Sanctum Secorum

Episode #13

Down to a Sunless Sea

Compatible With DCC RPG

Sanctum Secorum Podcast
Episode #13 Companion

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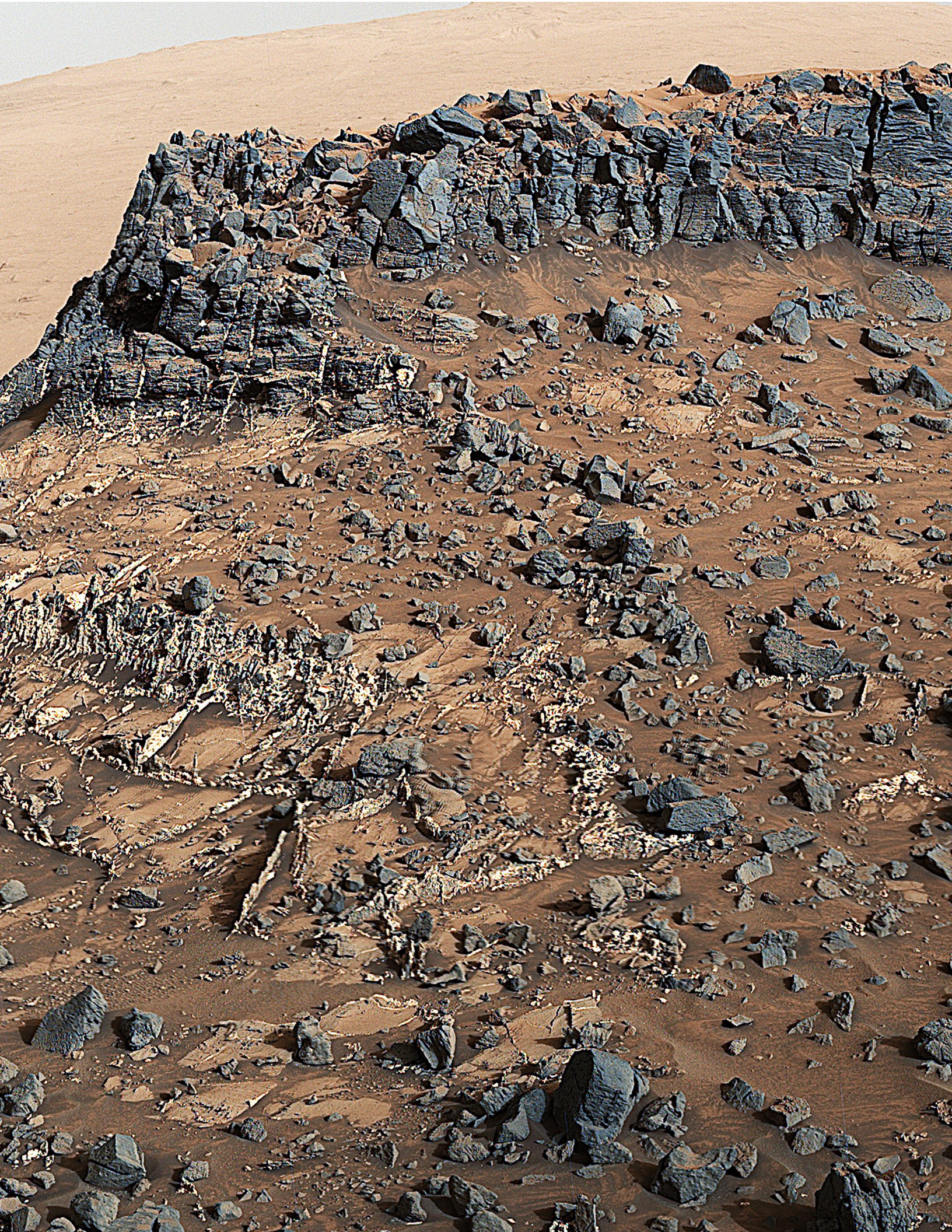


Items

Dialectric Accumulator

Dialectric accumulators are used to charge a wide range of devices. The accumulator is designed to hold an initial charge at its core. The charge is continually “bounced” against absorbing molecules that siphon a fraction of the charge, lending to an efficient “battery” capable of keeping most devices running for several days. Dialectric accumulators may also be recharged at any appropriate station found in civilized parts of Mars.

