Sanctum Secorum

Episode #22

Hiero's Journey

Compatible With DCC RPG

Sanctum Secorum Podcast
Episode #22 Companion

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Magic Items

Rod of the Unclean

The rod is a mechanical-cognitive device designed by the Lords of the Unclean to read thoughts and amplify mental speech over great distances - even allowing those with trained psionic abilities to attempt to hold minds they contact through the rod as if they were physically present. A metal-antenna spear of alien-like craftsmanship, the rod is both a potent tool and potential trap for the unwise.

The rod appears as a heavy, unornamented cylinder a little less than an inch thick and about a foot long made of a very hard, bluish substance. Four tiny knobs set in a curved line along one side control its functions. By pressing the buttons in a specific sequence, the user is able to control the strength of the rod's attunement as well as activate a mental transmission channel along a pre-set wavelength. As a final function, the rod can be transformed into a javelin-like weapon.

Button	Activation
1	Causes the cylinder to extend, revealing many tubes cunningly fitting one inside the other until it reaches a maximum length of 5'. Pressing the button again causes the rod to collapse to its original length or halt the extension at a desired length for shorter communications.
2	Configures the rod for communication. Two flat, oval discs on the end of two delicate six-inch arms emerge from the sides, forming a prong set at right angles to the rod's body.
3	Activates the communication channel, allowing users who have attached the oval discs to their forehead to transmit thoughts over dozens or hundreds of miles to listeners using receivers on the same the wavelength. The channel is a two-way transmission, and users of the rod with inherent or trained mental abilities such as psionics can use to those abilities on listeners connected via the rod as if they were within normal range. The mental channel can also be used to passively read thoughts of nearby intelligent creatures. 1/day, the rod can cast *ESP* per the level 2 wizard spell with a +2 spell check, ignoring any line-of sight requirements.
4	Extends the rod in a single instantaneous motion to its full length, projecting a two-edged, razor-sharp lance head at its end. The metal javelin is perfectly balanced and receives a +1 to attack rolls when used as a weapon.

Monsters

Crocobear

"There is no such thing as a crocobear. The idea is totally absurd. It is...arghhhh...arghhh....get it off me, get it off me.....aarrrrghhhhhhhhhhhhh!"
– Marlin Perkins, Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom

The crocobear is an unholy union of two of nature's most dangerous living predators: the North American grizzly and the Nile crocodile. Fused together by means unknown, this beast is highly dangerous and not to be underestimated. Discovered in the 1980's by late zoologist Marlin Perkins, the footage of his death at the hands of this nightmarish beast has only recently surfaced.

Unlike the crocodile with which it has been merged, the crocobear is not an ambush predator. Instead it uses surprising speed to chase down its prey. The creature firmly holds its catch and then uses its massive jaws to rapidly finish its meal.

Crocobear: Init +4; Atk bite +6 melee (2d8+4) or claw +3 melee (1d8+4); AC 18; HD 7d8; MV 40', climb 20', or swim 30′; Act 2d20; SP grab; SV Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +2; AL C.

Grab: Once successfully striking with both front claws in a single round, the crocobear grabs its target and holds them tightly. This allows the crocobear to automatically succeed with bite attacks so long as the victim is held. Breaking free of this horrific hold requires a DC 20 Strength check.

Dweller in the Mist

The ghastly cosmic forces unleashed by The Death made the mingling of strange life possible, giving rise to inhuman things such as the dweller which should never have known the breath of life. The dweller in the mist is a creature of the vast marsh that borders the inland sea. Swathed in a whitish cloak and hood, the dweller navigates the waterways on a silent skiff of black wood, seeking mental life in the swamp, the aim of which is the total enslavement of mind and soul.

The dweller almost always achieves surprise in its native marsh, stalking its victims in the dree hours when the white fogs of night began to rise from the meres and dark waters. If not detected through some magical means, the dweller chooses the moment of attack and always achieves surprise. In death, the dweller dissolves into a sticky, oily substance accompanied by a foul charnel stench.

Dweller in the Mist: Init +2; Atk SP; AC 10; HD 4d6+4; hp 20; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP mental parasitism, paralysis field; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +8; AL N.

Mental parasitism: The dweller uses its inherent mental powers to overwhelm its prey, holding their physical forms in place as it consumes their minds. At the start of combat, the dweller attempts to place a mental hold on all creatures in a 30' radius, numbing their senses. Creatures that are awake must make a DC 15 Will save or fall asleep for 1d4 hours and can only be roused with violent shaking. Creatures already asleep receive no save and are automatically held in an unconscious state.

