

The Seafarer's Bottle of Rum

Item Description

It is an old bottle of rum, the label faded and aged by the passage of time, but its brand can still be made out- Captain Jack's, with the emblem of an anchor with waves on both sides of it. The liquid tastes like a well-aged sugarcane rum with a deep flavor. It is full and seems perfectly fine, but the cork looks like it been replaced- it is noticeably newer than the label.

The Seafarer's Bottle of Rum is a mildly cursed magic item with some benefits. The oldest story of Captain Jack's Rum is filled with romance and betrayal, the later stories filled with adventure and daring.

The Bottle of Rum is never ending. It always fills itself up after being emptied. This makes it a premium item on ships and long journeys. Unfortunately, there is one major disadvantage- possession of the bottle, and especially drinking from it, makes navigation drastically more difficult. Compasses will swing a few degrees off, ships find themselves drifting slightly off course, and maps seem vaguer than they might otherwise be. These issues are only compounded by the hangover.



Quick Guide

Core Genre	Fantasy, Sci-Fi
Origin	Presumed Arcane
Party Impact	Blemish
Pricing	3,000-12,000 GP
Rarity	Rare



AKA: Captain Jack's Rum, The Bottomless Bottle

Powers & Abilities

Notes

The Seafarer's Bottle varies in size, volume, and shape, but generally holds a fifth of rum. The drink is a strong dark rum that tastes heavily of sugarcane.

Main Properties

The main property of the bottle is its ability to endlessly refill itself. It isn't literally never ending- after a bottle is emptied or partially drain out, it will refill itself as soon as it is returned an upright position.

The created rum does not detect as magical and cannot be dispelled. For all intents and purposes, it is treated as a normal alcoholic drink.

Side Properties

The physical portion of the item, the bottle, is far more difficult to break than its appearance would suggest. While it is possible to damage or destroy a bottle, it would take a blacksmith's hammer and potentially several hours. A cannon would also work. This resilience leads them to often survive shipwrecks, washing ashore with what's left of the crew.

Hidden Properties

Anyone who possesses or drinks from the bottle suffers a severe, secret penalty to navigation checks (-10). Note that only navigation checks to determine one's current location or to chart/follow a route are affected. Other checks, like discerning the location of a city on a map, would be unaffected- though players may begin to mistrust their maps after finding themselves continually lost!

While not a set mechanic, the Seafarer's Bottle has a general tendency to head towards dangerous or unknown areas- many great impromptu voyages of discovery have been sparked by it, though many missing ships also owe their status to the effects of the rum.

Conversions

5e: Give players "secret disadvantage". Roll a secret d20 as they roll and take the lowest. If they have advantage from another source, roll the secret dice regardless and compare it to the highest of their rolls. The lowest is taken. Alternatively, just raise the DC by 5-10.

D100: -50% to navigation checks as detailed.

GURPS: -8 to the Navigation Skill.

SCI-FI: The penalty to navigational checks also effects plotting hyperjumps and FTL routes. It generally doesn't cause instantaneous losses (plotting a ship into a star for instance), but it often causes ships to end up in drastically different- and commonly hazardous- places.

History

Relevant Excerpt from the Lore of Far Nod

The earliest known legend regarding the Bottle of Infinite Rum, or the Seafarer's Bottle, dates back between two and three hundred years. The original story has countless variations, making it difficult to place a land of origin. Every region seems to have its own version, with regional morals and customs added.

The earliest and most common version is as follows. Two suitors, one a poor sailor and the other a well-off officer were competing for the attention of a young woman of considerable charm. While the officer had wealth and status, the sailor was of a far more charismatic nature. Given his profession, he was forced to return to the sea time and again, but he was a seaman through and through, and thus always returned

The soldier, desperate to persevere in the contest, sought underhanded help. This is where most tales differ. Some say it was a demon or a devil. Others say a trickster god or even an angel in disguise, fooling evil for its own ends. The earliest versions provided a name; Madam Rovita, a wandering mystic of unknown origins. He traded his future for a second chance at the woman's heart and was given a bottle of rum in return.

In a show of seemingly gracious defeat, he gifted the bottle to the sailor as the sailor prepared for yet another voyage- save that this time, the sailor did not return.

It varies from version to version, but it's commonly accepted that the sailor was lost for three to seven years, cast about by the winds of destiny as the bottle swayed his map, his judgement, and even the winds themselves. He would make his way through trial and tribulation through wit and cunning. The cursed bottle of rum ended up in taking him to distant lands and dangerous waters- but great risk is

often followed by great reward. The sailor supposedly amassed quite a fortune in his time at sea.

Again, the versions differ here- most to place his adventures in whatever land is most distant to the locale. Eventually, when he returns after discarding the bottle in bet or contest, the officer hangs himself in despair and the sailor lives happily ever after with the women.

This is the earliest version I have found. Oddly enough, it can be found not only in different regions, but on different continents, all with roughly the same estimated date of origin, lending some credence to the idea that the story contains a fragment of truth. Personally, I refute this on the simple grounds that no sailor has ever had an unemptied bottle of rum for more than three years.

