

The Heart of Ever-quenched Thirst

New Vampiric Artifact

Description:

The Heart of Ever-quenched Thirst is a perfect 5 inch sphere, made of red ivory (ivory with red lines covering the surface and an overall pinkish/reddish hue), and covered in arcane script. The red lines cover the top half of the sphere like lines on a globe, running vertically across the sphere, as if they were latitude lines on a globe. The outer lower portion of the sphere is covered with various fleshy, soft, moist tubes and ventricles that smell of coppery old blood.

At the converging point of all the red hemispherical lines, a small ivory bead protrudes above the sphere. Upon pressing this button, the sphere opens at the hemispherical lines, exposing the inner chamber. There is a small indentation at the rear where the hoses and tubes come in and stand ready with small barbed ends, and other tubes (similarly barbed) lead off to large sacs that cover the outer perimeter of the inner sphere. A large open space remains in the center, as if waiting to receive something.

History:

There was once a group of very powerful vampires who lived on the Eastern Frontier, wreaking havoc on the open planes beneath the Eastern Mountains. Their leader, LeStadt, wished for his men to be able to travel during the day without the need for magical darkness; and so he put out word that he was looking to commission the making of a great magical item to said effect.

The word reached as far north as the Dragon's Spine, where a great Golden Dragon heard of the Vampire lord's request. He had received complaints from his followers for many years about this group, and until now they proved too elusive for his airborne body to catch – but now he saw his chance.

Posing as an Elven archmage, the Dragon (whose own magical prowess was quite well renown) went to the Vampire Lord, and offered his services. After suitably impressing the Lord, he was told the exact specifications for the artifact. He agreed, and went to a secluded area in (what is now) the Civil Wood to perfect the item.

He returned in a matter of 6 months with what has come to be known as the Heart of Ever-quenched Thirst. He told the Lord that it would not only allow him to go out in the sunlight, but it would allow him to cross running water and it would sate his great thirst for blood so it would no longer weaken his men when dinner proved elusive. The Lord anxiously accepted the artifact, and set to work fulfilling the Dragon's instructions for how to implant it. But he was deceived.

Not trusting his men with such a powerful item, he decided that he would be the first to undergo the implant process. But once his physicians had removed the heart of his volunteers and began to fill the heart with blood, the artifact showcased its intelligence – and its good aligned nature. The vampire lord was killed, as was his volunteer, when the item teleported away from the castle, taking the vampire's heart with it.

Without their strong and charismatic leader, the Vampires fell to in-fighting, and their power was forever broken. Some searched far and wide for the dragon-mage that forged the item, but it could never be found. Some rumors say the dragon put the item out into circulation and simply quit watching the situation, sure of his success. Others say that the item appeared in the dragon's lair after killing the Lord, and that both the Dragon and the Item lay hidden to this very day.

But those are just stories, and nobody seems to know more than that. Many have gone looking for the Heart of Ever Quenched Thirst (for its value, both to vampire hunters and to collectors, would be untold) – but none have ever found it, and few have returned from the errand alive.

Statistics:

Despite its origins as a trick for an evil vampire, The Heart of Ever-quenched thirst is actually a boon to any (unlikely) good-aligned vampire that happens to come into possession of it. The dragon wasn't lying – it can indeed do all the things he said. The only thing is, it can only do them if it is implanted in a good aligned vampire, and the implantation process is performed with three willing, good-aligned assistants.

Here is the brief run-down of the benefits and drawbacks of the Heart of Ever-Quenched Thirst:

1. The vampire host, upon successfully implanting the device, is no longer vulnerable to damage from natural sunlight or effects that simulate it (such as the *Daylight* spell). However, the vampire is still vulnerable to normal

and magical fire, and spells and effects that rely on positive energy rather than duplication of the sun's effects (such as *Cure Light Wounds*, *Searing Light*, etc). This artifact does not negate racial negatives from acting in total sunlight (e.g. If the vampires in the campaign suffer a -2 in full sunlight, this still applies).

2. The host can cross running water. However, he can only cross it if he doesn't touch it – immersing the vampire in running water will still destroy it. However, they are no longer required to cross it in a ship in their coffin.
3. The host can now ignore their diet dependence on blood, though their inescapable craving for energy (life force) will still remain. It is a craving, however, and not a requirement – a strong character can safely ignore it anyways. (See page 10, “Variant Rule: Handling Undead Hunger”, *Libris Mortis*).

