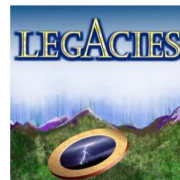


LEGACY ITEM:

The Crown of Thorns

By Mike Bourke, Johnn Four & Michael K Tumey



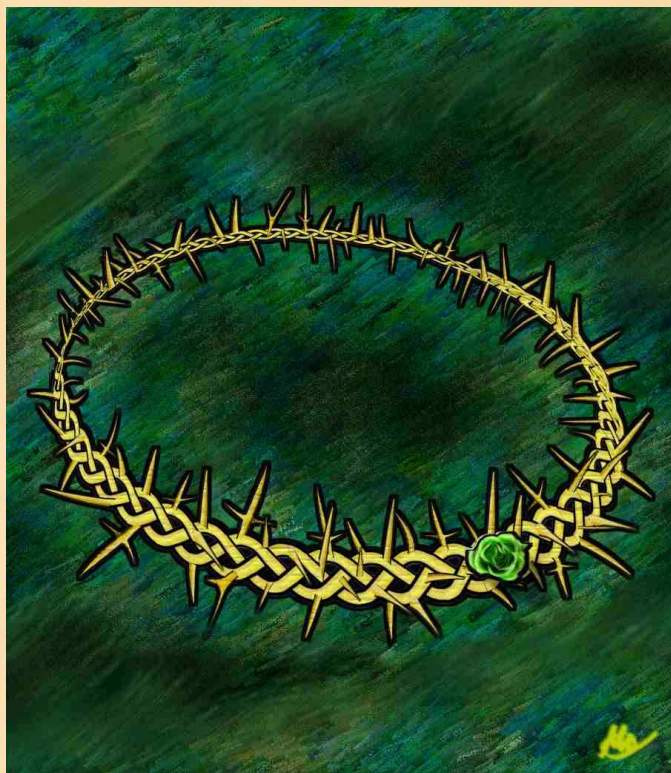
This is one of eight Legacy Items included in *Assassin's Amulet* which we are re-presenting here in a format optimized for use in play. There is little additional information included (other than this introduction); but the content is organized differently.

These supplements are organized into five parts. The first is this introduction. The second contains page(s) with the name, description, and an image of the item, as the typical PC would perceive it. The third part consists of a series of tables describing the Legacy Powers, with any appropriate notes – the first describes only the First Inheritance, the second describes both First and Second Inheritances, and so on. The fourth contains the history of the item, which is something a Player may discover – eventually. It also contains the pronunciation guide. The final part contains

the GM-only information that completes the Description of the Legacy Item.

Page Numberings have been manipulated throughout. This is not just one game supplement – it is nine. Each of the pages in section three has the SAME page number, so the player never needs to know that the Legacy Item contains a further power to be unlocked, or how long it will be until it happens. The GM simply hands the newly-printed page containing the additional Legacy Power to the player as a replacement for the one he already has. The remaining page numbers within the supplement are also tailored accordingly.

We have also included a page for additional notes, with NO page number showing. This can be printed as many times as necessary. Just print as many copies of the page as you need to contain the additional info for the player. Enjoy....



The Crown of Thorns

Three rose bush branches with thorns regularly spaced have been twisted together and woven into a Celtic knot in the shape of a circular crown, then dried to the consistence of hardwood. The ends of each branch somehow fuse into themselves; you can never find an end when following any individual branch. The crown always has a non-shiny surface, no matter how it is oiled or painted.

At the start of each season, a single miniature rose, half an inch or less in diameter, will bud and then bloom. The color of this flower varies according to the season, and always located on the part of the crown over the forehead:

- **Winter:** White with a red heart
- **Spring:** Green with a darker green heart and yellow spots
- **Summer:** Yellow-gold with a reddish-brown heart
- **Autumn:** Purplish-Blue with a black heart

The buds are visible for a week prior to the change of seasons, and the flowers bloom on the day of season change. They remain in bloom for three days, then wither overnight and crumble to dust on the morning of the fourth day.

The colour of the crown branches also varies - from a golden yellow to a yellowish green, then a mahogany brown, and finally a grayish brown, before returning to golden yellow to start the cycle anew. If the crown is washed at all, no matter what might be used to achieve this washing, the surface layer dissolves to reveal a deep green vine-like color, which will become mahogany brown after a day or two of exposure to sunlight or other non-magical light source.

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	3	2	+2 Swim
Total: 2			

Notes:

The wearer dedicates the occasional kill to Fithak (10% chance after the first such). He sometimes (one time in ten) refers to the moon as an Egg.

The character loses all body hair over a period of a few weeks.

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	3	2	+2 Swim
Second	3	2	+2 Con, +2 Str
Total: 4			

Notes:

The wearer dedicates the some kills to Fithak (20% chance). He sometimes (one time in five) refers to the moon as an Egg.

