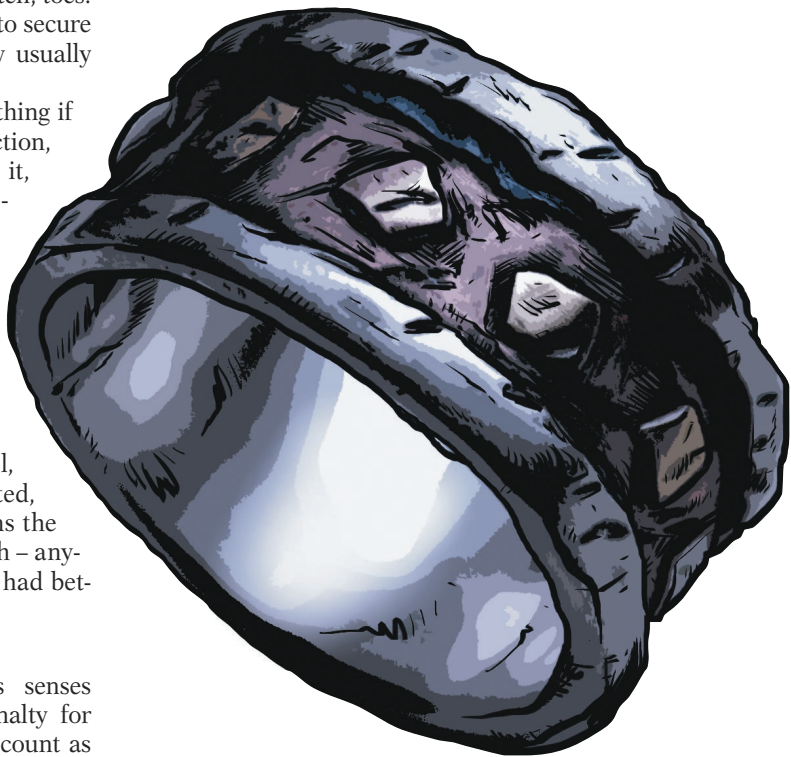
more effective: +1 to damage (becomes thrust crushing for most characters, thrust cutting for cat-folk), cumulative with any Brawling bonus.

Anellaccio is an alchemical charm (*Magic Items*, p. 9), and so unaffected by mana level unless there's *no* mana, in which case it doesn't work.

*Sell Price:* \$77,000, but only if adequately *demonstrated* without harming the buyer; otherwise, it's a \$50 steel ring with "worthless magic," because it doesn't do anything when worn normally, and isn't even a good power item.

*Weight:* 0.1 lb.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 1 FP.



## Treasure!

*Using Your Head.* An amusing way to introduce Anellaccio is to give it to a major bad guy – preferably one with *lots* of junk in their coiffure, so it doesn't stand out. Then have that foe armor everything but the head. Odds are the heroes will target the noggin, which won't be as effective as it should be, especially if their foe also has the Tough Skin of a dwarf or half-ogre barbarian. Anellaccio won't make the delvers too powerful – 90% of the body still needs armor. But it's a keeper simply because it weighs almost nothing and gives serious protection to a vital area. Remind anyone thinking of selling it to buy better armor that they could also *stack* it with armor for functional immunity to head blows.

# BLESSED BOTTLE

Francesco suddenly looked up from his prayers. “Blessed Bottle!”

“A what, now?” asked Hap. “Flame-Top said it was nothing special.”

“To her. Temples use it to sanctify liquids. For instance, water becomes **holy** water.”

“Would it have a moral conflict with poison?”

“No, but you might not like the results.”

Blessed Bottles are rare but not unique. Temples use them to transmute liquids into sanctified versions with altered properties. These concoctions are useful enough that delvers who “acquire” a Bottle often decide to keep it.

To use the Bottle, just pour in liquid. It can hold up to one pint, which weighs 1 lb. for most liquids adventurers carry. Drinkable and utility preparations consist of 0.25 lb. of liquid; grenades, of 0.5 lb. Thus, it holds 1-4 doses of the former or up to two of the latter.

Sanctification takes one full day per “dose” poured in. Liquid removed sooner isn’t altered – start over. If kept in for the necessary time, its effects *might* change:

**Alchemical Antidote\***: Becomes *hallowed* antidote. Instantly negates all ongoing “evil powers” (demonic fear, mummy’s plagues, etc.) currently affecting drinker.

**Alchemist’s Fire†**: Becomes *cleansing* fire: +1 damage per die to undead *before* any Vulnerability multiplier.

**Alkahest†**: Becomes *ectoplasmic* solvent. Inflicts 1d corrosion injury on intangible foes. No effect on material world.

**Anti-Toxin\***: Becomes a *sovereign*. Works instantly! Still affects one specific poison.

**Bladeblack\***, **Monster Drool\***, **Oozing Doom†**, or **Paralytic Slime\***: Becomes a *deathbane*. Works like usual version, but affects undead – even if immune to poison – instead of the living.

**Death Potion†**: Becomes *rest* potion. Works like usual version but affects only undead, even if they don’t breathe.

**Demon’s Brew†**: Becomes *angel’s* brew. Works like usual version but affects only demons, even if they don’t breathe and/or are immune to poison.

**Faerie Ink\***: Becomes *sacred* ink. Only visible to readers with Holiness or Power Investiture. No effect on developer.

**Glow Vial\***: Becomes *sunlight* vial. If pressed against or poured on anything with a Weakness to sunlight, injures as sunlight.

**Healing Potion (any)\***: Becomes *blessed* healing potion. Roll three times and take the largest result.

**Magebane†**: Becomes *cultbane*. Those who inhale fumes cannot cast unholy clerical spells.

**Magic Resistance Potion\***: Becomes *evil* resistance potion. Grants Resist Evil 5 (**Adventurers**, p. 27).

**Oil†**: Becomes *consecrated* oil. Applied to forehead, gives +2 to rolls to treat curses (**Exploits**, pp. 23-24) on subject or subject’s rolls for prayer (**Exploits**, p. 90).

**Paut\***: Becomes *pneuma*. Restores four points of Energy Reserve (Holy).

**Water†**: Becomes *holy* water. Anything that’s mostly water (juice, wine, even urine) works.

**Wisdom Potion\***: Becomes *divinity* potion. Adds +1 Power Investiture. *Can* give seven levels! Those without gain one level, letting them use clerical scrolls and cleric-only magic items, sense blessed items and curses, and pray more effectively.

\* Drinkable/utility, maximum four doses.

† Grenade, maximum two doses

Anything not listed isn’t transformed – unless the GM has a fun idea! Notably, holy water doesn’t get *more* holy.

With the exception of holy water – which remains holy indefinitely even if removed – sanctified liquids must be *kept* in the Bottle to retain their holy “charge.” Taken out, they revert to their original form after one minute. (The GM may sell “stabilized” versions in town, which should cost at least double for rarity.) If *used*, though, effects such as injury, the magic of potions, or secret writing with sacred ink have their usual duration.

A Blessed Bottle is also a high holy symbol, giving +2 to rolls for Exorcism, Turning, and other tests of faith. As it has DR 1, HP 2 – like any bottle – it isn’t wise to brandish it at monsters.

Blessed Bottles are clerical artifacts. They require sanctity. In low sanctity, they take *two* days per dose to work.

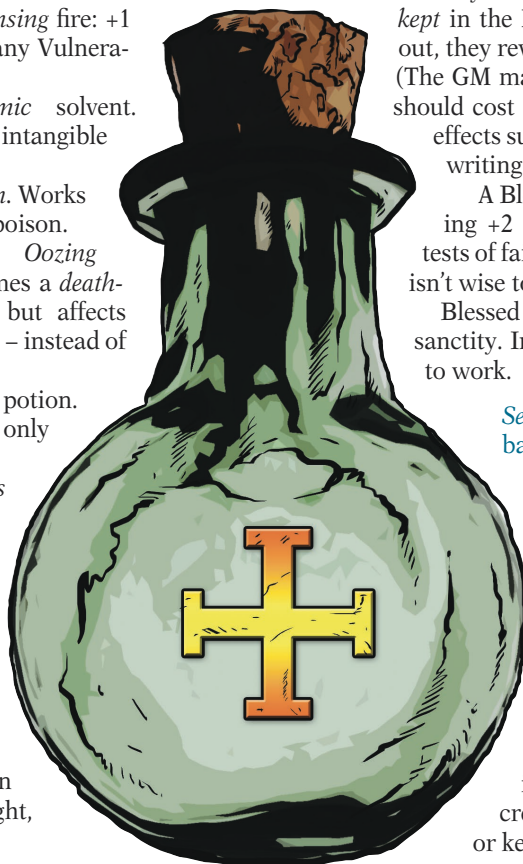
**Sell Price**: \$17,000. The temple wants these back and offers “healing credit” of equal value. Only miscreants pay cash, and once word gets out (miscreants gossip!), the temple may engage in price gouging, denial of healing services, or outright violence.

**Weight**: 0.5 lb.

**Power-Item Capacity**: 8 FP.

## Treasure!

**Return For Deposit**. The obvious quest involving a Bottle is retrieval for temple credit. The heroes can be *heroic* and return it, or keep it and face the consequences.





# BOOTS OF FLEEING

Masha removed the boots. "They're light and comfortable, but worthless for chasing enemies. That sage lied about them being Boots of Fleetness."

"Well, they said 'Boots of **Fleeing**.' We interpreted that as 'Boots of Fleetness,' but maybe they meant 'Boots of **Fleeing**,'" suggested Francesco.

"Who'd want Boots of Fleeing?" asked Masha.

"Someone who leaves fighting to warriors," replied Puddin'. "Too bad they're human-sized."

The Boots of Fleeing are a dream come true for anyone whose response to danger is "Run away!" They're light leather foot armor (DR 1), and also fine, and thus lighter and less encumbering – though the idea of "expertly fitted" is academic, as they magically adapt to any wearer of Size Modifier -4 to +4. Their other benefits are more interesting:

- The wearer isn't *faster* but can better negotiate inanimate obstacles. When running away (**Exploits**, p. 22), hindrances that entail no roll to push past don't give -1 to Move; those that call for DX or DX-based Running rolls, like unlocked doors, give no Move penalty on any success or merely -1 to Move (not a wasted second) on any failure. This ability also facilitates attempts to pass through tight spaces. Acrobatics rolls for *Diving* (**Exploits**, p. 20) through openings are at full skill, not at -4; Escape rolls for *Squeezing* (**Exploits**, p. 21) through a gap are at +4. If squeezing past a damaged door (**Exploits**, p. 55) involves an Escape or Forced Entry roll, that gets +4, too. Where a grille blocks the way (**Exploits**, p. 83), the wearer counts as one step slimmer, needing just two bars removed if Fat, one if thinner.

- When sprinting (**Exploits**, p. 33), the wearer not only gets the standard +1 to Move but also ignores the movement penalties for slopes and stairs – though not for water or treacherous ground. See *Bad Footing* (**Exploits**, p. 35).

- When taking the All-Out Defense (Increased Dodge) maneuver (**Exploits**, p. 31), the Dodge bonus is +3, not +2.

- When retreating (**Exploits**, p. 50) after an All-Out Defense or Move maneuver, the Dodge bonus is +4 (not +3). Block and Parry are unenhanced.

- When attempting *Acrobatic Evade*, *Acrobatic Guard*, or *Tumbling* (**Exploits**, p. 58), the wearer has +4 to Acrobatics. While there's no *direct* Acrobatics bonus for Acrobatic Dodge, remember that the first dodge after these tricks counts as an Acrobatic Dodge, so there's an *indirect* benefit.

Compatible effects combine! For instance, with All-Out Defense (Increased Dodge), the wearer gets +3 to Dodge and retreats for +4, for a potential +7 instead of the usual +5; during successive Move maneuvers to sprint, they ignore movement penalties on stairs, enjoy the +4 retreat bonus, and have +4 to Acrobatics if tumbling. But tumbling requires a Move maneuver, so *that* would never matter during an All-Out Defense.

Effects are specifically as outlined above; there's no *general* bonus to athletic feats, even if they use the noted skills. However, the GM may grant similar benefits whenever the situation seems "close enough," provided that the underlying maneuver is All-Out Defense or Move. The Boots never help *offense*.

Benefits apply only on foot. When climbing, swimming, levitating, etc., the Boots do *nothing*. The Boots are also ineffective if the wearer cannot move, as when entangled in a lariat or net, grappled, or held by a Glue or Rooted Feet spell.

The Boots rely on an alchemical leather treatment, making them dependent on mana but more easily identified using Alchemy than Analyze Magic.

*Sell Price:* \$35,000.

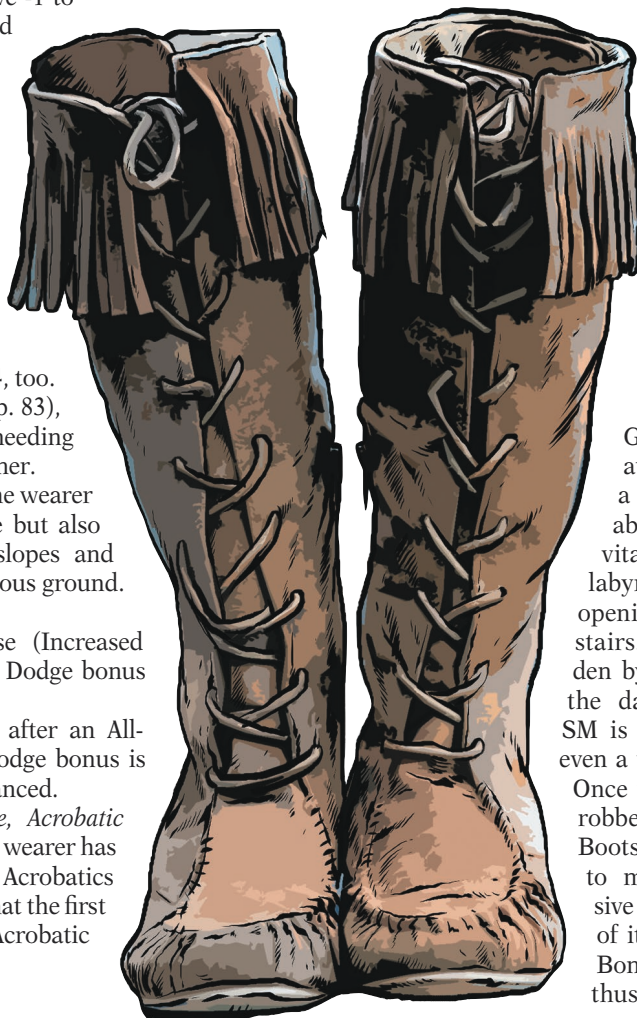
*Weight:* 1.6 lbs.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 3 FP.

## Treasure!

*Catch Me If You Can!*

Give the Boots not to an attacker but to a thief. Have a speedy enemy with suitable skills grab something vital and *take off* through a labyrinth, darting through openings, up slopes, and down stairs. Tumbling along, hidden by doorways and pillars in the dark – particularly if their SM is negative – they won't give even a trained scout a clear shot. Once the delvers apprehend the robber, they'll confiscate the Boots. If they opt to sell, be sure to mention that their defensive magic differs from that of items that grant a Defense Bonus or improve Dodge, and thus will "stack."



# BUTCHER BLADE

"Terrible design for stabbing," commented Sir Yvor, "but well-made for chopping."

"Yes," agreed Grükuk. "A Butcher Blade. Many believe the orcs have never learned the secret of enchanting. Mostly because orcs only ever enchant weapons like these."

Jag sniffed. "I'd want nothing to do with it. Looks barbaric."

"Um, can I have it, then?" asked Puddin'. "Always wanted a magic sword. I kinda like that it's wicked-looking. People might take me more seriously – err, when we're not in town, that is."

Grükuk smirked. "Swords are overrated, but we'll make a warrior of you yet, little one."

Where swords bearing the Puissance enchantment are the closest thing to "standard" magic weapons in most cultures, Butcher Blades are classic *orcish* magic weapons. As there are so few orcish wizards – and fewer capable of creating permanent magic items – many who encounter such blades believe them to be remarkable artifacts. But they're merely extremely uncommon.

A Butcher Blade is *always* a fine-quality falchion (*Adventurers*, p. 101). It's also an *orcish* blade (see box). Thus, damage is swing+2 cutting or thrust-1 impaling (a basic swing+1 or thrust-2, +1 for being fine), and any target wounded for at least 1 HP suffers an *extra* 1 HP of injury.

Where a Butcher Blade differs is that it enhances the bleeding effect. On their first turn after being injured and every turn thereafter, the victim must roll vs. HT, at -1 per full 5 HP inflicted by the weapon up to this point. Failure means losing another 1 HP. Three *consecutive* successful HT rolls – or one critical success – end the ongoing HP loss, but any new wound from the Blade resets the count, and the HT penalty is based on the *total* injury it has inflicted.

*Example:* Puddin' has ST 11, so her Butcher Blade inflicts 1d+3 cutting. She whacks an orc with DR 2 for 7 points of damage; penetrating damage is 5 points and cutting has a  $\times 1.5$  wounding modifier, for 7 HP injury, and the *orcish* edge makes this 8 HP. The orc must roll vs. HT 11, -1 for injury – or 10 or less – each turn. It rolls an 11 the first turn, a 9 the second, and a 12 the third, so it loses 2 HP more. Total injury is now 10 HP, so the orc's HT roll is at -2 (9 or

less). Then it gets lucky and rolls an 8 and another 8. But *then* Puddin' wounds it anew for 7 HP, so the orc has lost 17 HP to the Blade and is rolling at -3 (8 or less) – and because it was reinjured by the Blade, its two recent successes don't count toward the three consecutive successful HT rolls required to stop HP loss.

To treat this ongoing injury, use the rules in *Bleeding* (*Exploits*, p. 63) or cast Stop Bleeding at the 1 FP level.

The downside of carrying a Butcher Blade is that anyone "civilized" who sees it treats its owner just like an orc with Social Stigma (Savage); see *Adventurers*, p. 66. This isn't a disincentive for half-ogres and half-orcs! Delvers of other races would do well to learn the Holdout and Smuggling skills, and are advised to avoid such a weapon as "everyday carry" around town.

Butcher Blades are ordinary magic weapons, though some seem to be wizardly while others are clerical, empowered by nasty *orcish* gods.

*Sell Price:* \$6,600.

*Weight:* 3 lbs.

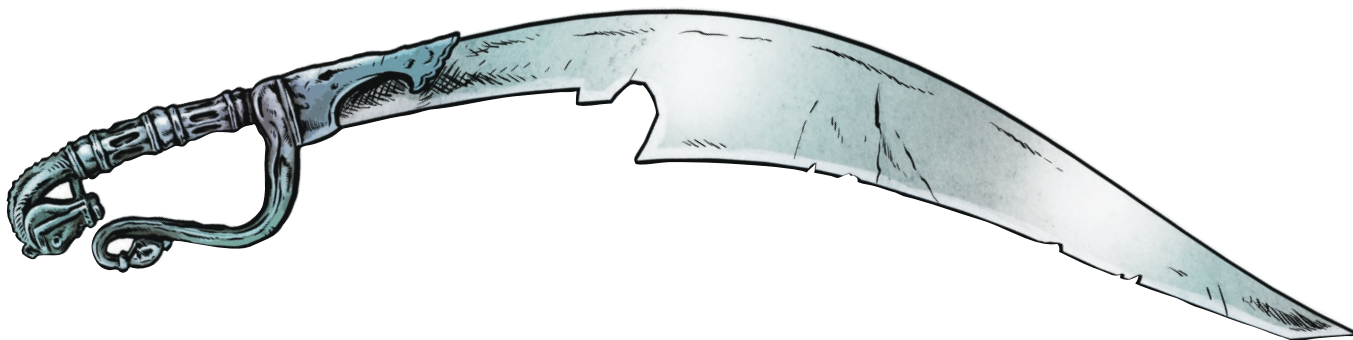
*Power-Item Capacity:* 10 FP.

## New Weapon Modifier: Orcish

Adds 1 HP to any wound of at least 1 HP it inflicts. Gives carrier Social Stigma (Savage) if visible. Any blade. +0 CF.

## Treasure!

*Fresh Meat!* The obvious way to introduce a Butcher Blade into the campaign is to arm an *orcish* leader with it – and not just *any* leader, but a paragon warrior among orcs. Making the wielder remarkably strong and skilled will teach the delvers to respect the Blade from firsthand experience. That HT roll can become a death spiral when the first blow wounds you for 15-20 HP.





# COIN OF FATE

*Death spoke in the Archmagus' head. The Emperor bet and lost. His ministers, too. Leaving you.*

*"Their time had come. But I have seen my doom and it is not here, not today – as you know. The universe **forbids** you to take me," stated the Archmagus in the ancient tongue. No idle words; Fate had spoken.*

**Yet the Empire falters. You are its last living official.**

*"Empires end. I have higher goals."*

**So be it. Realize them with the wealth of the fallen.**

*Death flicked a coin to the Archmagus and vanished. The barbarians' carnyces grew louder. The palace walls trembled.*

The Coin of Fate is an ancient gold piece five times as large as a standard one. Its markings have largely worn away. All that remains is Death's head on the obverse, a pentacle on the reverse.

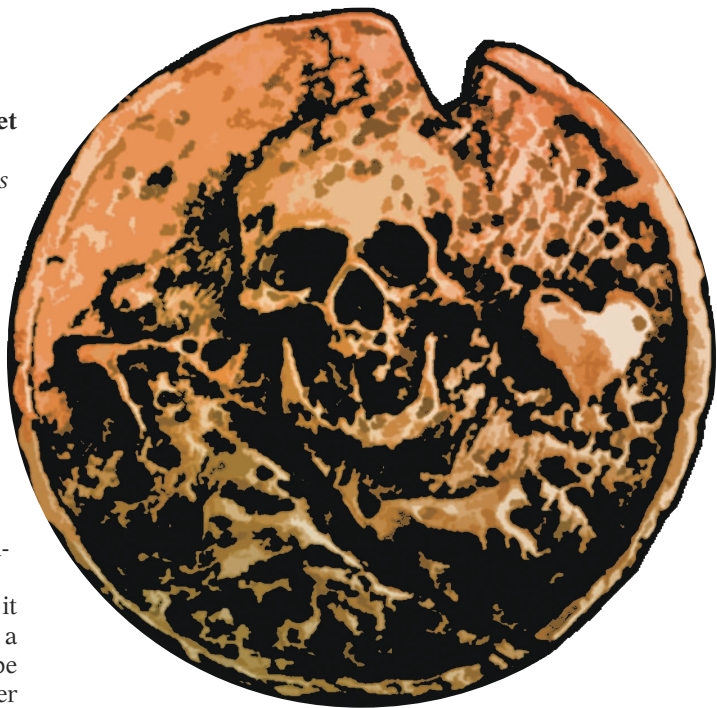
To use the Coin, toss it into the air, catch it, and slap it down and read it – three Ready maneuvers that require a free hand. This ritual requires no dice roll but cannot be hurried. Someone in close combat (reach C) with the user can attempt to snatch the Coin out of the air with an Attack after it's tossed and before it's caught; this requires a DX-6 or Sleight of Hand roll, and success means the results of the toss affect the *thief*.

Roll 1d even/odd for heads/tails, or flip a coin, for effects:

**Pentacle (Tails):** The person flipping the Coin gains one use of Luck (*Adventurers*, p. 51) if they don't have it. If they have Luck and it's available, the next use "recharges" faster: in 30 minutes instead of an hour, 10 minutes instead of 30, or 5 minutes instead of 10. If they have Luck and it's unavailable due to recent use, it resets immediately.

**Skull (Heads):** The person flipping the Coin acquires temporary Unluckiness (see box). This affects them *once* and ends.

Invoking Luck to take the best of three tosses is allowed but pointless: There's a 7 in 8 chance of the pentacle, replenishing the Luck that was just used and gaining nothing, and



a 1 in 8 chance of wasting Luck to get cursed! Tampering with the Coin (using magical or mundane trickery) afflicts the *cheater* as if they got the skull. This artifact can't be "gamed," but there are times when a potential Luck boost is worth the risk of Unluckiness.

Once the Coin affects someone, flipping it *again* – no matter who does it – has no effect until the affected person uses their Luck or suffers their Unluckiness.

The Coin is *not* a cosmic artifact, but a divine one "blessed" by Death, Luck, and Fate. In theory, it's affected by sanctity; in practice, these forces are so profound that few places lack suitable sanctity. Still, the Coin wouldn't work Outside Time And Space, where the Elder Things are – or, perversely, in Death, Luck, or Fate's own realms.

**Sell Price:** \$10,000. No matter how bad the trade goes, it's a big gold coin worth at least \$2,000.

**Weight:** 0.1 lb.

**Power-Item Capacity:** 11 FP.

## New Disadvantage: Unluckiness

-10 points

Once per game session, the GM will maliciously make something go wrong for you: a critical success turns into a failure (but not a critical failure), a "good" roll on a table or for effects (e.g., for treasure or a magical fountain) is negated, something bad destined to happen to someone at random happens to *you*, etc. The only rule is that the GM may *not* kill you outright.

With the GM's permission, anybody can select this instead of -10 points of other disadvantages from their template.

## Treasure!

**Pieces Of Fate.** The Coin of Fate is inevitably found among *other* coins. It's valuable enough that the fight to win it should be tough, but it's more whimsical than powerful, so it works well as loot obtained from an enemy other than a high-powered boss. For fun, have the dying monster moan, "Not my lucky coin!" The first delver to flip it mockingly receives either a blessing (and an overoptimistic idea of its powers) or a curse (likely to be seen as the former owner's doing, inspiring amusing paranoia).

# DARKRAZOR

The watchman scowled. "Rules is rules. No magic weapons in town."

"I'll be wanting a receipt," Hap insisted, relinquishing his enchanted shortsword. "I went through a lot to get that."

"Ere, then, what about *that*?" the guard barked, indicating the handle protruding from Hap's boot.

"My razor. You wouldn't deny a halfling nicely trimmed toes, would you?"

"Hrmph. Plenty of assassins what like razors."

"Sir! I'm a member in good standing of the **Thieves'** Guild. I have no truck with assassins."

There are times when surprise is the most powerful weapon. But it sure helps if you strike the telling blow with something *deadly*. This summarizes the philosophy behind Darkrazor.

Darkrazor is a straight razor (see box) of very fine quality. Thus, it does thrust cutting damage rather than thrust-2. That's often all that's needed, for two reasons.

