

THE EYE OF THE COBRA

Most pirates will grab a sparkling jewel without a second thought. Perhaps that's why so many sailors on account fall prey to strange curses . . .

PREPARING TO PLAY: When all are gathered to play, and the Players are prepared, begin the adventure by following the steps given below.

Beginning: Unlike most Adventures, this one does not begin with an introductory narrative, but rather plays like an extended Encounter, one which will create strange occurrences as time goes on during the party's other adventures.

The jewel: The Eye of the Cobra is a cursed gem extracted from the skull of a king cobra, and it is cursed. Once it is in someone's possession, its evil effects him and all bound to him—his family, his shipmates, etc. Nobody can willingly give it away or discard it, for to do so forces the giver and all bound to him to make a Saving Throw at 6 each day—for the rest of his natural life—or contract an incurable level 1 poison. Only by surviving all the 'curses' of this jewel (as detailed in the Section titled 'Curses of the Eye') will one be free of its evil, indeed breaking its curse forever.

Legends: Many a man has known a shipmate to be cursed by this jewel, so it's possible to find stories about it. Still, like the gem itself, nobody is fool enough to offer them. So when the party begins to ask about this jewel, wherever they make inquiry, they can learn 2 of the following tales.

Legends

Roll	Legend of the Eye
10-12	The jewel of that name will not rest until it has completed a cycle of four betrayals
6-9	The jewel is cursed, binding all who are bound to its owner by blood or pledge
1-5	The jewel of that name waits to stab the heart of no less rich of blood than a king

THE EYE SEES THE PARTY: The party will enter the party's lives when next they put into any port. Once there, use the following Encounters as necessary to get this cursed gem into their hands.

1) Three pirates in a bar . . .

This Encounter should be played first, as it is the most likely way that the evil jewel known as the Eye of the Cobra will find its way into the party's pockets and thus into their lives.

In one corner of the tavern, you overhear three strange pirates—one Spaniard, one Chinaman, and one Scotsman—telling the strangest tales. Amidst all their bad jokes they also speak a deal about treasure, and you know the truth when you hear it. Perhaps their jesting is a way to disguise their discussion, but you are not so easily fooled. Yet their talk is entrancing, captivating, like looking into the eyes of a cobra. Indeed, their strangest story is how when a king cobra dies, something calcifies in its skull, creating an amber-like pearl, and these three rogues have one such jewel in their possession, one that is greater than any ever found, one that is magical . . .

These three pirates indeed have a great jewel, the 'Eye of the Cobra' as they call it, an amber-pearl worth 18000 gold! If asked, they will claim they are the last of their crew and cannot divide a single stone three ways, so they'll sell it. Realizing nobody has the wealth they seek, they can be very easily bartered down to whatever amount the party actually has to pay with—a low price, others will claim, is due to their rum 'dulling merchant wits'. However, if anyone in the party takes possession of this jewel in any manner, move at once to the next Section of this adventure. For the Eye of the Cobra is cursed, and thus the three pirates here were deliberately enticing the party from the very beginning to rid themselves of it . . .

2) Pigs and swine

Run this Encounter only if Encounter 1 did not get the Eye of the Cobra in the party's possession.

Outside the tavern, there's a drunkard wallowing in the mud, talking with the pigs. He speaks to them as a pious man would his gods.

THE EYE OF THE COBRA

The man with the hogs is going to be used as a distraction by a thief 'picking the pocket' of the Character with the **highest** Intuition Score—he does not want to go away without being caught, and he is ready to die, for he is the Spaniard of the last scenario, cursed for too long for carrying the Eye of the Cobra. If he is not detected, he'll rob the next most intuitive Character, and so on until he's found out and thus the jewel taken from him.

CURSES OF THE EYE: Once someone in the party has the Eye of the Cobra in their possession, it will cause strange things to begin happening for all. Use the following Encounters when applicable.

3) Voice of death

Run this Encounter the first time in which anyone in the cursed crew tries to sell, destroy, or in any other way rid themselves of this jewel.

Suddenly, the air becomes hazy, humid, difficult to breathe. Then a cobra slithers out from your own mouth and proceeds to wreath around you. Then it rears back before your face and flares its wings . . . and speaks in your own voice: "Jewels sparkle like the devil's eyes!" it says. "Like God, that which is most beautiful is most successful at betrayal!" Then, everything vanishes, a delusion and nothing more.