Paralysis field: When attacking, the dweller sends a wave of fell power and evil intent which overwhelms its victims like a vast and clammy net. Characters targeted by the dweller are flooded by a mingled loathing and delight at same time a must make a DC 20 Will save; those who fail are unable to act: no combat, skill, or magic use until the effect drops. Each round thereafter that the dweller chooses to maintain the hold, the victim must make a further DC 20 Will save or lose 1d3 Personality as the character is seduced by the promise of unspeakable pleasures. Characters reaching 0 Personality are mentally consumed by the dweller. Once held, characters can only break free of the assault if the dweller is interrupted by a physical attack or through the use of a mental ability such as psionics.

Snapper

The snapper's hideous beaked head was four feet long and three wide. The giant turtle squattered out of the water in one explosive rush, clawed feet scrabbling for a hold on the rock, the high, gray, serrated shell spraying foul water as it came, yellow eyes gleaming. Overall, it must have weighed over three tons, but it moved very fast just the same. From a sixty-five-pound maximum weight before The Death, the snappers had grown heroically, and they made many bodies of water impassable except by an army.

– Sterling E. Lanier, Hiero's Journey

Snapper: Init +4; Atk bite +11 melee (1d24) or claw +12 melee (2d8); AC 18; HD 8d12; MV 40' or swim 80'; Act 3d20; SP worrying bite; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +8; AL N.

Worrying bite: Should the snapper score two successful bite attacks against the same target in a single round, it begins shaking the target from side to side, seeking to break the target's spine. Target must make a DC 18 Fort save or have their back broken, leaving their lower extremities paralyzed. Healing damage of this type requires a cleric to score 4 dice on a *lay on hands* check.

Water Weasel

Their undershot, sharklike jaws and vicious teeth glistened in the light as they blinked their beady eyes and then recovered. Each one, from wet muzzle to long tailtip, was at least ten feet and could hardly have weighed any less than a full-grown man. Collars of bluish metal glinted and betrayed their wearers' allegiance, even as they scuttled out of the water and rushed to the attack, snarling as they came.

– Sterling E. Lanier, Hiero's Journey

Water weasels are a type of leemute emerging after the corruption of The Death that hunt in small packs of 4-6 individuals and are adept at moving through water and streams when seeking prey. Water weasels are large creatures, and a fully-grown adult is typically 10' long from muzzle to tailtip and weighs up to 200 lbs.

Water weasel: Init +6; Atk bite +4 melee (2d4); AC 14; HD 4d8+6; MV 30' or swim 50'; Act 1d20; SP pull; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +2; AL C.

Pull: Despite their size, they are incredibly quick, and attack using their undershot, sharklike jaws to lacerate targets or attempt to drag them into prone positions to be vulnerable to further attacks from the pack. With a successful bite, the water weasel receives an opposed Strength check against its opponent. If the water weasel wins the Strength check, the character is knocked prone and must spend an action to stand up.

Weapons

Boar Spear

This short, sturdy spear has a long, leaf-shaped blade and a metal crossbar extending out from beneath the blade to prevent targets from continuing to slide up the spear's shaft to attack the wielder. Targets impaled with a boar spear must make a DC 12 Strength check to pull themselves off the weapon.

Heirloom Knife

An ancient weapon from before The Death, these great knives have a straight, heavy back, a sharp point, a fourteen-inch rounded blade, and only one edge. Typically worn strapped on the back like a short, massive sword, owners prize the weapon for its durability and balance. It is rarely traded, and is considered a great honor to receive a gift of one. The knife's fine craftsmanship imparts a +1 to attack rolls made with it.

Thrower

The thrower is a muzzle-loading, smooth-bore carbine, with an inch-and-a-half bore. It fires six-inch-long explosive rocket shells to sometimes devastating effect. The thrower is accurate up to 300' but can be fired at targets up to 600' away with a -1d penalty for every 100' (or fraction thereof) over 300'. Upon impact, the shells explode, doing full damage to the target and half damage to all additional targets within 10'.

Weapon	Damage	Range	Cost
Boar Spear*	1d10	–	8 gp
Heirloom knife	1d5	–	N/A
Thrower*	2d16	300'/600'	10,000 gp
Rocket Shells (each)			100 gp

* *Two-handed weapon. Characters using two-handed weapons use a d16 on initiative checks.*

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