

Atlas Games Presents an *Ebon Mirror*™ Preview:

THE TRUNK OF CURSES

A BOX OF D20 SYSTEM™ SURPRISES BY KEITH BAKER

The Ebon Mirror is a new 96-page D20 System adventure from Atlas Games, which will be appearing in game stores worldwide in February of 2002. It is designed for characters levels 8-10.

In the course of the adventure, the player characters meet agents of the Crucible of Osai, a group dedicated to preserving the flow of magic by destroying “flawed” artifacts — both dangerous cursed items and frivolous magical objects — that waste magical energy and upset the balance between matter and magic. They will also

encounter the Trunk of Curses — a collection of such magical artifacts destined for destruction, if the Crucible has its way.

Like all the offerings in our **Penumbra**™ line, *The Ebon Mirror* is designed to be easily adaptable to any fantasy campaign, whether it be a published setting or a world of your own creation. We wanted to share the contents of the Trunk of Curses in advance of the release of *The Ebon Mirror* — perhaps some of these intriguing, and often dangerous, items may find a place in your game.

ILLUSTRATION ©2001 BY LEE MOYER



NEW CURSED
ITEM:

ARMOR OF SELF- LOVE

This appears to be a beautiful set of polished chain-mail. It is immune to the effects of rust and weather, and to a simple *identify* it appears to have a +5 enchantment bonus. However, there is a reason that it is in such good condition; whenever the armor is about to be damaged a hole will open up in the links, allowing the attack to pass through unimpeded. As a result, this armor provides no protective value whatsoever!

Caster Level: 14; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms

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Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook, Third Edition, published by Wizards of the Coast.

d20
system

and Armor, *animate objects*; *Market Price*: 36,000 gp; *Weight*: 35 lbs

NEW CURSED ITEM: BONE CHOKER

This is a choker made from segments of bone. When it is worn about the neck, the victim begins to asphyxiate; the necklace does not physically constrict, but it blocks all passage of air to the lungs. The wearer takes six points of suffocation damage per round until she dies or the necklace is removed. The necklace can only be removed by use of a *wish*, *limited wish*, or *miracle*.

Caster Level: 18th; *Prerequisites*: Create Wondrous Item, *slay living*; *Market Price*: 60,000 gp; *Weight*: —

NEW MINOR ARTIFACT: CARCOASN, THE AXE OF BALANCE

In ancient times a rebellious smith made this beautiful dwarven waraxe for an unjust lord. It is an axe fit for a king; the haft is shod in silver and brass, and the studs that hold the head to the shaft are tipped with rubies. The blade of the axe is engraved with patterns of flame, with a hint of a face hidden amidst the fire. Despite its beauty, the axe has no magical bonuses to hit or to the damage that it inflicts (although it receives a +1 to hit for being a masterwork weapon). Instead, it has one simple but powerful enchantment: whenever it inflicts damage on a living creature, its wielder must make a Will save against a DC of 22 or suffer equal damage himself. The damage the user receives should include all additions for Strength, skill, or the effects of a critical hit; this damage is mental in nature and does not actually damage the victim's armor. To add insult to injury — literally — the weapon is intelligent. It has the power of speech (it speaks dwarven and accented common), it can communicate telepathically with its wielder, and it has one additional power — the ability to hold fast to the hand of its wielder. In order to put down the axe, the user must make a Will save against a DC of 20; he can attempt this save once every hour. *Remove curse* will also allow the victim to let go of the axe. Carcoasn (*kar-ko-ass-en*) can choose to release its

wielder, but it is not likely to do so. It was created to punish unjust warriors, and at this point it is very cynical about humanoid nature.

Carcoasn is somewhat manic-depressive; it goes through moody phases and talkative periods. This can be a useful tool to break up the otherwise uneventful periods of traveling and camping. It will try to cajole warriors to pick it up, first playing on their greed (“Oooh, with your strength and skill and my mystical powers, just think of the damage we could do!”) alternating with attacks on their pride (“What, are you scared to seize your destiny?”). If a character does pick up the weapon, it will try to encourage him to do battle. When Carcoasn's curse is revealed, it will make fun of the wielder (“Not so tough now, are you, big guy?”). As a result of its background and intended purpose, it prefers to target dwarves and warriors of all sorts.

