



Fig. I: Found the only way it is ever found, by the sound of it weeping. House-style plate.

CRYPTID № 11 THE SQUONK

Pennsylvania's saddest monster: a creature so ashamed of its own skin that it weeps in the dark, is tracked by its tears, and dissolves into a puddle rather than be caught. Real folklore, a full 5E stat block, a system-neutral card, and rules to keep one as the familiar you can only earn by kindness.

"You do not kill a Squonk. You corner it, and it grieves itself into a puddle, and it is gone."

THE LEGEND

Most monsters want you dead, but the Squonk only wants to be left alone to cry. It lives in the hemlock forests of northern Pennsylvania, in the cold wet dark under trees that block out the sky. It is a small, hunched, miserable thing, and it is the least dangerous monster in this whole field guide. What makes it worth a page is not its threat. It is that no one has ever managed to keep one.

The Squonk is ashamed of how it looks, and with some reason. Its skin is a size too big, loose and ill-fitting, and every inch of it is covered in warts and moles and blemishes. Knowing this, it hides from everything with eyes, and it spends nearly all of its time weeping. You do not find a Squonk

by looking. You find it, if at all, by following the trail of tears it leaves through the wet leaves, and by the sound of it crying somewhere ahead in the dark.

It comes to us straight out of the American lumberwoods, from the tall tales the loggers told around the bunkhouse stove. It was first written down in 1910, when a man named William T. Cox put it in a slim book of invented beasts called *Fearsome Creatures of the Lumberwoods*, and gave it the mock-Latin name *Lacrimacorporus dissolvens*, the dissolving body of tears. A second cataloguer, Henry Tryon, wrote it up again in 1939. It was a joke the woods told about itself, a monster made of pure misery, and it stuck.

The one story everyone tells is the catch that was not a catch. A hunter named J.P. Wentling is said to have tracked a Squonk by its weeping, imitated the sound to lure it close, and bundled it into a sack to carry home. On the walk back the bag went strangely light. When he opened it there was no creature at all, only a wet residue of bubbles and tears. Cornered and afraid, the Squonk had done the one impossible thing it can do: it had dissolved completely into its own crying and escaped through the weave of the sack.

So the Squonk is a monster assembled out of the loneliness of a deep dark forest and the particular cruelty of being ashamed of yourself. It has no teeth worth the name and it never once attacks. Its whole and only power is that it cannot be held, that the moment you close your hand on it there is nothing there but grief and water. That is not a weakness in the legend. It is the entire, sad point of it.

For D&D 5E

STAT BLOCK

**For Every Other
Game**

CREATURE
CARD

The Squonk

Small monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d6 + 5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7	14	12	6	13	5
(-2)	(+2)	(+1)	(-2)	(+1)	(-3)

Skills Stealth +4, Perception +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP) **PB** +2

Dissolve into Tears. If the Squonk is grappled, restrained, reduced to 0 hit points, or otherwise about to be captured or killed, it can (no action required) collapse entirely into a harmless pool of tears and bubbles. It cannot be held, struck, or targeted while dissolved, seeps away through any gap water could pass, and reforms fully healed at a hidden spot within a mile the next nightfall, unless the pooled tears are all gathered and sealed before they soak away. It is, by any ordinary means, impossible to capture or kill.

Ceaseless Weeping. The Squonk cannot stop crying and cannot hide the sound. Any creature actively listening has advantage on checks to track or locate it. In exchange, the Squonk is never surprised, and it always knows the direction of the nearest creature that can see it.

Wretched Aspect. The Squonk is so plainly miserable that harming it feels like kicking a weeping child. The first time a creature tries to

The Squonk

No stat lines. Just what it is and how to point it at your players, whatever system you run. A small, hideous, harmless creature that weeps without stopping, hides from every eye, and escapes capture by dissolving into a puddle of its own tears. Where the Goatman is a monster that will not be sourced, the Squonk is a monster that will not be held, and that, not any claw, is the whole encounter.

HOW IT BEHAVES AT THE TABLE

- **It never attacks.** It has no interest in the party except to get away from them. The tension is the pursuit, not any danger from the thing itself.
- **You track it by its grief.** It cannot stop crying and cannot hide the sound, so it leaves a trail of tears and a sob somewhere ahead. Finding it is easy. Keeping it is the impossible part.
- **Corner it and it is gone.** The instant it is truly trapped it melts into tears and bubbles and seeps away. Force does not work on a Squonk. Only kindness, or a trick, ever could.

