Total Party Kill

BESTIARY VOL. 2

MONSTERS TO CHALLENGE VETERAN HEROES



5E COMPATIBLE

WRITTEN BY
Ryan Servis

PRODUCED BY
2CGaming

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Ryan Servis

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2CGaming, LLC.

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Authors

Ryan Servis, Casey Machado – Bloodmoon Wolven, Celeste Conowitch – Grey Wanderers, Emma Lambert – Living Dreams, Gabe Hicks – Tricksters, Grant Ellis – Sovereign Swarm, Jim Davis – Protean Proselytes, Jonathan Pruitt – Abhorrors, Orla ní Dhúill – Mycelial Groves, Paul Wright – Neko Yokai

Editors

Misty Bourne, Ryan Servis, Jon Kelly

Artists

Ambrose Hoilman (Cover, Illustrations, Sketches), Jason Strutz (Illustrations), Christina Qi (Illustrations), Juan Arrabal (Illustrations), BNE Design (Graphic Design, Page Layout)

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Introduction

All courses of action are risky, so prudence is not in avoiding danger, but calculating risk and acting decisively. Make mistakes of ambition and not mistakes of sloth. Develop the strength to do bold things, not the strength to suffer.

– Niccolò Machiavelli, Bard - College of Whispers

PREFACE

Imagine you have been running a game of 5th Edition for some time now, and the characters have passed the 10th-level benchmark. As their powers increase, you find yourself struggling to field compelling foes that threaten these seemingly invincible heroes with defeat. As you scour the world in search of resources to improve your game's monsters, you find yourself spending more and more time customizing a handful of foes to meet your encounter needs. It's exhausting, time-consuming, and frustrating to see an ambush undone by a simple *banishment* spell or to watch your dragon boss fight be butchered in a single turn by a paladin's critical. This pain has driven many an experienced DM to retire a campaign when it should be at its most exciting. Whether you are looking for a solution to these aforementioned problems or just need some deadly, high-level foes for your next game, the *Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 2* is here to inspire fear and shred character sheets, no matter the level of your players' characters.

The creatures in this book will eat skilled adventurers for breakfast. Overconfident or careless characters will find themselves incinerated by a hellfire wyrm, crushed by the bulk of a titanic leviathan, or devoured by a nefarious hag giant. These monsters will feel right at home in your game world, lurking in its darkest corners or conquering nations. Whether bizarre, mysterious, malevolent, or virtuous, these creatures are exclusively high-level threats suitable only for veteran heroes. Wherever these foes appear, they will make an impact, putting your players' skills to the test and contributing to a vibrant and dangerous campaign.

VIOLENT CONTENT WARNING

The *Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 2* contains many fantastic and wondrous creatures to delight your players. It also contains some pretty dark and gruesome critters that will do gnarly stuff to players. We feel that such designs add an air of menace and danger that inspires real fear and disgust in players, emotions that are just as important to the RPG experience as fun, laughs, and thrills. However, they aren't for everyone, and you should take the prospect of integrating creatures that push this boundary seriously. The last thing we want is to see someone walk away from your game table because of something we made, so please talk to your players about how far you can push violence against their characters using some of the monsters contained with these pages. You don't have to give everything away, but do your best to ensure the people at your table don't get hurt.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Designing monsters is our favorite part of writing RPGs, and thanks to those devious supporters who backed this project, we are privileged to bring these deadly creations to your game table. Every character slain by these fearsome foes is done so in their name, an outcome made all the more certain by our dedicated play testers and critics who helped this project behind the scenes. To all our backers, we make the following dedication:

> *Once again you have afforded us the chance to menace your game with our designs.* Clearly *one volume of deadly beasties was not enough. We've heard your tales of victory and woe at the hands of the beasts within the* Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 1, *so believe us when we say that the volume you hold in your hands is an improvement upon that book's model in* every way. *We are immensely proud of this book and equally humbled by your support and generosity. Tell your players good luck from us, and remember:* no mercy.
>
> – The 2CGaming Team

We would also like to thank our contributing writers on this project, each of whom conceived of and wrote a monster group found within. When you TPK your group with a swarm of sentient bee people, lay them out with a colony of fungal blooms, or humiliate them via a magical trickster, you will know who should get your thanks!