The character has no body hair. His jaw swells and his chin projects forward to form a more snout-like shape. The character occasionally tastes the air with his tongue instead of snipping it with his nose.

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	3	2	+2 Swim
Second	3	2	+2 Con, +2 Str
Third	3	2	+2 AC
Total: 6			

Notes:

The wearer dedicates the some kills to Fithak (30% chance). He sometimes (one time in four) refers to the moon as an Egg.

The character has no body hair. The “whites” of the characters eyes become

moderately reddish in colour. The character’s jaw becomes snout-like and his teeth have begun to recede into his gums. The character occasionally tastes the air with his tongue instead of snipping it with his nose.

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	3	2	+2 Swim
Second	3	2	+2 Con, +2 Str
Third	3	2	+2 AC
Fourth	4	3	Freedom of Movement 3/day
Total: 9			

Notes:

The wearer dedicates the some kills to Fithak (40% chance). He sometimes (one time in three) refers to the moon as an Egg.

The character has no body hair. The change of shape of the jaw into a snout is pronounced, and all but his eye teeth are

all-but invisible behind his swollen (but not painful) gums. The character grows a second set of eyelids and the pupil changes shape into a more diamond-shaped form. The character occasionally tastes the air with his tongue instead of snipping it with his nose.

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	3	2	+2 Swim
Second	3	2	+2 Con, +2 Str
Third	3	2	+2 AC
Fourth	4	3	Freedom of Movement 3/day
Fifth	5-3=2	1	Freedom of Movement 6/day
Total: 10			

Notes:

The wearer dedicates half his kills to Fithak (50% chance). He frequently (one time in two) refers to the moon as an Egg.

The character has no body hair. The character loses all colour to the iris surrounding the eye, which becomes black or very dark brown. Only his eye teeth are visible, and they have begun to grow longer; on casual inspection, he might be mistaken for a vampire. The character

frequently tastes the air with his tongue instead of snipping it with his nose. Thick skin has begun to grow and swell around the character's ears. The character will find it increasingly hard to chew, preferring to break his food into small chunks and swallow it whole. The soles of his feet will become extremely tough and the skin of his feet will become inflexible to the point that the character finds it preferable not to wear shoes.

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	3	2	+2 Swim
Second	3	2	+2 Con, +2 Str
Third	3	2	+2 AC
Fourth	4	3	Freedom of Movement 3/day
Fifth	5-3=2	1	Freedom of Movement 6/day
Sixth	3	2	+2 Con, +2 Swim, -2 Int
Total: 12			

Notes:

The wearer dedicates most of his kills to Fithak (60% chance). He generally (two times in three) refers to the moon as an Egg.

If predisposed to hunt, there is a 10% chance each day that he will sacrifice live prey in the name of the sun.

The character has no body hair. The "whites" of the characters eyes become dark red in colour. The rest of the eye is black, and double-sets of eyelids give the irises a diamond shape. Only his eye teeth are visible, and they are becoming thinner and

curved while still growing; he is now unlikely to be mistaken for a vampire. His gums have become toughened dentine, and the character can no longer chew grains and grain-based foods. Other foods he will prefer to swallow whole or in small chunks. The character frequently tastes the air with his tongue instead of snipping it with his nose, which has begun to flatten and widen. Thick skin encloses the character's outer ears. The character's skin develops a slight scaly quality. The soles of his feet are extremely tough and the skin of his feet is inflexible to the point that the character finds it preferable not to wear shoes.

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	3	2	+2 Swim
Second	3	2	+2 Con, +2 Str
Third	3	2	+2 AC
Fourth	4	3	Freedom of Movement 3/day
Fifth	5-3=2	1	Freedom of Movement 6/day
Sixth	3	2	+2 Con, +2 Swim, -2 Int
Seventh	4	3	+2 Jump*, +2 Balance*
Total: 15			

* Use +2 Athletics for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game

Notes:

The wearer dedicates most of his kills to Fithak (70% chance). He generally (three times in four) refers to the moon as an Egg.

If predisposed to hunt, there is a 25% chance each day that he will sacrifice live prey in the name of the sun.

