



MAXOLT'S Magical MENAGERIE

Tricky Owlbear Publishing, Inc. presents this series of pdfs for use with the Swords & Wizardry Core Rules (and, by extension, any retro-clone game). The narrator here, Maxolt Alberim, is the same personality featured in our "Behind the Spells" series of pdfs that focuses on the origins of the game's classic spells. For this series, Maxolt (actually an ancient gold dragon who takes human form to better disseminate his wisdom) rummages through his hoard of magical paraphernalia and presents the most interesting items which many have thought long lost to the ages. The format is simple—the magic item is explained and the accompanying italicized text is Maxolt's commentary (providing some sort of insight into the item or its history). All text in this product is Open Game Content.

Misc. Magical Items

Boots of tremors: These sturdy leather boots have a stony appearance accentuated by decorative "cracks" running across their surface. When the wearer jumps in place three times he unleashes ground-shaking power. All creatures within 60 feet must succeed a saving throw (Dexterity bonus applies) or fall to the ground. Unattended objects, at the GM's discretion, may also topple. Usable by: Magic-users.

*After witnessing the effectiveness of a Cleric's **Earthquake** spell, a human Magic-user named Mobiq Farnand developed this special pair of boots for those of his own vocation. While their power was reliable, most Magic-users weren't comfortable wearing the things around their sensitive laboratory equipment. As such, this particular brand of magical footwear fell out of favor and only a few dozen pairs were created (making them quite valuable among the right circles). Mobiq was a great lover of this type of magic item and it is widely thought he also created the more popular **boots of elvenkind**.*

Column of projection: Smoothly tapered from the square crown down to the crisp edges of an octagonal base, this exquisitely veined marble column measures 3-1/2 feet high, 15 inches in diameter, and weighs 200 pounds. When a nonmagical object is placed atop the flat top, the magic of the column examines it down to the last detail. This process requires 10 minutes but, thereafter, the object's image is stored within the magic item permanently. When commanded by the column's owner (the last person to have touched it), an illusory image of a stored item is projected atop the column. Even books are copied in their entirety just by placing the originals atop the column. The resulting illusions are interactive, the owner being able to page through a book, for example. The column has one defense mechanism that can be activated by its owner (if within 120 feet). On command, the column becomes **Invisible** and projects an illusory duplicate of itself up to 15 feet away. Usable by: All Classes.

*The ability to copy books in their entirety makes individual library use of this item obvious. No longer does a person have to rely on physically storing hundreds of books when they can now store them "virtually." However, wanting a **column of projection** and getting one are two different things. These items are not only hard to move, they're hard (and expensive) to acquire. But besides being extremely handy for data storage, there is a persistent rumor that, even though it cannot copy the image of a magical item, a column can positively identify the qualities of any placed on it. The problem is, no one has been able to verify this intriguing rumor. Requiring a command word for this function, if it exists, seems most likely. This possible power aside, the column is a great find for any adventurer since its unknown contents could be quite valuable on their own.*

Fire orb: This polished orb appears to be little more than a large version of a child's marble (2 inches in diameter). When its bearer is damaged by magical fire, however, the orb's magical nature becomes obvious. It soaks up a maximum of 5 points of magical fire damage and stores that power until shattered. Usually the orb is thrown at an enemy which then releases the same amount of fire damage it had stored. Usable by: All Classes.

*A clear variant of the more popular **ring of fire resistance**, the **fire orb** came into prominent use among the elite guards of the Denatt Kingdom. A fire-loving evoker had long plagued the main trade route leading to the capital city when an enterprising Magic-user decided to even the playing field. He developed the **fire orb** and sold the design to Denattan mages who were able to mass produce the items quickly and distribute them to the elite guard (who were tasked with eliminating the evoker). The final battle was a classic case of someone being able to dish something out without being able to take it as the evil Magic-user died in a hail of small fireballs. The Denatt Kingdom has long since crumbled to ruin but these*

orbs are typical treasure for those who explore its now monster-infested land.