Casey Machado – Bloodmoon Wolven



Casey is cofounder of Roll It Slant, an organization whose mission is to empower, educate, and entertain the TTRPG community. She has worked on numerous D&D publications released on DMs Guild including the platinum bestselling "Reflectionist Class." She enjoys her role at the table as a DM, creating experiences that both challenge players mechanically and create compelling, collaborative stories. While not enjoying TTRPGs, Casey works as a research engineer, designing and operating robots to explore the most difficult-to-access regions in the world.

Celeste Conowitch – Grey Wanderers



Celeste Conowitch is an RPG author and designer. She produces the Venture Maidens actual play podcast and cohosts the DMNastics podcast. You can find her serving up content as a DMs Guild adept or browse her website celesteconowitch.com for the full catalog of her work. To keep up with Celeste, follow her on Twitter at twitter.com/cconowitch.

Emma Lambert – Living Dreams



Emma Lambert is the Communications Director and Partner of Web DM, as well as a freelance writer, editor, and media consultant. Her first TTRPG writing credit was as part of Web DM's contribution to the *Epic Legacy Campaign Codex*. In recent years, she's appeared on many streamed TTRPGs and actual play podcasts including as a guest on D&D Twitch's Tales from the Mists, critically acclaimed Cypher stream and podcast The Lost Girls, and Starward Bound l, Breath of the Fall, and the new Symbaroum game Eyes in the Dark on the Web DM Twitch channel. She's been playing TTRPGs with Web DM for more than fifteen years and is thrilled to contribute to her second 2CGaming book!

Gabe Hicks – Tricksters



Gabe Hicks you may recognize from pictures as a glorious wizard named Gilmore, a coffee shop dad named Mat, or even the ruler King Harrow. Outside of cosplay though he spends most of his time designing games. Gabe has been working as a freelance writer and designer in the tabletop industry for more than two years. Currently he runs a group named Mythic Grove which focuses on supplements for 5th Edition Dungeons and Dragons. Whether it's a brain-eating mimic or a magic item to make a connection to your animal companion, there are so many things to explore, and Gabe wants to help you do it.

Grant Ellis – Sovereign Swarm



Grant Ellis is a freelance game designer, and this is his fifth project with 2CGaming. Grant strives to bring excitement and adventure to every project he participates in. Grant has worked for two years as the Twitch broadcast producer for the Web DM show, actively serves as a special guest at numerous tabletop conventions, and loves running games for just about everybody. Grant believes in using games as a storytelling medium to explore and connect across communities. Grant has achieved industry awards in motion pictures, game design, and online education.

Jim Davis – Protean Proselytes



Jim Davis started running roleplaying games like Dungeons & Dragons when he was eleven years old, and he's played every edition of D&D since joining a group with Jonathan Pruitt in high school. In 2015, Web DM was born and has grown into one of the largest online RPG content creation companies in the world. Jim's first writing contribution to a 2CGaming publication was the Velvet Alleys for the *Epic Legacy Campaign Codex*. Web DM currently has more than 170,000 subscribers on YouTube. When he's not researching some obscure aspect of D&D, Jim enjoys spending time with his family and reading ancient and medieval history.

Jonathan Pruitt – Abhorrors



Jonathan Pruitt is cohost and cocreator of Web DM, one of the largest D&D and TTRPG advice content creation companies in the world. He is the DM of Starward Bound, a long-running streamed, Spelljammer-inspired 5E D&D game. He's currently running a Symbaroum game on Web DM Twitch and has played in dozens of other streamed games across the internet including Adventures in Middle Earth, Call of Cthulhu, KULT, and Warhammer FRP.

Orla ní Dhúill – Mycelial Groves



Orla ní Dhúill is an Irish writer from Dublin who is also known as "you know the bumblebee girl" and "hey, get out of that tree!" Orla writes adventures on DMs Guild, including the bestselling "Murder on the Eberron Express," and runs the Dublin & Dragons actual play show.