First, where effective ST for damage purposes cannot normally exceed triple a melee weapon's ST statistic (*Adventurers*, p. 98) – putting the cutoff at ST 12 for a straight razor – Darkrazor has no such limit. Although it's awkwardly tiny in the hands of huge fighters (positive SM penalizes skill; e.g., an SM +2 siege beast has -2), anybody with the capacity to wield weapons can use their *full* ST.

Second, Darkrazor has this way of slipping through gaps in armor. *Attacking Chinks in Armor* (*Exploits*, p. 37) is allowed despite the damage type being cutting. The blade is magically guided to weaknesses, facilitating such attacks. Valid targets are the torso at -2, arm or leg at -4, hand or foot at -6, or face or neck at -7. This halves armor DR (*not* natural DR or that from a spell).

Darkrazor supernaturally assists surprise attacks, too. When *Backstabbing* (*Exploits*, pp. 57-58), the sneak's first attack has +7 to hit, not the usual +4. Not coincidentally, this exactly cancels the -7 to target chinks in neck armor.

The weapon is also easy to conceal. When using *Hidden Weapons* (*Exploits*, p. 58), the Holdout roll is at a *bonus*: +2. The same +2 applies to Holdout rolls to conceal Darkrazor around town. Magic spells intended to detect danger or weapons have -2 for the same reason.

Although Darkrazor is meant for assassinations, not standup fights, it doesn't leave its owner defenseless – the same magic that lets its user strike with full ST gives it unusual sturdiness against enemy blows. Most straight razors *can't* parry; Darkrazor can, though at the usual -1 for a knife. And when it does parry, it *won't break* despite its low weight, much like an orichalcum blade.

Darkrazor's properties appear to be tied to its substance: a seemingly indestructible black material. Some claim it resembles iron, others feel it looks more like obsidian; a few whisper it comes from stars extinguished by Demons from Between the Stars. While not cosmic in the sense that it radiates extreme power, it's unaffected by supernatural energy levels.

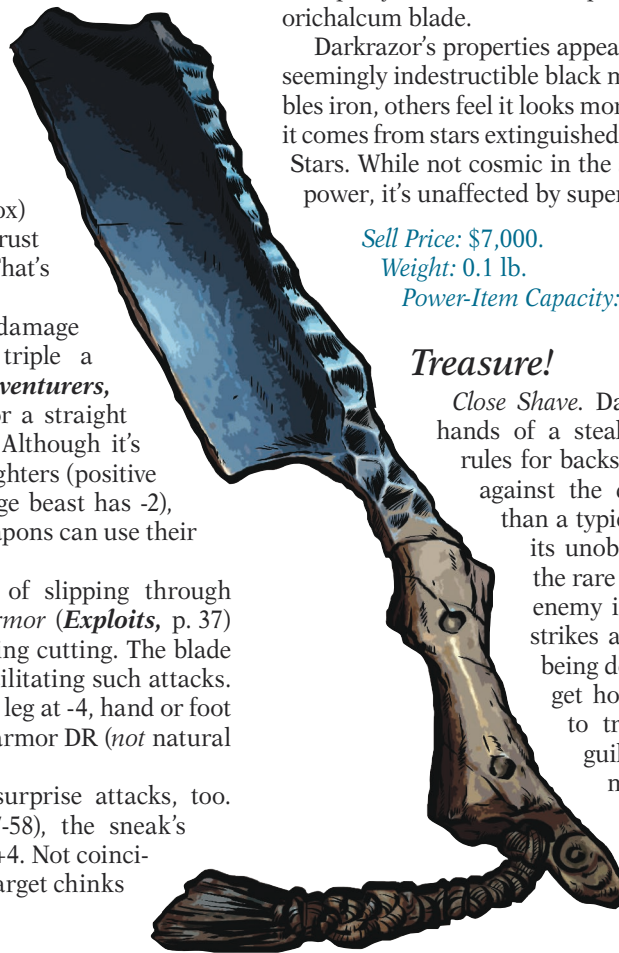
*Sell Price:* \$7,000.

*Weight:* 0.1 lb.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 10 FP.

## Treasure!

*Close Shave.* Darkrazor is interesting in the hands of a stealthy attacker who turns the rules for backstabbing and hidden weapons against the delvers, but it's no deadlier than a typical sword; its value resides in its unobtrusiveness. Thus, it's one of the rare artifacts better wielded by an enemy in town – preferably one who strikes and flees several times before being defeated. Once the adventurers get hold of Darkrazor, they'll want to try to assassinate watchmen, guildmasters, the mayor, and maybe even the King in situations where weapons are forbidden. Be ready!



## New Weapon: Straight Razor

A razor, for shaving. An ordinary version can be used as a weapon, wielded with the Knife skill; it can slash, but cannot stab, be thrown, or parry. Often fine (+3 CF) or very fine (+19 CF).

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Cost	Weight	ST
Straight Razor	thr-2 cut	C	No	\$30	0.1	4



# DEVIL'S DICE

*"God does not play dice."*

*The Devil, however, enjoys games of chance, explaining why many religions have a dim view of gambling. Gods of luck present theological conundrums best left to clerical debates.*

*The Devil's Dice **probably** aren't bona fide creations of HIM. In the wrong hands, though, they're The Devil's playthings. In the right hands, they can be useful. "Wrong" vs. "right" is another debate best left to clerics.*

The Devil's Dice are a matched set of dice made of what looks like polished obsidian. They're far harder than stone, though! Attempts to pulverize them – however extreme – simply fail. So do shape- or structure-altering spells: Earth to Air, Shape Earth, Shatter, Stone to Earth, Weaken, etc.

The six polyhedrons are etched with ever-changing symbols. *Reading* them is easy. *Interpreting* a roll is trickier.

Anyone can consult the Dice before undertaking a task with an uncertain outcome – anything requiring a success roll. They must first visualize the action with the Dice in hand. In game terms, the player has to describe their character's hypothetical action in detail.

Then the Dice are rolled. Interpretation requires an Occultism roll; gamblers with Intuition may opt for a straight IQ roll. Failure means the Dice divulge nothing. Success indicates the Dice reveal the task's outcome: The GM assesses all modifiers for the visualized action and applies them to the PC's skill, and then the player rolls for success.

Once the outcome is known (success or failure, critical or otherwise, and margin), *it's set in stone forever!* Unless the situation changes enough to completely redefine the task (switching subjects, asking an unrelated question, or adjusting effective skill by  $\pm 10$  or more), there's no way to avoid that result, good or bad. Revisiting the same problem – after a second or a lifetime – means accepting the same conclusion. Others trying that deed are unaffected, though they can seal *their* fate by consulting the Dice.

As the Dice are rolled *before* acting, it's possible to abort an ill-fated task. Thus, the Dice offer a way to avoid disasters. They can also reveal a task's difficulty and the skill required. But this knowledge often comes at the price of inaction!

*Example:* Zephyra is seriously injured after a battle in a lich's lab, which contains a cabinet of elixirs. She rolls the Dice for help, and her player rolls vs. Occultism. Success! The GM reveals that finding a potion that heals rather than harms takes an Alchemy roll at -5: 10 or less for Zephyra. Her player rolls an 11 – she's *fated* to select poison if she pulls a bottle from that locker, now or centuries later (when *she's* a lich). Happily, Uncle Seamus has Luck; opting not to roll the Dice (not that Zephyra would share), he makes three Alchemy rolls at -5 and picks the best.

If time matters, using the Dice (visualization and rolling) takes one second – a Ready maneuver. Thus, consulting the Dice in battle is possible. The upside? Combat is chaotic enough that each turn's actions are deemed unique – if you foresee a bad result, just wait a turn. The downsides? You waste time, require a free hand, and must roll vs. DX or DX-based Gambling (adjusted by High Manual Dexterity or Ham-Fisted, and at -4 with just one hand free) before each use; failure scatters the Dice, which diabolically hide until after the fight.

The Dice are *cosmic*, unaffected by mana, Nature's strength, or sanctity.

*Sell Price:* \$27,000.

*Weight:* 0.15 lb.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 8 FP for one die or 19 FP for all six (but losing even one makes the FP inaccessible!).



## Treasure!

*The Gambler.* A boss monster that enjoys riddles and tricks challenges the heroes to a game – dice, cards, darts, etc. – with rules set by the GM. The adventurers get the Dice if they win. Their opponent can *use* the Dice and bet on the known outcome of their own actions; e.g., knowing exact margin of success allows bets like "I'll plant this knife six inches from the target, no closer, no farther." Delvers who've never heard of the Dice simply lose. Those who succeed at Hidden Lore (Magic Items) will recognize the Dice and can take precautions.

# ENERGETIC CONCENTRATOR

*Argua brandished the dead necromancer's pointy cap triumphantly. "Wizard hat!"*

*"A wizard too stupid to wear something that stops arrows," Llandor quipped.*

*Argua perched the hat playfully on her head.*

*"Necromancers' regalia is **not** a toy," Zephyra warned icily.*

*Argua drooled.*

*"Great. Our half-ogre is a zombie," sighed Llandor.*

*"No, **she** is an idiot." Zephyra snatched the hat. "But **this** is legendary."*

In masquerade and pantomime, tall, pointy hats signal magician characters. Delvers avoid such headgear. For one thing, sporting it is perilous when your enemy believes the stories and someone orders, "Kill the casters!" For another, it offers meager protection against that and other violence; the Energetic Concentrator provides just DR 1 on the skull (thanks to extraordinarily strong monster-silk), and precludes wearing a helmet.

Yet the Concentrator isn't for show! It's dubbed a "concentrator" for two reasons valuable to casters – though its blessing is double-edged.

First, the Concentrator focuses the wearer's mind on magic – obsessively so. It boosts any spellcasting talent they possess already – Bardic Talent, Magery (even Magery 0), Power Investiture, or Power Investiture (Druidic) – by three levels. This *can* exceed the usual maximum of six. But the Concentrator also *reduces* the IQ of anyone who dons it by three, along with everything that depends on it. The net effects?

*Everyone:* -3 to IQ, Will, and Per for all purposes, and to skills based on these.

*All spellcasters:* No effect on spell levels; +3 from increased talent cancels -3 to IQ. The same goes for Perception + talent rolls to detect magical items and phenomena. Spells with minimum IQ prerequisites (Blink, Foolishness, Great Haste, Lend Skill, Mass Daze, Mass Sleep, Pathfinder, Seeker,

Simple Illusion, and Trace Teleport) can no longer be cast if the caster's IQ drops too low; those already cast can be maintained. But for the upside, see *Talent and Effect (Spells, p. 11)*

and *Missile Spells (Spells, p. 13)*; clerics with Power Investiture 7-9 can heal 14-18 HP using Major Healing, wizards with Magery 7-9 can build 21d to 27d missiles, and so on.

*Bards:* Effects cancel out for Musical Composition and Musical Instrument, and for IQ-derived rolls for Bard-Song abilities. Singing gets +3, as it benefits from Bardic Talent but is *HT*-based; this enhances Song of Humiliation. Reaction bonuses when performing for a willing audience or using Song of the Wild increase by +3.

*Clerics:* Effects cancel out for IQ-derived rolls for Holy abilities. Clerics *can* learn spells for their higher Power Investiture level, but if they remove the Concentrator, they can no longer cast these if Power Investiture falls too low, though they can maintain those already cast.

*Druids:* Effects cancel out for IQ-derived rolls for Druidic abilities. Reaction bonuses when using Speak with Animals or Speak with Plants increase by +3. Like clerics, druids can learn spells they can cast only while wearing the Concentrator.

*Wizards:* Effects cancel out for Thaumatology.

As the name implies, the Concentrator also focuses the wearer's energy. If they have an Energy Reserve, add its level to power-item capacity.

The Concentrator works wherever there's mana, Nature's strength, or sanctity. That doesn't allow casting without suitable supernatural energy! It just means -3 to IQ and +3 to talent apply even where the talent isn't useful.

*Sell Price:* \$75,000.

*Weight:* 0.45 lb.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 6 FP + FP equal to wearer's Energy Reserve, if any.

## Ultimate Power!

The Energetic Concentrator may inspire players to ask to buy more than six levels of spellcasting talent. For already-smart casters, spellcasting talent at 10 points/level is more attractive than yet more IQ at 20 points/level. This bargain-hunting can upset game balance. If permitting spellcasting talent 7+, it's best to charge 20 points/level, making it worthwhile only to those who intend to exploit *Talent and Effect* and *Missile Spells*.

## Treasure!

*Stupidly Powerful.* A boss with spellcasting talent 4+ can exploit the Concentrator to shatter normal limits. One with a generous Energy Reserve gets a mega-power item. One with extreme Will can absorb -3 to avoid distraction and resist spells. Liches and large dragons (laugh and die) have all three. In delvers' hands, this artifact is fairly balanced; high energy costs curb enhanced spell effects.





# FANTASTIC FALCON

"In the chest we find . . .," Puddin' paused dramatically and finished picking the lock. She lifted the lid and her face fell. "A bird."

"Miao Miao eat?" the cat-girl asked.

"Yuck! It's stuffed and musty," Puddin' replied. To the others she added, "We fought all those brain-eaters for **this**?"

"Abominations against Nature beget abominations against Nature," preached Llandor.

"Wait, m'lads and lasses," interjected Elin. "This falcon be **strong** with Nature! I believe our necromancer friends mistook suspended life for suspended death."

The Fantastic Falcon doesn't look fantastic to most treasure-hunters. At first glance, it's a stuffed raptor wearing a tasseled hood – a jeweled blinder that might fetch \$600. The only clues that it's special are the lack of evidence of taxidermy, apparent on a *Per*-based Connoisseur (Luxuries) or Surgery roll, and an aura of druidic magic, detectable with a Perception + Power Investiture (Druidic) roll.

But once per day between sunrise and sunset – the magic senses this even indoors or underground – the Falcon will come to life for up to an hour when unhooded (a Ready maneuver), to do the mental bidding of whoever holds the hood! Treat this as a Bird Control spell (*Spells*, p. 17) requiring no dice roll or energy. Constant concentration is required, without which the raptor circles (if there's room) or perches (if not), awaiting orders.

While the Falcon is animate, the hood's holder can project their senses or even their full consciousness into it, per Rider Within (*Spells*, p. 20) or Beast Possession (*Spells*, p. 18). Starting either effect requires *one* Concentrate maneuver and no dice roll; distance is irrelevant. Energy cost is as usual for these spells: 4 or 6 energy for the first minute, 1 or 2 energy per additional minute.

The Falcon uses the stats in the box. It is smarter than most members of its species and has some unusual skills. It shares its *controller's* Will – at a bonus equal to Power Investiture (Druidic) for a druid – which makes it hard to "steal" with Animal spells. It is otherwise indistinguishable from a natural creature. It's a competent thief, a useful scout when using Rider Within, and a way for a magic-user to remotely cast spells known at skill 20+ in conjunction with Beast Possession.

After its hour is up, the Fantastic Falcon perches and falls inanimate. It's best to call it back before then! It cannot be reanimated again until after the next sunrise – but unless rehooded, it animates automatically then.

The Falcon is "loyal" to its hood, not its handler; whoever holds the blinder controls the bird. If *no one* possesses the hood, the Falcon behaves as if without orders

(circling or perching), becomes inanimate after an hour, and reanimates and does nothing for one hour at sunrise; after three sunrises without orders, the magic dissipates and the Falcon flies off forever. If killed while animate, the Falcon is simply destroyed.

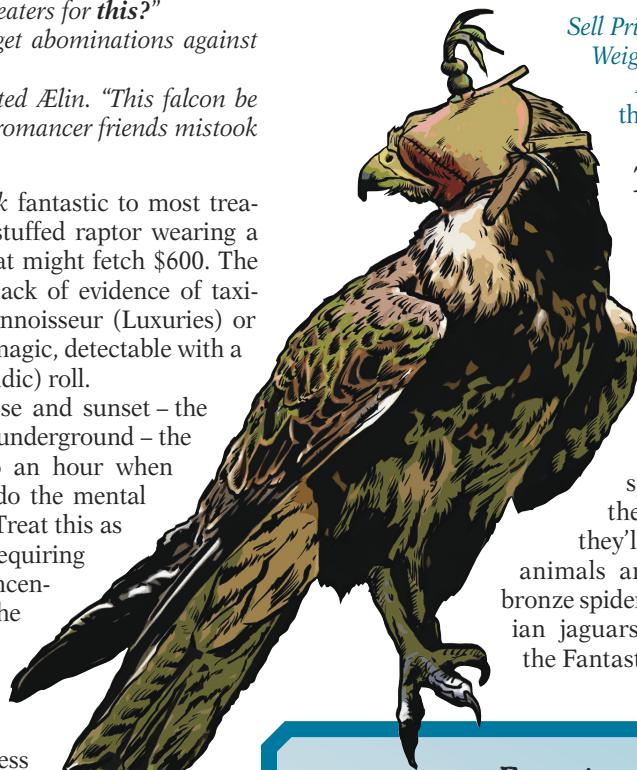
Sell Price: \$41,000.

Weight: 5 lbs.

Power-Item Capacity: 6 FP for the jeweled hood.

## Treasure!

*Malicious Menagerie.* Using the Fantastic Falcon in combat against delvers means its destruction. That's boring! However, it can explain how a boss knows the group's plans, especially on an outdoor adventure where it can fly well beyond spell and arrow range. After the heroes defeat the villain, they'll find a collection of stuffed animals and statues, including hostile bronze spiders (*Monsters*, p. 17) and obsidian jaguars (*Monsters*, pp. 43-44) – and the Fantastic Falcon.



## Exceptional Falcon

ST: 3	HP: 3	Speed: 6.00
DX: 14	Will: *	Move: 2 (Air Move 12/24)
IQ: 4	Per: 13	
HT: 10	FP: 10	SM: -4
Dodge: 9	Parry: N/A	DR: 0

**Beak (16):** 1 point large piercing. Reach C.

**Claw (16):** 1 point cutting. Reach C.

**Swoop (16):** 1d-2 cutting (Move 12) or 1d cutting (Move 24). Treat as *Move and Attack* (*Exploits*, pp. 30-31), but without the -4 to skill and skill cap of 9. The other drawbacks of Move and Attack still apply. Reach C.

**Traits:** Acute Vision 3; Enhanced Move (Air); Flight (Winged); No Fine Manipulators; Wild Animal.

**Skills:** Acrobatics-14; Brawling-16; Filch-14; Observation-13.

**Class:** Animal.

**Notes:** Uses *controller's* Will + Power Investiture (Druidic) as Will.

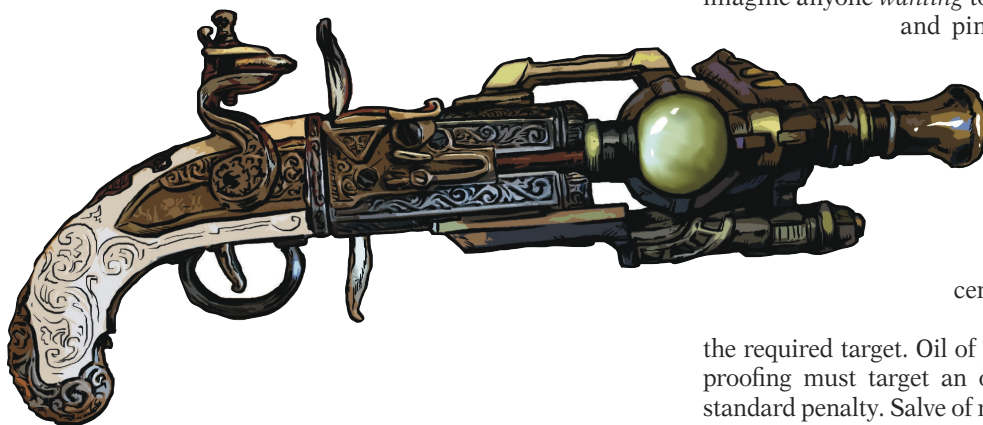
# FOUNTAINIZER

## *The Power Of Precision Potions!*

*Avoid the inelegance of hurled bottles with the new, improved FOUNTAINIZER.*

*Available at finer magic shops.*

The Fountainizer is an alchemical item that projects potions in a narrow stream using the rules for missile weapons (**Exploits**, p. 45), *not* those for grenades or jets. It requires a new skill, Fountainizer (DX/Easy); this defaults to DX-4, Crossbow-2, or Innate Attack (Beam)-2. Combat stats are Acc 2, Range 30, Shots 1(4), ST 10†, Bulk -5.



*Range* is *Maximum Range*. The Fountainizer squirts potions to 30 yards at full effect. It has no Half-Damage Range.

*Shots* indicates the Fountainizer normally takes four Ready maneuvers to reload: one to open it (letting any potion bottle within drop out), one to draw a new potion, one to load the potion into it, and one to close it for shooting. A successful Fast-Draw (Potion) roll shaves off one Ready maneuver.

The Fountainizer requires *two* hands to operate. It has a pistol grip and no stock, like a pistol crossbow, but is too unwieldy to shoot one-handed.

A thrown grenade potion has Acc 0, Range ST×2, and Bulk -2. Purely as a ranged attack, then, the Fountainizer isn't *necessarily* better. But it provides other benefits that depend on the class of potion it's loaded with:

**Drinkable:** The potion becomes a contact agent (**Exploits**, p. 56); it affects the target if it hits bare skin (including Tough Skin) or DR 0 clothing, but cannot penetrate armor. This often requires targeting the face (-5). Because drinkables are *beneficial*, it's hard to imagine anyone dodging – indeed, if the shooter misses, the would-be target may try a Dodge roll (*without* modifiers for retreating or Defense Bonus) to interpose their mouth, bare skin, etc. A margin of success equal to or greater than the shooter's margin of failure means they benefit.

**Fountain:** The potion endures for only one second but gains the Fountainizer's range. Shakable potions have maximum effect. For instance, an acid fountain normally shoots a two-yard jet for two seconds, doing 2d corrosion, or 3d after shaking; the Fountainizer shoots a 30-yard jet for one second, but for 3d corrosion. **Exception:** A light fountain emits a 30-yard beam for 20 seconds, ending if the weapon is reloaded sooner.

**Grenade:** The contents are squirted, so bottle breakage is never a problem. Grenades that normally affect an area – that is, most of them – behave as contact agents that affect a single target, as for drinkables (though it's hard to imagine anyone *wanting* to be hit). They trade area for range and pinpoint accuracy. Ones that affect

one target, like liquid ice, simply acquire different range stats. A bottled explosion or windstorm produces the maximum effect (no shaking needed) at the weapon's muzzle. It requires no attack roll and is centered on the shooter's center front hex – be careful!

**Utility:** As a drinkable, except for the required target. Oil of penetration, sharpness, or shatterproofing must target an object – usually a weapon – at the standard penalty. Salve of regrowth takes the hit location penalty for the body part to be regrown, which can't be armored. Thieves' oil takes *no* penalty to hit; the torso will do. True water uses the SM of the water-filled container.

The Fountainizer contains magical machinery to pierce bottle stoppers and alter how potions work. The potion's magic powers this, meaning the Fountainizer cannot project nonmagical liquids (including alchemist's fire) – it works only on the substances listed under *Potions* (**Adventurers**, pp. 116-117 or **Magic Items**, pp. 20-21) or that the GM calls potions. It works anywhere the potion would, which normally requires mana.

**Sell Price:** \$8,000.

**Weight:** 6.5 lbs.

**Power-Item Capacity:** 13 FP.

## **Treasure!**

**Arms Dealing.** The Fountainizer isn't a unique artifact. It isn't *that* much better than hurling bottles, and the -2 to conventional skills negates the benefits of Acc 2. It shines only in niche uses: helping distant friends benefit from potions they don't have to draw, open, and drink; shooting fountains and liquid ice *far*; and not endangering allies with grenades. Its "ammo cost" is high. It's unlikely to upset game balance, but that doesn't mean it has to be sold everywhere – finding a seller (or the inventor!) is quest-worthy.



# GOD-KING'S OCULUS

*"God-King" was what the citizens of an ancient city-state called their adored ruler: monarch, general, high priest, and archmage. Unlike many similar sovereigns, the God-King did not attempt to defy death, rule the world, or challenge the gods. Kindness and wisdom earned him his moniker, and his life – while long – ended in a natural death.*

*Which was when the problems started. Not the difficulties every personality cult faces after losing its leader, but body-snatching: People who believed the God-King was truly divine sought to cut powerful relics from his corpse.*

*Most of these relics are lost to time. The God-King's Oculus – his left eyeball – is an exception. It hasn't changed since it was hacked out, and is genuinely (and inexplicably) magical.*

The God-King's Oculus is a human eyeball with a length of attached grue. When not in somebody's eye socket, it looks fresh and bloody, as if just ripped out. Wherever it is, it radiates clerical and wizardly magic.

To use the Oculus . . . yes, you must stuff it into an empty eye socket. If you started out with Blindness or One Eye – or acquired either during your adventures – pop it right in! The Oculus takes root at once. It won't *do* anything until you've acclimated to it by "buying off" your problem with character points: 35 points improve Blindness to One Eye, 15 points eliminate One Eye.

If your eye has been freshly dismembered (not merely crippled; see *Exploits*, p. 61), mash

the Oculus into the still-bleeding hole. It works immediately and you keep your sight. Such a wound might occur in combat, or you can have an associate put out your eye or even do it yourself: Roll a Fright Check (*Exploits*, pp. 10-11) at -5; instead of the standard results, failure when an ally is trying means you flinch, suffering injury to your *face*, but can try again, while failure for self-mutilation means you wimp out and *can't* retry. However it happens, injury is twice that to cripple, which in turn is injury over HP/10; e.g., a knight with HP 14 needs injury over 1.4 HP, or 2 HP, for crippling, and 4 HP to gouge out the eye.

Alternatively, resort to surgery. If you're conscious, treat this like an attack. If you're unconscious, the surgeon must roll vs. Surgery: All outcomes remove the eye – but any success halves injury (e.g., 2 HP for our knight) while any failure deals the usual injury. Critical failure *also* costs an Appearance level, with Ugly becoming Hideous [-16] (-4 on reactions, -8 to Sex Appeal); lower your point total by the difference. Battle scars look rugged – botched medical procedures look *creepy*.

However your eye comes out, putting in the Oculus gives you Unnatural Features 5 (*Adventurers*, p. 67), for -5 points; it glows, magically draws the gaze, and *isn't yours*. If you hack out your eye and lose the Oculus before you can slip it in, you acquire One Eye [-15] instead. Either disadvantage lowers your point total.

