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Living Spells

**Acid, Slumber, and Stone****Part 1 of 4**

By Sean K. Reynolds

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One of the innovative new ideas in the *Eberron Campaign Setting* is that of the living spell—a spell giving permanent form and semblance of life during the terrible battles of the war that eventually created the Mournland. This unique use of the template mechanic applies a template to a spell rather than an existing creature, opening up a vast number of possibilities for new creatures. In this series we'll create stat blocks for various "common" living spells (saving you the work of doing so) and explore the boundaries of the living spell template by applying it to unusual spells or those that don't quite fit its requirements. The end result for you is a series of useful living spells, some of them less predictable than others.

In this article we'll create a living acid arrow, a living deep slumber, and a living flesh to stone spell.

Living Acid Arrow

Acid resistance is rare among civilized troops (especially compared to protection against fire or cold), and *Melf's acid arrow* is a good way to debilitate or kill enemy leaders, particularly spellcasters. Because of the frequency of its use, living acid arrows are fairly common among the living spells populating the Mournland, and they are greatly feared for their speed and continuing damage. This living spell was formed by a *Melf's acid arrow* spell with caster level 6.

This thing looks like a noxious yellow or green puddle, with acrid vapors rising from its surface. Behind it is a trail of scarred vegetation and smoothed stone. It reaches forward with thin pseudopods, pulling itself along with remarkable speed.

**Living Acid Arrow CR 5**

N Medium Ooze

Init -1; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., Listen -1, Spot -1**AC** 11, touch 11, flat-footed 11

(+2 deflection, -1 Dex)

hp 39 (6 HD); DR 10/magic**Immune** critical hits, flanking, gaze attacks, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, polymorph, sleep, and effects that rely on sight**SR** 16**Fort** +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3**Speed** 60 ft. (12 squares)**Melee** slam +5 (1d4+1 plus acid arrow)**Base Atk** +4; **Grp** +5**Atk Options** engulf, acid arrow**Abilities** Str 12, Dex 9, Con 12, Int --, Wis 9, Cha 12

Acid Arrow (Su) A creature hit by a living acid arrow's slam attack or engulfed by it takes 2d4 points of acid damage. This acid lasts for 2 rounds after the initial attack, dealing 2d4 acid damage each round unless somehow neutralized.

Engulf (Ex) A living acid arrow can flow around a Medium or smaller creature as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. The living spell merely has to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against the living spell, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw against the engulf attack. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed at a DC 13 Reflex save or be engulfed; on a success they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the spell moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the full normal effect of the *acid arrow* spell (see above) each round on the living spell's turn, and are considered to be grappled.

Living Deep Slumber

The *deep slumber* spell is very effective in wartime when you need to capture enemies for interrogation or preserve their defenses for your own use. Strong enough to eliminate even a mid-level character, the spell was a favorite of spellcaster assassins who needed to deal with multiple opponents silently and quickly. Quiet and unearthly, they are particularly dangerous near water or on the Mournland's rare bright nights, as at those times

they are easily mistaken for standing pools or clouds of glowing bugs. This living spell was formed by a *deep slumber* spell with caster level 8.

This cloud of blue mist is occasionally lit by silvery sparkles or flashes of moonlike light. Its motion seems simultaneously languid and frenetic, like a slow but determined nightmare approaching a helpless sleeper.

Living Deep Slumber CR 7

N Large Ooze

Init +0; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., Listen +0, Spot +0

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 12

(+3 deflection, -1 size)

hp 52 (8 HD); DR 10/magic

Immune critical hits, flanking, gaze attacks, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, polymorph, sleep, and effects that rely on sight

SR 16

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee slam +6 (1d6+1 plus deep slumber)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +11

Atk Options engulf, deep slumber

Abilities Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int --, Wis 10, Cha 13

Deep Slumber (Su) A creature hit by a living deep slumber's slam attack or engulfed by it must succeed at a DC 14 Will save or fall asleep for 6 minutes. Creatures with 11 or more HD are immune to this effect. As wounding a sleeping creature awakens it, it is likely that the ooze's later slam attacks will awaken the creature only to have this sleep attack trigger again.