WAYS TO USE IT

- **The hunt that cannot succeed.** The party is hired or dared to bring one back alive. Let them track it, corner it, and watch it dissolve through

attack or capture the Squonk, it must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or lose that action, unable to bring itself to do the thing. A creature that has ever shown the Squonk genuine kindness has disadvantage on the save.

ACTIONS

Feeble Swipe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) slashing damage. The Squonk only ever does this cornered, and hates itself for it.

Piteous Wail (1/Day). The Squonk lets out a sob so forlorn that each creature within 30 feet that can hear it must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or be overcome by grief, spending its next turn weeping and taking no other action. The Squonk uses the moment to flee.

Running it. Do not run the Squonk as a fight. It is a chase, a rescue, or a mercy, and the star of the block is Dissolve into Tears: the party CANNOT win it by cornering the thing, because cornering it is exactly how it escapes. Lean on that. Let them track it by its weeping (Ceaseless Weeping), let Wretched Aspect stay the hand of whoever raises a weapon, and make catching it a puzzle of gentleness rather than force, since the only way to hold a Squonk is to give it a reason not to dissolve. The stat line is deliberately tiny; the encounter is emotional, not martial. If your table needs stakes, put someone ELSE after the Squonk, someone who does not care that it weeps, and let the party decide whether the

their fingers, and make the story about what they do with a task that has no honest win.

- **The creature that needs saving.** Someone crueler is after the Squonk, for its tears, its hide, or sport. The party can be the reason the saddest thing in the woods is not also a hunted one.
- **The ingredient.** Squonk tears are the rarest reagent in the region precisely because the creature dissolves before anyone can collect them. Getting a sealed vial means catching grief itself before it soaks into the ground.
- **Cut it loose from Pennsylvania.** Any lightless, lonely wood will do: a drowned swamp, a fog-drowned pine barren, the dark side of a sacred grove. Keep the weeping, the ill-fitting skin, and the impossible escape; leave the hemlocks on the map.

DIFFICULTY DIAL

- As a *threat* it is essentially zero, and that is the design. Make it *memorable* instead by making the party care: let them hear it before they see it, and let the reveal of the wretched little thing land as pity, not triumph.
- Make it *matter* by attaching a real choice to it, protect it or exploit it, help it or leave it, so the session is

ugliest, saddest creature in the woods is worth protecting.

about the party's mercy rather than the Squonk's non-existent bite.

As a Familiar / Companion

**KEEP
ONE**

HOW YOU CATCH ONE

You cannot catch a Squonk. Every hunter learns this the same way, with a sack that goes light on the walk home and nothing inside but tears. The only Squonk you will ever have is one that chooses you, and it chooses exactly one kind of person: the one who found it weeping and did not reach for it. Sit with it in the dark. Leave food and ask for nothing. Stand between it and the people who would sell its hide, and never once try to hold it. Do that enough times, wanting nothing back, and one grey morning you will find it has followed you home and will not be sent away.

In play: there is no capture check, because capture is the one thing that does not work. Over downtime a character shows the Squonk genuine kindness with nothing expected in return. No roll beats this and none is offered; the willingness is the whole of it. When the GM judges that a character

has been kind to the ugliest, saddest thing in the woods for no reason but mercy, the Squonk decides they will do, and stays.

WHAT IT DOES FOR YOU

Wept For. While your bonded Squonk is with you, its grief stands guard over you. A number of times equal to your proficiency bonus per long rest, when you would be **frightened** or **charmed**, you may instead let the Squonk weep the feeling away, and the condition fails to take hold. And once per long rest, when an attack or effect would reduce you to 0 hit points, the Squonk can dissolve entirely into tears to shield you: you drop to 1 hit point instead, the Squonk seeps away, and it reforms, whole, at the next dawn, back at your side. It gives you its one impossible trick, because it could not bear to watch its person be the one who is caught.

It is not your power, it is the Squonk's, so **any character can bond one**, the paladin and the cutpurse alike. What it asks is not a class or a spell slot but a kindness, which is rarer. A familiar for the softest heart at the table, and a quiet dare to the hardest.

Other-system version. However your game handles a bonded companion, this is a small, harmless creature that cannot be taken from you and cannot truly die: a few times between rests it

wards you from fear, and once, when a blow would end you, it spends itself to keep you standing and comes back with the dawn.

RUNNING ONE AT THE TABLE

Never let it become a weapon; it has no bite and it knows it. Play the Squonk as the party's conscience with a face: it flinches at cruelty, weeps at kindness, and hides in someone's cloak the instant a fight starts. The bond is not a tool the players earned, it is a trust they are keeping. Its one great act, dissolving to save its person, should cost the table a held breath every time, because for one night the saddest creature in the woods is simply gone, and no one is quite sure until dawn that it is really coming back.

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