And what does the Oculus *do*? It grants the ability to "see" magical forces. Someone without Magery gains Magery 0 [5]; someone *with* Magery 0-5 gains another level (10 points); and someone with Magery 6 gains one level of Improved Magic Resistance (5 points). This raises their point total. They don't gain access to special wizard traits, so the Oculus benefits wizards the most – but non-wizards can learn wizardly spells their new Magery level permits.

The Oculus requires mana or sanctity to merge with someone and replace their eye. Once installed, neither force affects it!

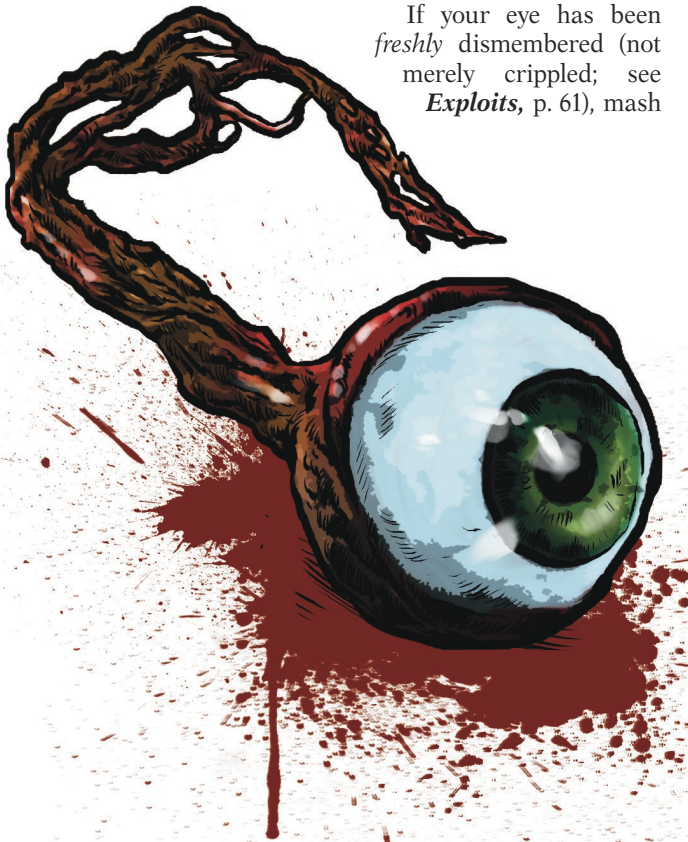
*Sell Price:* \$12,500. It's powerful but *ghastly* – most people don't want it.

*Weight:* 0.02 lb. (one standard coin).

*Power-Item Capacity:* 1 FP if carrying around the disgusting eyeball. It *can't* be a power item once "installed."

## Treasure!

*Wide-Eyed With Amazement.* The Oculus *will* be in some boss' eye socket. Having an evil cleric *also* cast basic wizardly spells, or giving it to an enemy warrior who has *one* such spell (say, Haste) at a high level, is a nice surprise. An elf or half-elf raises racial Magery 0 to Magery 1, letting any such opponent cast numerous wizardly spells. In all cases, Perception + Magery or Power Investiture can detect the Oculus, while excising it requires Surgery skill (*Exploits*, p. 24).



# GORILLA CLUB

"It is clearly a wand carved with a sinister jungle totem," Zephyra lectured, "and therefore the sort of thing best entrusted to a wizard."

"If it's some heathen fetish, I say we destroy it," countered Miriam.

"Monkey," Argua added helpfully.

Grükuk sighed. "It's a Gorilla Club."

"The orc speaks! I have researched the world's magical artifacts. You have studied – well, nothing I have seen evidence of," Zephyra snarked.

"I'm as much an orc as you are an elf," Grükuk replied with deadly calm, "and I've studied weapons. This is a Gorilla Club. But yes, it's magical by definition."

Argua smiled. "Ha! Argua right! Monkey!"

A Gorilla Club is a fine-quality knobbed club (*Adventurers*, p. 98) whose business end is carved to resemble the head of a flesh-eating ape (*Monsters*, pp. 27-28). The wood is dark and *extremely* hard. The carving's eyes and teeth are made of ivory.

Such weapons aren't unique, but neither are they created using widely known magic. Their magical properties are best described as "spirit" (more precisely, "shamanic"), but treat them as druidic for the purposes of detection and identification; see *Supernatural Origins* (*Exploits*, p. 77). A side effect of this is that when used as a druidic power item, it has twice the usual capacity.

When wielded, a Gorilla Club grants its user Arm ST 2, like that of a flesh-eating ape. This is true Arm ST, identical to the monster ability, and also aids strikes, grapples, and lifts with the arm *not* holding the Club. It has no effect on *overall* ST for breaking free, carrying equipment, kicking, and so on, or on HP.

Moreover, whenever the Club connects, the ape head *bites the target*. This inflicts a flat 1d+2 cutting damage, regardless of ST. This must overcome DR separately.

*Example:* A warrior with ST 12 would swing a Gorilla Club as if ST 14, for 2d+1 crushing, not 1d+3. If they hit, they'd roll 2d+1 crushing against the target's DR *and* 1d+2 cutting against the same DR.

All told, this makes a Gorilla Club a nice but not overwhelmingly powerful magical weapon. The GM who puts two in the campaign should be prepared to answer questions about whether wielding one in either hand gives Arm ST 4. This is a considerably bigger deal, but *probably* fine by the time the delvers reach the power level where everyone has a couple artifact-grade weapons.

The Gorilla Club does have one other property: If it is *broken* (destroying it for good) – deliberately or through bad luck – the spirit is freed. It will materialize and fight for the former Club's owner for one minute, after which it will run off (if still alive) or revert to wooden shards (if slain). Roll 1d; on 1-5, it's an ordinary flesh-eating ape, but on 6, it's a *giant* ape (*Monsters*, p. 30).

*Sell Price:* \$46,000 in theory (it's *almost* as good as a \$60,000 Might +2 item). In practice, it's usually seen as "primitive" in cities big enough to have magic shops, and fetches (1d-1)×10% as much, with a roll of 0% meaning no interested buyers.

*Weight:* 2 lbs.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 4 FP for most users, 8 FP for druids (and tribal shamans).

## Treasure!

*Gorilla Warfare.* If the GM is strict about resale value, a Gorilla Club makes a fitting reward for a relatively low-powered quest. The ideal place for it to show up is in the hands of a tribal leader in a jungle teeming with flesh-eating apes, giant constrictors, horde pygmies, leaping leeches, and tigers, plus a few trigers and maybe a giant ape. If the heroes are more powerful, make it lost Teclá (*Monsters*, p. 44) and throw in ciuaclán, Demons from Between the Stars, and obsidian jaguars. Such a boss would have druidic spells, command tribal warriors, control many of the local monsters, and create zombies not via necromancy but with mind-destroying herbs.





# HANDY GRENADE

"We toss you across the chasm in this," explained Sir Yvor, holding out a metal flask, "and you pop out and lower the bridge."

"Daft if you think I will!" shot back Hap.

Zephyra looked exasperated. "It's. Perfectly. Safe. Magic."

Hap glowered. "'Safe' like being sucked underground into a tomb? I haven't forgotten, you know."

Yvor tried again. "The mechanism needs a deft hand, Master Badapple. Were it a matter of a swift blow, **I** would go, for the honor."

"Honor!" exclaimed Miao Miao, suddenly paying attention. She pounced on the flask, fiddled with the stopper, and vanished.

"She **is** agile, stupidly lucky, and disposable. Let her try," Zephyra decided.

Everyone has heard tales of spirits imprisoned in magical flasks. Upon encountering any vessel that might be such, wise delvers handle it with care. Greedy ones might open it, blinded by visions of genies and wishes. But *nobody* expects the Handy Grenade!

Physically, the Handy Grenade is a metal flask in the style of an ancient civilization. Its composition is unknowable, as it's coated in a patina that refuses to be polished away. Its

most noteworthy feature is its large, ornate stopper, which twists but won't pop out.

Twisting the stopper (a Ready maneuver in combat) gives the one doing the twisting the *option* of being stored inside in suspended animation, along with any equipment they're wearing or holding. They'll *know* this, and if they don't wish to go, they'll remain there, holding the flask – the Handy Grenade isn't a prison. If they and their gear weigh more than a stout, battle-ready human knight (more than 300 lbs. total), they likewise won't enter the flask.

As soon as someone vanishes into the Handy Grenade, the stopper starts to unwind with a mechanical whirring noise. After five seconds, there's a loud "POP!" and the occupant appears wherever the flask was, the flask at their feet. They must roll against Body Sense (defaults to DX-6 or Acrobat-ics-3), with effects as described on p. 73 of *Adventurers*.

The most obvious way to exploit this is to *toss* the occupant farther than they could jump, among unsuspecting enemies, and/or over an obstacle; use the rules for throwing grenades (*Exploits*, p. 44). Another trick is to hide someone – either in plain sight (e.g., amidst clutter) or *on* somebody (requires a Pickpocket roll) – when five seconds is long enough to provide a useful surprise. If the Handy Grenade is tossed into a monster's mouth (-6 to hit), the person within appears *next to* the creature and not inside it unless the critter is large enough to swallow them whole (SM at least four greater); in that case, *Suffocation* (*Exploits*, p. 70) starts once the monster-slayer emerges, but all blows struck from within bypass DR and, on any *living* creature without No Vitals, enjoy a wounding modifier of ×3 regardless of damage type. The flask is in the creature's belly either way. Imaginative delvers will dream up other uses!

The Handy Grenade's powers stem from the brain-hurting logic that lets Elder Things exist Beyond Time And Space, and could be said to be cosmic. It radiates no detectable supernatural energies.

*Sell Price:* \$25,000.

*Weight:* 1 lb.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 1 FP.

## Treasure!

*Say Hello To My Little Friend.* With a five-second "fuse," it's unlikely that the Handy Grenade would be sitting around a dungeon for untold ages with someone waiting inside for delvers to show up (unless there's a zone of stopped time . . .). But there's no reason why a brainy master of occult lore, like a lich or mindwarper, wouldn't lob a small-but-dangerous minion *behind* a party of adventurers. Such a boss is likely to have a second, stronger minion do the throwing. As a twist, perhaps the minion lobs the *boss* behind the heroes. The adventurers can keep the Handy Grenade if they can survive the stab in the back.



# HERMETIC CAULDRON

*Sola dosis facit venenum.*

– *Hermetic adage*

Potions – you never have what you need and you never loot what you want. The Hermetic Cauldron solves these problems. It transforms concoctions into one another, *if* you have quality ingredients and alchemical knowhow.

The Cauldron can convert *to* or *from* anything on the table below. Value and liquid volume – given per “dose” – affect what’s possible.

Liquid	Value/Dose	Volume/Dose
Acid	\$10	1/2 pint
Alchemist’s fire	\$100	1/2 pint
Anti-toxin (any)	\$20	1/4 pint
Bladeblack	\$1,000	1/4 pint
Demon’s brew	\$500	1/2 pint
Faerie ink or developer	\$75	1/4 pint
Glow vial	\$30	1/4 pint
Glue	\$60	1/2 pint
Lantern oil	\$2	1 pint
Monster drool	\$20	1/4 pint
Oozing doom	\$100	1/2 pint
Paralytic slime	\$500	1/4 pint
Potion (drinkable or utility)	*	1/4 pint
Potion (fountain or grenade)	*	1/2 pint

\* *Identified, standard* potions use the prices from *Adventurers*, pp. 116-117 or *Magic Items*, pp. 20-21. *Identified, nonstandard* potions contribute \$100 each (*Exploits*, p. 76) and can’t be converted *to*. *Unidentified* potions spoil the attempt.

Total ingredient *value* must equal or exceed total product value. The GM may permit other ingredients *known* to the Cauldron’s user to contribute their usual value; *unknown* ingredients cause the attempt to fail automatically! Converting to several doses of one concoction is possible. Converting to several different concoctions – or to anything not listed here – isn’t.

Total ingredient *volume* cannot exceed the Cauldron’s capacity: four gallons, or 32 pints. This limits options with low-value ingredients; 32 pints of oil (total value \$64) won’t allow expensive poisons and potions. Product volume cannot exceed ingredient volume, but as adding water to increase volume is acceptable, this matters only if water is scarce. Ingredient volume can exceed product volume – the excess boils off.

The user can “see” the mixture’s fundamental properties and “reach in” to rearrange them. This takes two minutes and cannot be hurried. Then roll vs. Alchemy, even if the ingredients or product normally require Herb Lore, Pharmacy,

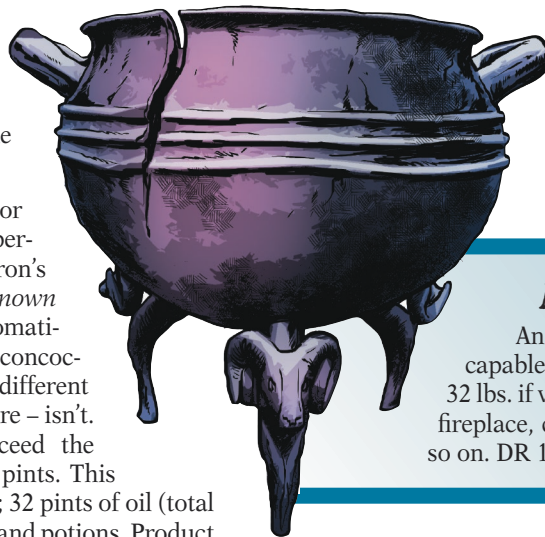
Poisons, or another skill. Although unknown ingredients guarantee failure, roll to check for *critical* failure.

**Modifiers:** -1 per different ingredient after the first (water added to make up volume counts!); -1 per *full* \$500 of product value (dose value × number of doses); +1 for taking five minutes, +2 for 10, +3 for 20, +4 for 30, or +5 for an hour.

Success yields the desired product; if creator skill matters later on, use the number rolled against. Failure spoils the ingredients. *Critical* failure also inflicts 3d damage on the user and anybody within a yard. The GM decides damage type, inspired by the ingredients or rolling 1d: 1-2, burning (flames or boiling liquid); 3-4, corrosion (acid); 5-6, toxic (poison gas).

The product has that liquid’s usual volume and weight. See *Containers* (*Adventurers*, p. 111) for storage. Nobody will buy most home-brew concoctions; obviously magical potions fetch a flat \$100/dose.

**Example:** The party needs four fire-resistance potions with total value \$2,000, total volume one pint. They have one dose of demon’s brew (\$500, 1/2 pint), one of paralytic slime (\$500, 1/4 pint), and 10 of alchemist’s fire (\$1,000, 5 pints). That totals \$2,000, 5.75 pints – enough. Uncle Seamus has Alchemy-15, -2 for three ingredients, and -4 for total product value, and commits an hour for +5, giving 14. He succeeds easily! The resulting potions have effective skill 14 and sell for \$100/dose.



The Cauldron is *cosmic* – it lets the user alter almost anything. Potions it creates still require mana to work.

**Sell Price:** \$46,000.

**Weight:** 20 lbs.

**Power-Item Capacity:** 3 FP.

## New Item: Cauldron

An iron pot with handles and feet, capable of holding four gallons (weighs 32 lbs. if water). Can serve as a makeshift fireplace, crucible for melting coins, and so on. DR 12, HP 11. \$180, 20 lbs.

## Treasure!

**Pot, Kettle.** Monsters are *stealing* one thing, *using* another – as the heroes discover when healing potions stolen from the temple reappear as bladeblack and death potions. The bad guys always have just the right concoction for every situation, too. Once the adventurers acquire the Cauldron, they’ll be hauling a 20-lb. weight, turning valuables into unsellable stuff, and wasting ingredients. Abuse is unlikely.



# INSTANT ZOMBIE

"Samar and I have a strategy, but we're short on warm bodies," said Sir Yvor.

"We have people enough to hold the chokepoint, but we need someone way over there," Samar explained, pointing, "to pull this rope. We can't sacrifice anyone for that."

"I'm always willing to sacrifice myself!" interjected Francesco.

Zephyra looked up. "I can help without sacrificing Brother Zombie – err, Zombani." She smirked. "But the body won't be warm."

Shrunkened heads are *de rigueur* for primitive witch doctors. Supposedly, shrinking an enemy's head captures their spirit and compels it to serve. Which isn't inaccurate here.

An Instant Zombie is easy to use (three Ready maneuvers in combat, if it and a blade are in hand):

1. Use a cutting weapon to sever the head of any dead humanoid of Size Modifier -2, -1, or 0. The corpse can't have been undead before (no recycling) and must be "meaty" (no skeletons), but it needn't be *fresh* – rotting and maggots is fine.

2. Stick the Instant Zombie on the neck stump. A good fit doesn't matter. The head affixes itself. The cadaver comes to (un)life at once.

3. Give your new zombie orders. Be precise – it's literal-minded and has no initiative.

For stats, this zombie keeps the formerly living person's DX, HT, Basic Speed, Basic Move, and *physical* traits, such as Flexibility, Lame, Lifting ST, One Arm, One Hand, Striking ST, and Tough Skin – including racial abilities like Sharp Claws. It uses that individual's ST+1 and HP+5. It gains all the traits of a zombie (*Monsters*, p. 62); where these conflict with personal traits (e.g., High vs. Low Pain Threshold), use the zombie's. It has FP "N/A" and is subject to the notes in the zombie monster description. But whatever the body, it has the *head's* knowledge and senses: IQ, Will, and Per 8; the Brawling, Broadsword, Shield, and Wrestling skills (no others) at DX+1; and no trait that could be deemed "mental." In a pinch, use the standard zombie write-up, but with the body donor's ST+1, DX, HT, HP+5, Basic Speed, and Basic Move.

The zombie views whoever stuck the head on the corpse as its master. Automaton and Reprogrammable mean it needs precise orders. A repetitive physical task or a plan that can be summed up as a single combat maneuver works best.

Commanded to "fight my enemies," it pursues the nearest active foe, attacking until its master takes a Concentrate maneuver to retask it. Faced with anything it lacks orders for, it keeps on doing what it's doing – which might be *nothing*.

Should the zombie be destroyed, the Instant Zombie might survive. If the injury that reduced the zombie to -1×HP was to the head (skull, eye, or face),

the Instant Zombie is ruined beyond repair. If the *whole* zombie is reduced to -10×HP by burning or corrosion damage, or something like magical disintegration, the shrunkened head is gone along with it. Otherwise, just saw the head off the old body and stash it – you can stick it on a new corpse later (the previous one is spent).

The Instant Zombie isn't a unique artifact.

It is a wizardly item, and can't reanimate a corpse in a no-mana area. If already animating a zombie, that zombie can

function in a no-mana area but loses 1 HP per minute due to Dependency. Should *that* injury reduce it to -1×HP, the Instant Zombie loses its magical powers permanently.

**Sell Price:** \$15,000 among villains who can't animate zombies; those who can offer \$2,500 at most (it's still handy), as do temples (to get it off the market). As a curio, not a magic item, it might fetch \$350.

**Weight:** 5 lbs.

**Power-Item Capacity:** 13 FP.

## Treasure!

**Head Hunters.** On the side of Evil, an Instant Zombie is unimpressive; bad guys have unlimited undead. It's more valuable for delvers, who effectively acquire a permanent (if mediocre) ally; a good helmet ensures many reuses. Hide the Instant Zombie among regular zombies. Noticing that one has a strange-looking head calls for a Physiology (Undead) roll, made by the GM in secret. If this succeeds, the adventurers must ask for a Hidden Lore (Magic Items) roll and succeed to deduce what it is.





# JUG O' TROUBLE

Grükuk pulled out a huge jug.

"Our odds are **that** terrible?" asked Hap, whizzing an ineffective sling bullet at the zombie horde. "Give it here, then. If anyone deserves a last drink, it's me."

In response, Grükuk uncorked the jug and raised it to her lips.

Hap lobbed another bullet. "Look, it's just you and me, and I won't live to tell."

The jug started to hum. Then Hap remembered and sidled closer. "Hah! I'll owe **you** a drink when we get out of this."

Adventurers usually encounter jugs (see box) as packaging for booze. A jug can also be played musically by buzzing the lips *into* the opening. Musical Instrument (Jug) skill permits use with Bard-Song.

Wielding the Jug o' Trouble requires ST 13 in one hand, ST 11 in two. The Jug can be played musically – but its powers are triggered by blowing air *across* the opening to produce a resonant hum. This requires no skill; what matters is lungpower. Individuals with Doesn't Breathe are out of luck!

Sounding the Jug takes a Ready maneuver and costs 1 FP (*not* payable from Energy Reserves or power items). This causes it to emit sound waves harmful to any *material* being, regardless of whether it can hear. Resist Sound (*Spells*, p. 67) or, for monsters, Immunity to Sound protects; Damage Resistance doesn't.

Consulting the diagram on p. 46 of *Exploits* or p. 12 of *Spells*: The number of rings of hexes affected equals the number of *consecutive* turns played, but there's an "eye" in the center where the user is (the hex marked "1"). Nothing happens after one turn – but after two, the waves affect everyone in the ring marked "2," with each successive turn adding a ring.

Each turn, every material being in the affected area suffers HP of injury equal to the number of uninterrupted turns of playing, -1 HP per yard from the center. Victims in the outermost ring suffer 1 HP; every yard closer adds 1 HP. The center hex is always safe, however.

This potent area-effect weapon has several drawbacks. First, blanketing a large area

requires *uninterrupted* playing, and Ready maneuvers allow only a step. Second, if more than two people, friendly or not, enter the "eye" (close combat) with the wielder, their mere presence prevents playing. Third, the user cannot go to *negative* FP; 0 FP means they're too winded to play. Finally, the effect isn't selective – it injures allies, especially those close enough to prevent enemies from overrunning the user.

*Example:* With FP 14, Grükuk could play for 14 turns. If she did that without being mobbed, she'd affect a 14-yard radius. On her final turn, everyone in the 14-yard ring would take 1 HP. Injury in the two-yard ring would be 13 HP!

The Jug is a wizardly item that requires at least low mana to function.

## New Item: Jugs

Glazed pottery jugs are widely used to store and transport liquids. Although heavy and brittle, they're cheaper than crystal, glass, and well-made wooden containers. All include a handle (allowing it to be hung where it takes one Ready maneuver to grab) and a stopper (a Ready maneuver to pop). The listed ST is to wield the *empty* jug one/two-handed. Each gallon of liquid adds 8 lbs. if water.

*One-gallon jug.* ST 11/8. DR 1, HP 6. \$6, 4 lbs.

*Two-gallon jug.* ST 13/11. DR 1, HP 8. \$11, 8 lbs.

*Three-gallon jug.* ST 14/12. DR 1, HP 9. \$16, 11 lbs.

*Four-gallon jug.* ST 16/13. DR 1, HP 10. \$22, 14 lbs.

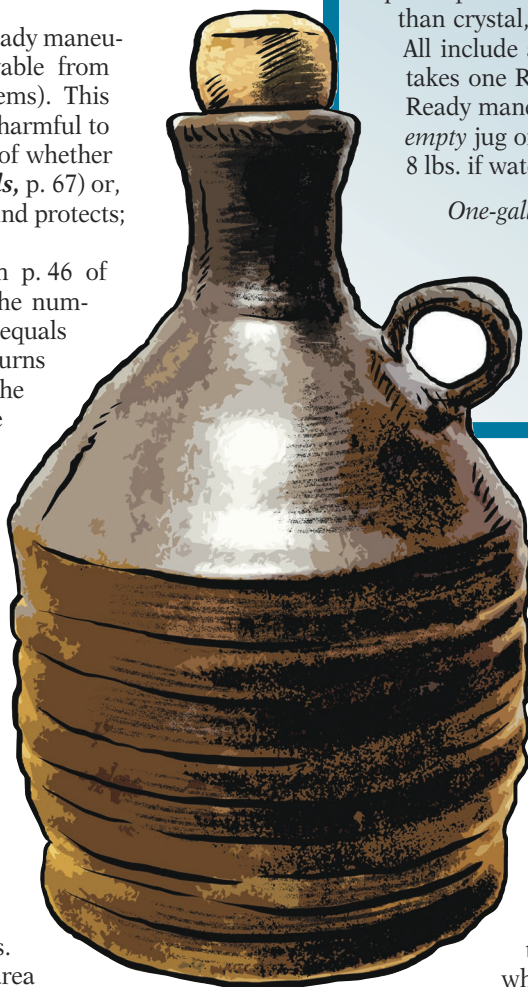
*Sell Price:* \$49,000 in theory, but authorities will *confiscate* such an indiscriminate weapon if revealed. Heroes who hand it over will get a modest reward (GM's decision).

*Weight:* 8 lbs.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 1 FP.

## Treasure!

*Jug – Or Not.* Smart heroes will rush the Jug's user. But an antagonist who can fly, cast Resist Sound on allies, or otherwise do something clever makes it deadlier than any horrid skull. It's likely to shatter if its wielder is knocked down, so if the heroes take pains to capture it intact, they *deserve* to use it for a while – until it's inevitably smashed.





# KJELLSTRÖM'S KOMPASS

"Saying 'Kjellström' makes me spit. Must be dwarvish," said the merchant.

"Captain is a sea elf," corrected the first mate, "and the name is respected hereabouts."

"Should I know of him?"

"**She** is your only hope of sailing around the icebergs, pirates, and sea monsters between here and World's End."

Any hand compass (see box) can help you navigate, and Kjellström's Kompass is no exception. Such instruments are often enchanted with Find Direction, Know Location, Pathfinder, Remember Path, or Tell Position to enhance their mundane capabilities. The Kompass is a Power 15 casting item (*Exploits*, p. 78 and *Magic Items*, p. 10) for *all five spells*.

Where Kjellström's Kompass stands out is that it divines where the user wants to go – not necessarily the journey's endpoint, but its next leg, like "100 miles down this coast" or "around those mountains" – and constantly points to the fastest path around anything that might jeopardize the voyage. This includes insurmountable obstacles (if there's a way around!), treacherous environments (icebergs, lava fields, magical storms, etc.), and serious opposition (such as dragons, pirate ships, and undead-haunted burial grounds). The Kompass reveals *no* details about what it's steering around; it just shows how to avoid trouble.

