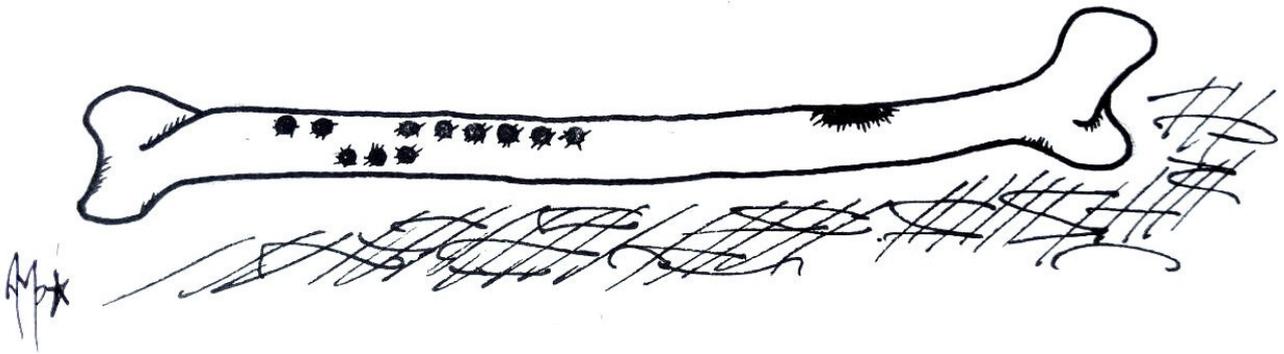


A weird artefact with some pretty involved effects. Entirely untested, toot at your own risk.



The Bone Flute of Zalmoxes

“You find a femur, fashioned into a flute. The design is unremarkable, and the structure resembles that of a simple, horizontally gripped eastern make.”

Description: The Bone Flute of Zalmoxes is made of a humanoid femur, and structurally matches an undecorated *bansuri* flute, roughly 60 cm (2') in length. If investigated, it is obvious that the individual from whom the original bone was collected was unusually tall.

Identification: Zalmoxes of the Wheel was a bard-king of the ancient Hyperboreans, at the time of their decline. Through extended meditation of the passing light of the stars, he gained the revelation that time is a cycle of pain, through which endless incarnations wander meaninglessly. After his enlightenment, he carved a flute from his own femur, and spent his remaining reign playing songs of despair and wistful dirges of change to his subjects.

When identified, through whatever means, read the following:

“A reeling realization is inflicted upon your open mind: the flute has been made to sing the songs of fallen cultures, kingdoms, and realities. Anyone who has touched it has touched the oblivion of countless stories and souls. Anyone playing it can possibly release these horrors upon the surroundings, causing distress, and untold destruction.”

Effects and powers: The effects of the flute are threefold.

1. Anyone who touches it is affected by the Touch of Zalmoxes, a lingering effect from the dying days of ancient Hyperborea (see below).
2. If anyone carries or owns the flute for an extended period of time there are additional effects that come into play, as the destruction witnessed by the instrument seeps into their aura; this is called the Cure of Zalmoxes (see below).
3. If played the flute can produce the Song of Zalmoxes (see below, *note* that the Song is laid out on the last pages of this document so they can be used as a player handout).

NOTE that the both the Touch and the Cure of Zalmoxes can only be detected as strange latent effects or a curses, and should never be described to the players in detail, regardless of identify check results.

The Touch of Zalmoxes: Roll on the below table if a character has touched the flute (1d6 modified by their Personality). The roll should happen on the next rest, or whenever it is convenient for the story, effects are not immediate. After suffering whatever effect occurs, the character gains an immunity to the Touch for the next 28 days. Bare skin is not required for the effect to take place.

NOTE that optimally the effects of the Flute should not be explained to the characters at all, but rather impressed upon the players as urges towards certain things, and strange physical occurrences.

TABLE A: The Touch of Zalmoxes	
D6 + PER mod	Effect
<i>0 or less</i>	<p>Wounds: The character takes 1d8 points of damage, experienced as the feeling of being rent apart by uncontrollable forces. There is no apparent or visible source for this damage, nor is the character directly aware of what is causing it. Witnesses do not see any source for the pain either, although it is obvious the sufferer is damaged and hurting.</p> <p>If this damage would kill the character they are rendered comatose instead, remaining in this state for d7 days or until healed magically. The damage does not heal as normal, and Cleric Lay On Hands checks are treated as one step lower.</p>
<i>1</i>	<p>Scars: The character takes 1d6 points of damage, experienced as a realization of old wounds that weren't there earlier. Scars are present, and the character has vague memories of other people getting hurt in those body parts.</p> <p>If this damage would kill the character they are rendered comatose instead, remaining in this state for d7 days or until healed magically. Damage heals as normal, but Cleric Lay On Hands checks are treated as one step lower.</p>

2	<p>Pain: The character takes 1d4 points of damage, experienced as an inordinate strain on internal organs and joints. They have clear memories of self-destructive acts towards these body parts, but the perpetrators are clearly not the character themselves, but rather other, unrecognizable beings.</p> <p>This damage cannot kill a character. Damage heals as normal, and can be healed as normal.</p>
3	<p>Memories: The character is plagued by the recollections and references of others, experiencing dé ja vu almost constantly.</p> <p>This dissonance lasts 1d7 days, and causes them to be at a -2 to all checks except those considering perception and intuition, which are made at a +2.</p>
4	<p>Caress: The character feels content when witnessing despair or pain, yearning for the oblivion at the end of all things.</p> <p>They gain +2 to all morale checks and Will saves to resist fear effects and disgust. In these situations, they experience elated memories of similar experiences; these memories are clearly not their own. The effect lasts for d7 days.</p>
5	<p>Joy: The character experiences feelings of happiness and contentment when faced with entropy and destruction, acutely realizing the path of all things, and wishing to witness it to the very end.</p> <p>They gain +2 to all saves for the duration of d7 days, freely expressing their joy at the discomfort and pain of others.</p>
6 or more	<p>Bliss: The character realizes that nothing matters and all things are entropy. They eschew expressing this revelation to anyone around them, but are secretly strengthened by pain around them, experiencing orgasmic joy at the destruction of others.</p> <p>Whenever a creature takes 10+ damage from a single event within 7 metres (21') of the character, they are healed by half that amount. The effects last for d7 days.</p>