Caster Level: 20th; *Weight*: 15 lbs

NEW CURSED ITEM: COLLAR OF SILENCE

If a character places this necklace of silver and jade around his throat, he will find that words flow easily off of his tongue, and that he is more comfortable talking to others and making speeches. The only problem is that no one else can hear him. The character will hear his own words, but in fact he is making no sound at all. While wearing the collar the character cannot cast any spells that require verbal components, and cannot engage in conversation with others. Initially the wearer will refuse to believe that he is not speaking. Even when he comes to recognize the curse, he will find that he cannot remove the collar from his neck; a *remove curse* spell is required to get rid of the necklace.

Caster Level: 8th; *Prerequisites*: Craft Wondrous Item, *bestow curse*, *silence*; *Market Price*: 2,000 gp; *Weight*: —

NEW MINOR ARTIFACT: FALSE GLASS

This is an oval mirror, approximately 18 inches by 9 inches. It is formed of what appears to be polished obsidian, set into a silver frame. The true purpose of this mirror remains a mystery; its obvious enchantments are that it is immune to all forms of

physical and magical damage, and that it shows false images in its glass. Generally it will reflect false images of the character looking into it, changing hair color, race, or similar aspects of appearance; but at times it may show scenes that will trouble the observer — loved ones in peril, a home in flames, etc. (In point of fact, this mirror is a tool for studying alternate realities.)

Caster Level: 18th; *Weight:* 10 lbs

NEW WONDROUS ITEM: **GOLDENHAIR**

This is a shoulder-length wig made from woven strands of flexible gold. It is quite beautiful, and a character will gain a +1 bonus to her Charisma score as long as the wig is worn. When it is placed on the head and a command word (“goldenhair”) is spoken, it adheres to the head of the wearer as if it is natural hair; if the word is spoken again, it can be removed. This item is not actually cursed; instead, it is an example of what the Crucible considers to be a waste of magical energy.

Caster Level: 10th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *polymorph other*; *Market Price:* 6,000 gp; *Weight:* 8 lbs

NEW MINOR ARTIFACT: **HARP OF THE BANSHEE**

This is a beautiful harp formed from mithral and gold. The neck of the harp resembles the torso of a gorgeous woman, and her hair streams out behind her to form the top of the harp. A character can learn more about the harp by using *legend lore*, or by making a Bardic Lore or appropriate Knowledge roll against a DC of 13; its story is fairly recent and well known. About ten years ago, two merchant families were engaged in a feud. The conflict was beginning to drain the resources of both families, and one of the merchants sued for peace. He produced this harp from the vaults of his family mansion, claiming that he wished to make restitution for his actions with this noble gift. But when the harp was played before the opposing merchants at a victory feast, it began to sing with a voice of its own — a terribly beautiful sound that drew the life from all who heard it play. The original owner fared no better than his foe; for when he went to

reclaim the harp, he found that it was still singing amidst the hall of corpses, and he was the next to fall. It continued to sing for a day and a night, after which it fell silent. The servants were afraid to enter the hall — but eventually word of the incident reached the Crucible, who dispatched an agent to find the cursed instrument.

If it is left alone, the harp is relatively harmless. Occasionally, a character within ten feet of it may hear a soft, seductive woman’s voice, whispering, “Play with me.” Should someone actually pick up the harp, the woman’s face will come alive, and it will encourage the user — “Play me, let us sing together.” Should anyone be so foolish as to actually play the harp, it will begin to sing a beautiful, intoxicating song. Anyone who can hear the song of the harp — it can be heard from approximately seventy-five feet, although walls and other barriers can reduce this distance — must make a Fortitude save vs. a DC of 23 or die on the spot. This affects the twenty people closest to the harp, and it will continue each round until the harp itself chooses to stop singing or until 24 hours have passed. The effect is considered to be both death magic and a sonic attack. *Silence* and similar spells will provide temporary protection, but will not actually stop the harp from singing; when the spell expires, the harp will continue its deadly song. The harp cannot be damaged by simple physical or magical attacks.