Cost: 10 credits

Use: The accumulators can be used to charge devices needing relatively low amounts of energy for 30 days of continual use on a typical cycle. Weapons using the accumulators draw a heavier load from the energy store and are usually only good for 20 shots before they must be replaced.

Power fence

Traveling the wilds of any planet can be dangerous and any traveler daring to make camp without some means of being alerted to predators making their hunt during the hours of darkness is a fool not long for the world. The power fence was created with a two-fold purpose. The device consists of small extendable poles made from a lightweight polymer. Each pole is driven into the ground, and once set a thin retractable wire is thread through the stakes, and clamped down upon. The finished result is a energized fence powered by dialectric accumulators. The “fence” may be spread to cover a diameter 15’. The fence serves to deter, and warn of approaching predators in addition to keeping mounts from straying out into the wild.

Cost: 20 credits

Use: Setting up the power fence takes one turn, and once activated, an invisible charge courses through the wire. Touching the wire inflicts 1d4 damage and requires a DC 10 Fortitude save to avoid being stunned for 1d2 rounds. The act of touching the wire instantly causes a burst of light followed by a crackle of energy, awakening anyone sleeping within 40'.

Pressure Still

The pressure still was designed for regions where water sources aren't readily available, like the scorched dust bowl that is Mars. The device can be assembled in one round and is designed to be fueled by dialectric accumulators. Should this energy source be unavailable, any flammable material may be used (even poisonous plants, as the water is instantly boiled) but the time to extract potable water is doubled. Any plant type may be used with the pressure still for the purpose of extracting its existing moisture. As a secondary effect, any non poisonous plant used can be fed as a viable food source to any herbivore.

Cost: 25 credits

Use: The pressure still comes unassembled in a leather case resembling a canteen. Assembling takes one round, and once the accumulator is activated the process can be started on the following round. Any plant based material may be used, and one ounce of potable water will be extracted for each ounce of plant used in the still, but the maximum capacity is 12 ounces during each extraction. Water is funneled away from the extractor into any suitable container, ready to drink. With a maximum load, the still will generate 12 ounces of water after four rounds. Should alternative power sources be used, the time to extract water is doubled.

Water Shoes

Legend tells of a vast ocean that exists deep below the surface of Mars. They also tell of a fey-like race that live in a child-like splendor on this ocean, free of the traits that often infect and collapse most civilizations. The children are said to ride giant dragonflies and sail the milky sea of heavy minerals upon ships made from rattan and other light weight wood. This is where the invention of the boat shoe is said to originate. Two pontoon-shaped pieces of lightweight wood are laced with leather straps. With some time and effort, the wearer is able to float on any surface of water. With the aid of long paddles, the water shoes may be used to cross any calm body of water. The shoes are perfect for hunting fish that school towards the shallows or surface of whatever body of water the user finds himself in.

Cost: Considered artifacts, the water shoes would be priceless to the collectors of ancient civilizations. With knowledge of the water shoes, and a basic knowledge of woodworking, the shoes can be made with any buoyant material soft enough to carve. Leather straps are typically laced across to keep the shoes secure.

Use: A simple DC 8 Agility check is needed to become acclimated to the shoes and use them to move about on water. Movement is 20' with the use of a paddle to help propel and steer the shoes. Fishing is a slightly harder skill to master, and requires a DC 10 Agility check to maneuver a fish into a containment device. Falling causes no damage, but requires a DC10 Agility check to raise and stand back up.

