#06 - Weapon and Armor Charms

Special Mundane Item Qualities

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Introduction

The reliance on mundane equipment in 5th edition fantasy games is more important than ever. Magical items are rare, and most characters will be relying on unenchanted equipment for a large portion of their adventuring career. As such, there exists a gap between mundane items and magical equivalents. The concept encompasses a dynamic system for low level powers that can enhance weapons without disrupting balance.

Consider the following items as not a replacement for magic weapons and armor, but to act as intermediary items that can make lower level loot tables feel more special and interesting. The best part is that they can supplement otherwise mundane equipment that is special to a character, such as heirloom armor or a sword that, while not magical, is made of a meteorite, for instance.

None of these charms are especially powerful or potent, and they won't generally grant a competitive edge, but they do bestow interesting and character defining little tricks and boons that make your weapon and armor feel just a slight cut above the rest.

Weapon and Armor charms

While some artificers focus on weapons or belts to enchant, some canny crafters decide instead to infuse a removable charm that grants an attached item with power. These bangles are often not as powerful as full fledged magic items, due to the fact that they contain their power in a much smaller form, but they are easier to make. There are obvious drawbacks to this method; history rarely remembers a legendary dragon slaying bangle, and bangles confer no special protection to their weapons as enchantment normally does. Additionally, bangles do not generally offer the same accuracy and deadliness that often accompany traditional magic weapon and armor.

But despite this, there are a number of benefits that make charms very enticing to various factions. Armies can request and obtain numerous charms, and while outfitting an army with such charms would be prohibitive, they are perfect for officers and special squads. They are also easy to conceal and transport, are relatively inconspicuous to thieves, and provide a great versatility on the field, especially for martial specialists that enjoy using many different weapons or even armors.

The efficiency of these charms would make them ubiquitous over the rarer magic items, but their creation still requires lots of time, and few organizations can bring to bear the resources that it would take to make more than a handful of them. That there generally exists no free market for magic items makes these wonders only marginally more prevalent than any other kind of magic item.

Using Charms

A magic charm always requires investment, and as such they slowly become obsolete in the later stages of the careers of most adventurers. Despite this, they occupy a very excellent position of utility both in the early stages of an adventure, as well as in the later stages as a helpful bauble for henchmen, cohorts, and even bestial companions.

Along with the usual attunement process, a charm must be attached to the object or central component of the item meant to be enhanced; a full plate of armor would require that the charm be attached to the chest piece. The attachment itself, not counting the attunement, takes but a minute of time and requires smith's tools. Thanks to the magic of the charm, the attachment tends to be secure, and foils most attempts at thievery or intentional attempts to break or remove the charm. Forcibly removing the charm from an attached weapon or armor requires either smithing tools and roughly a minute's worth of efforts, or a DC 18 strength check that has a 50% chance of breaking the charm (and potentially the weapon or armor that it's attached to).

Once attached and attuned, the charm begins to give its benefit to the weapon or armor, and can be moved from one item to another for the same owner. While a weapon or armor with an attached charm can be used by others, the charm confers no benefits if the user does not attune to the charm itself. Charms are generally incompatible with items that are already magical, unless otherwise noted in the charm's description.

Charms, much like items of quality, can spontaneously be created through acts of incredible heroism or emotion. A loving spouse may tie a bangle onto their spouse's weapon before a great battle, or a person may sacrifice themselves and leave behind a bauble that enhances their sibling's chances for survival. It is through these legendary but low end magic items that many wizards engineered the methods for the intentional creation of these unique items.

The creation of these items is, in practice, relatively simple. One must first have a blueprint, which may be requisitioned from a mage's guild, or be part of some obscure treasure. No charm can be created for less than 500 gold, though a GM may require that more gold or rare

components be found. Otherwise, the usual rules apply for crafting. All charms are considered to be uncommon wondrous items.

ARMOR CHARMS

Table- Armor Charms
Charm of the Defender
Crash Guard
Elemental Guard
Glamor Charm*
Indifference Charm*
Misty Defense
Mouse Charm
Spell Trick Charm*
Weather Guard

*This charm also functions on weapons.

Charm of the Defender. Appearing as a shield or gauntlet, this small charm aids in the defense of others. When attuned to this charm, and you attack and hit a creature that moves out of your reach, you can activate this charm by expending your bonus action and force the creature to make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. If the creature succeeds, their speed is reduced by half. If they fail, they are restrained and must make another saving throw at the beginning of each of its actions. Once the creature succeeds, it is no longer restrained. This charm can confer this benefit twice, and can do so again at the next dawn.

