

# 9 CURSED MAGIC ITEMS

I love the idea of cursed magic items. They're such a staple of fantasy stories and, when done properly, can create a huge amount of dramatic tension all on their own. Unfortunately, most of the cursed items in the core books are so detrimental that they end up being more like 'gotcha' traps - and once a cursed item has been identified, it usually just gets discarded. Who would bother attuning to an *Armor of Vulnerability* or putting anything into a *Bag of Devouring*?

Therefore, I have decided to write up some cursed items that are genuinely useful. The idea here is that they give the player a difficult choice to make, where the 'right' answer isn't at all obvious: is it worth using the item and dealing with the curse, or not?

## AMULET OF OPENNESS

*Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)*

This ostentatious amulet would suit someone with an extroverted personality. While attuned to it, you are the life and soul of the party, gaining magical insights into the wants and needs of the people around you. You have advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Persuasion) checks you make to interact with humanoids, and whenever a creature must make a saving throw to avoid being charmed by you, it has disadvantage.

**Cursed.** The *amulet of openness* is cursed, and attuning to it extends this curse to you. As long as you are afflicted with this curse, you are unable to remove the amulet or break your attunement to it, and creatures you interact with can always tell when you are lying; you automatically fail all Charisma (Deception) checks you make. You also automatically fail any saving throw you make that would prevent a creature from reading your thoughts or communicating with you telepathically, and you cannot attune to a *ring of mind shielding*, be targeted by a *mind blank* spell, or benefit from any similar effect.

## BOILING STAFF

*Staff, uncommon (requires attunement by a spellcaster)*

This black iron staff is warm to the touch and, when you wield it, you feel slightly feverish. While you are attuned to this staff, any spells you cast through it that deal fire damage ignore resistance to fire damage, and treat immunity as if it was resistance.



**Cursed.** The *boiling staff* is cursed, and attuning to it extends this curse to you. As long as you are cursed, you have vulnerability to fire damage and you cannot break your attunement to the staff.

## BOOTS OF THE HARE

*Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)*

While attuned to these boots, whenever you use your action to Dash, you gain 90 feet of extra movement instead of the usual amount.

**Cursed.** These boots are cursed, a fact that is revealed only when an *identify* spell is cast on the boots or you attune to them. Attuning to the boots curses you until you are targeted by the *remove curse* spell or similar magic. While cursed, your movement speed is 15 feet and can't be increased by any means.

## ÉMIGRÉ MANUSCRIPT

*Wondrous item, rare*

This ancient tome is shaped like a skull and smells of either violets or tiger lilies. Once per day, the manuscript can be used to cast the spell *resurrection*.

**Cursed.** The *Émigré Manuscript* is cursed to bring nothing but misery to those who would use it. Whenever you use it to raise the dead, roll a d20 to determine the result according to the table below.

## d20 Effect

- 1-2 The spell fails and the caster immediately dies.
- 3-4 The target is resurrected as a revenant, seeking revenge against the caster.
- 5-6 The target is resurrected as a ghost, but otherwise retains their memories and personality.
- 7-8 The spell works, but the 200 humanoids nearest to the target (excluding the caster) immediately die.
- 9-10 The spell works, but the caster must roll twice on the Indefinite Madness table, suffering both results. If the same result is rolled twice, the caster immediately dies.
- 11-12 The spell works, but the target loses all of their memories, class levels, proficiencies (including languages) and personality traits.
- 13-14 The spell appears to work, but the target dies again after 1d10 minutes. No magic short of a wish can revive them from this death.
- 15-20 The spell works as normal.

## GLASS FANG

*Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)*

While attuned to this charm, whenever you add an ability score modifier to a weapon damage roll, that modifier is doubled.

**Cursed.** This charm is cursed and attuning to it curses you until you are targeted by the *remove curse* spell or similar magic. As long as you remain cursed, whenever you take damage, you are overcome with agony. You have disadvantage on attack rolls, can't cast spells, and can't add your Strength or Dexterity modifier to damage until the end of your next turn.