An upshot is that if a group's guide controls the Kompass throughout an *entire* trip governed by *Getting There Quickly* (*Exploits*, p. 17), the results of the Navigation and Weather Sense rolls discussed there are improved: critical failure (+20% travel time) becomes regular failure (+10%); regular failure, success (-10%). Rolls against travel skills (Boating, Hiking, Riding, Seamanship, Skiing, etc.) are unaffected. This reduces the worst possible total adjustment from +60% to +40%. Even someone attempting Navigation and Weather Sense at default (IQ-5) would likely save 20% on travel time.

And because the Kompass guides travelers around lurking enemies, it gives -3 to all checks for wandering monsters (*Exploits*, p. 85) or random hazards *while traveling*. This modifies only the daily roll for outdoor travel. It has no effect indoors or when engaged in tasks other than travel (camping, kicking in doors, and so on).

As the Kompass works by choosing optimal paths, it can't accelerate travel or help avoid wandering monsters where routes are restricted, as in most dungeons.

And because it reveals no details, it won't warn of specific curses, traps, or monsters. In the situation where delvers face several tunnels or doors, though, it *will* point to the least immediately dangerous one (GM's opinion). Treat this as Intuition (*Adventurers*, p. 50) for someone with IQ 15 for this one purpose; e.g., if the heroes encounter three doors, the Kompass would indicate the least-dangerous one on  $15 + 1 - 2 = 14$  or less.

The things the Kompass steers away from tend to be interesting: hazardous terrain often conceals dungeons, monsters may have loot, and treacherous paths sometimes lead to riches. Groups who claim *any* of its benefits (faster travel, fewer wandering monsters, or safer choices) have -3 on all rolls the GM requires for "lucking into" side-quests, and cannot use Luck or Serendipity to reroll or avoid rolling.

The Kompass uses druidic magic. Modifiers for Nature's strength adjust the effective Power of its five enchantments and its IQ when invoking Intuition.

*Sell Price:* \$68,000.

*Weight:* 0.25 lb.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 8 FP.



## Treasure!

*Unhappy Trails.* Treasure-hunters should have to work hard to obtain such a (literal!) game-changer. A fun possibility is a race to *another* powerful treasure against bad guys who own the Kompass. Wandering monsters and dangerous terrain ensure that the heroes arrive battered and in second place, only to confront healthier rivals who've "powered up" with the quest item.

## New Item: Advanced Compasses

A compass (*Adventurers*, p. 112) allows unpenalized Navigation rolls. Needle and pivot pin sit in a nonferrous bowl under glass, set in a wooden box; the setup is durable but requires two hands and weighs 5 lbs. A chunky *pocket compass* with a crystal cover and hinged metal case is equally tough and can be used one-handed: \$250, 1 lb. A *hand compass* is similar but smaller: \$1,000, 0.25 lb. Either is easier to orient in hand or atop a map, for +1 to Navigation.

# KLANG

The demon swung its shamshir at Samar, who deftly blocked. *Clang.* The holy warrior circled defensively, staying close enough to draw another blow.

Samar's opponent took another swipe. Once more she caught it on her shield. *Clang!* It was louder this time. She continued to sidestep around her foe, unable to resist a smirk.

Roaring, the demon hacked at Samar a third time. Again she interposed the shield. *CLANG!* The noise was deafening.

Suddenly, Samar darted in and delivered a vicious shield bash. The demon didn't duck in time. **CLANG!** In a puff of smoke, Samar sent the monster back to Hell.

Klang is a fine-quality dwarven medium shield. Thus, it is metal and fireproof, has DB 2, and does +1 damage with a shield bash or rush. To start with, that is.

Each time Klang is used for a successful block defense, its Defense Bonus increases by one afterward, to a maximum of +3 DB (total DB 5) after three or more blocks. This DB is magical; treat it identically to the Deflect enchantment for the purpose of stacking magical DB. It endures only while the user continues to block successfully each turn; if a turn passes without a successful block, *all* the additional DB dissipates.

On any turn when Klang has additional DB from blocking, a shield bash or rush using it is *much* deadlier. Attacking with Klang automatically drains the extra DB regardless of the outcome, but on a hit, *multiply* the damage roll by (1 + bonus DB):  $\times 2$  after one block,  $\times 3$  after two, or  $\times 4$  after three or more.

*Example:* Samar blocks an as-Sharak's sword, giving Klang +1 DB. On her turn, she chooses All-Out Defense (Increased Block), almost guaranteeing her Block 13 will work: +2 for Klang's base DB, +1 for extra DB, +2 for All-Out Defense, and +3 for her Higher Purpose.

The as-Sharak attacks again, and Samar blocks easily. Klang now has +2 DB. If the demon hadn't attacked or had missed, or Samar's block had failed, *all* the additional DB would have disappeared. Samar sticks to All-Out Defense on her turn.

The demon strikes a third time. Samar blocks once more. This means Klang has +3 DB. Again, if the block hadn't happened, *all* the magical DB would have drained.

This time on her turn, Samar switches to Attack, for a shield bash.

This *automatically* dissipates all the accumulated DB. The blow lands. Her damage – 1d+1 crushing – gets +1 for the dwarven shield and +3 for Higher Purpose. She rolls maximum damage, or 11 points, which is  $\times(1 + 3)$  for the bonus DB: 44 points! The demon's DR 2 lets 42 points through, taking it below  $-1 \times \text{HP}$ . As the blow came from a magic weapon, the as-Sharak's Supernatural Durability is void; it must roll vs. HT, fails, and dies.

The wielder *cannot* charge up Klang by hammering their weapon against it or having friends do so. Klang feeds on the enemy's willful desire to kill the user – not on physical force! However, *different* attackers can deliver the blows that add DB, and the eventual recipient of the deadly shield attack can be someone else again.

One curiosity is that Klang gets noisier as it charges up. Everyone nearby – including wandering monsters – gets a Hearing bonus equal to its current magical DB (+1 to +3) to hear any block or attack it makes.

Klang's magic is the usual wizardly kind, but works normally even in low mana.

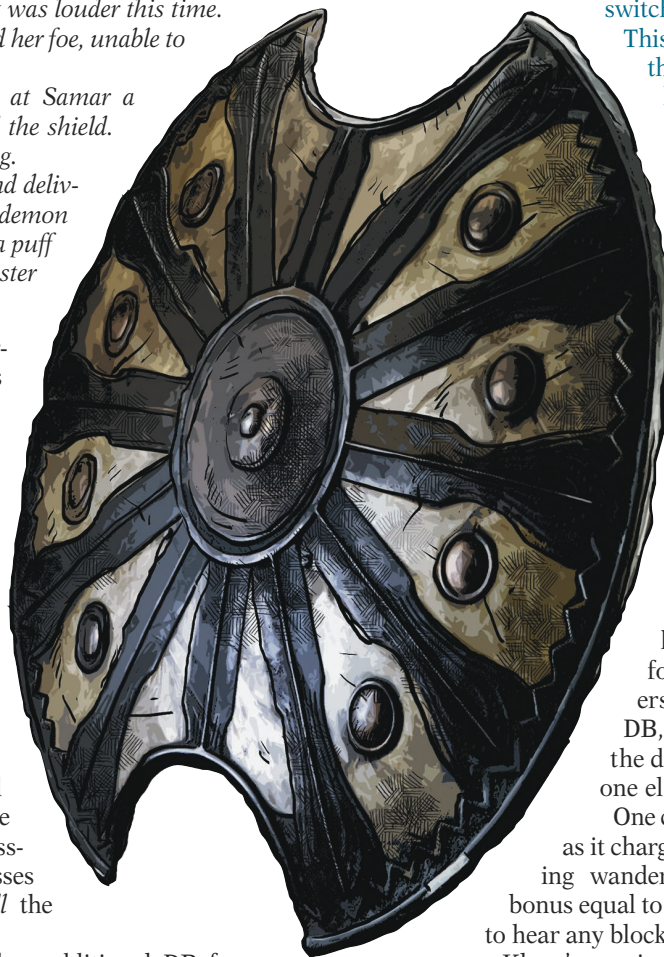
**Sell Price:** \$111,000. Klang's ability to *multiply* damage is matchless and powerful. Heroes selling off Klang are giving up a lot, so let them profit – but don't relent and give them something similar later!

**Weight:** 22.5 lbs.

**Power-Item Capacity:** 7 FP.

## Treasure!

*Clang!* Putting Klang in the hands of a competent enemy warrior is the surest way to ensure the delvers *earn* it. Even one double-, triple-, or quadruple-damage bash from, say, a ST 22 draug won't soon be forgotten, and practically guarantees the heroes will want to keep Klang rather than pawn it for gold!





# LAST-DITCH LOCK

*Argua brought up the rear. Releasing Samar from her headlock, she slammed the flimsy door and put her back to it. "Too many demons for Argua. What we gonna do?"*

*"Slay them as they come through!" raged Samar.*

*"We must prepare first," Uncle Seamus told the demon-slayer as the Hellish din drew nearer. "Magelock might buy a few seconds."*

*Puddin' cut in. "Master locksmith comin' through! Argua: bag."*

*Argua handed Puddin' a tool satchel.*

*Llandor aimed his bow at the door. The clamor beyond was deafening. "Locks – seriously? The door is paper-thin!"*

*Puddin' slapped a big black padlock against the portal and turned the key. "That'll hold 'em. Take a breather and get Mr. Hacksy ready, Argua."*

The Last-Ditch Lock is a magical gnomish padlock. Treat it as merely "good" if used as a padlock. Its blackened exterior masks the fact that it's orichalcum and functionally indestructible, however, rendering DR and HP irrelevant – the only ways to open it are to use the key, pick it (no Lockpicking modifier), or cast Lockmaster, which it resists as if with Magelock-20.

That isn't the Lock's greatest power, though! To invoke *that*, close a true door (gate, hatch, portcullis, sliding screen, or similar *movable* means of access control – not a fixed grating, wall, seal like a welded metal plate, or obstacle like upended furniture or tons of rock), press the Lock against it, and turn the key. As time is often of the essence: Taking out the Lock, positioning it, pulling out the key, and turning the key is a series of four Ready maneuvers; thus, using the Lock takes four seconds, like casting Magelock.

Once deployed, the Lock is magically fused in place . . . as is the door. The entrance becomes as strong as that of a vault (*Exploits*, pp. 82-83) – of iron, where relevant. Any door improves to DR 150, HP 84; its hinges, to DR 24, HP 46. A portcullis has DR 24, HP 46 *per bar* and requires ST 44 to lift if unlocked. A portal that's better in any respect retains its original statistics; it's neither lowered to these values nor reinforced.

The door is also locked. All native locks and bars engage instantly. Locks become DR 24, HP 46 and bars DR 16, HP 37, where an improvement. Any lock shabby enough to give a Lockpicking *bonus* loses that, but other modifiers (0 or a penalty) are unaffected. Regardless, the door enjoys the

equivalent of Magelock-20, so even if it has *no* locks or bars, or those it has are defeated, Lockmaster is required if the goal is to unlock rather than destroy the portal.

The catch is that if Lockmaster *does* defeat Magelock-20, the Lock drops off, ending its benefits: It no longer reinforces the door, and if it was the only lock, the portal is unlocked – though *ordinary* locks or bars that haven't been defeated remain closed. The same thing happens if the Lock is opened with its key (the usual way to recover it) or picked (no Lockpicking modifier). Picking it is impossible from the far side of a solid door; reaching through a portcullis is merely awkward, giving -5 to Lockpicking, reduced for Flexibility or Double-Jointed.

If the sealed portal is *destroyed*, the Lock falls off and ends up in the rubble. It won't be damaged. Using the Lock to buy time to flee foes means giving *them* the artifact.

The Lock is an example not of classic enchantment but of gnomish techno-magic. It needs mana to function. Its effective Magelock level is 15 in low mana.

*Sell Price: \$60,000.*

*Weight: 2 lbs.*

*Power-Item Capacity: 25 FP.*



## Treasure!

*Do Not Disturb.* The Lock is a nasty trick to pull on heroes. If bad guys use it on what *looks* like a flimsy door or even paper screen, typical treasure-hunters will advertise their presence trying to kick it in – and even Lockmaster means it hits the floor with a clang! The boss on the far side will be warned and ready. And hopefully *tough*, as the Lock is a powerful tool for delvers who camp in the dungeon or lure monsters into chokepoints, to be won at some cost.



# LIAR LYRE

When facing a foe  
Bearing strange arms  
Wise warriors know  
Everything harms

– Delvers' rhyme

Experienced adventurers know that not everything is what it seems. That goes double for strange artifacts found in dungeons. Take the Liar Lyre, for instance.

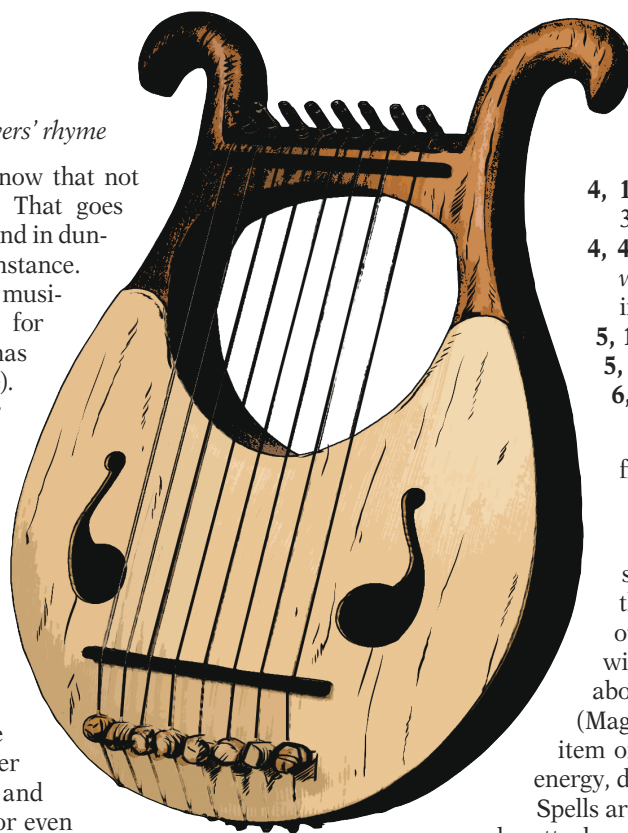
Superficially, the Lyre is a musical instrument – one useful for Bard-Song, if the bard has Musical Instrument (Lyre). (Defaults to specialties for other stringed instruments at -3.) It's nicely made, too, with strings and tuning pegs of indestructible orichalcum, and a body of highest-quality hardwood. What's odd is the handle on the back, similar to that of a buckler (*Adventurers*, p. 107).

In fact, the Lyre is tough and balanced enough to serve as a fine-quality small buckler (DB 1). It can block, bash, and Feint without being harmed or even going out of tune. A bard carrying it can use it as *either* a buckler *or* a lyre on any given turn in combat – though to strum it, they'll still need a free hand.

That isn't its most remarkable property, though. What makes the Lyre special is that whenever its user successfully blocks a crushing, cutting, impaling, or piercing attack, or an offensive *sonic* effect like a Sound Jet spell – but *not* a burning, corrosion, fatigue, or toxic attack, nor one that inflicts direct injury or *no* injury – it resonates. And in doing so, it works magic on the attacker!

Roll 1d, 1d:

- 1, 1 – *Charm\** (*Spells*, p. 53). Loyalty is to Lyre's bearer. 6 energy.
- 1, 2-6 – *Command\** (*Spells*, p. 53). Bearer must give order immediately. 2 energy.
- 2, 1-2 – *Forgetfulness\** (*Spells*, p. 54). Attacker must resist with *better* of Will or skill used to make blocked attack, or forget that skill! 3 energy.
- 2, 3-6 – *Mind-Reading†* (*Spells*, p. 25). Focuses on combat planning. Bearer receives +1 to all active defenses against attacker's later attacks, and +2 to rolls to guess attacker's actions (Strategy to learn their plans, Thaumatology to know what spells they're casting, and so on). 4 energy.



3, 1-2 – *Hush†* (*Spells*, p. 66). 2 energy.

3, 3-4 – *Garble†* (*Spells*, p. 66). 4 energy.

3, 5-6 – *Strike Dumb†* (*Spells*, p. 23). 3 energy.

4, 1-3 – *Strike Deaf†* (*Spells*, pp. 22-23). 3 energy.

4, 4-6 – *Shatter* (*Spells*, p. 50). Only if a *weapon* was blocked. Does 3d HP of injury to weapon. 3 energy.

5, 1-2 – *Sleep\** (*Spells*, p. 55). 4 energy.

5, 3-6 – *Daze\** (*Spells*, p. 54). 3 energy.

6, 1-6 – *Stun†* (*Spells*, p. 23). 2 energy.

\* Only on subjects with IQ 6+ and free will.

† Only on living subjects.

If the rolled spell can't affect the subject, nothing is cast. Otherwise, the spell is cast instantly, simultaneously with the block, and the Lyre's wielder *must* pay the energy cost (noted above) from FP, HP, or Energy Reserve (Magical); they can draw on their power item only if it's the Lyre. When conserving energy, don't block!

Spells are cast at skill 15. Use full skill against melee attackers, regardless of reach; apply -1 per yard against ranged attackers. If the spell is Resisted, the subject may resist normally. If the spell works, it endures for the spell's regular duration; the Lyre's bearer *cannot* maintain it.

The Lyre uses wizardly magic. It can be sensed by Magery and requires mana (in low-mana areas, spells are cast at skill 10).

**Sell Price:** \$84,000. That's an upper limit based on the premise that the Lyre can cast many spells, including *Charm* – if only unpredictably. The Wizards' Guild might pay this at the end of a dangerous quest to fetch the artifact. Most buyers see it as a fancy shield that stuns enemies: \$24,000.

**Weight:** 6 lbs.

**Power-Item Capacity:** 10 FP.

## Treasure!

*Zinggg!* Introduce the Lyre by sticking it in some enemy's paw. That foe need not be a bard, though it's more interesting if they are. The *real* fun starts when the adventurers, subjected to its effects, attempt to figure it out. That should be trial and error; Analyze Magic reveals only "Something that harms those striking the artifact." They can have yet more fun casting random, often draining spells – or questing for a buyer who sees it as something besides a low-value curiosity.



# LIBRO INFINITAS MYSTERII

*The party barely escaped alive. Puddin' slapped the Last-Ditch Lock on the door. "The book, Uncle Seamus! There's gotta be **some** way to kill that thing!"*

*Seamus agreed the circumstances warranted risking **Libro Infinitas Mysterii**. He cracked it open. Madness warped his normally kindly features. "De-destroy! **De-destroy!**"*

*Libro Infinitas Mysterii (L.I.M.)* appears to be just another tome; see **Adventurers**, p. 114. It's far more, however – it offers the enlightenment you need, when you need it. With a catch.

Opened with the need for esoteric knowledge, *L.I.M.* functions exactly as a tome for *any* arcane "information" skill, allowing a default roll for readers without the skill and granting a bonus to skill (and related Research rolls) to those who possess it. It's so comprehensive that the latter bonus is +2, not the usual +1! Skills that benefit – sorted by default – include:

**IQ-5:** Connoisseur (Art), Hazardous Materials, Heraldry, Hidden Lore (any), Occultism.

**IQ-6:** Pharmacy, Physiology (any), Poisons, Psychology (any), Religious Ritual (any), Theology (any).

**IQ-7:** Alchemy, Herb Lore, Thaumatology.

When using *L.I.M.* (or *any* writing) to assist skill rolls, whatever time the rules or GM normally require is *doubled*. A successful Speed-Reading roll halves this, allowing skill use in the usual time. Moreover, the circumstances must be amenable to perusing books: not in darkness, while fleeing, underwater, etc.

There's also one genuine problem: *L.I.M.* ransacks the reader's mind to discover their needs. This causes a Fright Check (**Exploits**, pp. 10-11) at -2. Only Unfazeable modifies this, and merely eliminates the -2; it doesn't prevent the Fright Check.

Spellcasters reap additional benefits but face greater risk. If *L.I.M.* – that is, the GM – determines that no mundane skill can supply the needed wisdom, it may provide a *spell* that can. This might be *any* Knowledge-college or Information-class spell. If the magic-user knows it, they may opt to cast it at +2. If not, they may attempt it at IQ-6, or IQ-7 if Very Hard, adding any spellcasting talent that covers it. There's still a Fright Check, at only -2 if the caster decides not to cast or casts a known

spell, -4 if they cast a default spell their spellcasting talent covers, or -6 if they try a default their talent *doesn't* cover. Unfazeable erases only -2.

An upside to *L.I.M.* invading the researcher's mind is that if they *fail* the Fright Check *and* the skill or spell *L.I.M.* chose is one they don't know but could learn – meaning they have *all* its prerequisites (**Adventurers**, p. 69) – they may optionally spend one unspent character point on it.

*Example:* Uncle Seamus and friends face a techno-magical construct. It seems invulnerable! The GM decides it's more robot than golem, and beyond "information" skills, but that Find Weakness – a wizardly Information spell – can reveal a low-DR flaw.

Seamus, a wizard, could cast Find Weakness at +2 if he knew it. He doesn't. He can settle for discovering the necessary spell (Fright Check at -2) or attempt a default casting (Fright Check at -4). He elects to cast, rolling against IQ-6, or 9, improved to 12 by Magery 3.

His Fright Check is against modified Will 11; he gets a 13, blowing it by 2. He rolls  $11 + 2 = 13$  on the table. He's stunned for two seconds and gains a quirk. Since Seamus is seeking to kill something, the GM selects "Bloodlust toward constructs."

Failing the Fright Check would let Seamus spend a point on Find Weakness if he knew its prerequisites. As he doesn't, he cannot profit from his madness.

*Libro Infinitas Mysterii* is *psychic*, like the abilities of a horrid skull or mindwarper. It works anywhere. Use attracts Elder Things, however – if they're lurking nearby, check at +3 for wandering monsters.

Because *L.I.M.* isn't magical, Hidden Lore (Magical Writings) can't identify it. But it "helpfully" introduces itself the first time anyone leafs through it. This triggers a Fright Check at -6 (-4 with Unfazeable).

*Sell Price:* \$36,000.

*Weight:* 12 lbs.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 8 FP.

## Treasure!

*Throw The Book At Them.* Place *L.I.M.* on a shelf the heroes can loot *after* defeating a suitably erudite magic-user. Think of the getting-to-know-you Fright Check as its former master's last laugh.



# MEDJAY

At the height of the Nadusian Empire, ferocious warriors – the Medjay – guarded the royal necropolises, inspiring the wealthy to hire protectors for their own mausoleums. Ironically, the Empire was destroyed from within by those buried there. In slaying the undead, tomb-raiders serve a purpose!

## – Historia Necromantiae

The khopesh was popular when bronze prevailed and long stabbing swords were possible only if made of orichalcum. Modern warriors shun it, but it still turns up in ruins – particularly in the hands of immortal golems and undead. Such beings often wield indestructible specimens such as Medjay.

Countless magical weapons are “holy” in the sense of the Holy Weapon enchantment (*Magic Items*, p. 7); a few, in the sense of the sought-after artifact (*Magic Items*, p. 23). Medjay is the near-opposite of those things. Its mission isn’t to set to rest undead who might menace the living, but to protect the dead from the quick.

Medjay inflicts +2 “unholy injury” on anything living, causing instant withering. This becomes +3 vs. angels, clerics, holy warriors, and other beings – living or otherwise – who serve Good deities. This doesn’t increase basic

damage; it’s a follow-up. But if the khopesh hooks an applicable target, it applies each time the automatic hooking damage penetrates DR.

Add bonus injury *last*. If it takes the victim from one or two HP above -1×HP, -2×HP, -3×HP, or -4×HP to that threshold, thus requiring a HT roll to stay alive, failure by 1 or 2 means death – not a mortal wound. See *Exploits*, pp. 59-60.

Medjay’s greatest power is that its wielder enjoys the equivalent of Higher Purpose 3 (*Adventurers*, p. 27) when defending a tomb, corpse, or undead master from desecrators, tomb-robbers, etc. They have +3 on all attack and damage rolls against such foes, and on all defense and resistance rolls against them (including rolls to resist Turning).

This *isn’t* simplistic Evil vs. Good – a saintly holy warrior *would* get bonuses when protecting their temple’s crypts or battling body-snatching reanimators.

Finally, when Medjay is used as a power item, each energy point spent from it counts *double* for Necromantic spells, regardless of caster type.

Medjay is a clerical item and requires sanctity. As most gods respect the inviolability of the afterlife, divine morality isn’t the issue. The sanctity of deities who prefer reincarnation or resurrection might not suffice, however.

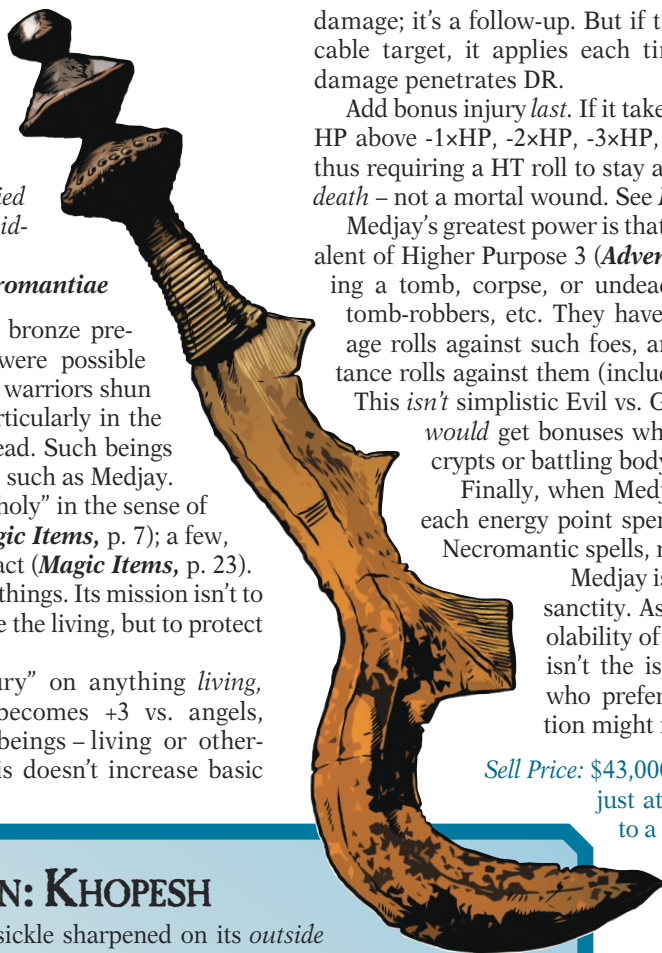
**Sell Price:** \$43,000 to the undead, if they don’t just attack for it; half that *at most* to a temple with legitimate need; and even less (minimum \$13,500) at conventional shops.