Crash Guard. This charm can mitigate damage caused by heavy impacts to the attuned owner. The charm grants you resistance to bludgeoning damage, including damage caused by a fall from great heights. Activating this charm requires that you use your reaction. This charm functions once, and regains its ability at the next dawn. This charm often appears in the form of a feather shaped brooch.

Elemental Guard. When activated as a bonus action, this charm grants you resistance to one of the following damage types: acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, poison, psychic, and radiant. This resistance lasts for three turns. The damage type is decided when the item is created, and cannot be changed without effectively unmaking the item. The charm's design tends to be simple, and appears often as a piece of jewelry that is of a color that corresponds with the elemental resistance. It

functions once, and regains its ability at the next dawn.

Glamour Charm. This charm is a simple illusion that can affect a given weapon or armor. With it, you can alter the general appearance of the attached item, but it cannot change it drastically. An armor may appear battle worn, in different colors, or even to be of elven or dwarven make, at the wearer's preference. The item's appearance can be changed with an action. This specific charm can also be altered to appear as an item of the same general size, but in its original form appears as a very simple but ornate pin.

Indifference Charm. This charm often looks like something innocuous and perhaps even indignified, such as a rusted bangle or a tattered length of cloth. When attached to a piece of equipment, it creates a powerful illusion that makes the item in question appear useless or broken. Consider the attached item to be under the effect of an arcanist's magic aura spell, as well as an illusion that does not allow an inspection to break the illusion. This charm can be placed on weapons and armor, and can also be placed on magical items, as an exception to the general charm rule. Though this magic can cause some to overlook the item, it will not aid in smuggling weapons in, as ownership of such a derelict item is likely only to raise more questions. This charm can function on both weapons and armor.

Misty Defense. A curious and much sought after charm, this brooch is often crafted to resemble a stylized rain drop or cloud. When you are attacked, you can use the charm's power as a reaction and make a Dexterity saving throw with the DC equal to the attack roll. If you fail, you still suffer the effects of the attack, but you can teleport so an unoccupied space within 30 feet. If you succeed, you can teleport before the attack takes effect. This charm can be used once, and can be used again after the next dawn.

Mouse Charm. The mouse charm is typically styled eponymously, and can help in sneaking even in heavy armor. When attached to a piece of armor that confers disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks, you can use an action to activate the charm and negate the disadvantage for one night. To recharge the charm, you must spend an evening helping creatures less fortunate than you. This should take the form of either a 10 gp tithe, or an entire day of downtime spent towards a charitable effort.

Spell Trick Charm. This amazing charm can store low level spells that are released on a conditional event.

When a spell is cast into the attuned charm (you do not have to cast the spell), you can then set a condition for the spell's casting, which is triggered by your reaction. This can be as simple as having a healing spell affect you after you are hurt, or cast a grease spell on you once you become grappled. Once the spell is cast, you must wait until the next dawn to cast another spell, and set a new condition. When attached to armor, this charm is incompatible with the use of offensive spells (spells that deal damage, inflict conditions, or force saving throws), but spells of level 1 and 2 are allowed. When this charm is attached to a weapon, any 1st level spell can be cast into it, and the condition can have the spell affect you or the target of your attack. This charm often looks like a small stylized wand or orb.

Weather Guard. Often appearing as a lightning bolt or a weathervane, this bauble has the power to protect against severe weather. When you wear armor protected by this charm, you can use an action to activate it and stave off extreme heat or cold for 1 day, suffering no ill effects from either. You also have advantage on saving throws to avoid exhaustion from any source during that day. The charm functions once. The charm recharges if it is exposed to calm weather for 1 hour, or if you spend one day of downtime paying oblations to a weather god or spirit.

WEAPON CHARMS

Table- Weapon Charms
Brain Hands and Tongue Charm
Fear Charm
Glamor Charm*
Grounding Boost
Indifference Charm*
Mighty Boost
Range Charm
Return Charm
Spell Trick Charm*

*This charm also functions on armor.

Note: All of these charms function on ranged weapons with the ammunition

Brain Hands and Tongue Charm. This very specific charm is always represented as its namesake, and is either a pin or bangle that resemble a hand, brain, and tongue that are somehow attached (though the species

may vary). Once attuned, you can activate its ability as a reaction when you defeat an creature by reducing it to 0 hit points with the weapon attached to this charm. Regardless of whether you kill the creature, you may gain either the ability to speak a language that the creature spoke, a proficiency in a skill that the creature possessed, or a weapon proficiency that the creature possessed. If the creature is still alive, it does not lose the ability that you gain. The stolen ability persists for one hour. The charm functions once, and can be recharged the next time you consume offal, or spend a day performing oblations to a god of sacrifice or war.

