

TREASURES OF THE YUGOLOTHS

BY JASON THOMPSON

As they travel throughout the cosmos to perform evil deeds, the mercenary yugoloths are routinely paid in gold, souls, and magic from every plane of existence. Some of the more precious magic items to have been commissioned for the yugoloths as payment for services rendered have subsequently been scattered to other realms, still tainted by the evil of their former masters.

These yugoloth-themed magic items can be used by the DM as special treasures, or as plot hooks for a campaign built around the Lower Planes. Three of these items—the *amulet of the Styx*, the *censer of blood*, and the *merrenoloth's oar* first appeared in the adventure *Six Faces of Death*, in *Dragon+ 21*.

AMULET OF THE STYX

Wondrous item, rare

This amulet of smoked glass on a platinum chain contains a small amount of water from the River Styx, making it resemble a round black gem unless closely inspected.

When you sleep or trance, you dream the lost memories of a random creature that has died, giving you some of that creature's skills and insights. At the end of a long rest taken while you wear the *amulet of the Styx*, you gain proficiency in one skill or with one tool of your choice. You cannot already have proficiency with the skill or tool. You lose this temporary proficiency at the end of your next long rest.

CENSER OF BLOOD

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

This brass incense burner hangs on a brass chain, and is covered with fiendish symbols and the names of ancient vampires. While the censer is on your person, you have advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track by scent and Wisdom (Perception) checks to detect smells. In addition, you are aware of the exact location of any creature within 60 feet of you that is below its hit point maximum.

As an action, you can spill one drop or more of your own blood into the censer, causing it to steam. You suffer one level of exhaustion, and the censer issues forth 1d6 vampiric mists that appear within 10 feet of you. (See *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes* for information on the vampiric mist.) You can repeat this process to create multiple mists, taking yourself to a maximum

of five levels of exhaustion. The vampiric mists don't appear if you are in sunlight.

The summoned vampiric mists understand your language and obey your spoken commands. If you issue no commands, they attack all nearby humanoids



except yourself, only sparing those that you specifically command them to.

You reduce levels of exhaustion imposed by the *censer of blood* in the normal fashion. Each mist lasts until it is destroyed, until you die, or until you dismiss it as a bonus action.

DERGOLOTH'S BELT

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

While you wear this belt, your head, torso and waist can rotate independently from one another. In addition to being potentially disturbing to onlookers, this gives you the following benefits:

- Your Dexterity score increases by 2, to a maximum of 20.
- You have advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks.

MERRENOLOTH'S OAR

Weapon, very rare (requires attunement)

Made of special wood that grows only in the Lower Planes, this long oar is carved with ancient symbols of death from countless cultures.

While you hold the oar, you have advantage on Dexterity checks to maintain your balance while on a watercraft. In addition, as a bonus action while you hold the oar, you can learn the depth of any water or liquid within sight, and the distance and direction to the closest land while you are on open water.

The *merrenloth's oar* can be used as a weapon. It is treated as a *+1 lance* when so wielded, and it can be used one-handed while you are on board any watercraft.

OCTAVO OF KEEPING

Wondrous item, legendary

In the arcanaloths' endless quest for knowledge and power, no magic item is as highly sought after as the *Books of Keeping*, in which the true names of all yugoloths are scribed. Over eons of research, a few arcanaloths have managed to record the true names of some of their weaker kin in smaller tomes, creating tiny versions of the *Books of Keeping* for their own purposes.