Monsters

In our April episode/issue, Sanctum Secorum covered the first of the *Myth Adventure* series by Robert Asprin. Among the items featured in the issue was David Baity's spider-bear. Presented in this issue is another take on the creature, inspired by the art (and mind) of J. Benjamin Wilson.

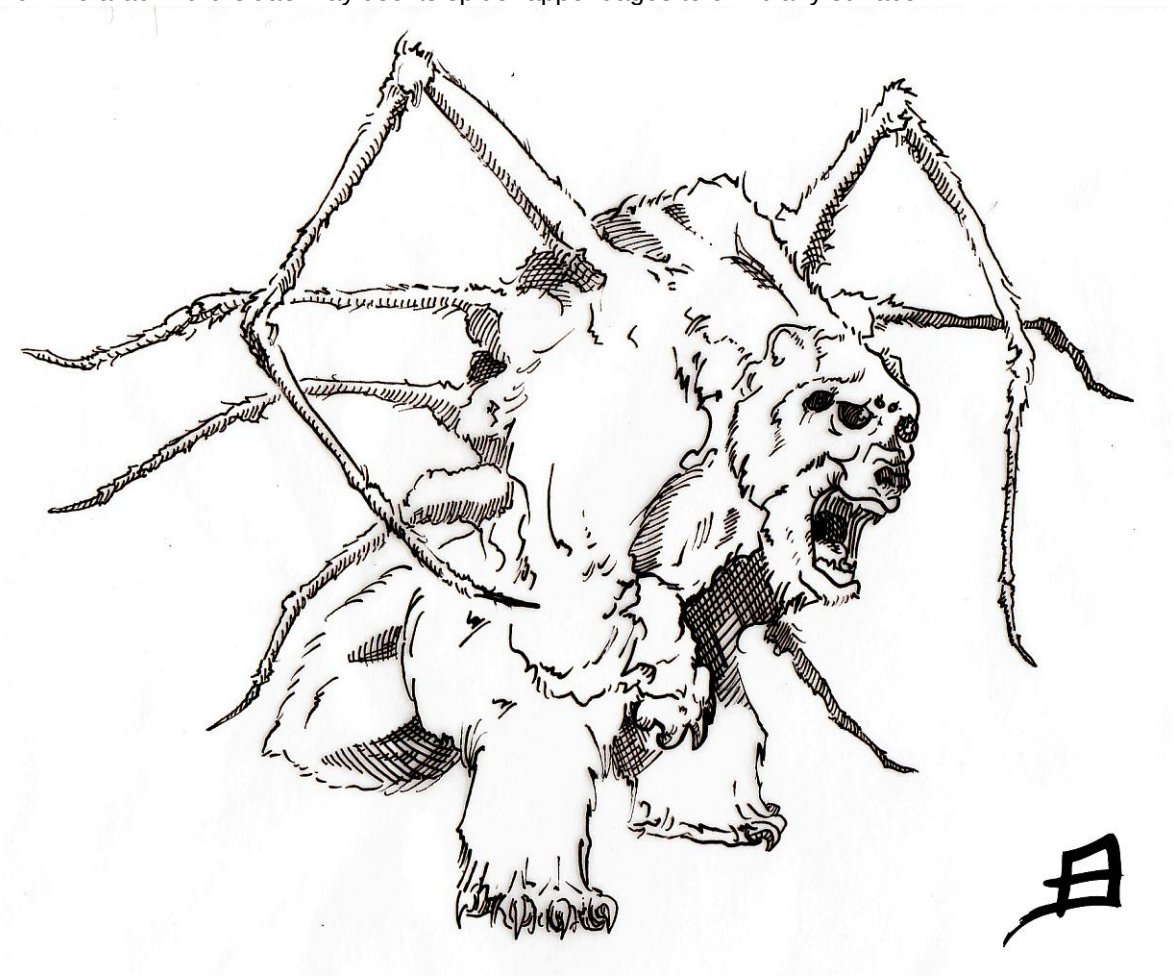
Arachni-Ursidae
The fearsome looking arachnid-ursidae, or spider-bear, is a well known nuisance in the forests of the dimension of Klah. Posing a danger to small game and wildlife, seldom will the creature be brave enough to attack something as large as a human target. Themselves only the size of a Chihuahua, spider-bears will often work together in small groups of 4-5. Dangerous as they may look, they are generally not considered a threat and their bark is often worse than their bite.