Ballad of Pantsless Ned

*There once was a man named Pantsless Ned,
His breeches long worn out,
A fool or a drunk or true blockhead,
But his skill was in no doubt.*

*The man could scarcely read a map,
Or maybe scarcely read,
When he took the helm of an old deathtrap,
The crew did shortly bleed,
The crew did shortly bleed.*

*Lost at sea on an endless cruise,
The men were not sustained,
If not for his bottle of an endless booze,
That ship would be bloodstained,
That ship would be bloodstained.*

*Now Ned sails the seas with his land-lost crew,
Good spirits in two ways,
He seeks to return to the place called home,*

*His britches still astray,
His britches still astray.*

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From the "Personal Published Journal of Emilo Turas"

My time on the Boutagati Isles were strange to say the least. I had arrived in my predicament by a series of unfortunate maritime incidents. The natives, much feared for their savagery, proved to be hospitable hosts (they seemed accustomed to odd guests, which would soon be made clear to me), though my grasp of their language remained quite loose. My adventures on the isle are worthy a manuscript all their own, but my exit from the isle was most noteworthy.

It began when the shaman of the Boutagati tribe became rather excitable, raising his arms and chanting in a loud voice. My translation is certainly inaccurate, but my closest approximation was that it sounded similar to "gods of above". Despite my friendly ties, I was skeptical, until the sky became as fire and a great mountain of metal descended from above, filling the sky with light. A large iron cauldron (for lack of a better term) descended down. From the cauldron emerged seven figures. Five were similar to man in appearance, while I cannot hazard a guess at the origins of the other three.

The village erupted in celebration. Bonfires were lit and suckling pigs were roasted. The party went long into the night. The reason for such a joyous reception was made clear in the early morning- an exchange of gifts was made between the gods and the tribe. Exchanges of food, drink, and all manner of shell and plant from the island was given- great quantities of food and clothing were given in exchange, but also many of the sick and crippled were healed. How pitiful our gods must stack compared to theirs, for ours require the use of clerics and priests to do their will upon earth while theirs merely do as they please!

I too partook of the exchange. I had little to offer- most of my possessions, save this

journal, had been lost in my trials. I did, however, have one possession left- an enchanted bottle of rum, destined never to empty! Truly, it gotten me into and out of many scrapes, but presented with divinity, what could I do? I gave the bottle to the most human-looking of the figures, and after demonstrating it's properties, was warmly received. They gifted me a holy relic, a long tube capable of creating immense light without end and sounds no man could ever have heard, along with clothing and food and many more weighty gifts.

The gods left in the morning, their cauldron ascending just as it descended. The metal mountain- their Iron Olympus- stayed where it was, hovering above the isle for the day, before leaving at next dusk. It ascended into the sky as night fell, and seemed to erupt fire and light yet again, swerving wildly into the night sky. I was rescued within a week- the light-maker given to me made signaling a passing ship a simple task- and bid my farewell to the natives. From what I have heard, the gods have not returned since that day, but I'm sure they shall when the mood strikes them- after all, perhaps they shall desire an everlasting bottle of whiskey?

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A rare translation of the Odyssey, supposedly translated by Thomas More, was noted as more nonsensical than traditional translations- whether these were satirical additions or a legitimate attempt at translation based on an earlier version is unknown. It was occasionally referenced as the "Odyssey". Within it, Odysseus part takes of a chance meeting with Dionysus, who gifts him with an ever-full wineskin similarly to the story Hermes and Perseus. He refused to share his name until the hero ate and drank his fill with the god. While Odysseus believed it was Dionysus, the precise phrasing suggests it may have been Dolus, the spirit of trickery, potentially at the prodding of Poseidon, who was slighted due to a lack of sacrifice before Odysseus's journey.

Skill Checks

Connoisseur: A successful check will reveal that it is sugarcane rum, aged between 5-10 years. It tastes fine, but not exceptional- top shelf stuff for an average taproom, but not anything that would make a true collector gasp.

Alchemy: The rum is laced with magic due to its conjured nature, but it is stable rum, immune to standard arcane dispelling effects. Due to the residual magic, there could be side effects if the rum is used in a potion creation process, so it is ill advised. The bottle itself is simply a reinforced bottle, though the glass seems to be made from ordinary beach sand.

Appraisal: This is a highly valuable magic item based purely on it's potential economic return. Selling a normal bottle of rum of this caliber could easily cost 2-8 silver- the ability to produce hundreds or thousands of bottles a day leads to a high profit margin (though inflation would reduce this). Additionally, the potential military application in regard to logistics make it potentially valuable.

Brewing: A successful brewing check reveals that the rum is identical every time, with no deviations. It also reveals that there was a brewing company headed by a sailor named "Captain Jack" a few decades ago, but it burned down.

Detect Magic: The rum does not detect as magic, unless thoroughly examined at which point a small amount of residual magic may be detected. The bottle detects as arcane conjuration magic.

Detect Evil or Good: The bottle detects as neither evil nor good.

Identify: Identification spells will reveal the information listed under main properties.

History/Knowledge/Bardic Lore: A successful check can reveal one of the stories above, as most appropriate.

Arcane Examination: Lengthy (1-4 weeks) examination can reveal that the bottle bends probability around it slightly, though only sporadically and towards an unknown purpose. It seems designed to gravitate towards the sea.

Science/Physics: The bottle exhibits the ability to spontaneously generate matter in flagrant disregard for most laws of physics and thermodynamics. There is no known source or cause for the rum. Additionally, the rum is chemically identical to normal rum.

Creation: Creating a new Seafarer's Bottle of Rum is a difficult task, mostly due to how little is known about it. First, bottles made of sand from the beach or sea must be made. These bottles must be properly made over time, up to a month a bottle, with sea shanties being sung over it as it is made. The bottle must then be reinforced through arcane means, layering a base enchantment upon it to fortify it, a relatively expensive task. Finally, it must be filled with rum straight from another Seafarer's Bottle and left to age for seven years. Finally, the bottle must be cast into the sea, left to wash up where the tides decide it.