Item: Oleum

A black liquid, oleum has a foul, bitter odor. It occurs naturally around the world, but is particularly common in the waste. Though it forms underground, oleum is generally found in surface pools in areas of barren waste terrain.

You can use a flask of oleum as a splash weapon. Use the rules for alchemist's fire, except that it takes a full-round action to prepare a flask with a fuse. Once it is thrown, there is a 50% chance of the flask igniting successfully. Burning oleum is hard to put out, granting a –4 penalty on the Reflex save to extinguish the fire. The oleum burns away within 4 rounds (eliminating the penalty on putting out the fire).

Raw oleum burns readily, but it is smoky when it does so. The smoke created by burning oleum is heavy smoke (see Smoke), so a wide area of open air is required for the substance to burn safely. Every round when raw oleum burns, it produces enough smoke to fill a 5-foot cube. For this reason, oleum is typically used only in lamps made to burn outdoors. The smoke drives away flying insects.

Oleum is also used to lubricate moving parts; a flask of it can cover a 5-foot square, provided that the surface is smooth. A creature can walk within or through an area of oleum at half normal speed by making a DC 10 Balance check. Failure means it can't move that round, while failure by 5 or more means it falls prone (see the Balance skill). If an area of oleum is ignited, it burns for 4 rounds and deals 1d3 points of fire damage to each creature in the area.

A quart of oleum (two flasks) can coat a Medium creature, providing a +4 circumstance bonus on Escape Artist checks and opposed grapple checks made to resist being grappled or to escape a pin. Oleum applied in this manner also acts as insect repellent, protecting you from normal vermin (such as those summoned by insect plague) and granting a +4 bonus to Armor Class against vermin. A creature with oleum on its hands takes a –4 penalty on grapple checks or any task requiring a solid grip, including attack rolls with weapons. A roll of 1 on the attack means the oleum-coated creature drops the slippery weapon.

When worn, oleum is uncomfortable and unpleasant. You take a –2 penalty on Fortitude saves against natural heat effects. Further, oleum makes you quite flammable, granting a –4 penalty on saves against supernaturally hot effects and any attack involving fire, including Reflex saves to put yourself out after catching fire. When subjected to a fire-based attack that does not normally cause subjects to catch on fire, you must make a DC 14 Reflex save or catch on fire. As indicated above, oleum burns away after 4 rounds.

An ounce of oleum can substitute for the material component usually used for a grease spell.

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