The Cure of Zalmoxes: If a character owns and carries the Flute of Zalmoxes for a period of 12 days, the effects of the Cure start to take effect. Consult the list below for details, effects are permanent but when experienced once, cannot be gained again, rather the progression continues with further involvement:

12+ days: The character experiences a distinct lack of worry or care, and starts to make light of otherwise grueling situations. They feel as if nothing really matters, not even their own pain or survival, for *all is ephemeral*. Add +1 HP to their maximum hit points.

18+ days: The character starts losing fear and respect for things or events around them. They realize that nothing is worth their horror, as *everything will come to pass*. Add +1 to their Will save and they are immune to fear based damage.

24+ days: The character becomes aware of the fact that *all of this has happened before*. They become bored and dull towards even the most unusual of events, adding +1 to their Ref save and perception checks, as they seem to expect everything that happens to them.

30+ days: The character slowly builds a dissonance with their body, understanding that it is *just dust coiling around an ideal*. They are able to withstand things otherwise beyond their capability as they simply do not care anymore; add +1 to their Fort save, and they no longer disturbed by pain.

2 months or more: As the character understands that the *world is a wheeling river of pain without meaning*. Their alignment shifts towards Chaotic. If already Chaotic, they lose their alignment entirely, becoming one with the void (Judge's discretion on consequences). They also lose the ability to resist magical coercion effects, and resist mundane coercion at a -15.



The Song of Zalmoxes: If any song is played on the Flute of Zalmoxes, it transforms into the Song of Zalmoxes: a dirge of pain and suffering and a laudation of change that destruction brings.

- A character has to use all of their action dice to play the flute, the song persists as long as the flute is played, and the effect should be re-rolled every round the flute is used.
- Playing requires a suitable occupation or background: unskilled occupations use lowered dice, skilled occupations use a d20 or more. Bards use a d30.
- Characters using the instrument may lose themselves in the music, using Intelligence as if it was spellburn.
- A user may always choose a lower result from the table below, regardless of roll.

TABLE B: The Song of Zalmoxes

Skill check die + level + PER mod	Effect
1 or less; or natural 1	<p>The pain of existence ripples through the vicinity, causing 1d8 damage to everyone within 3 m (10') of <i>the instrument</i>. The damage is experienced as cramps, seizures and a violent panic rising from within.</p> <p>If the character playing the flute takes any damage, they are forced to stop and avoid the instrument for 1d7 days, and they suffer a major corruption effect.</p>

2-8	<p>The irrelevance of the present forces ennui on all sentient creatures nearby, causing 1d6 damage within 5 m (15') of <i>the instrument</i>. The damage is experienced as a listless weight pulling their bodies down to rest.</p> <p>If the character playing the flute takes any damage, they are forced to stop and avoid the instrument for 1d7 days, and they suffer a minor corruption effect.</p>
9-13	<p>The fear of the future is brought manifest in creatures around <i>the instrument</i>. Everyone in the vicinity of 7 m (20') takes a Will save against the check result, or suffers a -4 to all morale checks for the next 1d6 turns (effect is cumulative).</p> <p>If the character playing the flute is affected they are forced to stop and avoid the instrument for 1d7 days.</p>
13-16	<p>The horror of reality is settles upon those hearing the dirge. Everyone within the vicinity of 8 m (25') takes a Will save against the check result, or automatically fails all morale checks for the next 2d6 turns (effect is cumulative). The artist is unaffected.</p>
17-19	<p>The cries of dead families echo through the bone, bringing about small goutts of wind, feeling like the grasping hands of those lost to time. These can be directed by the character holding the instrument, dealing 1d3+character level attacks of 1d3 damage to one or more targets within 10 m (30').</p>
20-24	<p>The shrieks of disappeared tribes ring through the flute, appearing as painful flashes of agony in the minds of creatures within 12 m (35'). 1d6+character level creatures can be targeted with these attacks, each suffering 1d8 damage, a single creature can be targeted once.</p>
25-27	<p>The screams of bygone kingdoms sing through the flute, appearing as painful memories of loss and despondency. The artist may target this effect to an area of 5 m (15') with a central point within 15 m (40') of themselves. Any creatures in that area of effect take 1d10 points of damage.</p>
28-31	<p>The destruction of dying empires blasts through the flute as a single note, which may be directed at a single target within line of sight of the artist. The shrill cry rips through the reality shell of the recipient, causing them to visibly wither. Target takes 3d6 damage, and is forced to take a Will save against the check or lose 1d4 points from 1d4 random stats immediately.</p>
32+	<p>The oblivion of fallen planes is brought down from the formless void, and hits an area of 25 m in diameter (80') within the artist's line of sight, with a delay of 1 round. The song causes all creatures and objects in the area to take 3d6 damage, and renders the location barren for all plant life for 1d10 years. The artist is affected with the Touch of Zalmoxes, even if they'd otherwise be immune to it (see table above).</p>