

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

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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 oozing 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.