Caster Level: 20th; *Weight:* 10 lbs

NEW CURSED ITEM: **MACE OF FURY**

Compared to Carcoasn, this heavy iron mace seems plain and worn; there are no engravings or decorations on the haft or head. Anyone touching the mace is filled with unreasoning anger and fury; while carrying the weapon, the bearer suffers a –2 to all Intelligence, Charisma, and Wisdom-based skill checks. If the wielder enters battle, the weapon functions as a –2 *heavy mace*; in addition, the user goes berserk, with all of the effects of the barbarian Rage ability. In battle, the wielder will fight until he is slain or rendered unconscious, or until there are no living creatures within 30 feet.

Caster Level: 8th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *bestow curse*, *feeblemind*, *Market Price:* 17,500 gp; *Weight:* 12 lbs

NEW CURSED ITEM:

RING OF CHARGED DEATH

This silver and jet ring absorbs spells, just like a *rod of absorption* — except that it absorbs spells cast by the wearer of the ring, as opposed to spells directed against him. It saves these spell levels, and whenever it reaches a multiple of 7 it casts *finger of death* on the wearer (Fortitude save DC 17, a failed save results in instant death, and the wearer still takes 3d6+15 damage on successful save). While it is worn, spells cast by the user have no effect, aside from charging the ring. It can only be removed through use of a *remove curse* spell — which must be cast by someone other than the wearer of the ring!

Caster Level: 15th; **Prerequisites:** Forge Ring, *finger of death*, spell turning; **Market Price:** 17,000 gp; **Weight:** —

NEW CURSED ITEM:

RING OF LOVE

The wearer of this ring becomes obsessed with romantic conquest, to the exclusion of all other activities. She must make a Will saving throw against a DC 20 to engage in any sort of activity aside from flirtatious banter and posturing, and even if she is successful, she must make this roll again if a new potential partner appears. The wearer has no idea that this behavior is in any way unnatural, and the only way to break the spell is to forcibly remove the ring — the wearer herself becomes quite attached to the ring and will not take it off willingly. The magic of the ring will only force the wearer to pursue other humanoids (although orcs and goblins are humanoids too!) and gender orientation is unaffected. The ring itself features a heart-shaped ruby set into a gold band.

Caster Level: 15th; **Prerequisites:** Forge Ring, *bestow curse*, *emotion*, *limited wish*; **Market Price:** 10,000 gp; **Weight:** —

THE EBON MIRROR

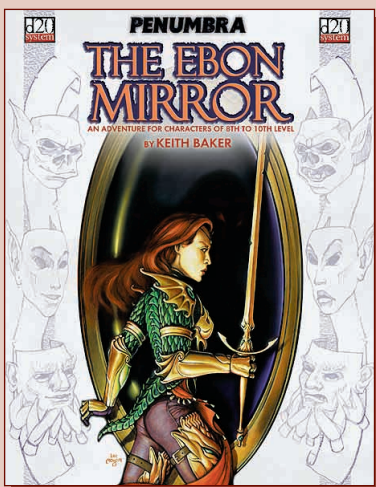
A party of adventurers is caught in the wake of an unwise wizard's mystical experiments. Without realizing it, they are drawn into a pocket of space -- a mirror world, where the laws

of reason and magic have been twisted by the mind of a mad-woman. Feral gnomes and savage halflings prowl the forests alongside warlike humans and elves, while peaceful goblins, orcs, and ogres farm the land, always fearful of another brutal attack. Only the divine protection of the sacred undead keeps this bloodthirsty horde at bay.

The PCs must find their way out of this strange world before it destroys them ... but on the way, they have to deal with their suddenly new and unfamiliar abilities, and defeat their own alter personalities.

The Ebon Mirror is a 96-page, perfect bound D20 System adventure designed for characters of 8th through 10th level.

In stores worldwide, February 2002!



ORDERING INFORMATION

If you are interested in buying a copy of *The Ebon Mirror*, these are the “vital statistics” your friendly local game purveyor may need. (Usually a game store needs the stock number, while a bookstore needs the ISBN.)

Stock Number: AG3211
ISBN: 1-58978-010-8
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