Each *octavo of keeping* contains the names of $1d4 + 1$ yugoloths, as well as ritual instructions for summoning them written in a complex code combining Infernal and Abyssal. These special instructions are unique to each yugoloth. For each name in an *octavo*, roll a d6 to determine what kind of yugoloth it is:

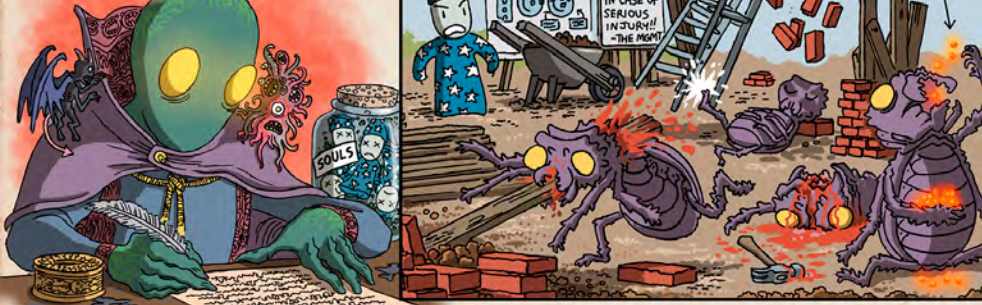
d6 Yugoloth

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1 | Mezzoloth |
| 2 | Nycaloth |
| 3 | Dhergoloth* |
| 4 | Canoloth* |
| 5 | Hydroloth* |
| 6 | Yagnoloth* |

*See *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*

A creature that can read both Infernal and Abyssal must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check to decode each ritual in the *octavo of keeping*. Any creature that decodes a ritual can use the *octavo* thereafter to summon the yugoloth named by the ritual. This requires 1 hour, rare incense and alchemical powders worth 5,000 gp, and the blood sacrifice of a creature of at least Medium size. When the ritual is completed, the yugoloth appears from the Lower Planes and the summoner must make an Intelligence (Arcana) check contested by the yugoloth's Intelligence check. If the sacrificed creature was a humanoid of Intelligence 4 or greater, the summoner has advantage on the check.

Neither demon nor devil, a yugoloth's only conflicting drives are between evil and more evil. Though used as cheap labor by mages who know their True Names, they invariably find loopholes in their contracts, and act with selfish abandon knowing they will respawn in Gehenna upon 'death'.

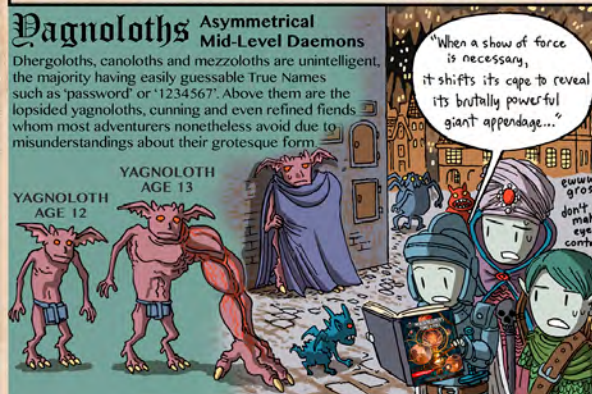


Oinoloths

Incarnations of Disease

To ancient peoples, the difference between diseases, daemons and preexisting conditions was often unclear, leading to incidents like the Siege of Folarg in 258 D.R., in which a goat with carpal tunnel syndrome was thrown over the castle walls to infect the defenders. Among the most powerful of yugoloths, oinoloths are the cause of this ancient myth, each one embodying a particular illness.

Anthrax **Poxus** **Peanut** **Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease**



Dagnoloths

Asymmetrical Mid-Level Daemons

Dhergoloths, canoloths and mezzoloths are unintelligent, the majority having easily guessable True Names such as 'password' or '1234567'. Above them are the lopsided dagnoloths, cunning and even refined fiends whom most adventurers nonetheless avoid due to misunderstandings about their grotesque form.

YAGNOLOTH AGE 12

YAGNOLOTH AGE 13



Merrenoloths

Navigators of the River Styx

Also known as Charonadaemons, Merrenoloths are the least vicious of yugoloths, living only for the toxic Styx-spray on their faces, the sound of souls crashing against the rocks, and the burble of hydroloths devouring their prey. Blasphemous, forbidden ferry schedules show how to summon them to pilot skiffs, junks, dinghies, coracles, galleys, knarres and even undead dragon turtles. Information is gladly given but safety requires avoiding unnecessary conversation.