The character has no body hair, and his skin has a slight scaly quality. The "whites" of the characters eyes become dark red in colour. The rest of the eye is black, and double-sets of eyelids give the irises a diamond shape. Only his eye teeth are visible, and they are extremely thin and visibly curved. His gums have become toughened dentine, but they are rarely visible; the character can no longer chew grains and grain-based foods. Other foods he will prefer to swallow whole or in small chunks. He will occasionally run a twig or

small vine between his lips, stripping off the leaves with his gums. The character normally tastes the air with his tongue instead of snipping it. His nose is almost nonexistent, just a swelling above his upper lip. Thick skin encloses the character's outer ears and a thin, taut membrane has grown over the inner ear, though the human(oid) ear is still visible through the membrane. The character's lips project out, flatten, and become leathery. His speech acquires a lisping sound, and the character hisses occasionally, especially when angry or alarmed. When not in motion, he holds himself with unnatural stillness and tends to make sharp motions and then become still again. The soles of his feet are extremely tough and the skin of his feet is inflexible to the point that the character finds it preferable not to wear shoes. Over a period of a month or so, his finger- and toenails will all fall out.

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	3	2	+2 Swim
Second	3	2	+2 Con, +2 Str
Third	3	2	+2 AC
Fourth	4	3	Freedom of Movement 3/day
Fifth	5-3=2	1	Freedom of Movement 6/day
Sixth	3	2	+2 Con, +2 Swim, -2 Int
Seventh	4	3	+2 Jump*, +2 Balance*
Eighth	5	4	Natural Weapons: Claws x2, Bite (as per Lizardfolk); Multiattack feat
Total: 19			

* Use +2 Athletics for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game

Notes:

The wearer dedicates most of his kills to Fithak (80% chance). He generally (four times in five) refers to the moon as an Egg.

If predisposed to hunt, there is a 50% chance each day that he will sacrifice live prey in the name of the sun.

The character has no body hair. The “whites” of the characters eyes become dark red in colour. The rest of the eye is black, and double-sets of eyelids give the irises a diamond shape. Only his eye teeth are visible, and they are extremely thin and visibly curved. His gums are toughened dentine, but they are rarely visible; the character can no longer chew grains and grain-based foods. Other foods he will prefer to swallow whole or in small chunks. He will occasionally run a twig or small vine between his lips, stripping off the leaves with his gums. Should he break one or both teeth, new ones will erupt from the gums within 24 hours. The character’s lips

are indistinguishable from his skin, whose scaly quality of his skin is becoming pronounced and which is taking on a greenish hue. Thick skin encloses the character’s outer ears and the thin, taut membrane over the inner ear has begun to thicken, save only for a cavity over the actual eardrum. He no longer appears to have a nose, but two black pits are visible above the upper lip. He can only smell through his tongue, which has become thinner and longer, and frequently projects between his lips when he speaks. His speech acquires a lisping sound, and the character hisses occasionally, especially when angry or alarmed. When not in motion, he holds himself with unnatural stillness and tends to make sharp motions and then become still again. The soles of his feet are extremely tough and the skin of his feet is inflexible to the point that the character finds it preferable not to wear shoes. The character will grow sharpened spurs that project from the tips of his fingers and toes.

Inheritance	Base Ranking	Modified Ranking	Description
First	3	2	+2 Swim
Second	3	2	+2 Con, +2 Str
Third	3	2	+2 AC
Fourth	4	3	Freedom of Movement 3/day
Fifth	5-3=2	1	Freedom of Movement 6/day
Sixth	3	2	+2 Con, +2 Swim, -2 Int
Seventh	4	3	+2 Jump*, +2 Balance*
Eighth	5	4	Natural Weapons: Claws x2, Bite (as per Lizardfolk); Multiattack feat
Ninth	5-3=2	1	Freedom of Movement at will
Total: 20			

* Use +2 Athletics for Pathfinder Roleplaying Game

Notes:

The character must make a Will save (DC25) not to dedicate a kill to Fithak. He must make an Int save (DC25) not to refer to the moon as an egg. Once per day, he will stalk prey to sacrifice in the name of the sun.

The character appears to be half serpent man. He has no body hair, his eyes are black diamond-shaped slits on dark red "whites", his skin is green and scaly. Only his eye teeth are visible, and they are extremely thin and visibly curved. His gums are toughened dentine, but they are rarely visible; the character can no longer chew grains and grain-based foods. Other foods he will prefer to swallow whole or in small chunks. He will occasionally run a twig or small vine between his lips, stripping off the leaves with his gums. Should he break one or both teeth, new ones

will erupt from the gums within 24 hours. He no longer appears to have a nose, but two black pits are visible above the upper lip. He can only smell through his tongue, which has become thinner, longer, and forked, and frequently projects between his lips when he speaks. His speech acquires a lisping sound, and the character hisses occasionally, especially when angry or alarmed. Thick skin encloses the character's save for a cavity over the actual eardrum. Once a year (more often if he has a rich diet) the character will shed his skin. When not in motion, he holds himself with unnatural stillness and tends to make sharp motions and then become still again. The character will grow sharpened spurs that project from the tips of his fingers and toes. The character is acutely uncomfortable in an urban environment and most comfortable in swampy conditions.