Spider-bear: Init +4; Atk bear claw +0 melee (1d2) or bite +1 melee (1d3 + poison); AC 11; HD 1d5; hp 3; MV 60' or 20' climb; Act 1d16; SP venom, web; Fort +2 Ref +3, Will +0; AL C.

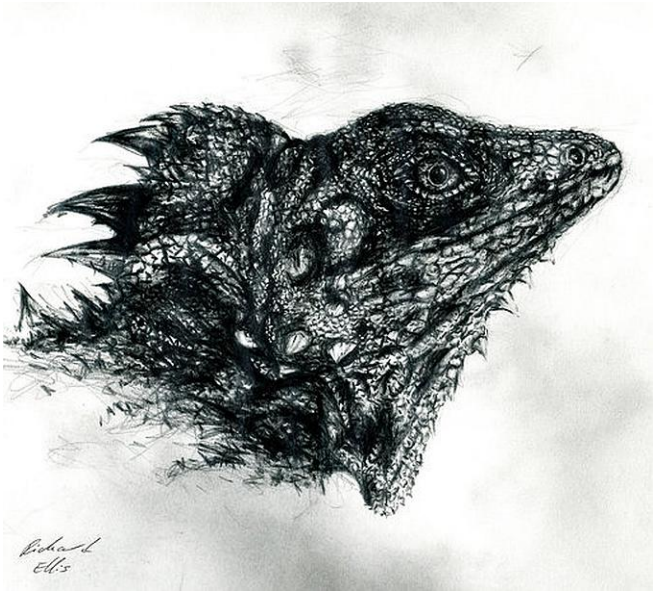
Venom: Upon a successful bite the target must immediately pass a DC 10 Fortitude save. Failure results in the target falling unconscious for 1d3 rounds or until the save is passed.

Web: The spider-bear may empty its web gland once per day in an attempt to capture prey. The ability mimics the *spider web* spell found in the DCC rulebook. Treat as if a spell check result of 15 was rolled on the spell chart.

Climb: The arachnid-ursidae may use its spider appendages to climb any surface.



Hunter



Used as hunting dogs by the tribes of Mars, the lizards known as hunters are spiked, almost thorny beasts. Capable of running down prey over long distances, the tenacity of these creatures is only matched by their foul disposition. A pack of hunters is a match for nearly any beast on Mars, with the exception of the dreaded rock dragon.

Hunter: Init +4; Atk bite +5 melee (1d10) or claw +3 melee (1d4); AC 16; HD 4d8; hp 18; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP tremor-sense; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.

Tremor-sense: So attuned is the hunter to the shifting of the sands of Mars that it is able to detect even the most subtle variations to the natural movements of the soil. Even the shifting caused by subtle movements up to half a mile away may be picked up.

Loper

He pulled the reptile's head around and thumped bootheels into its scaly sides. It voiced a shrill hiss of displeasure, then broke into that clumsy gait for which it was named.
- Lin Carter, 'Down to a Sunless Sea'

Favored by the nomadic nation-clans, the loper is the chosen desert mount of Mars, the loper is capable of traveling through the heat and harsh environments of open mars for great periods of time while requiring very little water.

Loper: +1; Atk bite +6 melee (1d7+4); AC 15; HD 5d10; hp 23; MV 90'; Act 1d20; SP tremor-sense 50'; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +0; AL N.

Tremor-sense: So attuned is the loper to the shifting of the sands of Mars that it is able to detect even the most subtle variations to the natural movements of the soil. Even the shifting caused by the subtle movements of a buried sandcat may be picked up (should the rider succeed in a Luck check), and will spook the loper.