- When you are prone, standing up costs you only 5 feet of your movement.
- Enemies that gain advantage or other benefits when one or more of their allies are within 5 feet of you gain those benefits only when two or more of their allies are within 5 feet of you.

If the yugoloth wins the opposed check, the ritual was performed improperly and the fiend is free to act as it wishes. This typically involves attempting to kill the summoner and destroy the octavo (see below). If the summoner wins or ties the check, the yugoloth cannot attack or cast spells on the summoner (though any other creatures in the area are fair game) and is bound to obey the summoner for 24 hours. However, the yugoloth always bends and misinterprets the summoner's commands if it can, and the DM might call for Charisma checks to threaten, coax, or trick the yugoloth into doing exactly what the summoner wants. After 24 hours, the yugoloth vanishes back to Gehenna.

If an *octavo of keeping* is used multiple times, the same yugoloths are summoned again and again, even if they were previously destroyed. This greatly annoys the affected yugoloths, which constantly scheme for revenge. If a summoned yugoloth can get its hands on the octavo, it can tear the book in half as an action, destroying it and summoning all the yugoloths whose names are written in the book. Those fiends appear at the start of the yugoloth's next turn, work together to kill the summoner and its allies, then go on a rampage of murder and destruction before returning to Gehenna 24 hours later.

TOL-KENDAR

Weapon (pike), very rare

The *tol-kendar* ("body wrecker" in Infernal) is a magic weapon that grants a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. Wielded by the asymmetrical yagnoloths, it takes the form of a 10-foot-long steel pike topped by a metal cup ringed with blades, with a harpoon point emerging from the cup's center. The *tol-kendar* has the statistics of a pike, but each time you hit, you can choose to do either piercing damage with the harpoon or slashing damage with the blades.

When you roll a 20 on an attack roll made with the *tol-kendar*, the weapon pierces deep into the target's body to deal an extra 2d8 piercing damage. A target that isn't a construct or undead must then succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the start of your next turn.

ULTROLOTH'S EYE

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

Resembling a large, pale fire opal, this gem is actually a magically preserved eye from an ultroloth—one of the yugoloths' secretive lords.

When you hold the *ultroloth's eye* up to one of your own eyes and look through it, you feel terrible pain, and you take 1d6 poison damage and 1d6 acid damage at the end of each of your turns in which you look through the eye. While looking through the eye, you are color-blind but have truesight out to a range of 120 feet.

Fiendish Insight. You also gain an additional benefit based on which eye you hold the *ultroloth's eye* up to. (If you have more than two eyes, the DM rolls randomly to determine the effect.)

If the *ultroloth's eye* is held to your left eye, you can use a bonus action to look at a creature of Intelligence 4 or greater. While doing so, you learn the name and appearance of the mortal being that creature most loves and respects. If the *ultroloth's eye* is held to your right

eye, you can use a bonus action to look at a creature of Intelligence 4 or greater. While doing so, you learn the thing that creature most fears.

If a creature you look at with either of these features has telepathy, it is aware of what you're doing and can shield itself from your scrutiny with a successful DC 17 Wisdom saving throw.

Permanent Placement. While attuned to the *ultroloth's eye*, you can gouge out your own eye and press the gem into the empty socket. You take 6d6 acid damage and 6d6 poison damage by doing so, but if you survive, the eye grafts itself into your head. A grafted eye gives you the permanent benefit of its features (depending on which eye socket it replaces) and does not deal damage when you use it. It no longer counts against the number of magic items you can attune to, and remains a part of you until you die.

Rumors speak of how a creature that implants one or more *ultroloth's eyes* draws the attention of powerful ultroloths in Gehenna, which might seek out the creature that has stolen the power of their kind.

STAFF OF THE LOWER PLANES

Staff, artifact (requires attunement)

Fiendish lore says that only one other yugoloth was ever powerful enough to challenge the General of Gehenna: an enormous, magically augmented oinoloth named Anthraxus the Decayed, lord of plagues. Anthraxus's fate is lost to time, but its diabolical essence survives, soaked into the wood of the staff it once bore.