Drawbacks and Notable Effects:

1. Advancement in any and all vampiric character classes immediately stops, and cannot resume until the artifact is removed. The host does not lose any levels, and their type remains undead.
2. The alignment of the host permanently changes to an average of those of his blood volunteers, as shown in “Table: New Host Alignment”, below. The alignment cannot be changed as long as the artifact remains implanted, and if the alignment does change, the artifact will remove itself. (See “removal”)
3. The host can still be killed if his volunteers are resurrected. A regular *resurrect* spell cast on the volunteers will fail, and have no chance of damaging the host. A *True Resurrection* or *Wish*, however, will have a 15% chance of not failing outright – and if it does, the volunteers get a Will save, since they would (presumably) rather be in the artifact than in their bodies. If they fail their will save and are resurrected, the functions of the artifact instantly stop, and it will begin doing a point of Strength damage to the Vampiric host every hour until it is removed, or new volunteers are found.
4. Any evil action willingly committed by the host while the artifact is still

implanted will result in a 5% cumulative chance (per such offense) that the artifact will choose to remove itself from the host and teleport away

Table: New Host Alignment

Volunteer Alignment*	Volunteer Alignment*	New Host Alignment
Lawful	Lawful	Lawful
“	Neutral	Neutral
“	Chaotic	Neutral
Neutral	Lawful	Neutral
“	Neutral	Neutral
“	Chaotic	Neutral
Chaotic	Lawful	Neutral
“	Neutral	Neutral
“	Chaotic	Chaotic

* Only the first portion of alignment is considered (lawful, neutral, chaotic), since only good volunteers and good hosts will be allowed to implant the artifact.


(see “removal”).

Implanting:

The ritual of Implanting is a painful and difficult process, only to be undertaken by the most dedicated and skilled. It requires the presence of the vampire, two good volunteers, and one good cleric or druid of at least 15th level. None of the participants can be charmed, compelled, geased or quested, or under any similar form of enchantment.

First, the vampire receiving the artifact must be laid out on a table, between his two volunteers, and the artifact must be implanted into his chest. The tubes must be attached directly to his blood vessels, his stomach, and his throat – but most importantly directly to his own cold heart. This requires successful Knowledge (Undead), Knowledge (Anatomy), and Heal checks at DC 25. Failure of any of these checks will require a Fortitude save from the Vampire, DC 25. Failure means the implant was botched, and the vampire is irrevocably killed.

Second, one of the volunteers must have his heart removed from his body while he still breathes, and while his heart still beats. The heart must be placed inside of the opened artifact inside of the vampiric host. This requires successful Knowledge (Anatomy) and Heal checks, both at DC 25. Failure means the heart has stopped beating before it could be



implanted in the sphere, and the ritual is a failure. The artifact must be removed from the host, or a new volunteer located within 1 hour, or the device will unbalance the negative energy levels in its vampiric host and kill it irrevocably. Naturally, the first volunteer is killed in the process.

Third, the cleric must attach the artifact in the vampire's chest to the major arteries of the second volunteer, and allow blood to begin to pass freely from the volunteer into the artifact. The blood will begin to flow into the artifact, being magically reduced and stored in the sacs on the inside of the sphere. The second volunteer is thusly bled to death. This stage of the ritual involves more Knowledge (Anatomy) and Heal checks at DC 25. Failure requires a Fortitude save on both parties at DC 30, as it may be that a horribly mis-crossed tube has caused the blood of the volunteer to flow directly into the vampire's veins and vice versa, having undefined side effects. Failure means instant and irrevocable death for both parties.

As the blood begins to flow into the artifact, a series of specially written prayers (which must be memorized from the surface of the sphere before the beginning of the ritual) recited by the cleric begin the artifact's functioning. The prayers will call the Souls of the volunteers into the artifact, giving it the spark of life. The heart inside the sphere will begin to visibly pump, pushing out fresh living blood to the vampire to internally feed on, as the heart magically regenerates the used-up blood cells to continually supply the vampire with fresh living blood. The artifact will close its front face on its own when the souls of both volunteers are inside the artifact, and the blood sacs inside it are full (when the second volunteer is drained of their blood). When the sphere closes, it will glow with a faint, warm red light, and will audibly "thump" with a heartbeat, when the ear is placed against it.

Removal:

Removal is an even more dangerous and painful process than implantation. It requires a good cleric of 15th level or higher. A successful Knowledge (Arcana), Knowledge (Undead), Knowledge (Anatomy), and Heal check at DC 35 are all required, followed by a successful fortitude save at DC 30. Failure means the host is irrevocably slain during the extrication process. All effects immediately cease following removal, regardless of the living status of the host.

Notes:

After being removed (or removing itself), the artifact will teleport to a random location 1d100x10 miles away in a random

direction (1d8 deviation).

Use of non-good participants in the implant ritual, likewise the use of non-willing participants, will cause it to fail. The vampire must then suffer the consequences of the implant ritual failing at the given stage where it fails. If the artifact is being implanted by a charmed, geased or otherwise compelled person, it will refuse to attach to the host. Further attempts will cause it to teleport away.

If the artifact is being implanted into an evil vampire, it will allow itself to be implanted, and then kill the host before removing itself.

The device not only holds (and regenerates) living blood cells, it also contains the souls of the volunteers used to kickstart the artifact. It is thus an intelligent item, and will have Int and Wis scores equal to the average of the two volunteers it now houses. Unless the volunteers were of above average Int and Wis (18+ each), the artifact will not be able to speak to its host. And even if it could, it would not – it prefers to act as a sort of "jimmy cricket" for the host, pushing emotions out to its long dead heart to communicate (thus making it impossible to change alignment until the device is removed).