

SANCTUM SECTORUM

Episode #40

A Martian Odyssey

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Sanctum Secorum Podcast

Episode #40 Companion

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Table of Contents

| | | |
|--|---------------|---------|
| <i>But suddenly there came drifting along...</i> | Frank R. Paul | page 4 |
| <u>Classes</u> | | |
| Tweel | | page 5 |
| <u>Magic Items</u> | | |
| Crystal Egg | | page 6 |
| <i>Honey Calcite</i> | Rob Lavinsky | page 6 |
| <u>Monsters</u> | | |
| Dire Turkey (poem) | | page 7 |
| Dire Turkey | | page 7 |
| <i>Dire Turkey</i> | Matt Sutton | page 7 |
| Dreambeast | | page 8 |
| Pumpkin Bugbear | | page 8 |
| Pumpkin Bugbear Pie (recipe) | | page 8 |
| <i>Pumpkin Bugbear</i> | Kevin Mayle | page 8 |
| Pumpkin Bugbear Mincemeat Pie (recipe) | | page 9 |
| <i>Mince Pie</i> | Alcinoe | page 9 |
| Pyramid Builders | | page 10 |
| <u>Weapons</u> | | |
| Steamgun | | page 10 |



Classes

Tweel

Tweel are brilliantly intelligent creatures whose closest Aereth analog is that of a tall bird such as a flamingo or an ostrich. That comparison, though, is a base one, as these creatures are not of Aereth, nor are they birds. Transported from their home world, the Tweel find it very difficult to communicate in such rudimentary fashions as Aereth's inhabitants. The ancient god, Thoth, was a member of the Tweel.

Hit points: Tweel gain 1d8 hit points at each level.

Weapon training: Tweel have difficulty with the use of most common weapons, which are made for bipedal forms and appendages wholly unlike their own. They suffer a -1d penalty when using terrestrial weapons. Fortunately, they do carry a weapon of their own manufacture: a steam gun, which they are capable of using with deadly accuracy. Tweel do not wear armor and instead add their level to their Armor Class.

Alignment: The Tweel do not normally take part in the struggles of Law and Chaos, being far more interested in the struggle of expanding their knowledge. While an individual Tweel may choose to align with any faction, the race is predominantly neutral in tone while being anarcho-chaotic by societal inclination.

Displaced brain: While not technically "displaced", when compared to any "normal" inhabitant of Aereth or its neighboring dimensional spaces, the placement of the Tweel brain is wholly alien. Protected by the creature's ribs, the brain is housed within the torso while the Tweel's head merely contains sensory organs. As such, Tweel are immune to most critical hits involving damage to the head and can never be knocked out by a blow to the head.

Intelligence: At character generation, Tweel are granted a +6 bonus to intelligence. Even the dimmest of Tweel is an intellectual match for the average sentient. Tweel have a solid understanding of architecture and detect traps as a neutral thief of 2 levels higher.

Move: While "walking", Tweel move at a rate of 25'. When free to move as they wish, Tweel traverse their locale by way of singular leaps capable of carrying them up to 150' at a rate of 75' per round. A leap of greater than 75' requires two rounds to complete, with the Tweel reaching the halfway point at the end of the first round. When leaping, the Tweel plummet back to the ground, head first.

Languages: A Tweel may learn a number of spoken words in a language equal to its Intelligence. It will use this small number of words to express complex concepts allegorically or mathematically. Understanding the communication attempts of a Tweel require an Intelligence check with a DC of 20 minus the number of individual words used to express the idea.