Fear Charm. This charm takes many forms, but the most common is that of a strange but recognizable alien eye. When you defeat a creature with the weapon that is attached to this charm, you can use your reaction to intimidate allies of that creature that are with 30 feet. Those allies must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw, or be frightened for 1d4 turns on a failure. Afflicted creatures must make saving throws at the end of each round, removing the frightened condition on a success. Creatures affected by this ability make their saves at a disadvantage if you are proficient in the Intimidation skill and if the creatures were weaker or subordinate to the creature that you defeated. This charm functions once, and regains the use of this ability at the next dawn.

Glamor Charm. See above.

Grounding Boost. This charm is commonly depicted by some boot-shaped iconography, and grants the ability to knock foes prone When you hit a creature twice in one round, you can use a bonus action to force the creature to make a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone after the second attack resolves. If either of these attacks was a critical hit, the DC for this effect is raised to 15. This ability can be used once, but can be recharged if you perform a brief exercise ritual when you benefit from a short rest.

Indifference Charm. See Above

Mighty Boost. Often crafted to look like a miniaturized weapon or fist, this charm grants bonus damage for a short time. When activated as a bonus action, the charm grants 1d4 damage for three turns. This damage can be of any sort, but the charm is typically designed to simply deal more damage of the same type as the weapon to which it is attached. This charm functions oncce, and regains its ability at the next dawn.

Range Charm. It is common to see this charm

symbolized by an arrow or javelin. When activated as a bonus action, this charm confers the ability to change a melee weapon into a ranged one, granting it a range of 20/60. The actual nature of the range attack can differ, and can include throwing the weapon which then returns to you, swinging your weapon and creating a magical force that can damage creatures at range, but the damage type always remains the same. Using a melee weapon in this way follows the rules of ranged weapons, confering disadvantage if you are within 5 feet of a hostile target. If this charm is placed on a weapon with the ammunition property, it can instead create the proper ammunition out of thin air. Either effect lasts for three rounds, and can be used once. The charm regains this ability at the next dawn.

Return Charm. Sometimes depicted with the iconography of a hand, this bangle allows for you to use a bonus action to magically retrieve a the attached weapon if it is within 30 feet of you. This item is compatible with weapons that have the thrown property, but it is unreliable in such cases, and prone to becoming lost, such as when you miss a target and overshoot. The power of this charm is continually active.

Spell Trick Charm. See above.

Magic Items

There are a handful of magic items that manage to interact with charms in unique and interesting ways. The following is a small sample of such items.

Charm Bead
Wondrous Item, Uncommon
This bead is a simple item that has been created to slightly boost the abilities of a given charm. You can spend an action to concentrate on the bead and a specific charm, and the bead can recharge the charm, returning any charges or abilities to it that it would normally have. Once used, the bead crumbles into dust. The dust, if preserved, can be used to fix a broken charm.

Charm Sash
Wondrous Item, Rare
When you wear this sash, you enhance any charm to which you are attuned. Any charms that have a set number of uses now have an additional use. If a charm only functions once in a day, it now functions twice, any charm that functions three times now functions four times, and so on. If a charm would be recharged by some specific activity requiring a day's worth of time, the activity now only requires an hour of time. The sash does not require attunement, but the abilities of the sash only function while it is worn.

Bangle Bracelet
Wondrous Item, Very Rare, (requires attunement)
When you attune to this bracelet, you may attach up to two charms to it. Those charms then function for any of your weapons or armors that would be eligible to receive the charm's benefits. If a charm could function for both weapons and armor, you can freely choose to have it affect your weapon, your armor with each of the charm's uses. As an action, you can activate the bracelet's final ability, and duplicate the effects of one of the attached charms, acting as that charm until the next dawn, at which time you can activate it and have it act as another charm.

Expanded Options Explained

Expanded Options are not rules supplements nor are they full on books about a certain subject. They present a set of rules, an idea, a concept for game masters and their players to explore. Hopefully they expand your game, broaden some horizons, and get people to think around the gaming table!

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The Fat Goblin Games 5th Edition Team consists of Ismael Alvaraez, Michael Riter, and myself with input from the Fat Goblin Hoarde.

Do you have an idea that might make a good 5th Edition Expanded Option? Hit us up at fatgoblingames@gmail.com and your idea might be the next one that we explore in a Expanded Option!

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