Sandcat

The sandcat was bigger than a Bengal tiger, and curiously catlike in appearance, for all that it was reptilian.
- Lin Carter, 'Down to a Sunless Sea'

Sandcat: Init +4; Atk bite +9 melee (2d8) and claws +5 melee (1d7); AC 15; HD 7d10; hp 31; MV 75'; Act 1d20+2d14; SP ambush, tremor-sense 100'; SV Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +2; AL N.

Ambush: A fearsome desert predator, the sandcat buries itself in the sand and waits for prey to pass nearby. Unless the target is already aware of the sandcat's presence (via tremor-sense or some other notification) it is automatically surprised as the sandcat springs to attack. From its position under cover of the shifting sands, the sandcat can spring up to 40' in its initial attack.

Tremor-sense: Even while covered in the sands of Mars, the sandcat is aware of its surroundings and is able to strike from ambush. It achieves this by detecting subtle vibrations in the sand as they spread across its scaly hide.

Sea-Slug

Sea-slugs float just below the surface the phosphorescent ocean in swarms, lazily feeding on algae or anything slow enough to float into its eyeless face. Whether a product of their bioluminescent diet or the sunless sea they call home, sea-slugs have gelatinous skin devoid of pigment, through which their thick blubbery flesh glistens. They resemble obese worms; a 100-pound sea-slug may only measure 1-2 feet long. Occasionally a swarm will churn to the surface, causing the water to boil. A normal bed consists of 2d8 sea-slugs.

There is no known predator of the sea-slug. If hunted, the sea-slug will attempt to escape by rolling away and plunging deep beneath the water's surface.

Sea-slug: Init -1; Atk none; AC 9; HD 2d4; MV swim 25'; Act 1d20; SP evasive roll (+2 to Ref saves to avoid capture), dead weight (see below), blind; SV Fort -1, Ref +1, Will +0; AL N.

Dead weight: The sea-slug transforms its excessive stores of blubber into a solid mass, resulting in a plummeting slug "bullet" that sinks toward the bottom of the sea bed at a rate of 100' per round, even amid turbulent water.

Sea-Slug, giant

"…it was as big around as a house, and must have been three hundred feet long.

Like the smaller versions they had seen earlier, its jelly-like flesh was lucent to the point of transparency. As it broke the waves again, heaving its glistening, glassy bulk high, [Brant] saw that it was blind and faceless, save for a wet-working sphincter-like orifice which must have served it as mouth.

"It looks harmless enough, for all its appalling size. But the sheer tonnage of the sea-monster could easily swamp or crush their flimsy vessel."

-Lin Carter, Down to a Sunless Sea

Similar to its smaller counterparts, the giant sea-slug's skin has grown into a thick hide like that of a dirty window, just muddied enough so one can't see through the creature. The solidification of blubber in the 60'-long leviathan has created a devastatingly heavy body capable of damaging anything that doesn't move fast enough. Unlike the floating sea-slug, the sea-monster is aggressive and will attempt to devour any objects or creatures in its path. If provoked, the giant sea-slug will fight by slamming its magnificent form into the offending force twice before turning its constantly-working maw to the water's surface to suck up the carnage. Its life is solitary, as the squelching sound of its uncoordinated mealtime drives most other life forms away.

Sea-slug, giant: Init +3; Atk maw +5 attack (1d8+2) or slam +10 melee (2d12); AC 13; HD 4d10+6; MV swim 60'; Act 1d20; SP heightened senses, misophonia; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C.

Heightened senses: Despite no obvious eyes or ears, the giant sea-slug has developed a heightened sense of awareness within its habitat. It can detect motion in the water up to 200' away.

Misophonia: When the giant sea-slug successfully attacks with its toothless maw, all creatures within a 100' radius must make a DC 5 Will save or flee; a DC 11 Will save is required to ignore the squelching noises and continue attacking the sea-monster once it has begun to works its sphincter-like orifice.

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