## MIND'S EYE

*Wondrous item, very rare*

This black blindfold is embroidered with arcane sigils. While wearing it over your eyes, any hit you land with an unarmed strike is automatically a critical hit.

**Cursed.** *Mind's eye* is cursed, and wearing it extends this curse to you. While cursed, you are unable to remove *mind's eye*, though another creature can if it succeeds on a DC 25 Strength check and then spends 1 minute undoing the knot. While wearing *mind's eye*, you are blind. You cannot benefit from darkvision, blindsight or truesight, you cannot see through the eyes of other creatures, nor can you see using spells like *arcane eye* or *scrying*.

## OVERDRIVE BANGLE

*Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a spellcaster)*

This bangle is set with glowing gems in many colors. While you are attuned to it, any damage dealt by a spell you cast of 1st level or higher is maximized.

**Cursed.** The *overdrive bangle* is cursed, and attuning to it extends this curse to you. As long as you are cursed, you cannot remove the bangle or break your attunement to it, and whenever you cast a spell of 1st level or higher, you must expend an additional spell slot. The additional spell slot can be of any level. If you only have one spell slot left, you cannot cast any spells other than cantrips.

## RITUAL STRAPS

*Armor (leather), rare (requires attunement)*

You have a +1 bonus to your AC while wearing *ritual straps*. Whenever you reduce a creature to 0 hit points while attuned to this armor, you regain hit points equal to four times the creature's CR (rounded down).

**Cursed.** The *ritual straps* are cursed, and attuning to them extends this curse to you. While you are cursed, you are unwilling to remove the straps, staying attuned to them at all times. Whenever you reduce a creature to 0 hit points while cursed, you experience a rush of euphoria that leaves you incapacitated until the end of your next turn.

## WRING

*Ring, artifact (requires attunement by a sorcerer)*

Inspired by the raw destructive power wielded by raging barbarians, the creator of *Wring* sought a way for spellcasters to mimic their fighting style. The item was a partial success, enabling its user to sling deadly spells at incredible speed and with single-minded focus, but at significant cost to their health.

Anyone who uses *Wring* in battle requires constant support to keep the ring from draining their energy completely, as well as help doing anything that cannot be accomplished by magic alone. As long as they have this support, however, they are a veritable engine of arcane destruction.



**Magic Ring.** *Wring* is a magic ring that grants a +3 bonus to spell attack rolls you make while wearing it. It also functions as a ring of free action.

**Random Properties.** *Wring* has the following randomly determined properties:

- 1 major beneficial property
- 1 major detrimental property
- 1 minor detrimental property

**Arcane Conduit.** While attuned to *Wring* and in combat, you regain one sorcery point at the beginning of each of your turns.

**Warp Speed.** While attuned to *Wring*, you are permanently under the influence of a *haste* spell. Furthermore, you can use the additional action to take the Cast a Spell action, and gain a +10 bonus to initiative rolls. If you ever remove *Wring*, the 'wave of lethargy' effect lasts for 8 hours.

**Cursed.** *Wring* is cursed, and attuning to it extends this curse to you. As long as you remain cursed, you are unwilling to part with *Wring*, staying attuned to it at all times. Your natural lifespan is reduced by 10 years as soon as you attune to *Wring*.

As long as there is a hostile creature within 120 feet of you, you cannot take any actions other than to Cast a Spell or Ready an action to cast a spell.

**Wring Out.** Whenever you cast a spell while attuned to *Wring*, it attempts to devour some of your life energy. You must make a Constitution saving throw against the spell save DC for your sorcerer spells, taking 2d6 necrotic damage on a failure.

**Destroying Wring.** *Wring* can only be destroyed by a *wish* spell cast by a creature. However, if *Wring* is destroyed, the creature that provided the *wish* must roll a d20. If the result is odd, the creature is instantly killed and cannot be resurrected by any means. If the result is even, the creature loses all spellcasting abilities and can never cast a spell again.