**Weight:** 3 lbs.

**Power-Item Capacity:** 15 FP. Double each FP spent on Necromantic spells.

## Treasure!

*A Time To Reap.* Medjay doesn’t require complicated adventure design: Give it to a powerful weapon-using guardian in a tomb or undead-filled dungeon. The delvers must deal with a being that’s difficult to turn and good at defending while it inflicts grievous wounds. In heroic hands, it isn’t *that* great – it might not even sell for much. But it may be worth keeping for those not-so-rare quests against tomb-raiding necromancers.



## NEW WEAPON: KHOPESH

A weapon similar to a long sickle sharpened on its *outside* edge. It has these stats:

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Cost	Weight	ST	Notes
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### AXE/MACE (DX-5, Flail-4, or Two-Handed Axe/Mace-3)

Khopesh	sw+1 cut	1	0U	\$450	3	10	
or	thr-2 cut	1	0U	–	–	10	Hook.*

### BROADSWORD (DX-5, Rapier-4, Saber-4, Shortsword-2, or Two-Handed Sword-4)

Khopesh	sw+1 cut	1	0U	\$450	3	10	
or	thr-2 cut	1	0U	–	–	10	Hook.*

\* Hooking is an attack at -5 plus standard hit location penalties. Success inflicts thrust-2 cutting damage *and* counts as a one-handed grapple at reach 1 instead of reach C; see *Exploits*, pp. 40-41. Allowed actions after this grapple are disarming if you attacked a weapon, arm, or hand (Regular Contest of ST, as usual) or a take-down if you attacked the person and not their weapon (you use highest of ST, DX, or weapon skill, at +3 if you hooked a leg or foot). A grappled victim takes hook damage automatically (DR protects) on your turn – but while hooking, the weapon can’t attack or parry. The standard sickle and scythe can also use this attack line.



# MR. BONES

*Rumors of lost, wealthy civilizations and forgotten magic inspire delving. Delvers, in turn, help protect villages from monsters, letting them grow into towns and cities. They also recover treasures and lore that fund new empires, catalyze magical innovation, and fuel tales of greater discoveries yet unmade. Sages speculate that this spiraling hunger for **more** dooms civilizations to collapse and oblivion – and ultimately, it stems from delvers' greed.*

*Whatever the truth, magic best forgotten explains many a fallen empire, and delvers too often unearth and use it. Mr. Bones is a wonderful, terrible example.*

When found, Mr. Bones is a creepy amulet that fairly screams, "I am a necromantic item. Destroy me in the name of Good!" The miniature skull could be described kindly as "stylized," less-kindly as "misshapen." Smashing it is a nice theory, but doing so only ever *seems* to succeed; somehow, the artifact always shows up intact in the hands of its would-be destroyer's enemies.

Mr. Bones radiates wizardly magic but doesn't obviously *do* anything. Attempts to figure it out – say, with Analyze Magic – reveal only "Something tied to the undead." A Hidden Lore (Lost Civilizations or Magic Items) roll, at -8 without access to a library as good as that of the Wizards' Guild, or -5 even with that, finds the truth.

To invoke Mr. Bones' power involves casting the amulet to the ground in an area of normal or better mana and chanting:

*Mr. Bones, Mr. Bones, I thee implore,*

*Appear to me now and share your dread lore.*

On doing so, a lich (*Monsters*, p. 40) replaces the amulet. Mr. Bones' abilities include basic lich traits; *every* Knowledge, Meta-Spells, and Necromantic spell in *Spells*, except Bless, at skill 20+; written and spoken command of the languages Ancient, Angelic, Common, Demontongue, and Elder Tongue (*Adventurers*, p. 9); and the skills Alchemy, Hidden Lore (Demons, Divine Servitors, Elder Things, Lost Civilizations, Magic Items, Magical Writings, Spirits, and Undead), Occultism, and Thaumatology at 20. The GM can adjust other stats to fit the campaign.

Mr. Bones' invoker can ask him to use his arcane skills; e.g., to cast Analyze Magic, reveal Hidden Lore, or translate Elder Tongue. The amulet's cosmic power compels the lich to serve – he isn't *willingly* passing eternity as jewelry! But for each language, skill, or spell he's asked to use, he can request a favor in return, which is equally cosmically binding.

The lich's requests are sphinx-like and not *obviously* evil. The invoker might be sent after an artifact, asked to slay someone who *seems* to deserve it, or compelled to reveal a sensitive truth. A successful Occultism roll reveals only that these demands (other than revenge; see below) are linked to undoing the amulet's cosmic magic.

Those who would weasel out of a bargain with Mr. Bones can do so, but fall prey to a Curse (*Spells*, p. 51) giving -3 to all dice rolls until they hold up their end. Discarding or destroying the amulet, or casting Remove Curse, won't lift the malison; that requires doing the favor. A no-mana area gives a temporary reprieve, but the penalty returns in any region with mana.

Mr. Bones *can* be attacked. He fights using whatever abilities the GM has assigned, and vanishes if defeated. But remember: If he appeared, there's mana. He'll be back – in amulet form, in the hands of his slayers' foes. The first favor Mr. Bones asks of his new "owner"? Revenge on his attackers!

*Sell Price:* \$25,000 if Mr. Bones makes selling the amulet (to someone evil!) part of a bargain. Other buyers offer \$250 for an ornate ivory amulet.

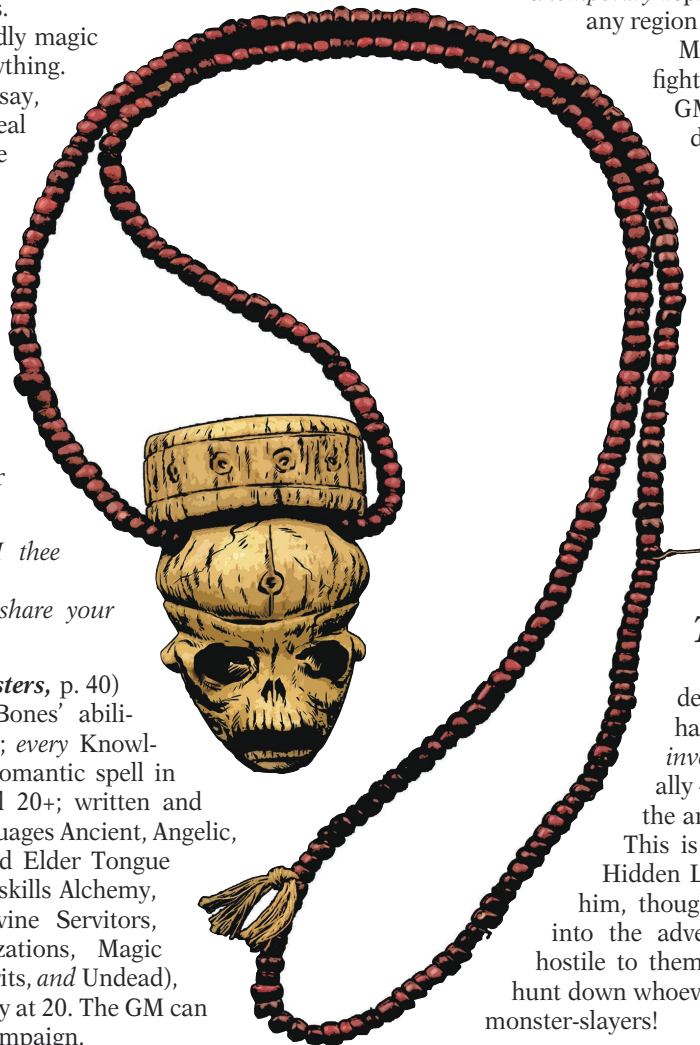
*Weight:* 0.25 lb.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 4 FP.

## Treasure!

*Vicious Cycle.* A fun way to deliver Mr. Bones to delvers is to have them fight him. As they didn't *invoke* him, he won't take it personally – if the heroes win, they'll find the amulet among the lich's remains.

This is a clue as to its nature (+3 to Hidden Lore rolls). Someone *did* invoke him, though, and because he was hurled into the adventurers' path, that's someone hostile to them. Mr. Bones' first demand? To hunt down whoever left him in front of a party of monster-slayers!



# MONK'S CHARM

*A monk on the road  
Humble and without riches  
Strikes fear in bandits  
— Haiku of  
the Mysterious East*

The East has many tales of wandering monks who – alone and seemingly unarmed – defeat bandits, slay monsters, or assassinate “untouchable” targets. In some cases, these individuals prove to be masters of *kung fu* who need no weapons to be deadly. In others, they’re *ninja* in disguise, their weapons camouflaged as innocent-looking accoutrements like the Monk’s Charm.

The Charm resembles prayer beads of some kind and indeed functions as a high holy symbol, giving +2 to rolls for Exorcism, Turning, and other tests of faith. What makes it *interesting*, though, is that it can channel the user’s life force (*chi*) to grow tougher and heavier than it appears, allowing it to serve as any of several weapons:

**Fist Load.** The Charm’s chunky pendant can be held in the fist and the beads wound around the hand. This requires a Ready maneuver. After that, punches with that hand – using Boxing, Brawling, Karate, or DX – gain not +1 damage (as with brass knuckles, a cestus, or DR 3+ gauntlets), but +2 damage. This isn’t cumulative with the bonus from another fist load. The hand also enjoys DR 4, which is cumulative with the DR of gloves.

**Flail.** The Charm’s pendant can be swung as a one-handed flail. Wielded this way, it works identically to a bolas used in the same fashion (*Adventurers*, p. 99), despite being a pound lighter.

**Garrote.** Used to strangle a foe, the Charm’s beads separate to reveal a wire garrote (*Adventurers*, p. 99). See *Exploits*, p. 39 for rules.

**Kusari.** Sliding one of the larger beads up to the pendant and twisting it causes the Charm to open up into a two-yard-long kusari. Switching to or from this configuration takes a Ready maneuver. Like this, the Charm counts as a kusari (*Adventurers*, p. 100) – again, despite its light weight – with the only change being that reach is 1, 2\* instead of 1-4\*.

Switching between two weapon modes requires a Ready maneuver – but this can be the *same* Ready maneuver as any of the special ones noted above.

When worn around the neck rather than used as a deadly weapon, the Charm causes its wearer to seem harmless,



like it. They gain the benefits of Honest Face (*Adventurers*, p. 50); if they already have that advantage, the bonus to Acting when “acting innocent” increases to +2. In addition, the Acting bonus extends to *all* uses of Panhandling, giving those without Honest Face +1 to skill and those with it +2.

However the Charm is used, it has one final benefit: It’s functionally unbreakable, enjoying the benefits of the Shatterproof enchantment despite radiating no magic. On that last point, because the Charm draws on the user’s *chi*, it doesn’t require any external supernatural energy and can’t be “figured out” with Analyze Magic. Although it works no better for owners with Chi Talent, such individuals get a Perception + Chi Talent roll to realize it’s more than it seems.

**Sell Price:** \$16,000 to martial-arts monasteries who can’t make their own, but only the usual \$1,000 for a high holy symbol to everyone else.

**Weight:** 1 lb.

**Power-Item Capacity:** 9 FP.

## Treasure!

**Patience, Young Grasshopper.** The Monk’s Charm isn’t a unique artifact and might be sold in shops, but it makes for a better story if the only place it can be acquired is at a monastery that trains martial artists. It need not be *for sale* there, though – each hero in the party might receive one as a quest reward. If so, recipients who don’t wish to keep it won’t be able to sell it for \$16,000 there; they can take a mere \$1,000 in another form in its place, or hold onto the Charm in the hope that some other monastery might be interested. If that’s a *rival* monastery (and aren’t they all?), this could make a powerful enemy, embroil the delvers in a war between rival martial-arts schools, or even anger the gods.



# MONSTROUS MONOCLE

*The Many-Eyed One, a feared Elder Thing, was eventually defeated by the efforts of an entire Wizards' Guild. This made it hard for the King to deny the Guild's demand for the Thing's remains as their reward. The Vizier objected, but the wizards had prevailed only at great cost, and the King needed them to rebuild after the devastation wrought by the Elder Thing incursion.*

*The Guild used the remains to manufacture many artifacts of power, among them the Monstrous Monocle and the Wand of Tentacular Intrusion. The rest have since been lost. Some scholars would add, "Thankfully!" – but most find **not** knowing the disposition of such things to be unsettling.*

*Of course, linear time means nothing to Elder Things. The Many-Eyed One isn't **dead**, just stuck outside the timestream. And it wants its body parts back.*

The Monstrous Monocle appears to be yet another creepy amulet, styled to resemble a sinister, inhuman eye. In fact, it is an eye – that of an Elder Thing, magically preserved and mounted in a bezel. And unlike most amulets, merely wearing it doesn't invoke its power.

If held in hand – meaning that hand cannot wield a shield, torch, weapon, or anything else – and raised to one eye (a Ready maneuver), the user can see *through* the Monocle to look into the material world as if from Outside. This is both good and bad.

On the upside, the user has Dark Vision similar to the spell (*Spells*, p. 46), but *with* color vision. They also enjoy See Invisible (*Spells*, p. 48) against all kinds of invisibility, and can perceive insubstantial entities per Astral Vision (*Spells*, p. 42) – both exactly as the spells. These abilities involve no energy cost or dice roll, nor a ritual beyond peering through the Monocle. Should someone attack the eye behind the Monocle, it receives an extra DR 12 – a purely mundane benefit of the artifact's toughness.

On the annoying side, these vision powers benefit *one* eye. While using them, closing the other eye means suffering the penalties for One Eye (*Adventurers*, p. 63): -1 to DX-based rolls for combat and other tasks involving hand-eye coordination, -3 to unaimed ranged attacks. (*Not* closing the other eye induces dizziness: Double these penalties!)

And on the disturbing side, peering through the Monocle reveals Things Best Left Unseen, lurking at reality's margins. Each time it's brought to the eye, and once per minute it's kept there, the user must roll a Fright Check (*Exploits*, pp. 10-11); the *only* advantages that help here are Fearlessness and Unfazeable. As well, while the Monocle doesn't *attract* Elder Things, anyone who encounters them while carrying

it (visibly or not) draws their ire; such monsters pick the carrier over other targets if there's a choice, and react at -4 in negotiations.

All told, the Monocle is a powerful tool for delvers who face hidden foes, but overuse *will* eventually cause madness.

Elder Things are cosmic, but the Monocle relies on ordinary wizardly magic to tap the eye's powers. Thus, it requires mana to work – although low mana will suffice, and has no effect on its functions (good or bad).

*Sell Price: \$44,000. As the Monocle is an abomination, the only buyers might be shady types offering much less – take it or leave it.*

*Weight: 0.25 lb.*

*Power-Item Capacity: 17 FP.*

## Treasure!

*An Eye For An Eye.* The Monstrous Monocle makes a good "reward before the fact." Being powerful, it shouldn't be won without a fight. Hanging it around the neck of a squid cult leader and requiring the heroes to defeat the entire cult seems fitting. Then the *real* battle begins. The Many-Eyed One might not be able to reclaim its eye in person, but it can dispatch lesser Elder Things – eyes of death (*Monsters*, pp. 26-27) being especially appropriate – to retrieve it. Spiriting the artifact out of the cult stronghold won't be easy!



# NECROGAUNTLET

*Hap emerged from the sarcophagus holding a gauntlet. Dangling it as if it smelled bad, he groused, "Crikey that's rotten! And not even the pair."*

*"Give it here," commanded Sister Miriam.*

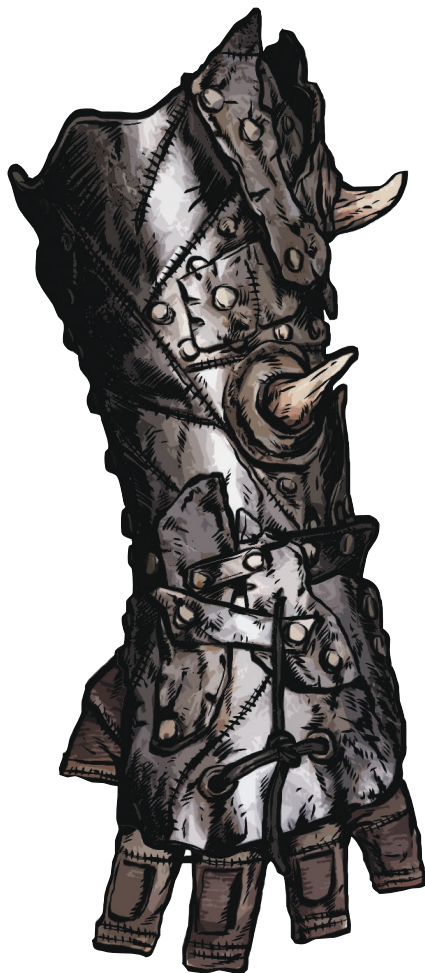
*"Of course, your ladyworshipfulness."*

*Miriam ignored Hap's attempt at humor and cast a quick spell. "As I suspected: a thoroughly evil artifact."*

*"One we are going to appreciate having against the even fouler undead on the lower levels," explained Uncle Seamus, gently relieving Miriam of the gauntlet before she attempted to smite or melt it into oblivion.*

Some artifacts obviously *aren't nice*. This is often a question of motif: skulls, horned pentacles, bas-relief torture scenes. Occasionally it's more . . . active, say a steady rivulet of blood or scent of decay. But the Necrogauntlet simply looks *wrong* – perhaps it's the horn-like protrusions, or maybe it's the way it appears to have been repeatedly patched up after attempts to destroy it, begging the question "Why?"

As armor, it's the unattractive equivalent of dwarven epic plate (DR 10) for the left hand. Very sinister. Most fighters



who use a shield do so in the left hand, meaning it's better protected (as the rules on p. 99 of **Exploits** support); if they commission just one expensive gauntlet, they choose the right. Fighters who *don't* use shields buy pairs.

But the real benefit of the Necrogauntlet is that it holds the power of life and death (well, undeath and true death) over the living dead. Anyone using the gauntleted hand to *touch* or strike an *unarmed* blow on an undead creature can heal it. On a successful hit, each energy point spent from FP, HP, Energy Reserve (Magical), or a wizardly power item – or, for evil clerics, Energy Reserve (Unholy) or a clerical power item – heals the monster 1d HP. There's no upper limit!

At the instant the energy is spent, the user can *attempt* to pervert it to do harm instead. This calls for a roll against the higher of Will or Physiology (Undead), at a penalty equal to the energy expended. On a success, the undead target *loses* 1d HP per energy point, regardless of its armor, innate DR, special abilities, or defensive spells. But if the roll fails, the gauntlet heals the monster whether the wearer likes it or not.

The Necrogauntlet *can* affect specters and similar ghostly undead. It doesn't let the user grapple or punch such beings, but the wearer can heal or harm them – just reach "into" them and (if they don't dodge) spend the energy. This doesn't grant immunity to the evil effects that contact with these entities often has on the living.

A side effect of the Necrogauntlet's magic – rarely of much value to delvers – is that as a power item, it holds twice as many FP for an *undead* user, regardless of what kind of caster they are (clerical, druidic, wizardly, or other).

The Necrogauntlet can draw on standard wizardly magic or evil sanctity. As long as one or the other is present at all, it functions normally.

**Sell Price:** \$59,000. This is what a lich or necromancer "honorable" enough to pay rather than steal might offer; they'll still drag the heroes down if anything happens to them. A temple of Good might want it off the market, but would pay far less.

**Weight:** 1.6 lbs.

**Power-Item Capacity:** 8 FP for most users, 16 FP for undead ones.

## Treasure!

**Throwing Down The Gauntlet.** The Necrogauntlet is a wonderful item for the sort of boss who has undead servitors. It consumes less energy than conventional healing magic, requires no dice roll to use (simply contact), and has no upper limit. On the hand of an undead boss, it's even better – they can do a lot of that healing with a generous power item, and nothing says they can't heal *themselves* that way. As with all artifacts, this one will eventually end up in the delvers' possession. It's a useful undead-blasting weapon, but not one without risks. And *real* heroes won't sell it to Evil to get rich.



# NIGHT

The Guildmistress frowned. "Am I reading this right? An alliance of monsters has posted a bounty and wants us to serve as agents."

"Yesss, Archmagus," oozed Black-Robe, "but they are **honorable** creatures who keep away from town."

"Sleeping dragons? Tomb-bound undead?" offered Green-Robe.

The Guildmistress looked unconvinced. "And who is this monster-killer they seek?"

"**I Am The Night!**" proclaimed a disembodied voice.

Everyone jumped. Only the Guild Council was permitted in here.

"Explain yourself!" the Guildmistress commanded while telepathically contacting Black-Robe: "They have their deal. This fool is **dangerous**."

Night (short for "I Am The Night") is a sinister-looking half-mask (see box). It offers no physical protection but cannot be worn with full-face armor. If used wisely, however, its wearer won't need armor.

To invoke Night's primary power, the wearer must take a Concentrate maneuver, cry "I am the night!" ("shouting" for the purpose of Hearing modifiers; see *Exploits*, p. 9), and pay 1 energy from personal FP or HP. They'll become darkness without substance at the end of their turn and remain that way for one full turn, which they may use as desired. At the end of that turn and each later turn, they can either pay another FP or HP to remain intangible for the following turn, or materialize. Transforming – either way – is always the *last* thing they do on their turn.

Being the night has effects equivalent to Ethereal Body (*Spells*, p. 57) in most regards – the wearer cannot interact with the physical world except to speak, and special rules for magic apply – with these differences:

- The six pounds of clothing permitted *must* include Night (0.25 lb.).

- The subject is shadowy, not translucent. This affects Stealth vs. vision. (Stealth vs. hearing is unnecessary for darkness.) In the dark – forest at night, unlit room or tunnel, etc. – this grants +5 if moving, +10 if still. In lit areas with shadow, there's no *bonus* but the shadows offer concealment in the barest of settings, negating the -5 for "lacks hiding places." In bright areas with no appreciable shadow, the user stands out; the -5 for "brightly lit" doubles to -10. *Successfully* using Stealth while transformed allows *Backstabbing* (*Exploits*, pp. 57-58), though being unable to carry weapons limits utility.



- The subject is an indistinct blotch. Rolls to identify them are at -10 if relying on vision alone, -5 if there are other clues (behavior, gestures, voice, etc.).

- The subject enjoys the benefits of Dark Vision (*Spells*, p. 46).

- The subject is affected by Sunbolt and other damaging magical "sunlight," receiving DR 0 and treating it as though it had a wounding modifier of  $\times 1.5$ . In addition, a hit to the wearer's face with Light Jet can dazzle even if not in relative darkness, with double effect: -8 to combat skills next turn, -2 for the rest of the battle.

Night's only other ability is extremely specialized: Demons from *Between the Stars* (*Monsters*, pp. 19-20), users of other artifacts like Night, and similar beings of darkness never get bonuses or reduced penalties when using Stealth against the wearer.

*Sell Price:* \$169,000. But empires, Thieves' Guilds, and Assassins' Guilds will try to kill the owner and *take* Night on 5 or less on 3d, +1 per 10% of this price demanded.

*Weight:* 0.25 lb.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 4 FP.

## New Item: Half-Mask

A textile or papier-mâché domino mask doesn't affect combat but obscures its wearer's identity *completely* if they're glimpsed fighting, climbing, swinging, or otherwise engaged in heroics. In sedate settings, it merely gives -1 to rolls made to recognize the wearer – and to the Seeker spell, if the caster's sole clue is "the masked figure." \$25, 0.25 lb.

## Treasure!

*Check Those Corners.* A game-changer like Night is worth dying for. Are the heroes willing to ante up? Give it to a boss who can strike most of the party simultaneously with powerful *innate* abilities: a mindwarper with five attacks, a dragon (why think small?) who breathes clouds of acid or poison, etc. Have the enemy emerge from the wall behind the delvers. If the survivors don't prevail in one second, the foe will escape to try again.

# POISONER'S LOOP

"Swords!" bellowed the sergeant.

A functionary scurried forward with matched rapiers. The sergeant examined each one and nodded her satisfaction.

"Arm yourselves!" the sergeant ordered the duelists.

The ensuing exchange was lackluster. The best that could be said was that honor was satisfied. Lord Darkwood drew first blood on Lord Slacht.

The next morning, Slacht was found dead in his bed. The sergeant swore she hadn't remarked a poisoned blade. Magic confirmed her words and found nothing suspicious on *either* rapier.

Without Slacht's leadership, the border states fell to the shadow elves. Darkwood's ensuing defection was no surprise. Yet to this day, no one has ever proved foul play.

Box rings, pillbox rings . . . rings with hidden compartments aren't rare artifacts but commonplace assassins' tools, used to poison food and drink. In some quarters they're *too* common to be useful: Chunky jewelry is forbidden at the banquet table. While the Poisoner's Loop would be no exception there, only the paranoid would ban it from the field of honor, where it's at its most dangerous.

The Loop can be filled with *one* dose of any utility poison (*Adventurers*, p. 116). This takes a long action (*Exploits*, p. 32), impossible in combat. The venom adds negligible weight – the 0.5 lb. listed for utility poisons is mostly that of the vial and its gnomish safety seal.

Once filled, the Loop subtly demonstrates its first property, which is that it's wrought from meteoric iron. While closed, spells to sense its contents (like Detect Poison) can't penetrate it; see *Spells*, p. 42. It's finely decorated to resemble precious metals, and the only way to learn its true composition is to confiscate it and test it using an alchemy lab; roll vs. Alchemy at -3. If that's all it did, it would cost \$200, give +3 to Holdout rolls to smuggle poison, and allow the unseen poisoning of victuals with a Sleight of Hand roll.

But that isn't all it does.

The Loop also has the *cosmic* ability to imbue any bladed weapon in the hand that wears it with the poison within it. This power is invoked by pressing a concealed stud – a free action with a Sleight of Hand roll, a Ready maneuver otherwise. Thus, an arbitrary weapon can be poisoned as needed in combat time. Once done, the ring's reservoir is drained irreversibly, though it can be refilled. For as long as the weapon is

kept in the hand bearing the Loop, it remains poisoned until it wounds someone, at which point the poison is consumed and the victim is affected normally; misses, parries, blows stopped by DR, etc. never dissipate the poison.