Paul Wright – Neko Yokai



Paul Wright enjoys reading and playing D&D. This is his third project with 2CGaming, but his first as a writer. He has traveled with 2CGaming and helped run their TPK tournaments and enjoys creating interesting challenges for his players. Paul can be found on twitter @Iceoverlord and on the 2CGaming Discord.

Welcome back!

I see you survived to purchase the sequel of my finest work. A testament to the quality of the first volume I would say! It seems the world has no shortage of horrific monsters in store for adventurers like myself, but fear not. You will find within this tome not only an expanded assortment of fearsome foes, but a refined and polished ecological research process that has produced vastly superior results. I can say, without a shadow of a doubt, that this book will save your life. Don't believe me? That's fine, there are plenty of graves across the realms filled with doubters like yourselves. But for those with an eye for detail, a daring spirit, and a hunger for adventure, prepare yourselves. You are about to discover what foul horrors lie ahead, and how you can save us all from their tyranny.

– Talien Vos Karven
Head Ecologist of the College of Lore

WHAT IS IN THIS BOOK

Monsters, obviously, but so much more than that. High-level heroes need worthy foes to contest their might, and you will find none more suited for this task than the creature found within. Accompanying these mighty foes are tools to bring them to life in your game. All the monsters therein are organized into groups centered around an exciting theme, creating a network of creatures that can form the basis of an entire adventure. Within these groups you will find detailed discussions about its members: ecology to integrate them into your world, plot hooks to build adventures around them, treasure to reward players who defeat them, and tactics to help you run them. With these elements combined you will find yourself circumventing the typical challenges of complexity and preparation when it comes to high-level games of 5th Edition. Detailed here is a breakdown of how all these elements appear and are used within the book, the mastery of which will aid you in using its content. So, what are you waiting for? It's time to read!

Anatomy of a Monster Group

Monsters within this book are compiled into thematic groups that share a background, lore, and ecology, imaginatively named "monster groups." Each monster group section contains its members' combat

TITANIC CREATURES

The *Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 2* features a number of creatures with a unique set of traits, summarized by classifying them as Titanic creatures. A Titanic creature is truly massive, with a unique anatomy that doesn't make sense for it to be treated as a single target. It has multiple sections, each of which functions like an independent creature, relying on the monster's core statistics for most of its effects. Each section has the same AC, resistances, immunities, and saving throw bonuses as the base statistical block of the creature. Sections are affected by conditions and other effects individually unless explicitly stated otherwise in the section's traits. A Titanic creature's statistics describe how much space the creature takes up along with each of its sections as well as its height. If you're using physical miniatures, you're unlikely to have a massive miniature that's appropriate, so you may have to improvise. Because a Titanic creature is so big, creatures smaller than it can always occupy the same space or move through the Titanic creature's space without penalty, and Titanic creatures neither take nor provoke opportunity attacks.

Every Titanic creature has a core section. If the "core" section is reduced to 0 hit points, the Titanic creature is slain. Other sections that are reduced to 0 hit points become incapacitated for as long as they have 0 hit points, but the creature as a whole remains alive and well. Some creatures can restore incapacitated sections during a fight while others can't. In general, unless a Titanic creature has an ability that allows it to restore an incapacitated section, it can only do so if it finishes a long rest, which allows each section to individually spend Hit Dice to recover hit points.

In combat, every section has a fixed initiative result on which it acts. On each section's turn, if that section has a speed, the entire creature can move during that section's turn, following normal rules for movement. In some cases, a creature may have a certain speed on a specific section's turn, such as a dragon with a "wings" section only having a fly speed when its wing section "acts."

Characters can attempt to climb a Titanic creature as part of their movement by making an Athletics or Acrobatics check (their choice) opposed by the creature's Athletics or Acrobatics (DM's choice). Success means they can move up to half their speed along the creature, while failure means they stay where they are, whether that's on the ground or upon the creature. Making this attempt doesn't require an action, but a creature can only attempt it once per turn. If a creature takes damage while climbing a Titanic creature or if a forced movement effect would push or pull the climbing creature, it must attempt a Strength or Dexterity saving throw (its choice) against a DC of half the damage taken or 10, whichever is higher. Success means the climber holds on and remains where it is. Failure means it falls, dropping to the ground in the Titanic creature's space and taking falling damage as appropriate. Titanic creatures have disadvantage on all attacks against creatures that are currently climbing them.