Let the Player (and his Character) make of his vision whatever he will. If this is the last curse to be endured, the king cobra will become real, and attack! Its scores are Movement Rate 60', Defense Score 8, Survival 6, Attack at +3 for no Damage but poison level 4 inducing an equal penalty to a victim's roll on Table 9.

4) Witness to death

Run this Encounter the next time the cursed crew sees someone die outside of battle.

The dead man gasps and speaks with his dying breath: "Tell me, tell me what is the three, suns which only the dead man sees?"

One must look at a dead man during the day and through the Eye of the Cobra, and then he'll see the sun split into three, and at the same time receive 20 Experience Points. This Encounter will recur with each death until finished properly.

5) Merchant of death

Run this Encounter the next time the cursed crew captures a ship.

As the defeated ship rocks in the waves, a low moaning sound echoes from its hold. It is a very human sound, like a groan, someone being either tortured or dying from illness.

A successful Searching Check is required for anyone to find the source of the sound, which is a ghastly pale man whose only color is amber blood flowing from a snake-bite. He'll beg to be killed by a Christian weapon before the devil's poison claims his soul. If not killed by a sword, he will say he will be back, then die, and the prize ship will sink so fast no treasure can be claimed from it (if any treasure was already taken, it will disappear, as if pilfered by ghosts . . .) Indeed, this Encounter will recur with each captured or sunken ship until the ghost meets his desired end.

6) Defiant of death

Run this Encounter the next time one of the Player Characters in the cursed crew gains a Level. When reading this narrative aloud, replace 'NAME' with that of the advancing Character.

A thick fog rolls in. Everyone falls silent. Then, a ghastly pale man emerges from nowhere, and approaches 'NAME', and demands tribute . . .

One must give the man 18000 gold—the price of the Eye—if one does, he will also be granted 1 Ability Point of the Player's choosing.

FINISHING THE ADVENTURE: Once the Eye has betrayed the party all four times (Encounters), its curse will rest, and they can do with it as they will, its gold value still 18000.

THE TEMPLE OF DEATH

Pirates are not historians nor are they interested in knowing culture or legends, but they should know their treasure . . .

PREPARING TO PLAY: When all are gathered to play, and the Players are prepared, begin the adventure by following the steps given below.

Background: The Adventure will begin with your reading the following narrative, thus setting the stage for the adventure that is to follow.

Every village along the coast has stories of their gods dwelling in the jungles. Mostly these are all fear and folklore. However, few places in all the world have turned Godly men into believers of a heathen's temple. Not far inland, so say both the natives and other Christian sailors, there stands a ruined temple to a long dead deity. It is, indeed, a temple now of death. Nobody knows who built it or even when. The natives shun it and venture miles, even days out of their way to avoid it on hunt, for all who venture there never return, for it is said its lure of gold inside is too strong.

Legends: The natives, and perhaps other explorers, will have many tales to tell of this ruin. The party to learn 1 story from the following chart, plus one additional roll for every 30 gold spent in pursuit of such lore. Do no re-roll duplicate results—the same tales can certainly pop up again.

Legends

Roll	Legend of the temple
11-12	The gods in the temple are said to bless those of noble heart, that to give gold to them is to be rewarded with greater gold beyond this life
9-10	The temple is guarded by the living dead, who, having arisen from their grave, fear only their own kind
6-8	The temple is haunted, but the dead will not dare to cross into the godly realm, a place beyond great pits of fire
4-5	The hoard of the conqueror awaits beyond the chasm of death
1-3	The hoard of the conqueror can only be found by one who commands the moon

EXPLORING THE TEMPLE: Finding the lost temple is not difficult—the natives know where its gates are, and they should not be far—the danger is in exploring these ruins. When the party finally dares enter, tell the tale of their adventure by the following Encounters. Run them one and all in the order they are presented.

1) Entrance

The jungle is reluctant to give up its secrets, and its dead. Slashing your way through a labyrinth of poisonous green, you stand at last before the silent stone ruins of a tiered temple, its stepped slopes ascending into a hazy, yellow sky. There before you is its only door, a wide, dolmen arch spotted cursed symbols written in ancient blood.