The neat trick is that the poison isn't on the blade to be seen, smelled, or detected by magic. Rather, the blade is temporarily infused with its essence, which is transferred on a hit or dissipated into oblivion if the weapon falls out of contact with the hand wearing the ring. A roll against weapon skill at -5, or unmodified Sleight of Hand, lets the carrier *deliberately* break contact without being seen, if ditching the poison becomes important.

Whatever the poison's eventual fate, no residue – mundane or magical – remains on the weapon afterward. The Loop's wearer could use almost any sharp object to envenom someone, but no one could ever demonstrate the existence of a poisoned blade. The Loop's ability to do this is *also* flawlessly undetectable, save perhaps by a cosmic force like the God of Assassins or God of Justice.

**Sell Price:** \$26,000. But only after a demonstration, as this item's properties can't be analyzed! Until then, it's just a \$200 assassins' gadget.

**Weight:** 0.1 lb.

**Power-Item Capacity:** N/A. Being meteoric iron, the Loop cannot be a power item.

## Treasure!

*In The Loop.* The Loop is an interesting artifact to give to a foe who's more assassin than warrior. Even canny delvers aren't likely to twig to its effects. If looted, it won't seem powerful – at best, it'll be taken for a fancy poison ring. Discovering the hidden stud requires deliberate examination and a Perception roll at -6. Learning what it *does* calls for trial and error, unless the experimenter has Serendipity!





# PYU PYU

Though better known for exotic hand-to-hand combat arts, the hidden monasteries of Qiu Qiu are home to masters of the crossbow – both its use and its manufacture. Their best-known innovation is the “repeating crossbow”: a malfunction-prone, low-powered contraption suited to dispensing short-range nuisance, not to facing armored troops in open battle. Exceptions are always magical.

## – Weapons of the Mysterious East

Nobody knows what “Pyu Pyu” means. Some say it isn’t the proper name of a unique weapon but a term for *any* crossbow capable of rapid fire. As with so many artifacts, the truth is doubtless lost in time.

Pyu Pyu magically cocks itself after every shot. Its magic also allows it to serve as its own cornucopia quiver (*Adventurers*, p. 118), though no visible “quiver” or “magazine” is attached; as soon as the bow recocks, a bolt appears. These features let it shoot every turn in combat – use requires neither Ready maneuvers nor Fast-Draw rolls. It cannot be shot any *faster*, however capable the armbruster; it’s often shot *slower*, the time normally needed for Ready maneuvers being diverted to Aim maneuvers. This appears to be as its maker intended, as it’s balanced (improving Acc from 4 to 5) but not enchanted with the Accuracy spell.

Like the bolts created by cornucopia quivers, those of Pyu Pyu can exist only one at a time. When the weapon recocks, conjuring a bolt, the previous bolt disappears. Targets riddled by Pyu Pyu are filled with holes but not projectiles – welcome news for assassins worried about leaving evidence! The *current* bolt can be doctored in place, allowing the use of poison and oil-soaked rags; such things are too slow to reapply in combat, and so matter only for the opening shot. Flaming Missiles, Icy Missiles, and Lightning Missiles affect *all* bolts Pyu Pyu looses while under the spell.

Because Pyu Pyu cocks itself, its *user’s* ST is largely irrelevant. It has ST 15 for the purposes of damage (1d+5

impaling) and range (300/375). The wielder still needs ST 7 to shoot it properly, and is at -1 to Crossbow skill per point of deficit. To hold it in one hand and shoot it like a huge pistol crossbow requires ST 14 and no less – but then two hands are *never* needed, as there’s no cocking or loading to do. A strong warrior could wield Pyu Pyu alongside a shield or melee weapon!

Pyu Pyu’s final remarkable feature is a slider that lets the wielder adjust what *kind* of bolt appears when it cocks: regular, bodkin, or cutting (*Adventurers*, p. 105). Changing settings requires two hands and a Ready maneuver, no matter the crossbowman’s skill or strength.

Pyu Pyu is a wizardly magic item created using closely guarded enchantments. It *does* work in low mana, but this reduces ST to 10 (1d+2 impaling damage, range 200/250) and prevents changing settings to shoot a different sort of bolt from what it was set for before leaving normal or better mana. It doesn’t work (even as an ordinary crossbow!) if there’s *no* mana.

**Sell Price:** \$16,000. That’s a *minimum* – every crossbowman will want it! Finding a suitably wealthy warrior can be an adventure in its own right.

**Weight:** 6 lbs.

**Power-Item Capacity:** 9 FP.

## Treasure!

**More Pyu Pyu.** Introducing Pyu Pyu is a matter of giving it to a bad guy with a good Crossbow skill. As a crossbow usually requires four Ready maneuvers to prepare – three, with Fast-Draw (Arrow) – plus an Attack maneuver to shoot, shooting every turn makes this foe as effective as four or five crossbowmen! Adventurers who notice this *will* strive to capture the weapon. Then everybody will want one, even low-ST wizards with a lousy point in Crossbow skill. If Pyu Pyu isn’t unique, the quest for additional copies should take the heroes far from home, where they must fight many battles, impress the monks who make the weapons, and *then* part with considerable coin . . . because as noted, the price won’t be a mere \$16,000 if demand is high.



# QUINGA

The horde pygmies salvoed poison darts from the undergrowth.

"These things are getting annoying!" grumbled Ælin, aiming his lightning bolt where it wouldn't accidentally blast a tree.

"Pygmies usually are," rejoined Masha, regretting her vow to fight unarmed.

"My latest acquisition should help," said Llandor, aiming his bow.

A pygmy appeared for an instant. Llandor loosed his arrow, which went **around** a tree and took down his prey with a satisfying **thock**.

Quinga is an elven composite bow designed for a typical elven scout who has ST 10, Strongbow, and high Bow skill. Any archer with effective ST 12+ can shoot it – and as it's elven, it functions as though it had ST 14. This gives it Damage 1d+3 impaling and Range 280/350.

Its carries magic intended to help it work in areas where trees get in the way of a clear shot – and sometimes even the Bowman's arms. Though neither balanced (which would improve its Acc 3) nor enchanted with Accuracy (which would grant a bonus to hit), it's excellent at finding its mark. That's because it enables the wielder to *curve* shots around obstacles!

Normally, a target behind someone else is attacked at -4 per occupied hex, one that's half exposed, at -2, and one with light concealment (e.g., bushes), at -2; see *Line of Fire* (*Exploits*, p. 42). The GM may assess similar penalties for other obstructions. Quinga's wielder adds Perception to any Acute Vision, Forest Guardian, and Outdoorsman they have, and subtracts the result from 10 to find the total penalty they may ignore for people or things in the way!

*Example:* The typical scout has Per 14 and Outdoorsman 2; that totals 16, so the scout may ignore up to 10 - 16 = -6 for obstacles. Llandor the Gray has Per 14, Acute Vision 1, Forest Guardian 2, and Outdoorsman 2; that adds up to 19, enabling

him to ignore up to -9 (more than enough to shoot around two big trees – or allies – with ease).

On a miss when shooting around intervening people, the odds of *Hitting the Wrong Target* (*Exploits*, p. 43) are the lower of a flat 6 – not 9 – or the number needed to hit that person on purpose. This applies only to figures in the way, not to anyone *behind* the target.

Quinga is also handy when fighting in tight spaces (most forests and jungles qualify). In close combat (*Exploits*, p. 51), where a composite bow's Bulk normally gives -7 to skill, Quinga gives *no* penalty – as if used by a scout with Heroic Archer. If someone who actually has Heroic Archer is in close, they may add the weapon's Acc 3 as if they weren't! None of this affects how Bulk works during Move and Attack maneuvers, nor does it change the bow's actual Bulk (e.g., for Holdout skill).

A side effect of Quinga's powers is that its user can shoot around corners if standing beside them. Treat this as allowing *Pop-Up Attacks* (*Exploits*, p. 42) when using a bow (such attacks are normally restricted to thrown weapons, crossbows, and Missile spells). The standard -2 to hit applies.

Quinga's power to avoid obstacles, work in close quarters, and make pop-up attacks derives from elven craftsmanship. It functions where there's *either* mana (low or better) *or* Nature's strength (penalty no worse than -5). Both Magery and Power Investiture (Druidic) can sense its magic.

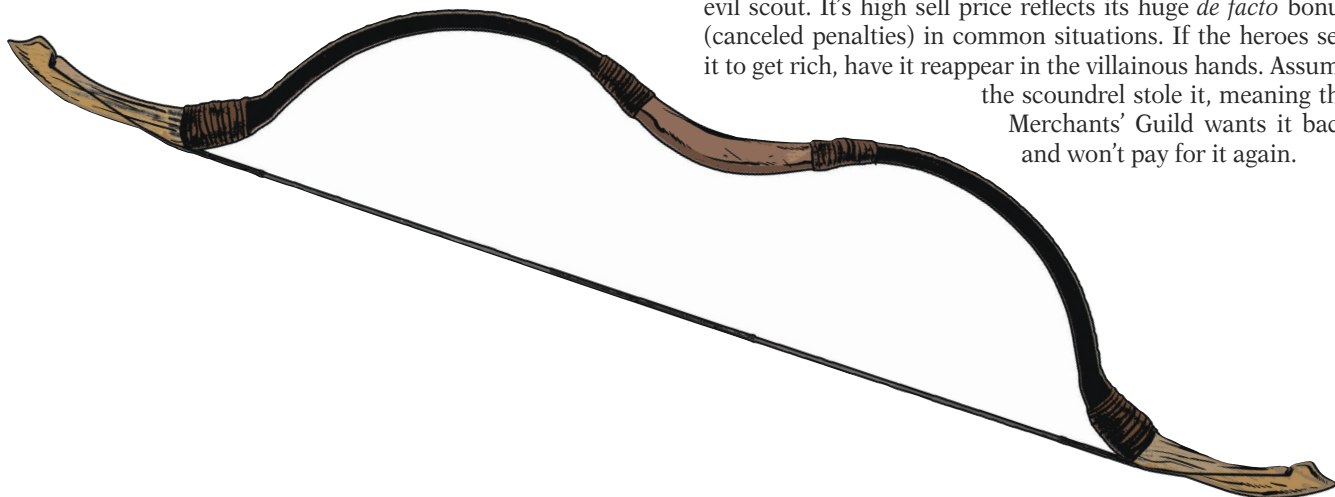
*Sell Price:* \$217,000.

*Weight:* 4 lbs.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 30 FP.

## Treasure!

*Curve The Arrow.* Quinga is an "A list" artifact – it lets a capable archer shoot from the safety of the back ranks, use a bow when overrun, and exploit the *heck* out of cover. Put it in the hands of a dangerous enemy who can profit, like an evil scout. It's high sell price reflects its huge *de facto* bonus (canceled penalties) in common situations. If the heroes sell it to get rich, have it reappear in the villainous hands. Assume the scoundrel stole it, meaning the Merchants' Guild wants it back and won't pay for it again.





# RAPID RAMPART

*The Wanderers on the Winds traveled famously light and fast. Knowing this, the orcs split up: Their heaviest troops marched on the Seven Cities. Swift riders and skirmishers raced northward to intercept the Wanderers.*

*Weeks later, scattered orcish raiders struggled back with tales of a fortress of stout planks, garrisoned with archers – and of similar strongholds along the previously clear path of retreat. The orcish marshal sent a siege party north to torch these fortifications. But the orcs found nothing . . . for by then, the Wanderers had come to the Southerners' relief.*

The martial dictum “Keep moving in enemy territory!” holds in the dungeon: Stay put for long and something will circle behind you and/or overrun your position. Unless you surprise the denizens with fortifications that weren't there on their last patrol. That calls for mighty magic – like the Rapid Rampart.

The Rampart appears to be a magical large shield (DB 3) of ordinary wood. Its only special property in individual combat is that it's totally fireproof: A built-in salamander amulet (*Adventurers*, p. 118) protects the shield, not the bearer.

The Rampart's true power is that it's a portable barricade. To activate it, the user must plant the ready shield in the ground – any solid surface underfoot – and will it to expand. This is a Ready maneuver. Doing so roots the shield (there's no need to prop it up) and releases its straps (freeing the wearer for other deeds).

For four turns after activation, the Rampart doubles in size horizontally and vertically. It becomes a full yard wide and tall one turn after its user's Ready maneuver, two on the next turn, then four, and finally eight yards on the fourth turn. This cannot be halted.

People and mobile objects in the path of the Rampart's growth are shoved aside; roll 1d for where they end up (1-3 in front, 4-6 behind). Anyone who resists gets a Quick Contest of ST vs. effective ST 60. If they win, they prevent the Rampart from growing in their direction. It keeps trying to expand, though; to block it, they must use future turns to stand fast

and reroll the Quick Contest. This is an Attack maneuver. A loss or tie, or simply not trying, means they're thrust aside.

Floors, ceilings, walls, doorframes, and other immovable objects block the Rampart's growth automatically. It conforms to and plugs any opening up to eight yards across. In a taller vertical space, the gap is above the wall (24' above ground). In a wider horizontal space, the barrier is centered wherever the Rampart was planted. Regardless of apparent support, the barricade is immovable – it's susceptible to *Bashing* (*Exploits*, p. 22) but can't be pushed over.

The wooden wall has DR 9 and HP 60, and is fireproof. Battering away its HP creates a one-square-yard hole, large enough to squeeze or shoot through. If the entire barrier is bashed away (taking 64 holes at maximum size), the Rampart reverts to shield form.

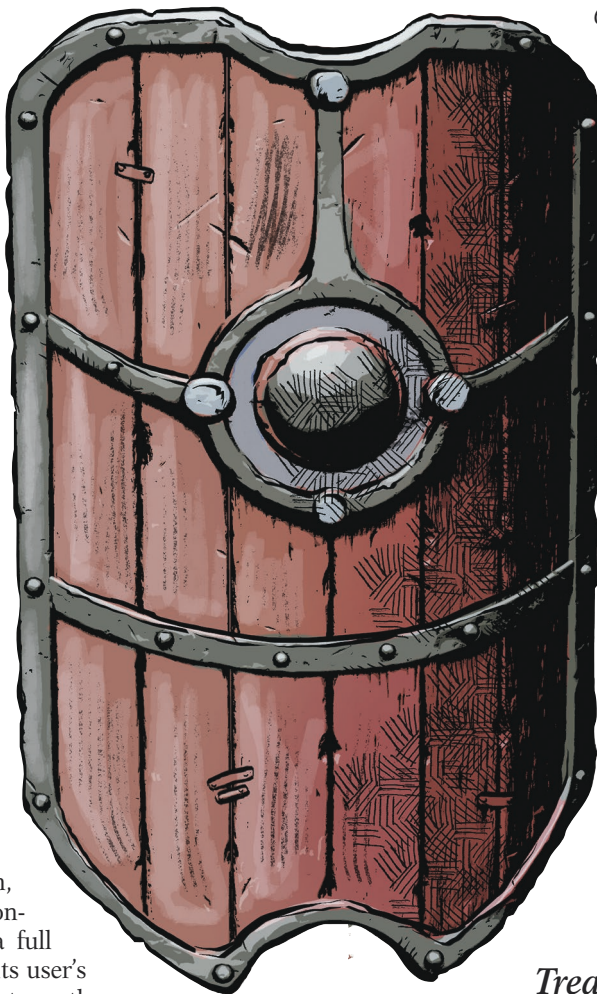
If someone takes a Ready maneuver to slip an arm through the straps on the back (at chest height at the wall's center) and will the Rampart to contract – or if the whole wall is battered down – the Rampart shrinks at the rate it grew. At the end of that time, it's a large shield again. If bashed, it's functional and lying on the ground where it was planted, but can't be reactivated for 24 hours. If willingly deactivated, it's ready on its user's arm.

The Rampart is a wizardly artifact that works wherever there's mana. Its value as a power item is based on the price of a wooden fortress wall, not a shield!

*Sell Price: \$52,000.*

*Weight: 25 lbs.*

*Power-Item Capacity: 20 FP.*



## Treasure!

*Where Did That Come From?* A boss determined to cut off the adventurers' departure surprises them in an area they've already visited, using the Rampart to channel or block their retreat. Delvers who aren't on their toes might assume the barrier was created using temporary magic, and miss the straps on the wall (treat as looking for hidden doors). If they figure out the mystery, they gain a powerful tool for dungeon warfare.



# RING OF SKULLS

Two knife-toting goons blocked the alleyway five paces ahead of Zephyra. “The jewels,” snarled one.

Zephyra shot a look over her shoulder and saw her escape route blocked by a third thug. “You won’t be running away – **freak.**”

The wizard glowered. “Three against one? Such manly men.”

The lead mugger retorted, “At least we’re men, not **half-breeds.**”

Zephyra held up a hand, displaying a glittering ring. “You want this?” The serpents carved into the ring slithered to free the miniature skull, which became a glowing green specter and streaked up the alley.

As the attackers in front recoiled in horror, Zephyra turned toward the third man, conjuring a Flame Jet. “Come and take it, Charcoal.”

The Ring of Skulls is a chunky gold ring styled to resemble a tangle of snakes clutching a shining platinum skull. It radiates wizardly magic – and evil.

As a *free action* (**Exploits**, p. 29) that can be combined with any combat maneuver – including Concentrate to cast spells – the Ring’s wearer can roll vs. Will to activate it anywhere there’s mana. Failure allows another attempt next turn. Success unleashes a venom skull (**Monsters**, p. 27). This costs 1 energy point, which may be paid using FP, HP, Energy Reserve (Magical), or a wizardly power item.

The skull attacks enemies of the Ring’s wearer. Its master can use mental commands to sic it on any target they can see; in the absence of orders, it pursues the nearest visible, active foe. The wearer *cannot* exploit this psychic connection to see, speak, or cast spells through the skull – only to control it.

The skull remains for one second – a turn in combat. At the start of each future turn, its master must decide whether to pay *another* energy point to keep it active for one more second or not to pay and have it vanish. The wearer cannot energize the skull if stunned, unconscious, or otherwise incapacitated; it vanishes automatically. But while the Ring’s wearer keeps paying, the skull relentlessly pursues their foes as commanded, unless it’s destroyed.

The wearer can conjure the skull as often as desired, but there are catches. If the skull is injured, it remains injured even if it vanishes and is re-summoned. It heals only if the user transfers personal HP to it (*not* FP, ER, etc.) while it’s active. This is a free action, but the wearer can transfer just 2 HP per second, healing the skull 2 HP; e.g., if the skull is missing 18 HP, fully healing it means paying 9 energy to summon it for nine seconds in order to transfer 18 HP. If the skull is *destroyed* (-1×HP), the Ring crumbles to dust. Wise owners heal the skull regularly.

If the skull is ever conjured for 20 seconds in the same day – whether consecutively or a little at a time, and for whatever reason – it becomes a free-willed monster. The Ring crumbles and its erstwhile wearer cannot command the skull. The fiend remains nearby, always going after the *nearest* active target, which might be its former master or one of their allies.

If nobody is left standing, it flees the area. The 20-second count is renewed at midnight. Wise users don’t activate the Ring for longer than necessary!

*Sell Price:* \$18,000.

*Weight:* 0.1 lb.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 14 FP. This energy is inaccessible while the skull is conjured – meaning it can be used to activate the Ring but *not* to maintain the skull.



## Treasure!

*Lord Of The Ring.* Flaming, freezing, and venom skulls are common in battles against the undead, so this item offers little new on the claws of, say, a lich. It’s more interesting on the hand of someone the delvers *won’t* suspect. One option is a stealthy foe like a bugbear or a horde pygmy shaman who harasses the heroes from concealment. Or give it to a boss who doesn’t normally command necromancy – like a mind-warper – and let the adventurers *witness* its activation. This allows an immediate Hidden Lore (Magic Items) or Thaumatology roll to realize its powers. They can decide for themselves whether to eliminate the skull and destroy a powerful artifact or to tolerate its attacks so they can inherit the Ring.



# SKULL OF THE CYCLOPS

*I'll kill ya and wear yer head as a hat!*

– Traditional barbarian insult

On encountering a suspicious skull – especially a magical one – many delvers smash it. This can backfire, but it *does* make sense in a world with horrid skulls, cursed relics that transform into flaming skulls, and so on. The Skull of the Cyclops isn't such a peril, but an enchanted helm crafted from the cranium of a one-eyed titan. Spontaneous skull-shatterers are unlikely to demolish it, as it's monster-bone armor (see box) that gives the head, face included, DR 9.

This helm encloses the *entire head*. Handle attacking the face or skull through natural holes in the giant cranium as *Attacking Chinks in Armor* (**Exploits**, p. 37). The openings are large enough that a hit bypasses *all* DR, not just half of it – but there are no gaps or weaknesses near the eyes, which always enjoy full DR. These exceptions are specific to the Skull, not general traits of bone armor.

The helm also has magical powers. First, the wearer can see *out* as if it weren't there; they suffer no vision restrictions, despite the armor's coverage. Transparency is one-way – their features remain concealed. A side effect is that supernatural abilities that require direct eye contact with the subject (from Fascinate spells to cosmic powers) are “filtered out” and *don't work*.

As well, the wearer can opt to see as though they were a cyclops. Turning this power on or off requires a Concentrate maneuver. While active, the user views the world as if through an eye 15 yards above ground level, and gets +5 to Vision rolls – but monocular vision and the bizarre viewpoint give -3 to all attack and defense rolls.

The wearer can hear and speak as if the helm weren't there, too. While sounds pass both ways, a filter blocks supernatural effects that work through the subject's hearing. This grants immunity to Bard-Song *abilities* (not bardic *spells*), stunning by Concussion spells,

distraction by Noise spells, etc. Mundane troubles – the swashbuckler's Rapier Wit ability, Hearing penalties from ordinary noise, Fast-Talk skill, etc. – are unaffected.

The Skull's powers originate from a combination of innate magic and an alchemical treatment. It works if there's any mana at all. In a no-mana area, the wearer is *blind*, can't invoke “cyclops vision,” suffers -4 to Hearing rolls, is muffled and heard at -4 by others, and isn't immune to hearing-based effects; vision filtering remains, as eye contact is impossible.

A parting thought: If cyclopes exist, they'll react at -3 to the Skull's wearer!

*Sell Price:* \$52,000.

*Weight:* 8.4 lbs.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 18 FP.

## Treasure!

**Bonehead.** Give the Skull to a low-IQ bodyguard for a boss monster; the artifact can overcome many drawbacks of being dim-witted (being susceptible to Fascinate, Song of Command, etc., and not noticing enemies), and makes a tough foe difficult to defeat with an eye-poke. Delvers are likely to keep this treasure. If so, have them discover its mana reliance by ambushing them in an unanticipated no-mana area. Removing a helm takes three Ready maneuvers.



## NEW ARMOR MATERIAL: BONE

Animal-bone medallions linked together much like segmented plate, or bone rings slipped over the limbs. Doubles reaction penalties in town – just like metal armor – because it's *creepy*, but retains full DR against lightning. Often has a modifier:

**Monster-Bone:** Bone from dragons, giants, and other fantastic creatures is *much* stronger than that of beasts: DR 3 bone armor with 1/3 of usual weight, +24 CF (suit: \$18,750, 24 lbs.); DR 4 with 4/9 of usual weight, +29 CF (suit: \$22,500, 32 lbs.); DR 5 with 5/9 of usual weight, +34 CF (suit: \$26,250, 40 lbs.); DR 6 with 2/3 of usual weight, +39 CF (suit: \$30,000, 48 lbs.); DR 7 with 7/9 of usual weight, +44 CF (suit: \$33,750, 56 lbs.); DR 8 with 8/9 of usual weight, +49 CF (suit: \$37,500, 64 lbs.); and DR 9 with usual weight, +54 CF (suit: \$41,250, 72 lbs.).

Armor	DR	Head (Full Face)	Body	Arms	Hands	Legs	Feet	Suit
Bone weight	3	\$65 (+\$25) 6 (+2.4)	\$265 25.2	\$125 12	\$25 2.4	\$185 18	\$85 8.4	\$750 72

# SWIFTSPELL GAUNTLETS

*Raghu the Rapid was legendary for casting elaborate spells in battle, Magelocking doors at a run, and so on. Many assume he was skilled, but scholarly studies suggest a merely mid-dling magician.*

*Raghu met a crispy end taking one shortcut too many with fire magic. Only his gloves survived. Sages suspect these were his secret weapon.*

*These days he's known as "Raghu the Rash." That doesn't deter seekers of the gloves.*

The Swiftspell Gauntlets are a pair of demonhide gloves (see box). They give the hands DR 4, 6 vs. magic. They're beautifully tooled in the arcane fashion of a power item; many non-casters find them creepy.

Both Gauntlets must be worn to experience their magic, which confers not protection but *speed*: The wearer's fingers race through magical gestures! The user controls this – sort of.

When casting a spell, calculate effective skill normally, accounting for shock, spells “on,” distance, and the local supernatural energy level. The caster may *optionally* apply any additional penalty to this, provided that final skill is at least 3; the resulting level is what they'll roll against. But for casting-time purposes (only!), add a *bonus* of the same size and look up effective skill on p. 10 of **Spells**. Neither modifier affects energy cost.

The wearer must activate this ability before casting. They cannot “slow down” mid-casting to remove the penalty, though they can abort an unfinished casting and restart from scratch.

Invoking this capability – even at -1 for success but +1 for speed – comes with two drawbacks. First, regardless of the caster's actual skill level, both hands must be empty and unrestrained for *visible* gestures.

Second, critical failures are catastrophes! The GM should take inspiration from the *Critical Spell Failure Table* (**Spells**, p. 8) but worsen the results. A suggested guideline is “Triple the Bad”: 1d injury becomes 3d, a spell rebounding on the caster inflicts triple damage, three monsters appear, and so forth. The Gauntlets always survive, however.

*Example: Raghu has Fire Cloud-18. He can cast without gestures, in the usual time.*

*Mobbed by horde pygmies, Raghu wants 5 points burning per second. The catch? That takes five seconds. However, he has no skill penalties if he casts directly in*

*front of himself; effective skill is 18. Casting as if he had skill 30 for speed would give three halvings of casting time, letting him cast in one second – but that effective +12 for speed means rolling at -12, or skill 6. He needs two hands free for gestures, and he can't decide at the end of his turn to slow down for better odds.*

*“Bah, they're just pygmies!”*

Raghu gets -1 to *energy cost* from base skill 18. He casts at a *speed* consistent with skill 30. But he *rolls* against skill 6.