The *Staff of the Lower Planes* is made of gray ash seamlessly grafted to a ram's skull, both as hard as iron. It can magically change in size to better conform to the grip of its user.

Dark Attunement. The process of attuning to the staff involves first soaking it in the water of the River Styx. This causes the staff to momentarily animate, whereupon the ram's head bites the nearest creature (+10 to hit, 1d8 piercing damage plus 3d6 necrotic damage). If this damage reduces the creature to 0 hit points, it dies instantly. Otherwise, that creature becomes attuned to the staff and gains instinctive knowledge of its powers.

Magic Quarterstaff. Whether the wielder is attuned or not, the *Staff of the Lower Planes* functions as a magic quarterstaff that grants a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. In addition, any creature hit by the staff is affected as if it had been hit by the *contagion* spell (save DC 17).

Any creature that possesses the staff for more than one hour without attuning to it is affected as if it had been hit by the *contagion* spell (save DC 17).

Random Properties. The *Staff of the Lower Planes* has the following random properties:

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

Spells. The staff has 8 charges and regains 1d4 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn. While holding it, you can use an action and expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it (save DC 17): *dominate beast* (1 charge), *dominate monster* (3

charges), *dominate person* (1 charge), *geas* (2 charges), *giant insect* (2 charges), *insect plague* (2 charges), *suggestion* (1 charge), or *mass suggestion* (3 charges).

Spells cast from the staff that impose the charmed condition can affect fiends normally immune to that condition.

Styx Master. While you hold the staff, you are immune to the *feblemind* effect of the River Styx (see chapter 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). If you drink from that river, you know the location of all creatures currently on or within its waters, and you can read the memories of any creature whose name you know and which has been subject to the river's *feblemind* effect within the last 24 hours. The dissolved memories are murky and fragmentary, and the DM might call for Intelligence checks to read specific memories.

Master of the Lower Planes. While you are holding the staff, you can use an action to focus and sense the direction to any portals leading to, from, or between the Lower Planes within 1,000 feet of you. You can also sense the specific plane that each such portal leads to.


Punish Fiends. If you reduce a fiend to 0 hit points with a weapon attack made using the staff, that fiend is permanently transformed into a larva when it returns to its home plane. (See the larva statistics block in chapter 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.) All intelligent fiends know and fear this power of the staff.

Final Wish. While you are holding the staff, you can cast a *wish* spell as an action. Doing so causes you to lose your attunement to the staff, and you are stricken by a *feblemind* effect as if you had drunk from the River Styx (no saving throw). Only another *wish* or similar effect can cure this affliction. If you use this feature to wish for Anthraxus to be resurrected, your soul goes to Gehenna and your body transforms into a magically augmented oinoloth, becoming the corporeal form of Anthraxus the Decayed.

Undone by Disease. While you are attuned to the staff, you become immune to all disease. However, if the staff ever leaves your side, you immediately suffer from some of the terrible afflictions that the item's power has long held at bay. At the end of each turn when the staff is more than 5 feet away from you, you must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or gain one of the disease effects bestowed by the *contagion* spell. See the *Player's Handbook* and roll a d6 to see which disease infects you.

Once you are suffering from three diseases, you stop gaining new ones. No effect short of a *wish* spell or similar magic can remove or ameliorate these magical diseases until the staff is returned to you.

Destroying the Staff. The *Staff of the Lower Planes* is destroyed if it is submerged for one week in the water of a particular magic stream in Elysium. The name of this stream is recorded in only a few places in the multiverse, including the *Book of Exalted Deeds*.

Each round that the staff is submerged in the stream, larvae and other unintelligent fiends emerge from the wood of the staff and attack any creatures they can see. All yugoloths in the multiverse of Intelligence 18 or higher become aware that the staff is in danger, and they attempt to converge on Elysium to rescue it. 

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