Action dice: Tweel receive a second action die at 5th level.

| Level | Attack | Crit Die/ Table | Action Die | Detect Traps | Ref | Fort | Will |
|-------|--------|--------------------|------------|-----------------|-----|------|------|
| 1 | +1 | 1d10/M | 1d20 | +5 | +2 | +1 | +3 |
| 2 | +2 | 1d12/M | 1d20 | +7 | +2 | +1 | +3 |
| 3 | +4 | 1d14/M | 1d20 | +8 | +2 | +2 | +5 |
| 4 | +5 | 1d16/M | 1d20 | +9 | +4 | +2 | +5 |
| 5 | +7 | 1d20/M | 1d20+1d20 | +10 | +4 | +3 | +7 |

Magic Items



Crystal Egg

"Then I saw something else. There was something beyond the wheel, something shining on a sort of low pedestal. I walked over; there was a little crystal, about the size of an egg, fluorescing to beat Tophet. The light from it stung my hands and face, almost like a static discharge, and then I noticed another funny thing. Remember that wart I had on my left thumb? Look!" Jarvis extended his hand. "It dried up and fell off—just like that! And my abused nose—say, the pain went out of it like magic! The thing had the property of hard ex-rays or gamma radiations, only more so; it destroyed diseased tissue and left healthy tissue unharmed!"

- Stanley Weinbaum, *A Martian Odyssey*

Crystal Egg, artifact, divine radiant: AL L; Special Purpose: to heal the injured and sick; Special Powers: *healing aura* (holder of the crystal egg heals 1 hpturn), *healing pulse* (once per day, releases 10 HD of healing in a 30' radius—affecting those closest first), *strengthened healing* (clerics possessing the egg heal as if +1d higher on *lay on hands* result), *trivial healing* (holder's skin clears, acne vanishes, warts disappear, skin spots fade, hair color returns, teeth whiten).

The so-called "crystal egg" of the Martian mound builders is a mystic artifact that, even now, is barely understood. Capable of generating healing beyond any treatment short of intervention by the holiest of clerics, the egg exacts a price upon those who would keep and use it. Originally found as an item of worship, the egg was not created to be carried—but instead meant to remain within the central temple of the mound builders. The strange creatures slavishly devoted their lives to the creation and maintenance of this artifact, constantly gathering raw materials and often sacrificing their lives to provide the egg with energies.

Taken away from its location, the egg begins to noticeably shrink as it uses up its stored material and energies. Maintaining the egg is a difficult, full-time affair that requires a constant flow of materials and life-energies. The power of the egg requires that 200 hit points' worth of life energies be sacrificed each day. This must be the complete energy of life, not merely the shedding of blood, and must occur within 100' of the crystal egg. Without this steady flow of energy, the egg goes inert within 24 hours, its reserves depleted.

Additionally, 200 pounds' worth of raw crystal (of any sort) must be ground to powder, daily, to maintain the egg's mass (also within that same 100' radius). The powder must then be allowed to be drawn to the stone, as if it were a sort of mystic loadstone, as needed. Unless its mass is replenished, the egg will vanish completely in 100 days (shrinking at the rate of 1% of its full size per day). If the stone is at less than full-size, it can absorb up to an additional 200 pounds of powdered stone per day, to recover its mass. The egg's ability to draw in stone remains active, even if the healing energies of the egg are wholly depleted.

While dedicated, the mound builders were not the most efficient guardians of the egg. They simply gathered what materials they could find (crystals, rocks, sand, wood, metals, etc.) regardless of whether it would aid in keeping the egg's equilibrium. While much of what was sacrificed to the egg was of no use, the sheer amount of materials that were sacrificed in a steady, round-the-clock flow guaranteed that the mound builders were able to prevent any shrinkage of their holy relic.

It stands to reason, of course, that any creature found tampering with, or attempting to steal, such a relic will find themselves the focus of the undying enmity of the mound builders, who will attempt to kill the desecrator on sight.

Monsters

Dire Turkey

Thanksgiving and the featured bird
A task reserved for those most brave:
Now cooling were the pumpkin pies
Next to 'taters and the grav'.

"Beware the dire turkey, my son!
The beak that bites, the claws that tear!
Beware the cranberry bird, and shun
The vile sweet potato bear."

He took his carving knife in hand;
Long time the roaster did he track—
So pondered he by the tall oak tree
He thought of heading back.

And, as in gloomy thought he stood,
The dire turkey, with eyes of flame,
Came creeping through the shrouded wood,
And gobbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
The carving knife went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, without its head
The beast's body it went slack.

"And hast thou slain a dire turkey?
Into the pan, my beamish boy!
Breast sliced so thin! Roast crisped skin!!"
He drooled in his joy.