You should use your best judgment when it comes to targeting a creature's sections. Ranged attacks should be able to target any section if the attacker is within range of the creature, but melee attacks and touch spells can only target sections the character could conceivably reach. A fighter with a sword, for example, isn't going to be able to attack the head of a 60-foot-tall golem—he'll be stuck hacking at the legs.

Likewise, use your best judgment when it comes to applying status effects to the Titanic creature. Casting *dominate monster* on a dragon's tail, for example, probably won't work. It would need to target the creature's head or its core to be effective. Likewise, you probably can't knock a golem's arm prone. Otherwise, most effects will only affect one section of the creature. For example, you could stun a creature's arms or legs, preventing them from acting, but the rest of the creature would act as normal. Finally, most Titanic creatures are immune to forced movement and teleportation effects unless they wish to be affected.

To avoid making dozens of rules to cover every possibility, control of the details is in your hands. Go with what feels right from the descriptions provided and your own sense of fair play.

classifications, favors, and foils, which member possesses the fearsome "TPK brand," lore, tactics, plot hooks, treasure, ecology, and special notes by iconic gnome bard Talien Vos Karven. This section details the significance of each of those elements, which are critical for you to understand to achieve the best results.

Monster Classifications

Monsters within this book are classified into groups based on their strengths and abilities, which helps a DM easily understand their role on the battlefield. Each monster possesses a classification, with the most powerful among them being "elites" who are proficient in multiple classifications simultaneously. By understanding this system of classifications, you can craft encounters that deliver on a specific challenge you want your players to experience. Do you want your heroes to dodge sniper fire as they storm a fortress? Use an artillery creature. Looking for a fearsome beast that crushes adventurers beneath its feet? Try a brute. Perhaps you need a final boss for your dungeon, in which case all you must do is find an appropriate elite. This system is a throwback to 4th Edition and helps create encounters that deliver on a specific style of play. The details of each monster classification and how to use them can be found in this section.

Artillery. The artillery classification indicates ranged combat specialists with abilities that can harry enemies from afar. Only the best snipers can match an artillery creature at ranged combat, which can often unleash firepower that puts even the most optimized *eldritch blast*–slinging warlock to shame. Artillery creatures are vulnerable at close range, relying on allies or their own evasive abilities to stay out of melee. An artillery wants to end a fight from afar, keeping its enemies on the defensive and struggling to find cover.

Brute. Brutes are brutal melee combatants specializing in giving out as much punishment as they take. Free from player interference, a brute quickly pulverizes vulnerable characters and dismantles tactical advantages. Brutes can be counted on to take powerful hits and often do so to protect vulnerable allies or objectives. A brute seeks to be the focus of a fight, soaking up punishment and returning the favor tenfold.

Controller. Controllers may not be the ones who kill a character, but they certainly make things easier for their allies. Controllers unleash debilitating effects that impair or cripple their enemies and are most effective when paired with more directly lethal creatures able to capitalize on advantages the controller provides. A controller wants to secure victory through tactical superiority, placing itself and its allies into a winning position that requires only a final killing blow.

Elite. Elites are monsters with enough diverse strengths to fit multiple classifications. Only the most powerful of creatures are classified as elites and possess few weaknesses that adventurers can exploit. As rare as they are powerful, elites can be considered bosses that lurk at the end of a dangerous dungeon or the climax of an epic adventure. An elite is often legendary and crushes opposition with overwhelming power.

Leader. Leaders are masterful support creatures that aid allies with healing, magical enhancement, and other powerful buffs. Leaders rarely possess significant kill potential, focusing instead on teamwork and keeping their deadly allies in top fighting shape. Leaders need at least a few allies to help, preferring those that help them accomplish their encounter objectives. In combat, a leader alleviates harm on its allies, undoing damage with an efficiency that is nearly impossible to outclass.