A Search of the overgrown courtyard may find a human skeleton hanging in the dense trees. Upon its neck is a medallion bearing a diamond cut to resemble a crescent moon. The entire medallion is worth a good 2400 gold.

2) Forbidden hallway

Once inside the temple, you pass from blistering sunlight into soul-chilling darkness. Ahead of you is a corridor running straight back, narrow but its ceiling is twice as high as it needs to be. Weird, inhuman figures glow upon the walls. Painted in some strange substance which gleams under your light as a pool does under the midday sun, they seem to resemble humans only in the most base of ways, seeming more skeletal, alien or demonic than alive, and posed in all manner of ways, so their purpose cannot be determined—some stand at guard, some are leaping, others seem to kneel as if to their god, and so forth.

The hallway is rigged with traps. The trick is to match the position of the figures on the walls every step of the way. For example, if one of the luminous figures is squatting, and one crouches or squats as he walks past it, he will so avoid a tripwire at head height. There are dozens of trips and dozens of figures running the length of this hall, so if one does not specifically mimic the strange

THE TEMPLE OF DEATH

beings, the triggers will seem to be random every time. A trap can be tripped every 10' of this 200' long passage, and each done so will cause a bolt to shoot from the being's eyes, hitting a trespasser for an automatic blow of 3 Base Damage. Solving this puzzle merits 45 Experience Points.

3) Chasm of doom

The corridor opens into broad antechamber with a low-ceiling. The walls are formed of thin stone stacked in uneven layers, giving the already low ceiling the impression of slowly crushing the area with its immense weight. To either side, several hallways lead into dimly lit areas. Straight ahead, wide stairs descend to a rope-bridge spanning an awe-inspiring chasm, smoke and flame belching up from the untold depths.

Lurking in the shadows are spirits, which shall emerge and attack the party once they pass through this area. The corridors all round the chasm, and those who go that way will each be attacked by a group of 1-6 spirits, while those who crossed the bridge will, by such a display before the gods, be facing only 1-3 spirits. All of their statistics are as B1, A10, E11, G1, W4, I9, C1, L6, DS 12, Survival 1, Attack at +1* using a sword for Base Damage 4, Morale 9*, and Movement Rate 200'. They have no treasure (at least not here . . .)

4) Chamber of the dead

Deeper into the temple, you enter a chamber that is built entirely of blood-red stone. However, an eerie, green light permeates the area, so that all seems dark or sickly colored. The chamber is too vast to see its far walls, though your echoes tell you there are other passages in the darkness.

This room contains coffins scattered all about the floor, which the party will bump into as they move through the area. More shadows, the same as those in Encounter 3, await to ambush the party in the unseen halls, 1-12 of them for each trespasser. However, once the fight starts, should anyone lie inside a coffin, the shadows will forever leave him alone, fearing him as a god.

5) Grand staircase

A grand staircase begins a steep descent into the lightless bowels of the earth. Skeletons litter the steps, clad in the rotting clothes, armor and with the widest variety of weapons from the last ten centuries—Conquistadors lie alongside Knights of the Crusades, and many others.

The stairs are trapped. Each step is a trigger. To step on any causes spikes to shoot out of the walls, impaling the trespasser for Base Damage 10. The only way to avoid this is to use the vines and other filth on the ceiling to 'fly' down the stairs, a feat requiring an Agility Check at a -2 penalty.

6) False treasure room

The stairs end in a large chamber filled with an unspeakable hoard of treasure! Mounds of golden coins arise from a shallow, sunken floor. All the water's wavering light seems to conjure ghostly hands that are counting it for you. The walls are covered with fading frescoes depicting the edges of the world where devils stand guard.

There is a total of about 2000 gold here, all in coins from the natives. However, a Search may discover a secret door. This door, however, cannot be opened. All the coins here weigh down a single pressure-plate which keeps it closed, and when that weight is lessened, its unseen latch has even less pressure against it—the party must make the total gold here 3000 in order to cause it to open . . .

7) Hoard of the conqueror

The secret chamber contains 34000 additional gold. There are no traps. However, one coin—the last to be taken—will prove to be magical, so that when it is removed from the hoard, it will echo with an unearthly voice in the Character's native language: "The conqueror knows you! Beware . . ." Just what this means is up to you and your game's needs.

FINISHING THE ADVENTURE: Once the party returns, other treasure-seekers will flock to the ruin and claim any and all treasure they left behind.