Thanksgiving and the featured bird
A task reserved for those most brave:
Sat cooling with the pumpkin pies
Next to 'taters and the grav'.



The dire turkey is the larger cousin of the common wild turkey. Capable of flight for short distances, these creatures tend to roost in tall trees and other high and remote places. Highly sought after by huntsmen during the holidays, the meat of a single dire turkey will feed a village of up to 100 people (providing that there are side dishes of course).

Dire Turkey: Init +0; Atk beak +6 melee (1d8) or claws +4 melee (1d5); AC 13; HD 4d8; MV 30' or fly 20'; Act 1d20; SP dive-bomb, pack hunter; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +2; AL N.

Dive-bomb: Dire turkeys are capable of plummeting from great heights as part of their attack, flaring their wings at the last minute and diverting the energy of the dive into their claws. For every 20' a dire turkey dives as part of its attack, its damage increases by +1d, to a maximum of 1d12.

Pack hunter: Dire turkeys are seldom found alone and are often in groups of 3 to 15. When encountered in groups, the turkeys become immune to fear and, when attacking, will charge in groups of 3 at a single target and continue until they or the target is dead.

Pumpkin Bugbear

Pumpkin bugbears come from a tribe of the beasts cursed by the powerful wizard Pil-gram, which magically changed their fleshless heads into great jack-o-lanterns. Standing 8' tall, their bodies are doughy and covered in fur. While their un-cursed brethren are monstrous powerhouses of muscle and sinew, the pumpkin bugbears are nowhere near as strong, spending more time protecting their easily-damaged skulls.

Pumpkin Bugbear: Init +1; Atk claws +3 melee (1d5+3); AC 16 (8); HD 4d8+4; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP glowing vision, vulnerable skull (AC 8, *precision shot* Mighty Deed is required to target); SV Fort +4, Ref -2, Will +2; AL L.

Glowing vision: Pumpkin bugbears have come to enjoy the terrifying effect of placing candles in the hollows of their carved eye sockets. Creatures caught in this glowing gaze must make a DC 12 Will save or flee in terror.

Pumpkin Bugbear Pie

Ingredients

- 1 severed pumpkin bugbear head
- Pastry for single-crust pie (9 inches)
- 2 eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 cup 2% milk
- Whipped cream, optional

Directions

- Cut pumpkin bugbear skull in half lengthwise; discard seeds and brains. Place cut side down in a microwave-safe dish; add 1 in. of water. Cover and microwave on high for 15-18 minutes or until very tender.
- Meanwhile, roll out pastry to fit a 9-in. pie plate. Transfer pastry to pie plate. Trim pastry to $\frac{1}{2}$ in. beyond edge of plate; flute edges. Set aside.
- Drain pumpkin skull. When cool enough to handle, scoop out pulp and mash. Set aside $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups (save remainder for other use).
- In large bowl, combine the mashed pumpkin skull, eggs, brown sugar, cinnamon, salt, ginger and cloves; beat until smooth. Gradually beat in milk. Pour into crust.
- Bake at 425°F for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350°; bake until a dagger inserted in the center comes out as clean as a lawful cleric's conscience, 40-50 minutes. Cover edges with foil during the last 30 minutes to prevent over-browning if necessary. Cool on a wire rack. If desired, pipe whipped cream around edge of pie using a star tip. Refrigerate leftovers.



Pumpkin Bugbear Mincemeat Pie

Mincemeat Ingredients

- 2 lbs. raisins
- 3 lbs. currants
- 1 ½ lbs. lean pumpkin bugbear (substitute beef)
- 3 lbs. pumpkin bugbear suet (substitute beef)
- 2 lbs. moist sugar
- 2 oz citron
- 2 oz candied lemon peel
- 2 oz candied orange peel
- 1 small nutmeg
- 2 quarts of apples
- the rind of two lemons, the juice of one
- ½ pint brandy

Mincemeat Directions

- Stone and cut the raisins once or twice across, but do not chop them.
- Wash, dry, and pick the currants free from stalks and grit.
- Mince the bugbear and suet, taking care the latter is chopped very fine.
- Slice the citron and candied peel.
- Grate the nutmeg.
- Pare, core, and mince the apples.
- Mince the lemon peel and strain the juice.
- Mix ingredients together, adding the brandy when the other things are well blended.
- Press the whole into a jar, carefully exclude the air, and the mincemeat will be ready for use in a fortnight.