Unfortunately, Raghu rolls 16 – a critical failure at effective skill 6. The GM rolls 4 on the table. A triple-strength Fire Cloud (15 points burning/second) engulfs Raghu. He burns to a crisp; the Gauntlets don't.

The Gauntlets draw power from Hell – not ordinary mana or sanctity. They function anywhere demons could manifest (necessarily left to the GM). Although any caster can benefit (bards gesticulating as if directing an orchestra to play *prestissimo*), they're marginally better power item for wizardly magic-users.

*Sell Price: \$27,000.*

*Weight: 1.8 lbs.*

*Power-Item Capacity: 7 FP for most casters, 9 FP for bards and wizards.*

## Treasure!

*Too Fast, Too Furious.* Give the Gauntlets to a boss with slow spells at high levels – particularly Area spells whose casting time increases with radius (e.g., Mass Sleep or Spark Cloud). Heroes held up fighting fodder are in trouble. Adventurers who capture this artifact will enjoy a power boost, so be strict about “empty and unrestrained” hands and unleashing Hell on critical failures.

## New Armor Modifier: Demonhide

Heavy leather armor (DR 2) can be demonhide. This has DR 4, becoming DR 6 against damage-dealing spells that don't ignore armor (e.g., damaging jet and Missile spells, but not Deathtouch). The GM may allow DR 6 vs. potions, traps, and monster attacks that resemble spells and are clearly magical. Wearing *any* demonhide gives -3 reactions from demons. Multiplies weight by 1.5. +35 CF.





# THAT OL' SHOVEL

"Every delver should carry a shovel. Real useful," the mysterious old man lectured.

"Quite," said Llandor, barely paying attention. He disliked this hamlet and hated the glorified peasant hovel that passed as its alehouse.

"Good for digging, see?"

"Evidently." Llandor hated digging – hard on the forests.

"And beheading the living dead. And burying the bits."

"Uh, yes." Llandor had heard this from Sister Miriam, but it seemed quaint. The ever-practical Miriam whacked things with a sword.

"And invading Hell's fortresses!"

"Um . . . may I please see this shovel?" Llandor choked. He hated "please."

"That Ol' Shovel" is more a description than a name. To the untrained eye, it's what it sounds like: an old shovel. Even to the *trained* eye, all that stands out is the keen edge that lets it double as a weapon. In combat, it counts as a fine, dwarven combat shovel (*Adventurers*, p. 102): +1 to cutting damage and Parry 0, not 0U.

In the hands of a cleric or holy warrior, however, it becomes a clerical magic item of considerable power. First, it serves as a high holy symbol. The undead in particular fear that it will bury them for good; the +2 to rolls for Exorcism, Turning, and similar tests of faith becomes +3 against them.

Next, it automatically casts Final Rest (*Spells*, p. 36) on any corpse buried using it, at an effective skill equal to the wielder's Will + Holiness or Power Investiture (use learned level, if better). This requires no energy and takes only as long as the GM rules is needed to inter the body – a minute or three with loose earth to hand. If it buries an unresisting *undead* being (say, a slumbering vampire or a zombie with no orders to fight back), the monster is neutralized; it isn't destroyed, but cannot claw itself free, cast spells, project a spectral form, etc.

Finally, Evil can't keep its user out! If something truly evil is hiding behind a door, wall, or similar inanimate fortification for protection from the holder (or that person's temple or deity), and the wielder knows *for sure* that specific monster is

on the far side, the barrier won't hold. The digger adds *dice* of damage equal to their Holiness or Power Investiture level to blows against the obstacle.

*Example:* Francesco Zombani has ST 12 and Power Investiture 4. A combat shovel does sw+2 cutting; this one is fine, so sw+3. For Francesco, that's 1d+5. But if he were digging his way into a vampire's castle, he'd add 4d, for 5d+5 per blow.

This power can short-circuit underground quests, so the GM must be strict about the conditions: No bonus damage because there *might* be a zombie in the dungeon. No bonus damage if the tunnels weren't carved by the forces of Evil to thwart the legions of Good. But if the digger *knows* a tomb complex contains a specific lich, and the lich used black magic to excavate the necropolis, too bad for the lich! Such situations are surprisingly common for delvers.

Oh, and That Ol' Shovel can dig like *any* ol' shovel – and being finely made, it won't break when doing so, even on a critical failure. This doesn't prevent *other* critical-failure consequences, like cave-ins.

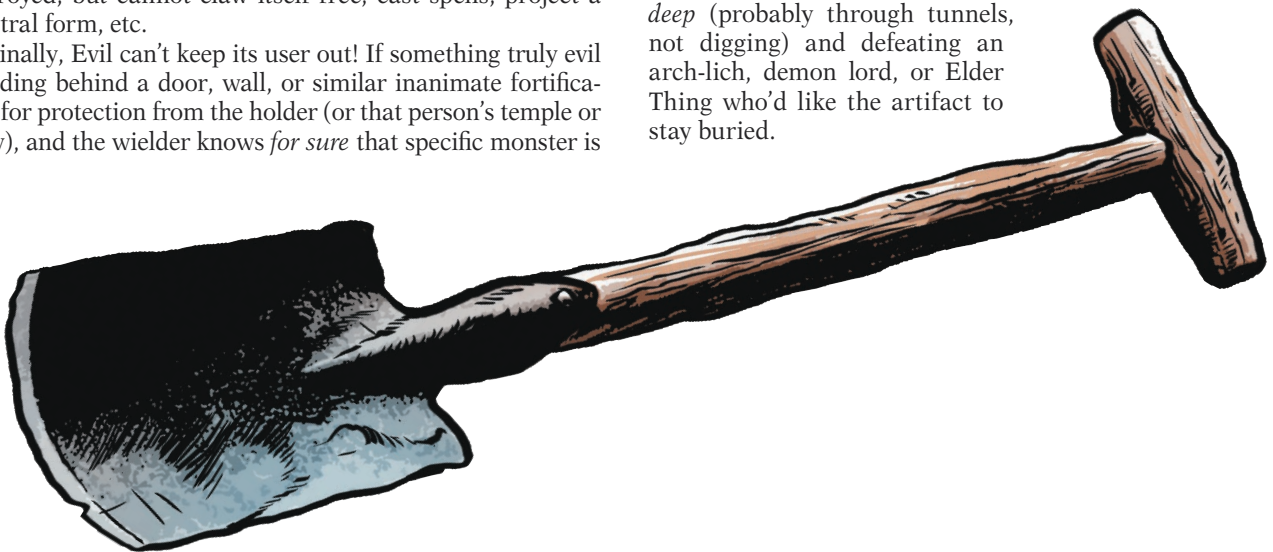
*Sell Price:* \$47,000

*Weight:* 5 lbs.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 12 FP.

## Treasure!

*The Deep Places Of The Earth.* If someone holy enough and crazy enough had That Ol' Shovel, and learned of Evil deep underground, they might try burrowing down to it. As this item doesn't convey engineering skill, the likely result would be the digger – not Evil – buried under umpteen tons of dirt. Thus, That Ol' Shovel is a fitting treasure at the end of a quest that involves venturing *deep* (probably through tunnels, not digging) and defeating an arch-lich, demon lord, or Elder Thing who'd like the artifact to stay buried.



# THREE-RING BRACERS

Francesco gaped in horror as the giant swung at Masha. Its club was longer than the girl was tall, and surely outweighed her! Stopping the blow was well beyond Francesco's magic – and the good priest prayed his companion would dodge in time, because so was raising the dead.

Yet Masha simply raised her arm as if to ward off one of Miao Miao's playful swats. Francesco shut his eyes, awaiting the crunch.

Toc.

Cracking open an eye, Francesco saw Masha still standing, the giant's weapon stopped cold.

"Gods be praised!" Francesco rejoiced, reminding himself to donate his share of the treasure to the temple.

When everyone carries a blade, deadly spells are nearly as common as weapons, and monsters roam the countryside, fighting unarmed is – to be kind – *risky*. The inventor of the Three-Ring Bracers was clearly aware of this. These wrist-guards were designed to level the playing field for warriors who rely on their fists.

The Bracers are solidly built – leather, reinforced with studs, bands, and rings – but not armor. Still, they have a variety of special properties that make them valuable on the defensive:

- Unarmed parries (using DX, Boxing, Brawling, Judo, Karate, Sumo Wrestling, or Wrestling) suffer no penalties for *weapon type* against melee and thrown weapon attacks. This eliminates the -1 or -2 to parry a thrown weapon; the -3 most unarmed parries have vs. *any* weapon; and the -4 to parry a flail or kusari. This doesn't eliminate most Parry penalties – such as those for the attacker or defender's tactics or situation – only those stemming from the incoming weapon. Ask, "If the attack were replaced by a punch but everything else was exactly the same, would the penalty disappear?" If yes, ignore the penalty.

- Parry Missile Weapons (*Adventurers*, p. 33) works with the hands regardless of DR or other abilities. This parry, too, ignores penalties from weapon type – there's no -2 vs. cross-bow bolts, blowpipe darts, and sling stones.

- When parrying weapons unarmed, failure *doesn't* let an armed attacker choose to hit the parrying arm, per *Exploits*, p. 40. The Bracer deflects the arm as a last-ditch measure and the blow hits its original target – but if that was the arm all along, too bad!

- Parrying Heavy Weapons (*Exploits*, p. 49) doesn't apply to unarmed parries. The defender won't fail automatically or suffer knockback when trying to parry something with (effective) weight greater than Basic Lift. It's possible to parry the unarmed attack of an opponent of any ST or Size Modifier, or a weapon of any weight, if the attack is one that can be parried (e.g., trampling allows only a dodge, so the Bracers can't help). The parry can still fail, of course.

- When parrying an attack carrying a Melee spell that ignores armor (*Spells*, p. 13) – Burning Touch, Deathtouch, Paralyze Limb, Shocking Touch, Total Paralysis, Wither Limb, etc. – a *successful* unarmed parry doesn't trigger the spell.

To enjoy these benefits, the *pair* must be worn – and while the hands and arms can be armored (the Bracers won't trigger the DX penalty for layered armor), both hands must be empty (no weapons, shields, bottles, scrolls, etc.). Wearing just one Bracer, or holding anything besides a grappled enemy in either hand, means *no* special powers work.

The Bracers rely on "the geomantic energy of the Earth." This is a result of materials and craftsmanship. Provided that there's *either* mana (low or better) *or* Nature's strength (penalty no worse than -5), they work.

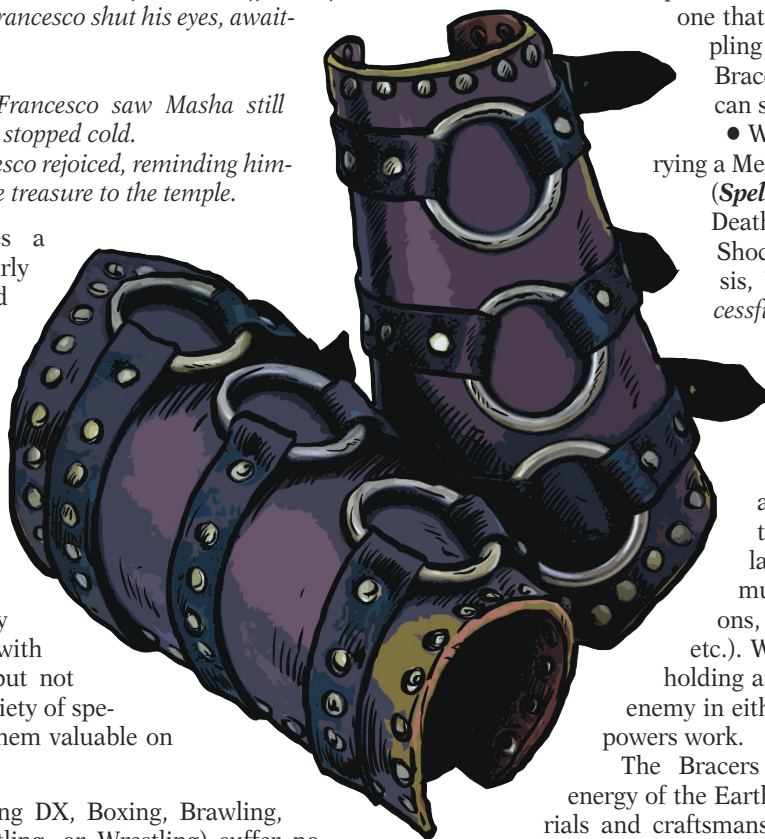
**Sell Price:** \$7,500. This is low because the artifact is mostly of value only to people who fight extremely dangerous opponents unarmed.

**Weight:** 1.5 lbs.

**Power-Item Capacity:** 4 FP.

## Treasure!

*Three-Ring Circus.* As the Bracers aid against a spectrum of attacks the heroes might not even use, giving them to a bad guy isn't terribly interesting. More exciting would be a martial-arts-themed adventure that requires a lone, unarmed fighter to defeat a grossly overpowered opponent like a giant who swings a 200-lb. flail and pitches stones the size of houses. If the delvers piece together some clues, they'll discover an equalizer: the Bracers. Indeed, the *real* test might be figuring that out, not defeating the giant!





# TRUSTY KNIFE

*If you go out in the woods today  
You're sure to fear for your life  
If you go out in the woods today  
You'd best bring a trusty knife*

– Traditional

There are magic blades that burn, freeze, strike truer, hit harder, and do endless other things of value in a fight. Yet most of even an adventurer's life is spent *not* fighting. And everyone else – farmers, nobles, nomads, villagers – carries a knife mostly as a tool. This is why some savvy enchanter invented the Trusty Knife.

This large knife is *fine* (+1 to damage and -1 to odds of breaking or, if bashing things, bending) and *balanced* (+1 to skill, in melee combat or when thrown), but looks plain. Its magic is in how it extends those properties to aid every conceivable task that might involve a knife, giving +1 (or -1, as with rolls for breakage, where favorable). Examples include:

**Catching** (*Exploits*, p. 22): +1 to allies' DX rolls to catch the Knife if thrown to them.

**Dungeon Parkour** (*Exploits*, pp. 20-21): +1 to DX rolls to catch something after a botched balancing, climbing, or jumping attempt – stick in the Knife and hang on!

**Fast-Draw (Knife)** (*Adventurers*, p. 76): +1.

**Foraging** (*Exploits*, p. 18): +1 to Fishing, Naturalist, or Survival – use it to gut fish, dig up roots, dress game, etc.

**Forced Entry** (*Adventurers*, p. 77): +1 to hit, where not automatic.

**Forcing** (*Exploits*, p. 22): +1 to ST (mutually exclusive with a crowbar's +2) when prying something open.

**Holdout** (*Adventurers*, pp. 78-79): +1 to conceal the Knife, including rolls for *Hidden Weapons* (*Exploits*, p. 58), where it shrinks the -2 for “larger knives” to -1.

**Interrogation** (*Adventurers*, p. 79): +1 when using the Knife to torture. This requires cutting – the Knife may be exposed to acid blood or whatever when torturing monsters.

**Intimidation** (*Adventurers*, p. 79): +1 when using the Knife to menace – but only if wielded all by itself. “This is all I need to gut you!”

**Lockpicking** (*Adventurers*, p. 80): +1 when using the Knife to open locks; it makes the -5 for “if using only a knife” just -4.

**Long Actions** (*Exploits*, p. 32): +1 to the DX roll to find the Knife *quickly* if you've gone and stowed it in a pack, pouch, or pocket.

**Pickpocket** (*Adventurers*, p. 85): +1 to cut a purse, though not to swipe jewelry, items in pockets, etc. *Working the Crowd* (*Exploits*, p. 14) benefits – most coin is in purses.

**Poisons** (*Adventurers*, pp. 85-86): +1 to the roll in *Practical Poisoning* (*Exploits*, p. 58) or similar rolls to poison the Knife.

**Readying in Close Combat** (*Exploits*, p. 51): +1 to the DX roll to ready the Knife.

**Smuggling** (*Adventurers*, p. 89): +1 to hide the Knife in baggage.

**Surgery** (*Adventurers*, p. 90): +1 to the rolls in *Dead Monster Bits* (*Exploits*, p. 24) to carve out organs – and +1 for medical surgery (*Exploits*, p. 63), though without surgical instruments (the Knife replaces only the scalpel), this merely reduces the -5 for “just a dagger” to -4.

**Survival** (*Adventurers*, p. 90): +1 to the roll under *Dead Monster Bits* (*Exploits*, p. 24) to remove a pelt – and to foraging rolls, as noted earlier.

The GM may allow bonuses to other rolls that seem like they'd benefit from a good knife; e.g., “Roll against Boating or Seamanship to untie from the pier.” See *Rolling, Rolling, Rolling* (*Exploits*, p. 12) for inspiration. If cutting something would complete the task *or* a knife could serve as improvised equipment enabling the task at a penalty, it's reasonable to permit it. All outcomes are consistent with using a knife, though – cutting and prying are never subtle!

This is *not* a unique artifact, but a fairly widely available item that relies on ordinary wizardly magic. It doesn't work without mana.

**Sell Price:** \$7,900.

**Weight:** 1 lb.

**Power-Item Capacity:** 5 FP.

## Treasure!

*But Wait, That's Not All!* This is one of the few items in this collection that's best sold in town, not treated as a rare treasure to fight and bleed for. That doesn't mean it's always available everywhere! Anything *this* handy may be backordered – and demand could drive up the price.



# ULTIMUM

*Nobody expected a dragon – and a big one at that. The mysterious stranger in town hadn't mentioned it, and there were no telltale signs. The delvers beat a retreat down a tunnel too narrow for the monster.*

*Bringing up the rear, Grükuk saw a gigantic maw appear: The dragon was going to breathe fire, and there would be no avoiding it here. She turned and raised her shield. Maybe she could screen her allies.*

*To her surprise, the shield stopped much of the flame. She'd stagger away from this, just barely. This new shield was impressive – even **without** a spike.*

Ultimum is a fine, orichalcum large shield. Consequently, it has DB 3, is fireproof, and gives anyone who carries a bash or rush +2 to odds of weapon breakage. Such high-quality, lightweight protection is *already* valuable, but Ultimum has additional powers – especially in the hands of an expert shield-user, like a knight.

A large shield normally gives a fighter without Shield-Wall Training (*Adventurers*, p. 29) -2 to attacks made with the other hand, and gives *anyone* -3 to hit in close combat (*Exploits*, p. 51). Ultimum grants a bearer who lacks Shield-Wall Training that ability's benefits: no -2 to attack and the ability to sacrifice their block to block for an ally beside them. A warrior who has that advantage may *further* ignore the -3 in close combat (they still can't block there – they just have no attack penalty) *and* can block an attack for an associate beside them without sacrificing their own block!

Similarly, Ultimum grants a wielder without Sacrificial Block (*Adventurers*, p. 28) that trait's benefits: They can sacrifice their block to block for someone behind them. A user who has the advantage can block for a friend behind them without sacrificing their own block. A fighter with Shield-Wall Training *and* Sacrificial Block may block *twice*, not three times – once for themselves and once for a nearby friend, or twice for allies (possibly the same one).

Ultimum also gives any wielder who lacks Shield Mastery (*Adventurers*, p. 29) that ability's full benefits: +1 to DB (total DB 4) if *blocking* or *dodging* a ranged threat, even when blocking for an ally, and +2 DR vs. area or spreading attacks from

in front. If the bearer has Shield Mastery, its benefits double: +2 to DB (total DB 5) to block or dodge ranged attacks, and +4 DR vs. frontal cones, explosions, etc.

Finally, Ultimum magnifies the benefits of Enhanced Block (*Adventurers*, p. 49). Each level of that advantage gives a *further* +2 DR vs. area or spreading attacks from in front.

Thus, someone without Shield Mastery would get +4, +6, or +8 DR, respectively, with Enhanced Block 1, 2, or 3; someone with Shield Mastery would get +6, +8, or +10 DR.

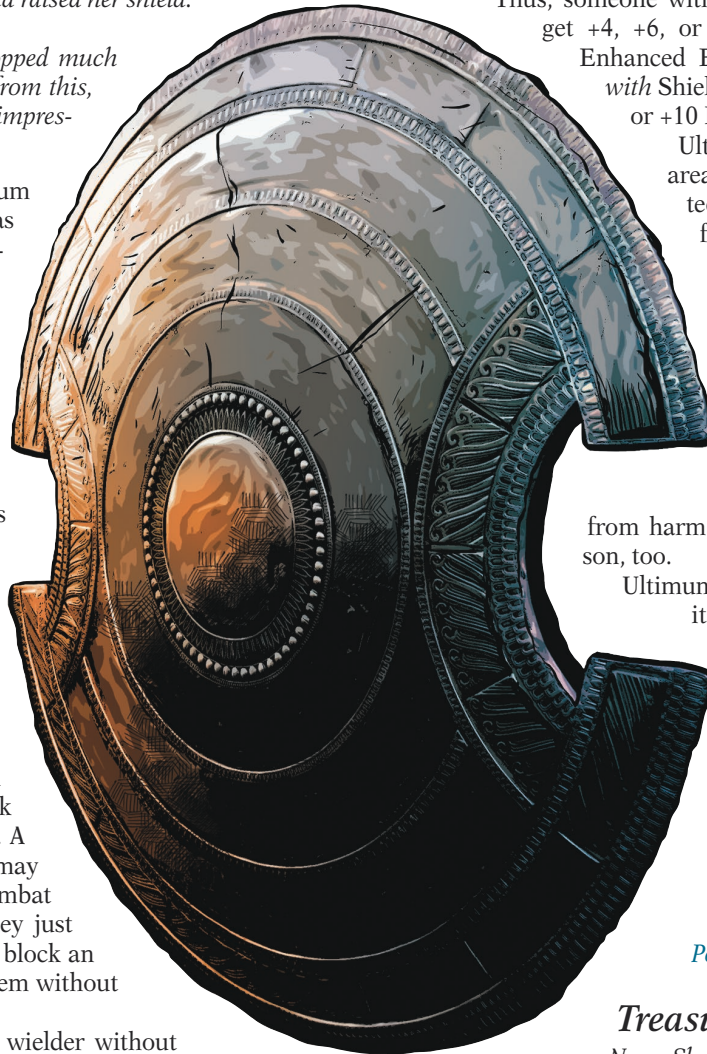
Ultimum's bonus DR against area or spreading attacks protects all hit locations from in front; simply add it to the DR used against *Large-Area Injury* (*Exploits*, p. 53). As well, in situations where the bearer is between the source of such damage and a friend, and the GM rules their presence wouldn't *completely* screen that ally from harm, the DR protects that person, too.

Ultimum's properties stem from its construction. It works *anywhere* and radiates no detectable magic. Any examiner with points in Armory (Melee Weapons), Connoisseur (Weapons), or Shield may try a *Per*-based skill roll to realize it's special.

*Sell Price:* \$84,000.

*Weight:* 12.5 lbs.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 30 FP.



## Treasure!

*None Shall Pass!* Give Ultimum to a boss' bodyguard, who will do a surprisingly good job – especially against ranged attacks. A golem-armor swordsman with added knightly abilities would be extremely hard to take down; a spellcaster, like a draug or vampire knight, would make the shield's high power-item capacity felt. Once taken off the corpse of its last owner, ideally after a tough fight, Ultimum makes a nice reward for team players, and one different from "another shield with Defending Shield or Deflect." Just make sure the campaign is at the point where *selling* something this valuable isn't game-breaking.



# VERSIFIER'S VISAGE

*Gaze upon your fool, king.  
My mien is your despair.  
Takest thou my folly.  
Givest me thine wisdom.*  
– Unknown

Masks are often magical. Most carry enchantments of protection or concealment, or are used in primitive rites. Not so the Versifier's Visage.

Although the Visage resembles a carnival mask, it isn't made of glass, leather, papier-mâché, or porcelain, but of thin-but-strong *steel*. It counts as contoured (see box) plate, giving the face DR 6 from the front without blocking the senses. It can be worn with any armor that lacks full-face protection.

The Visage also has great power, in the form of "the exchange": Swapping part of the wearer's persona with that of someone nearby.

To attempt this, wearer and subject must be able to see one other. If there's any doubt, make Vision rolls. *Deliberately* not gazing upon the Visage is permitted – but fighting with gaze averted is a major distraction in general (-3 to hit, -1 to defend), and requires fighting near-blind against the wearer (-6 to hit, -4 to defend).

The exchange requires the wearer to take a Concentrate maneuver and roll a Quick Contest of Will with the subject.

**Modifiers:** The *wearer* has -1 per yard of distance, adds their Bardic Talent, and subtracts the target's Magic Resistance. The *subject* adds their Magic Resistance.

If the wearer *wins*, they may "lend" the subject any one mental trait they have, losing it themselves, and "borrow" any one mental trait from the subject, who loses it. The size of the point value of the "borrowed" trait (regardless of whether it's positive or negative) cannot exceed that of the "lent" one – although *partial* borrowing (reducing the

owner's level to gain a lesser degree), where logical, is allowed. Duration in minutes equals the user's margin of victory. The exchange can be ended sooner only by attempting another exchange, which cancels the existing one regardless of the outcome.

The GM decides what's "mental." Knowledge is (permitting languages, skills, and spells); as are advantages that aren't clearly physical (ruling out Appearance, Fit, Voice, etc.), social (forbidding Clerical Investment and Wealth), or supernatural (eliminating spellcasting talents, Chi Talent, Daredevil, Higher Purpose, Holiness, Luck, Magic Resistance, Serendipity, and Bard-Song, Chi, Druidic, and Holy abilities); as are disadvantages meeting similar criteria (everything with a self-control roll is allowed!). For special professional and monster traits, the GM judges what's learned (e.g., Armor Familiarity, Armor Mastery, or Expert Backstabbing) and what's physical or superhuman (High Manual Dexterity, Telescopic Vision, Wild Magic, etc.) – and if necessary sets a point value. IQ, Will, and Per *cannot* be transferred.

**Example:** Jag is wearing the Visage. Establishing eye contact with a void brute, he rolls against Will 14, -1 for distance, +3 for Bardic Talent, or 16, getting a 9; the brute succeeds by 0. Victory by seven! The GM offers Jag the brute's mental disadvantages, Unfazeable, and skills. As void brutes mean a mindwarper nearby, Jag picks Unfazeable (to negate Terror); that's 15 points. Jag trades off Greed (12) [-15]; the brute might not start accepting bribes, but neither will Jag if the mindwarper offers. The exchange lasts seven minutes.

