Vox Murine

Wondrous item, very rare

A black fire-opal set onto a stud of polished silvered steel, to be worn as a single earring in a pierced ear. The steel is resistant to corrosion, and the fire-opal occasionally catches the light in a slightly disconcerting fashion for observers.

The Vox Murine was created by an ancient queen of the Savage Coast in preparation for her eventual overthrow and captivity. The earring allows the wearer to hear, understand, and communicate with rats, as though under a permanent speak with animals spell for rats only.

Abovombe, the queen in question, used the Vox Murine to build a spy network without rival while atop the Cinnabryl Throne, but was wise enough to foresee her own downfall. After she was incarcerated, her relationships with the rats with whom she spoke permitted her imprisonment to pass in relative comfort, and her knowledge of her erstwhile kingdom to continue unabated. In time, she even took several of the rats as simultaneous familiars on a permanent basis, a feat thought impossible both before and since and only vaguely approached by the works of Kwalish, who theorised that the Vox Murine’s level of contact brought new insight to the familiar relationship. The Alphatian wizard Haldemar deBrouche, possessor of the Vox Murine for approximately five years in the early days of the Great Expansion, warned that consistent use of the earring’s power had malign long-term effects but did not specify their nature; deBrouche was murdered in the planar city-state of Sigil and his possessions stolen, the Vox Murine among them. Its current whereabouts are unknown.

by Stuart Langridge