Necklace of skulls: No less than five ivory-crafted skulls adorn this fine silver necklace. The tiny human skulls can be easily removed and, when thrown to the ground, conjure a standard skeleton to do the user's bidding. Only one skeleton can be in use at a time, the undead serving faithfully until its destruction. Usable by: All Classes.

*Inspired by the more popular **necklace of firebaubles**, this necklace has found its niche market with minorly powerful necromancers and those who enjoy silent (if a bit creepy) servants. People should really think "outside the box" though with an item like this. A single skeleton's effectiveness in combat is questionable until one considers that there are other means of participating in combat besides direct melee. I've seen someone use a necklace skeleton to perform acts such as setting off a devastating trap, decoying a pursuing foe, and employing simple magic items (like laying out a **carpet of flying** or a **portable hole**).*

Portal bug: This magical transportation item appears to be a ladybug affixed to a small block of wood. The "insect" is dull red in color, measuring no more than two inches in length, and has a sharp steel point on the bottom which is how it is attached to the base. When removed from the block and pushed onto the wooden frame of a doorway (or other portal), the bug's magic is unleashed. For the next five minutes, anything that passes through the enspelled portal (which glows very faintly) is transported one-way onto the ethereal plane. After the duration, the **portal bug** disintegrates and the doorway returns to normal. Usable by: All Classes.

*When you hear about people "vanishing without a trace" it is usually because they are very good at hiding. Once in awhile, however, it is because they have used a **portal bug**. These items have proven useful not only for quick escapes but also to aid in defending against ethereal creatures;*

the user employing the bug to be able to reach the monsters on their home turf. Unless you have some means of returning from the ethereal, though, this item should probably be kept as a last resort.

Shadow wrap gauntlet: This black glove looks like velvet but has the resiliency of steel. Three times per day the wearer can shoot ribbons of dark energy from the gauntlet's knuckles. These bands of shadow stuff cocoon one human-sized (or smaller) target within 15 feet. On any round a target remains wrapped, the wearer can flood the ribbons with negative energy. This inflicts damage as per the reversed version of the **Cure Light Wounds** spell (1d6+1). The shadow ribbons remain for up to 6 rounds before dissipating on their own into nothingness. Severing the bands physically will achieve the same end but requires 10 hit points of damage to be dealt in one round. Usable by: All but Fighting-men.

*Conceived of, and later crafted by, a High Shadow (the chief Cleric of the Darkness deity), the **shadow wrap gauntlet** is a status symbol among the Darkness clergy. The church will exert above average effort to retrieve any that become lost to self-righteous adventurers. Some sages (myself included) believe that a person who possesses one of these gauntlets can gain access to magically sealed church safe houses.*

Specterblade: The sword is clearly of Elven make and its cross guard is shaped like a crescent moon. This magical **longsword +3** radiates a dim aura of darkness around its blade. Once per day, the wielder can fire this darkness at an opponent up to 30 feet away. Living targets must succeed a saving throw or be drained of 2 levels. Lawful creatures who merely touch the blade are subject to the same effect (but are only drained of one level for a failed save). Usable by: Fighting-Men.

There is a legend about a powerful Elven Adventurer who became corrupted by an artifact of chaos and turned on his community. Once its best protector, the

Elven lord became its doom, leading his corrupted company in wanton slaughter of the village. The deaths were too gruesome for me to recount here but the gods of that time are said to have punished the Elven company for the heinous deed by turning them into undead guardians of the once peaceful glade, forced to forever look upon their misdeed. The land had soaked up the blood and agony of the dead and the horrible event forever changed the landscape. To this day, trees seep poison and peaceful wandering animals become ferocious diseased creatures. At its heart, the corrupted glade's pond retains a magical quality (formerly of healing) that turns all longswords dipped into it into **specterblades**, like the ones carried by the cursed Elven company. For cults that venerate the undead, the glade is a rite of passage to which prospective upper echelon members must go to and claim their own **specterblades** before being able to elevate their status.