The Visage is a wizardly item, and functions at -5 in low mana.

**Sell Price:** \$92,000.

**Weight:** 2 lbs.

**Power-Item Capacity:** 16 FP.

## New Armor Modifier: Contoured

Shows stylized muscles, breasts, facial features, etc. without compromising protection. For *most* armor, this is one interpretation of the highest level of ornate, granting +3 to reactions in certain circumstances. For add-on full-face protection (i.e., *masks*), the close-cut design *also* eliminates the drawbacks described on p. 108 of *Adventurers*: no -4 to Hearing rolls, and the wearer can see their side hexes. +9 CF, or +16 CF for masks.

## Treasure!

**My Mien Is Your Despair.** The Visage is one of this catalog's most potent artifacts; it merits a high-Will boss. Popular borrowings are a warrior's top combat skill or caster's favorite spell. For this, a mindwarper might lend some knowledge skill that's useless in battle; a vampire, Uncontrollable Appetite for blood (yuck!). In delvers' hands, the GM should be careful about what exchanges are allowed, but it isn't necessarily overpowered – many dungeon denizens are mindless!



# WAND OF TENTACULAR INTRUSION

*After the Wizards' Guild defeated the Many-Eyed One, most of the items they crafted from its body emulated known spells – just with shortcuts. Quelle surprise! Researching new principles costs money and rarely yields saleable results, but the same old magic for less time and energy is **profitable**.*

*Yet there were horrific, unwholesome exceptions.*

*Nobody knows **who** created the Wand of Tentacular Intrusion. Things like it give **all** wizards a bad name.*

The Wand of Tentacular Intrusion resembles a stylized tentacle, not the appendage of any creature in *this* reality. It's difficult to pin down its composition: Impossibly hard or petrified wood? An unknown mineral? Its "handle" sprouts a jagged crystal, which on examination seems crusted with dried blood.

The world is full of wands that cast curses and shoot fireballs. This isn't one of them. It's a physical weapon – a *disgustingly* physical one. It would be reasonable to ask who it's more disgusting for: wielder or victim.

The wielder can use the Wand as a baton; treat it as fine quality due to hardness. To employ its special powers, they must *graft it to their hand*, plunging the sharp crystal into their flesh. This requires an unarmored hand – garments with DR 1+ prevent it from working. Grafting inflicts 1 HP of injury on the hand. That hand is considered filled while the Wand is attached; to free the hand, tear out the Wand, inflicting *another* 1 HP.

Once grafted, the Wand becomes a squirming extension of the arm. The wielder can strike at Reach C, 1 using the highest of DX, Boxing, Brawling, Karate, or Whip. They can also parry *as if using a weapon*, at 3 + half skill, rounded down.

A hit doesn't deal a blow – rather, the Wand attempts to burrow into the victim. Roll the attacker's swing damage (based on ST and Striking ST, never modified for unarmed combat skills or Weapon Master); if this *equals or exceeds* target DR, the Wand forces its way in, briefly writhes around inside, and then rips free, causing 3d HP of generalized injury. Provided that the target is material (the Wand can't harm specters), structure is unimportant; the tentacle tears flesh, splinters wood, cracks stone, and so on. The Wand cannot grapple or remain embedded.

Against a living target, the wielder may choose to cast Evisceration (see box) *instead* of doing injury. This requires just the attack – not five seconds of concentration. Effective skill is the *higher* of the user's HT or Will. Cost is always 10 HP; it cannot be paid in any other way.

The Wand's abilities to graft itself and burrow into people are cosmic. The Evisceration spell is affected by mana as usual.

**Sell Price:** \$51,000. The sort of people who want the Wand are more likely to *take* it than pay – though a quest-giver might offer a smaller amount to confiscate it.

**Weight:** 1 lb.

**Power-Item Capacity:** 8 FP.

## New Spell: Evisceration (VH)

### Melee; Special Resistance

Unlike most Melee spells, this one must be cast on a hand, never a staff. If the hand hits a *living* being, the subject may resist with the *higher* of HT or Will. **Exception:** No Vitals protects completely!

Failure to resist lets the caster scoop out a vital organ – heart, liver, kidney, etc. – leaving a bloody hole. The victim must roll vs. HT at -6 each turn afterward until they eventually fail and fall unconscious. Death follows unconsciousness in five seconds.

Evisceration is a Necromantic spell.

**Duration:** Instantaneous, but effects are permanent unless reversed by Great Healing before the victim dies.

**Cost:** 10. Cannot be maintained.

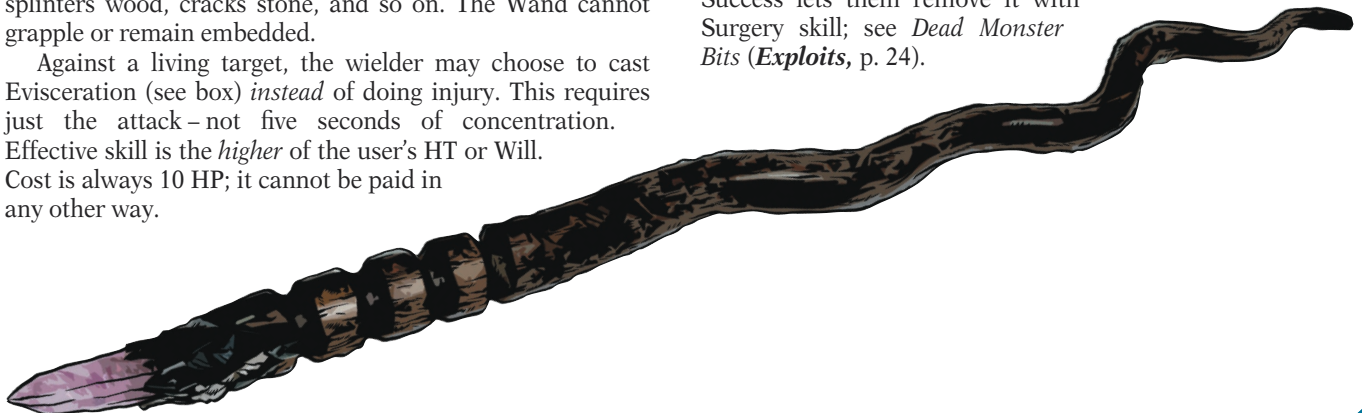
**Time to cast:** 5 seconds.

**Prerequisites:** **Wizardly:** Magery 3, Apportation, and at least nine Body Control spells, including Deathtouch.

## Treasure!

**Not-So-Dead Monster Bits.** The recommended way to introduce the Wand is to have a boss monster *use* it. Just graft it on and add it to the creature's attacks! The adventurers need a Hidden Lore (Elder Things or Magic Items) roll at -5 to realize it's an artifact, not a mutant body part.

Success lets them remove it with Surgery skill; see *Dead Monster Bits* (**Exploits**, p. 24).





# WIDGET-WORKER'S GOGGLES

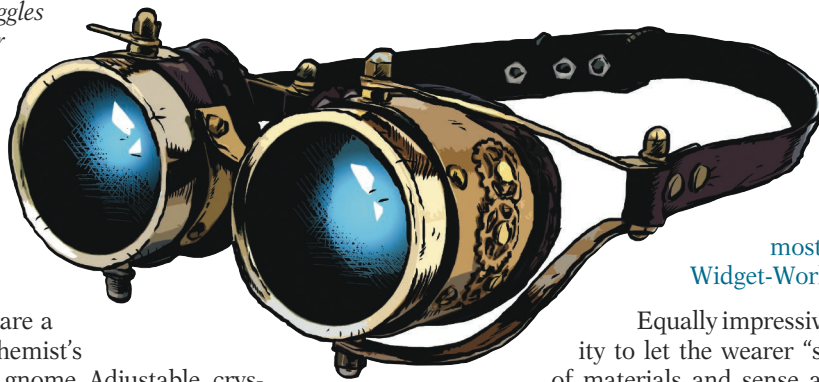
Puddin' fished tinted goggles from the chest. "Aha! Another fine gnomish creation!"

"Careful, those are magical and—," Uncle Seamus warned, too late.

"Oh, my! **This** isn't what I expected."

"What do you see?"

"**Everything.**"



Widget-Worker's Goggles are a greatly enhanced pair of "alchemist's goggles" (see box) sized for a gnome. Adjustable, crystal, and reactive, they fit SM -2 to 0 wearers, give the eyes DR 4, and grant +5 to resist flashes and glare without impairing vision. They're too bulky to wear with full-face armor.

More exciting are their magical properties. They highlight anything *technologically* interesting about any gadgetry the viewer examines – crossbows, locks, traps, and so on. This gives a bonus to Armory, Lockpicking, and Traps rolls to interact with mechanisms, which is most such rolls; Connoisseur rolls to identify item quality or composition, but not value; and Forced Entry rolls aimed at locks, hinges, and similar moving parts. This skill list overlaps that of the gnomish Widget-Worker trait but isn't identical; the bonuses are cumulative. The GM may include other skills where the objective is clearly "dealing with technology."

Bonus size depends on the wearer's vision. Add Acute Vision to Perception. For every *full* two levels the total exceeds 10, the bonus is +1, to a maximum of +5.

## NEW ITEM: IMPROVED GOGGLES

Tinted goggles (*Adventurers*, p. 114) are compatible with open-faced head armor but too bulky to wear with full-face protection. That problem is unsolved, but *other* improvements exist. These modifiers work like armor modifiers, and can be combined:

**Adjustable:** Goggles are generally designed for one specific Size Modifier. Adjustable strap and lens spacing can accommodate a one-level difference; e.g., gnome-sized goggles (SM -1) could adjust to a halfling (SM -2) or a human (SM 0). +1 CF.

**Crystal:** Goggles usually give the eyes DR 1. Thick, hard crystal grants DR 4. This *still* breaks if penetrated. *Doubles* weight! +9 CF.

**Reactive:** Goggles normally grant +5 to resist flashes and glare, but give -5 to Vision rolls. Alchemically treated lenses darken only for as long and as much as required, bestowing the bonus without the penalty. +9 CF.

*Example:* Puddin' has Perception 14 and no Acute Vision. She gets +2 to techie skill rolls. This helps a lot, as she has many relevant skills, most already at +2 from Widget-Worker.

Equally impressive is the Goggles' ability to let the wearer "see" the composition of materials and sense alchemical creations.

This grants a bonus to Alchemy and Poisons skill rolls for brewing (*Exploits*, p. 13); spotting gunk (*Exploits*, pp. 23, 69, 70); using a lab to analyze magic (*Exploits*, pp. 25, 76, 77); identifying poisons (*Exploits*, p. 63); and recognizing uncommon alloys (*Exploits*, p. 73). This aids only rolls to *create*, *detect*, or *analyze* – never to remove, neutralize, or treat dangerous stuff or its effects. Again, the GM may extend the bonus to other skills (especially Hazardous Materials) wherever the goals are similar, but the Goggles have a "blind spot" for herbal substances, and never help when the operative skill is Herb Lore, Naturalist, or Pharmacy.

This bonus relies on magical sensitivity to ingredients even when dealing with purely mundane substances like acid, bladeblack, and tumbaga. Thus, it's based on the sum of *Magery* and *Perception*. Again, every *full* two levels past 10 grants +1 (maximum +5).

*Example:* Puddin' gets the same +2 here, which doesn't help much because she lacks relevant skills. Zephyra, with Perception 12 and *Magery* 4, would receive +3 – useful, as she knows Alchemy.

These powers stem from gnomish techno-magic and special alchemical lenses. The Goggles need mana to function, but even low mana will do.

*Sell Price:* \$26,000.

*Weight:* 1 lb.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 14 FP.

## Treasure!

*The Goggles Do Everything!* The Goggles are glorified armor for a villain. Instead, use them as an alternative to the predictable potions looted from an alchemically adept antagonist's lab. Or have a technological trade guild loan them to heroes in their employ; the Goggles are the *only* way to detect a one-off "plot token" or quest item, and keeping them is part of the reward for mission success. Or just decide they aren't unique and sell them.

# XINGYUNG

The peshkali appeared out of nowhere – summoned by a magical trap, as demons so often are. Putting the “cat” in “cat-like reflexes,” Miao Miao somehow got between it and her allies. To buy them time, she couldn’t give an inch.

The demon rained down blows. Miao Miao’s blade was a blur as she deflected one, two, three, four, **five** scimitars.

The sixth strike looked like it was going to cut the cat-girl in half. Yet her sword followed her gaze into its path. “Ha! Old sword never did *that*. Miao Miao approve!”

Xingyung is a fine edged rapier of an exotic, some say *otherworldly*, pattern. Beyond the benefits of fine quality (-1 to breakage, +1 to damage), it’s potent on the defense – but not due to the Defending Weapon enchantment. Xingyung’s powers are evident only when the wielder is beset, and only if they rely entirely on parries with the sword.

Normally, repeated parries with a weapon suffer a cumulative -4 per parry after the first. This is halved to -2 per parry with a fencing weapon (like Xingyung wielded with the Rapier skill) *or* either Trained by a Master or Weapon Master. It’s halved again, to -1 per parry, for someone with a fencing weapon *and* either of those advantages. See **Exploits**, p. 48.

Xingyung halves the penalties yet again! When using Xingyung with Broadsword and no special advantage, -4 becomes -2; when wielding it using Rapier *or* a special advantage, -2 becomes -1; and with both Rapier *and* a special advantage, -1 becomes -1/2. The latter means the second *and* third parries are at -1, the fourth and fifth are at -2, and so on.

This effect persists only while the fighter parries with Xingyung, however. It ends if they parry with anything else, block, or dodge. If they resume parrying with Xingyung, they suffer the *full* penalty for the number of parries made so far!

This resets on their turn, letting them once again try successive parries at half the usual penalty.

Parry bonuses apply normally and *don’t* interrupt the sequence, however much they resemble other defenses. For instance, a cloak or shield adds DB; only blocking with it ends the halving effect. Likewise, retreating for +1 (+3 if using Rapier) is fine, even if that “feels like” dodging; only *actually* dodging breaks the pattern.

*Example:* Miao Miao faces a peshkali that makes six successful attacks on her. Her Parry score – with Combat Reflexes and Enhanced Parry – is 15. Her heavy cloak provides DB 2; this won’t interfere with Xingyung, so her final Parry is 17. Retreating could give *another* +3 against *all* of her opponent’s attacks, but the GM says she can’t do that without letting the demon close enough to strike her friends.

With Rapier skill and Weapon Master (Rapier), she’d usually have -1 per parry after the first: 17, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12. With Xingyung, that’s 17, 16, 16, 15, 15, 14. If some trap shot an arrow at her and she dodged, her seventh parry (if needed) would take the full -6 for six previous parries and be at 11, not 14.

Xingyung works by interpreting the user’s “thought waves” – while not magical, it’s anything but mundane. Sages suspect psychic technology from another universe. As with all matters psychic, Elder Things are never far away. If the *Critical Miss Table* (**Exploits**, p. 101) gives a “weapon breaks” result, recheck as usual for a fine weapon. A second such result means Xingyung breaks; any other outcome cuts a hole in reality, letting in Elder Things.

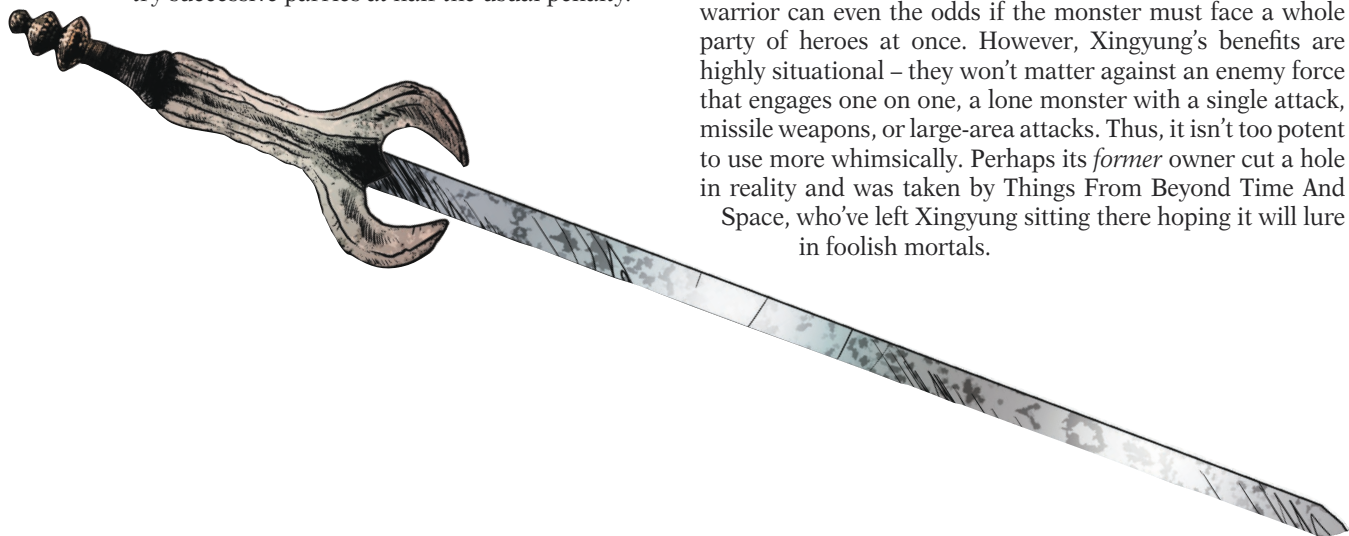
*Sell Price:* \$44,000.

*Weight:* 3 lbs.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 16 FP.

## Treasure!

*It’s Just Sitting There!* Giving Xingyung to a boss-quality warrior can even the odds if the monster must face a whole party of heroes at once. However, Xingyung’s benefits are highly situational – they won’t matter against an enemy force that engages one on one, a lone monster with a single attack, missile weapons, or large-area attacks. Thus, it isn’t too potent to use more whimsically. Perhaps its *former* owner cut a hole in reality and was taken by Things From Beyond Time And Space, who’ve left Xingyung sitting there hoping it will lure in foolish mortals.





# ZERO

*The Sixth Necromaster disintegrated Jag's prized sword. Were the group not battling **seven** undead archmages, he'd withdraw to hurl knives or magic as a distraction. But they had to press!*

*The tomb was full of cobwebby junk. Perhaps something here kept the Necromasters from death? He gambled a second to sing Mage Sight. No black auras of necromantic power – just a golden glow around a sword.*

*Jag resisted a curse he didn't want to contemplate as he snatched up the blade. The sword leveled **itself** at the Necromaster. Jag swore the fleshless skull looked worried.*

Zero appears to be an austere orichalcum shortsword. It emanates wizardly magic – *powerful* magic, to those who can sense degree. Analyze Magic reveals only “Something to guide the hand,” and not the Accuracy enchantment.

What Zero does is strike at weak points – not by bypassing armor, like Penetrating Weapon, but by pulling attacks toward what's likely to defeat the foe. Examples, with penalties to hit:

*Entities sustained by amulets:* Talisman, crown, or phylactery (-7); circlet, ring, or tiara (-11); tiny jewel (-12).

*Entities with hit location-linked Supernatural Durability or Unkillable (Achilles Heel):* Standard penalty for the location: -2 for the arm of a peshkali, -3 for the vitals of a demon of old, etc.

*Foes with mundane vital areas:* Eye (-9), neck (-5), skull (-7), or vitals (-3). The face and groin, while *sensitive*, don't count here.

*Armored foes:* Chinks in armor (-8 or -10).

Penalties in monster descriptions supersede these. Not all locations are susceptible to impaling thrusts *and* cutting swings; in particular, only thrusts can target the eye, vitals, or chinks in armor.

If Zero's wielder intentionally attacks such a location with it, *halve* the penalty, rounding for the worse: -1 for a peshkali's arm; -2 for vitals; -3 for neck; -4 for skull, a large amulet, or

chinks in torso armor; -5 for eye or chinks in other armor; or -6 for a small amulet. This power offsets penalties but never grants a bonus. When attacking other locations, enemies without weaknesses, or inanimate objects, Zero provides no magical benefits.

If, when attacking, Zero's wielder is unaware of an opponent's *special* weak point – never mere chinks in armor or a mundane being's vitals, but something like an amulet whose significance (or presence!) is unknown, an undiscovered flaw in Supernatural Durability or Unkillable, or a hidden equivalent to the vitals – Zero tries to reveal this. If there are several possibilities, the GM chooses whatever they feel is of highest value.

Zero pulls itself toward the secret weak point on the user's *first* attack. If the chosen attack mode (swing or thrust) isn't valid for that location, Zero switches modes. While the guided attack still enjoys reduced penalties, it can be risky at low effective skill – if someone is swinging at the torso because posture and darkness have reduced skill to 8, and this becomes a thrust to the vitals at effective skill 6, failure and *critical* failure are more likely. If effective skill is 2 or less, Zero aborts the attack; treat this as a miss.

Whatever happens (even a critical failure or aborted attack!), the wielder may roll vs. the *highest* of IQ, Perception, or Tactics to interpret Zero's intentions – a free action at the end of the turn. Success means they deduce the weak point as though they had used Hidden Lore, Physiology, or some similar skill. Regardless of whether its user clues in, Zero then returns target selection to them – until they attack an opponent with a *different* hidden flaw!

Zero is a wizardly artifact from a high-mana land plagued by supernatural fiends. Its powers don't work in no-mana areas.

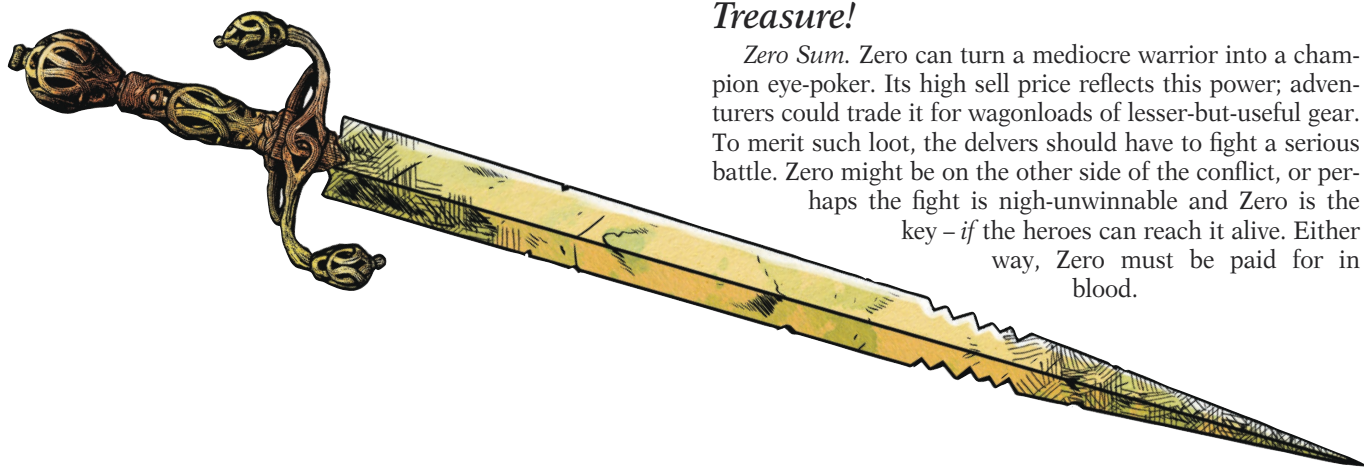
*Sell Price:* \$112,000.

*Weight:* 2 lbs.

*Power-Item Capacity:* 25 FP.

## Treasure!

*Zero Sum.* Zero can turn a mediocre warrior into a champion eye-poker. Its high sell price reflects this power; adventurers could trade it for wagonloads of lesser-but-useful gear. To merit such loot, the delvers should have to fight a serious battle. Zero might be on the other side of the conflict, or perhaps the fight is nigh-unwinnable and Zero is the key – *if* the heroes can reach it alive. Either way, Zero must be paid for in blood.



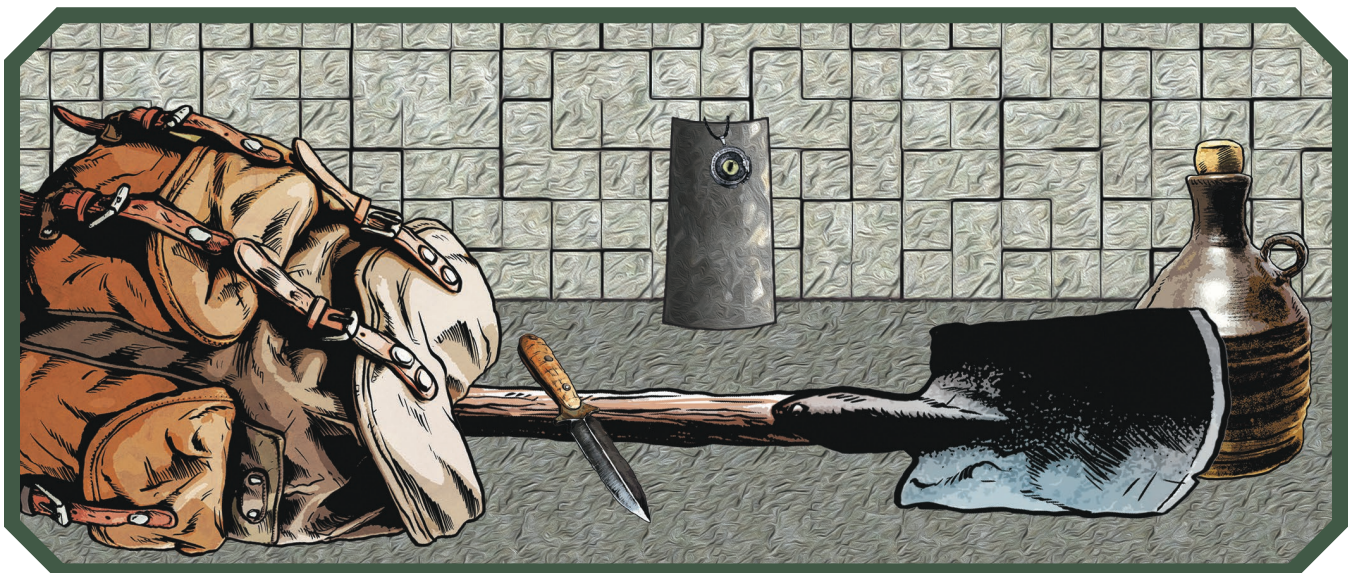
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