Origins & History

The lizardmen of Gruman'sh Swamp were as disagreeable a bunch as anyone was ever likely to find. They were primitive sun-worshippers who believed that each morning the sun [Fithak] hatched anew from an egg [Grob], only to grow old and enfeebled in the course of the day until it died. From time to time, they saw what they believed to be the Egg of the Sun shining brightly in the night sky, and occasionally the old egg was partially visible during the day. Every now and then, someone would slay the sun only to take its place—their explanation for eclipses. And none of it would happen without the ritual sacrifice of a sentient life.

The lizardmen believed other groups who shared their beliefs sacrificed to restore the powers of the Fithak each night, explaining how they could miss a sacrifice and the sun would still come up. However, to be sure Fithak would rise tomorrow they carried out a daily sacrifice at every opportunity, just in case no one else did.

The quick Gruman'sh ritual requires a round of prayer dedicating the sacrifice so the sun god may rise again. Then a non-lethal slash down the torso of the victim from chest to groin, a horizontal slash across the belly releasing the intestines, two angled slashes from left shoulder to right hip and right shoulder to left hip, and a thrust through the heart before the victim bleeds to death. Assuming the victim is restrained, this takes only seconds to complete—three rounds, to be precise. If the victim resists, it may take longer. The cuts may be inflicted in battle.

For these sacrifices, they first drew upon those captured trespassing on their domain. Then they drew upon those residing within the surrounding communities. If desperate, they used their own elderly and infirm.

Travelers soon learned to avoid the swamps, and their neighbors erected defenses against the raids and mounted punitive expeditions. The lizardmen had to abandon their beloved swampland and take up a life of exile. Wherever they went, though, they maintained their practice of sacrificing every day.

Eventually, enemies hunted them into extinction and destroyed most of their tribal relics. Only one relic was claimed as a memento of the occasion, the crown of twisted and dried rose bush branches worn by the chief of the lizardmen.

The lizardmen believed leadership was a burden and a hardship, requiring the chief to act in the best interests of his people regardless of his personal desires and interests. The crown was constructed to inflict mild discomfort to continually remind the chief of his obligation, and he was required to wear it every waking hour. In recompense for his burden, he was permitted a hedonism his followers were not, and was gifted with abilities by the sun that protected and nurtured him. These luxuries and comforts also served to prevent the chief being tempted to act in a manner other than that required of his role.

Servants discovered the power of the Crown of Thorns when cleaning the prize. They played a cruel joke, placing the barbed nest of woven branches on the head of one of their fellows. He took exception to this, and killed all but one of his co-workers, who he ritually sacrificed in the manner of the Gruman'sh Lizardmen before returning to his senses and fleeing the scene.

Pronunciation guide

Gruman'sh: Groo-man-ash

Fithak: Fifth-ack

Grob: Gurr-ob

GM Information Section

Further History

There is clearly scope for more history. How long ago were the Lizardmen hunted to extinction? Who by? How will they, or their heirs, react to the existence of the Legacy? There is a very flexible requirement; there can be just a little, or quite a lot, it's the GM's choice.

In play

The bonding process begins innocuously. The wearer might dedicate a kill to Fithak, he might refer to the moon as an Egg. Unless the wearer is already predisposed to ritual sacrifice, he will not begin stalking prey to sacrifice in the name of the sun until receiving the final Inheritance. More conspicuous are the physical changes undergone by the wearer, which are detailed extensively in the notes concerning each Inheritance Power. By the time of the final Inheritance, the character will appear to be half serpent man.

The physical changes are progressive and never reverse themselves even if the Legacy Item is removed from the wearer's possession. No healing or transformation will permanently erase it. Should the wearer be Reincarnated into a different body, it will slowly transform to display whatever

characteristics had been acquired prior to the severing of the Bonding.

Suggested Unlocking Challenges

Low level:

- Greet the dawn every day for a week
- Visit a swamp and defeat a creature of CR equal to the character's level
Refer to the moon as an Egg and be morbid at sundown for a week

Mid level:

- Dedicate the victory over a fallen enemy of equal or better CR to tomorrow's dawn
- Defeat a creature symbolic of the night of equal or better CR
- Practice the ritual sacrifice on the body of a defeated enemy

High level:

- Swim for a full day
- Make a personal sacrifice in the interests of those led
- Begin performing the ritual sacrifice daily

Designer's notes: The Crown of Thorns

A typical Legacy Item that offers many benefits to the possessor, but the non-mechanical aspects of the Legacy make it equally undesirable. This provides an excellent character dilemma and makes the roleplaying elements vital for the GM to convey to a prospective wielder.

The following page can be printed to provide additional notes to a player who has come into possession of the Crown of Thorns. The font used for body text in the other pages of notes is **Book Antiqua, 11 pt**, which should be available on any Windows system.

Notes (cont):

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