Staff of storing: This smooth wooden staff measures six feet in height and is 1-1/2 inches in diameter. When the staff bearer touches an object and speaks the word "keep", the object becomes a small (1-inch diameter) two-dimensional design that appears on the staff's surface. Restoring the object requires nothing more than touching the proper image and speaking the word "free." Unlike normal magical staves, this one does not use charges. Usable by: All Classes.

Although created in the same time period as the **column of projection**, that is the limit to the relationship of that item and this staff. Since the staff's power is not limited to capturing nonmagical objects, magic-users and clerics frequently carry miscellaneous items such as potions within it for easy transport. Non-spellcasters tend to use the staff as a lockbox, storing keys, gemstones, and important documents within its magical frame. These staves were quite popular up until two centuries ago in the region known then as Vylentia. The most recent news I've heard about them is that someone is trying to fashion a version which can capture living beings.

Unusual Magical Ammunition

The four different types of ammunition described below should be considered extremely rare and only be found in quantities of five or less.

Arrow of penetrating: This **+2 magical arrow** is decorated by tiny fists that run its length. Once this arrow hits a foe, and is not removed before the next round, it magically regains its previous momentum and damage must be re-rolled. If two "maximum" damages are rolled in a row, the arrow tears through the target's body in a gory eruption, inflicting an additional 2d6 damage. At the GM's discretion, repeated penetration of a target's head automatically slays it. The arrow can regain its momentum a total of four times before the magic dissipates.

Ogres, giants, and other sizable creatures rarely stop to pluck an enemy arrow from their bodies. It has good reason to be unconcerned when such projectiles are mere nuisances. The magic of this arrow changes things entirely. I once saw an orc fall to the arrow's first strike but land so the projectile was not crushed. In the next few moments, the arrow blasted through the monster's head to take out an ogre's kneecap. I'd call that a good shot!

Arrow of screaming: This **+1 magical arrow** emits a painful screech after it takes flight from a bow. The target as well as any creature within five feet of the arrow's flight path are subject to this horrible wail which inflicts 1d4 damage (no save) and deafens the affected creatures (save negates) for 2d4 rounds.

Besides being useful against spellcasters, these arrows can also do wonders in unnerving enemy soldiers when fired over their heads. It might improve effectiveness if someone took this arrow and added some harmless pyrotechnics as well.

Bolt of summoning: On impact, this **+1 magical bolt** summons one monster from the list below. The monster appears as close to the point of the bolt's impact as

possible and attacks the bolt's target for 1d4+1 rounds before disappearing.

Roll d6

- 1 – Ant, Giant (Worker)
- 2 – Centipede, Giant (Small, lethal)
- 3 – Gnoll
- 4 – Lizardman
- 5 – Wolf
- 6 – Zombie

This magical bolt lends a bit more efficiency to the battlefield. Instead of choosing between hefting his crossbow or casting a spell, a Magic-user can now do both! This bolt has also been known to be used defensively, being armed in a crossbow trap just inside a doorway or outside a treasure vault. The resulting "instant guardians" are rarely used due to their weak staying power but often prove effective in at least delaying an intruder long enough for more potent defenses to arrive.

Bolt of teleporting: Any creature damaged by this **+1 magical bolt** must succeed a saving throw or find itself **Teleported** 60 feet in a random (horizontal) direction. The target cannot arrive inside a solid mass (appearing as close to that spot as possible) but can appear over a pit or other imminently dangerous location.

*No matter what precautions Magic-users take, it seems almost inevitable that a foe gets too close for comfort. When a powerful opponent threatens the mage's companions, large-scale magical assaults are not an option (unless the caster enjoys heavy collateral damage). And maybe pinpoint magical strikes aren't powerful enough to get the job done. Perhaps a Magic-user has run out of spells and just needs time to escape. For all of these reasons (and more), the **bolt of teleporting** was created. And you certainly can't blame the crossbow wielder if the unfortunate target of one of these bolts finds its way onto the wrong side of a cliff face.*

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