Engulf (Ex) A living deep slumber can flow around a Large or smaller creature as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. The living spell merely has to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against the living spell, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw against the engulf attack. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed at a DC 14 Reflex save or be engulfed; on a success they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the spell moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the full normal effect of the *deep slumber* spell each round on the living spell's turn, and are considered to be grappled.

Designer's Notes: It is important to note from a game design standpoint that the "area spells only" limitation of the living spell template is there mainly to keep the template simple and to prevent abuse by applying it to single-target spells (which tend to be more powerful than the individual effects of an area spell of that spell level), though in many cases applying the template to a targeted spell would not cause any problems. For example, if you applied the template to the arcane version of *hold person* (a targeted 3rd-level spell) you would end up with a creature very similar to the living deep slumber spell presented here (the differences would be that the living hold person would not break the ongoing spell effect with its slam attacks and the target would get a save every round to free itself rather than depending on others to end the effect). Keep this in mind when considering spells for the template; a spell precluded by the template's general restriction to "area spells only" may actually be quite suitable as long as you think ahead to the possible repercussions of the chosen spell or perhaps modify its spell effect.

The third living spell presented here is an example of one of these "off limits" spells: *flesh to stone*. *Flesh to stone* is a targeted spell and therefore cannot be used with the living spell template as written; if anything, a creature that can petrify at will has a higher CR than a simple template modifier could account for. However, there is no reason we can't speculate that some mage once created a *gorgon's stony breath* spell, which causes creates an area of greenish-gray fumes that cause creatures in the area to slow down and eventually turn to stone. Rather than going through the hassle of creating such a spell and then applying the living spell template to that new spell, we can model the effects of that spell by using a staggered effect *flesh to stone* spell (slowing on first strike, stoning on the next) even though that spell is not allowed under the rules of the template. The two-step process of the creature's special ability makes it much less lethal and keeps its power level in accord with the template's CR calculation.

Living Flesh to Stone

Generals are always trying to find a way to prevent enemies from charging, particularly cavalry, and eventually a clever mage developed the *gorgon's stony breath* spell, which slowed approaching enemies and eventually turned them into obstacles for later charges. Though living spells of this type are rare in the Mourmland, some lonely hills are dotted with hundreds of statues in battle poses, leading some to believe a medusa, basilisk, or gorgon lairs nearby. This living spell was formed using a modified *flesh to stone* spell with caster level 12.

This cloud of greenish-gray smoke smells of wet earth and dust. It emits a low crackling sound like a lake freezing in wintertime.

Living Flesh To Stone Spell CR 12

N Large Ooze

Init +1; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., Listen +1, Spot +1

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 15

(+6 deflection, +1 Dex, -1 size)

hp 102 (12 HD); DR 10/magic

Immune critical hits, flanking, gaze attacks, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, polymorph, sleep, and effects that rely on sight

SR 22**Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +11****Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares)**Melee** slam +11 (1d6+4 plus slowstone)**Base Atk +9; Grp +16****Atk Options** engulf, slowstone**Abilities** Str 16, Dex 13, Con 16, Int --, Wis 13, Cha 16

Slowstone (Su): A creature hit by a living flesh to stone's slam attack or engulfed by it must succeed at a DC 19 Fort save or be slowed as if by a *slow* spell for 12 rounds. This effect counters and dispels *haste*. A slowed target that is hit again and fails this save a second time turns to stone as if by a *flesh to stone* spell.

Engulf (Ex): A living flesh to stone spell can flow around a Large or smaller creature as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. The living spell merely has to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover. Opponents can make attacks of opportunity against the living spell, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw against the engulf attack. Those who do not attempt attacks of opportunity must succeed at a DC 19 Reflex save or be engulfed; on a success they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as the spell moves forward. Engulfed creatures are subject to the full normal effect of the slowstone effect (see above) each round on the living spell's turn, and are considered to be grappled.

About the Author

Sean K Reynolds lives in Las Vegas and develops worlds for Upper Deck as well as running his own small press d20 company. His D&D credits include the *Monster Manual*, the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*, and *Savage Species*. You can find more game material at [Sean's website](#).

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