Mincemeat Pie Ingredients

- 2 cups pumpkin bugbear mincemeat
- 1½ cups chopped pecans
- 1 Gala apple, peeled & chopped (1 ½ cups)
- ½ cup chopped dried figs
- ⅓ cup packed brown sugar
- ⅓ cup brandy
- 2 teaspoon grated lemon peel

Mincemeat Pie Directions

- In medium bowl, stir together mincemeat, pecans, apple, figs, brown sugar, brandy, and lemon peel. Cover; refrigerate at least 8 hours.
- Let pie filling stand at room temperature 30 minutes. Heat oven to 425°F.
- Meanwhile, roll out pastry to fit a 9-in. pie plate. Transfer pastry to pie plate. Trim pastry to ½ in. beyond edge of plate. Set aside.
- Stir filling well; pour into crust-lined plate.
- Top with second crust and flute; cut slits in several places.
- Bake on lowest oven rack 40 to 45 minutes or until pastry is golden brown. Cool completely on cooling rack, about 5 hours.



Pyramid Builder

"A long, silvery-gray arm appeared, dragging after it an armored body. Armored, I mean, with scales, silver-gray and dull-shining. The arm heaved the body out of the hole; the beast crashed to the sand.

"It was a nondescript creature—body like a big gray cask, arm and a sort of mouth-hole at one end; stiff, pointed tail at the other—and that's all. No other limbs, no eyes, ears, nose—nothing! The thing dragged itself a few yards, inserted its pointed tail in the sand, pushed itself upright, and just sat.

- Stanley Weinbaum, *A Martian Odyssey*

Beings of living silicon, the pyramid builders are wholly alien creatures with undecipherable internal workings. Little is known of them other than that they are drawn to deposits of silicon which they ingest. They exude blocks of silica as their waste material, using it to build pyramidal structures which are used as they gestate into ever-larger sizes. Each pyramid uses the same number of bricks, scaling in size due to larger bricks instead of greater quantity.

Pyramid builder: Init +0; Atk claws +3 melee (1d5 + HD); AC 25; HD (1d30)d8+10; MV 0'; Act 1d20; SP ever-growing, ponderous, single-minded, immune to gasses and poisons, acid vulnerability (double damage); SV Fort +10, Ref +0, Will N/A; AL N.

Ever-growing: With a life cycle measured in the millions of years, these creatures never cease growing. Capable of growing to 100 HD or more, most commonly they are encountered in sizes ranging from 1 to 30 HD. Pyramid builders increase in strength as they grow larger and add their number of hit dice to their melee damage.

Ponderous: These creatures are slow, normally moving at a rate of no more than 10' per turn. They are also slow to recognize any threat, ignoring attackers unless damage is inflicted upon them. Their singular arm, however, moves with great alacrity and, while the creature's movement is slow, their attacks suffer no such deficiency.

Single-minded: If left to their own devices and not injured, these creatures will merely move, eat, create bricks, stack, and repeat. Lacking in understandable sensory organs, they seem oblivious to most of their surroundings and have built rows of pyramids through buildings, knocking them aside if the need arises. They are immune to all Will-based effects.

Weapons

Steamgun

Made of crystal and holding a reservoir of water and another reservoir of a gill of unknown liquid, the steamgun holds up to 100 crystal shards (often poison-tipped—DC 14 Fort save or death), which it can fire at high velocity. While the range of the weapon is not as great as that of a crossbow, its accuracy is greater.

| Weapon | Damage | Range | Cost in gp |
|----------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Steamgun | 1d8+poison | 25/50/100 | 500 |

| Ammunition | Quantity | Cost in gp |
|-------------------------|----------|------------|
| Crystal darts | 100 | 50 |
| Crystal darts, poisoned | 100 | 100 |

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Episode #41

Gone With the Gods

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