



DEATH BUGLE

No one begs to be given life, and this is as true anywhere as it is in the Greater Red Sea. Atop the sands and along the Outrim existence is arduous at best. World nemeses creep off the steppes, violent dust-ups make travel near impossible, and the distance between settlements is counted in months rather than miles. Thus, the cities swell; their walls pregnant with all manner of folk coming and living and going and hoping to avoid the desperate conditions on the outside. Space in the largest cities is fast running out, and as a reaction it has become illegal to bury the dead inside of city walls.

To many, death is seen as a relief from the hardship of life given without permission; A final affirmation of free will and a cause for festive observance. Before interior burials were outlawed, colorful ceremonies would honor the death of a loved one and in the wake would be a jubilant celebration. A panoply of musicians would perform somber standards on either end of an ox-pulled hearse as it traveled to the city's Flower District, where the deceased would be finally lowered into the ground. The entire procession would then erupt into a joyful clamor of song, dance, and drink.

Funerary parades are now forced to travel as much as half a day from the edge of a city gate to ground soft enough to bury the dead. Outside of these gates danger is immediate, and when the city cannot pledge a detail to protect the procession it becomes the job of a musician to provide fight. It is not uncommon for an entire marching band to break step and defend themselves with crude weapons made of instruments and spare blades, before falling immediately back into step and song without missing a note.

A death bugle is one of the most common of these hastily built weapons and it is as exactly as it sounds; half instrument and half tool of death. It damages as a smaller sword or handaxe might.