

# The Wail of the Dead and Dying

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## Description

The Wail of the Dead and Dying is an Aztec death whistle: a small stone skull that can fit in the palm of a hand. A short tube extends from the back of the head, and this particular whistle is decorated with smaller skulls and an Aztec-style headdress. When blown, Aztec death whistles make a horrifying sound; they were used as instruments of war.

## Powers

Like most death whistles, the sound generated by the Wail of the Dead and Dying is not particularly loud, but it is deeply unnerving. When blown, the whistle emits a blood-curdling human-sounding scream which wilts and kills all plants and animals the size of a housecat or smaller (Passings 1) in the immediate vicinity (roughly 6 metres). Larger creatures, including humans (but not angels or demons), are sickened and take a Blight for actions for an hour after hearing the whistle. The sound of the whistle doesn't need to be heard to have an effect: it is just as effective in a crowd during a sporting event or next to a jet engine.

## Provenance

At the height of the great lake city of Tenochtitlán, the Aztec armies went to war would sound hundreds of death whistles simultaneously to shake the resolve of their enemies. The Wail of the Dead and Dying was just one of many but was in the service of N'cho, the Demon of Self-Sabotage. Aztec soldiers in the immediate proximity of the whistle were stricken with discomfort and illness shortly before contact with rival forces and the demon would slip out of the battle surreptitiously having hampered his erstwhile allies. Time and time again, the demon would hamper the forces he ostensibly served with, delighting in mayhem and death inflicted.

Things changed when the Europeans arrived. They brought with them horses and steel and firearms to subjugate the indigenous Aztecs. In his first engagement with the invaders, the trickster demon was cut down along with the forces he was embedded

with, a victim of — among other factors — his own sabotage. The Wail of the Dead and Dying was buried for centuries at the site of the demon's demise, where he was crushed under the hooves and boots of bloodthirsty conquistadors.

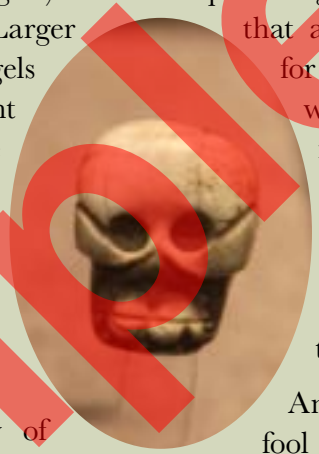
Archaeologists from the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México rediscovered the death whistle from the ancient battlefield a few years ago, and it has been held in the collection of that school until very recently. Now on display in a museum, two demons have set their eyes on the relic.

## Call to Action

The demon Vexus revels in the combination of desperation from crushing poverty, unfettered capitalist greed, and environmental destruction that accompanies deforestation of rainforests for cattle ranching. He plans on using the whistle to kill the Amazon 28 square metres (314 square feet) at a time. If that seems insignificant compared to existing techniques used to clear rainforest, it's because it is: Vexus is cursed with a very narrow focus and "can't see the forest for the trees."

Another demon, Reet, thinks Vexus is a fool and is in direct competition to steal the whistle. Reet would like to bring back the practice of sabotaging groups of humans: his goal is to swing sporting events rather than sabotage military forces. He hopes to make a fortune for himself and his cult through gambling on dark horse teams and then sabotaging their favoured opponents by blowing the whistle near the sidelines or dugouts. Reet is blissfully ignorant to the fact that his proposed usage of the Wail of the Dead and Dying is as petty and myopic as that of Vexus.

As both demons are putting together crews to hit the same museum in Mexico City, many criminals with the right skills have begun talking to each other. Word will reach the personas who might be tempted to try to catch two birds with one stone (whistle). Or they might just be in the museum when both demons arrive.



## Description

This relic is a clockwork crow made of hammered bronze. It is slightly larger than a real crow in order to fit its complicated mechanical workings which have maintained precision over the centuries due to the *virtus* imbued into them. The wings were never meant to work according to natural physics, but are a marvel of engineering and aesthetics driven by divine powers.

## Powers

Pry operates like a mundane crow, and possesses the power of flight (Intercession 1). It follows the basic instructions of its owner — although it can be finicky and even rebellious — and allows them to see through its gemstone eyes (Communion 2), making it the perfect scout. Moreover, Pry can travel at the speed of a Neshor of Barachiel, so it may outpace many angels.

## Provenance

To be more like humans, the angel Faleal tore his own wings off during the late medieval era in Europe. For a few hundred years, he wandered the earth pretending to be mortal, but eventually came to regret his choice. Eelal, Faleal's closest friend, felt great pity for the fallen angel, and when Eelal too fell to earth, they almost immediately imbued their *virtus* into an object that would allow Faleal to fly once more. Faleal wandered far and used the bird often, and it was next documented in Mongolia.

General Jiao Yu aided in the overthrow of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty and establishment of the Ming Dynasty. During his service to the emperor's court, he catalogued a variety of gunpowder military technology of the time in his text *Huolongjing* (roughly Fire Drake Manual). He hints only briefly at his

secret weapon, an aerial spotting device shaped like a bird.

After a century changing hands across armies and being carried west, Pry was shot down by Hungarian troops during the Siege of Wiener Neustadt in 1487. The automaton was recovered and returned to Matthias Corvinus, the King of Hungary and Croatia, and was featured in the royal family's collection. When Matthias died, his illegitimate son John was convinced to resign his claims to the throne. The official story was that he was promised the crown of Bosnia in return (which he never received), but the truth is that he took the clockwork bird from the



government in exchange for removing himself from the line of succession. The government eventually decided the best place to hide something so obviously supernatural was with the other treasures of the monarchy, inside Buda Castle in what is now Budapest.

It would have been a perfect hiding place but for a wealthy member of The Supper Club named William "Skip" St. Germaine, who tracked it down while hunting Hapsburg treasures. He now intends to buy it or steal it, then show it off not just to other Club members but at billionaire luncheons

and trade shows. Just to prove he's awesome.

## Call to Action

St. Germaine is exactly the wrong person to have possession of an ancient angelic artifact that defies basic physics (which will be obvious to every mortal who lays eyes on it). Angels are going to have to steal it from the castle to stop him getting his hands on it. Those who knew Faleal or Eelal might feel honour-bound to deny him the relic on principle, but any celestial would be revolted at the very idea of it being owned by this sleazy piece of garbage.