

An Artificer's Guide to the Ignis Fatuus

(*Wayne Imlach*)

These fey creatures of fire and misfortune are typically spoken of with muttered curses, accompanied by tales of unfortunate souls lured to their doom while abroad on moonless nights. To the industrious artificer, however, they are a wondrous source of magical energy to be harnessed and put to use!

Fey Lamp (Corpse Candle)

One must first ensnare an Ignis Fatuus. This is best done on a moonless night around the festival of Samhain, as the veil between worlds is thinnest at this time. These wisps appear in abundance across any moor or marsh. The decapitated head of a man, or a large hollowed out turnip grown in the grave of a freshly interred corpse, is set upon the open ground. The skullcap or top must be removed and set aside to provide an opening for the wisp to enter. Retreating to a good distance, the wisp hunter must wait until one of the dancing lights appears – it will be drawn to the trap, much like the reverse of a moth to a flame. The moment it blinks out of sight, the hunter must rush to the trap and replace the lid of the chosen receptacle, trapping the wisp within. A Fey Lamp has been created!

If a corpse head is used as a receptacle, the flesh will gradually dissolve until only the skull remains. The light of the wisp will shine through the eye sockets, nose, and mouth for a rather macabre effect. A turnip root will gradually blacken and harden, as if carved from a dark wood. It is advisable to have cut suitable openings in the root before entrapment. As long as any openings in the object are smaller than the Ignis Fatuus itself (which is a ball of light around 10 cm across) it cannot escape.

A Fey Lamp dims and brightens on proximity to living, sentient beings, becoming but a soft glow if there is no one within 100m, but increasing in intensity relative to both the number of, and the distance to, living person. This makes for an interesting warning device for those seeking solitude. Interestingly, a Mystic that is Mind Cloaked will elicit no response, supporting the hypothesis that the wisp can sense minds rather than bodies.

The Ignis Fatuus will be sustained within its prison as long as it is regularly fed human blood – 1 HP-worth will sustain it for a week. Each day thereafter it goes unfed, there is a 1-in-6 chance it will dissipate, leaving behind a small hard coal-like lump known as an Ignis Lapis (fire stone).

Ignis Lapis (Fire Stone)

This is a useful, if somewhat dangerous, magical object. If exposed to a naked flame it will catch alight and start to crackle and spit tiny, multi-coloured sparks. The following round it will explode violently, sending tiny razor-sharp shards of the flaming stone in all directions. The initial blast does 1d6 +6 damage (minus AF) to anyone within 1m, while everyone else within 5m takes 1d6 damage (minus AF) from the flaming debris. Anything flammable in the area has a 1-in-6 chance of catching fire.

Set in an amulet, it makes a useful device for breaking locks or blasting foes, as long as a suitable source of flame is present. Carefully carved (to avoid sparks!) into an arrowhead, it can be attached

to a shaft to create a missile of devastating power, though once set aflame the bowman should not tarry in letting loose the weapon!

Jack-O-Lantern

A bold Sorcerer may utilise a Fey Lamp to create a creature known as a Jack-O-Lantern. Prior to raising a skeleton with the *Animate Bones* spell, the unfortunate victim's head is removed and replaced with a Fey Lamp. Capturing the wisp in the original skull will save the sorcerer the trouble of procuring two corpses, should a previously obtained lamp be unavailable.

Once created, care must be taken! This undead creature is fueled by both necromantic and fey magic and is far more cunning and deadly than a simple-minded skeleton. It is not subservient to its creator unless immediately brought under control with an *Enslave* spell - this form of binding does not expire as normal, enduring until the death of the caster. Once summoned and successfully bound, it will be found to be a rather intelligent and amusing - if maniacal - companion.

Be wary when sending your servant against other sorcerers! A Dispel Magic of 7 MP or more cast upon a Jack-O-Lantern will break the binding spell. The creature will immediately seek out and turn on its former master. Once avenged, a Jack-O-Lantern will typically look to return to the moors from where it was captured, where it may help or hinder travellers passing through its domain as whimsy takes it.

A Jack-O-Lantern can spit a jet of magical flame up to 2m - this has a SPEED of 15 and does 1d6 HP damage. Magical armour can reduce this damage by its magical bonus. This cannot be used two rounds in a row.

Anyone first encountering a Jack-O-Lantern is subject to a 1d12 Fright Attack that, if successful, causes them to flee in terror for 1d4 rounds.

Once per day, the Jack-O-Lantern may cast the Sorcerer spells *Destrier* and *Vorpal Blade*. The Jack-O-Lantern can sense any human mind within 10m, so cannot be fooled by invisibility.

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|------------------------|------------------|---|-----------------|
| JACK-O-LANTERN | | | RE 6 |
| ATTACK | 18 | As weapon | |
| DEFENCE | 12 | AF 0 (2 vs stabbing; half damage from fire attacks) | |
| MAGICAL ATTACK | N/A | Magic Points | None |
| MAGICAL DEFENCE | 20 | Health Points | 1d6 +16 |
| EVASION | 6 | Movement | 10m (20m) |
| STEALTH | 6 (+6 if hooded) | PERCEPTION | 16 (Panoptical) |

To completely destroy a Jack-O-Lantern, the head must be opened and the wisp released. Otherwise, a new body can be restored with a second *Animate Bones* spell, or it can be kept as a talkative Fey Lamp.

A Jack-O-Lantern is equipped as its master sees fit, typically with at least light armour and a fine weapon, though often invested with various magical trappings as most Sorcerers will wish to ensure their servant is well protected.

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