Lurker. Master ambushers and assassins, lurkers strike first and hard. Using evasion and stealth to achieve their goals, lurkers are slippery foes that are difficult to lock down and destroy. Because adventurers travel in groups, most lurkers require the assistance of other creatures to finish the job. A lurker seeks to systematically and swiftly eliminate threats, taking heroes out of commission before they have a chance to respond.

Skirmisher. Mobility specialists, skirmishers use hit-and-run tactics to deliver precise blows while avoiding reprisal. A skirmisher can swiftly capitalize on a vulnerable enemy or disrupt a tactical advantage. Clever skirmishers are good at teamwork, waiting for the precise moment to strike or baiting frustrated adventurers into chasing them into traps. A skirmisher wants to frustrate and harass its target by being too dangerous to ignore but too elusive to easily kill.

Soldier. Tactical melee combatants of the highest caliber, creatures with the soldier classification are an implacable barrier that cannot be overcome with brute force. These creatures often plant themselves firmly between any force seeking to assail weaker allies, punishing those who injure their comrades with a frightful vengeance. A solider never fights alone and wants to enable and protect its more vulnerable allies to achieve victory.

Favors and Foils

An understanding of a creature's strengths and weaknesses is essential to a successful encounter. Along with a monster's classification will be a short list of character abilities and features that favor or foil the monster's own abilities and features. Use this information to ensure your encounters challenge the players in the right ways, giving them a specific path to victory. Some monsters favor no features, meaning there are no optimal paths to succeed against it.

Favors. Which character features, classes, and abilities perform well against the monster.

Foils. Which character features, classes, and abilities perform poorly against the monster.

Total Party Kill Brand

With a book full of deadly, high-level monsters, it is difficult to imagine there are even more lethal threats. Unfortunately for would-be heroes, a majority of monster groups within this tome have a single member that is marked with a special skull emblem, declaring it a lethal threat. These monsters are certified party-killers, guaranteed to deliver the toughest fight possible for their challenge rating. Each branded creature possesses abilities that, when applied by a skilled DM, make for an extraordinarily dangerous encounter. Such creatures should never be used lightly and only if you are absolutely certain your players can handle being wiped out. These creatures do not fight fair. Their abilities are devastating and overwhelming when used correctly, not only to adventurers but to the world around them. Carefully consider the consequences to both your narrative and gameplay when implementing such a creature.

Talien's Companions

Many of the creatures presented in this book have a statement by gnome bard Talien Vos Karven, sharing his personal experiences with the monster, along with the occasional insight from his adventuring companions. These sections are examples of in-character assessments of the creatures found in each monster group, and we encourage you to use them as examples when considering how NPCs in your game view the world and talk about such creatures. If you wish to make Talien or his companions a part of your game, some basic details are provided here. Keep an eye out for their appearances in our other projects as well.

- **Masako.** Half-orc Barbarian
- **Talien Vos Karven.** Deep Gnome Bard
- **Elkus.** Mountain Dwarf Cleric
- **Ionia.** Wood Elf Druid
- **Zau-Hek.** Dark Elf Fighter
- **Slate.** Battleforged Monk
- **Sister Solaria.** Human Paladin
- **Haloa Okalani.** Bronze Dragonborn Ranger
- **Ava Sonos.** Human Rogue
- **Shauna Troublefoot.** Lightfoot Halfling Sorcerer
- **Johan K'lay.** Half-elf Warlock
- **Archmagister King.** Tiefling Wizard
- **Heletek Pyeha.** Goliath Elementalist
- **Kaya Thul.** Human Artificer



Lore

While every monster in this book is presented with the usual array of information about its background and features, information that a DM can make available to players is also included. When your players want to research a foe before facing it in battle, you can allow them to attempt certain ability checks to gain valuable lore that will improve their odds of success against it. Groups wishing to attempt such checks should make significant efforts to even attempt the roll—gathering evidence, tracking movements, consulting wise beings, or delving through forgotten tomes. Once the party has done so, they may attempt the appropriate check as detailed in the monster's lore section. Depending on the result, the party gains valuable information about the monster's behavior and abilities, examples of which are found in each monster's lore table. You should alter this section and the lore therein at your discretion to better fit your game. Unless the characters are extremely powerful, give them a chance to gain lore about creatures found in this book. It can make for a meaningful downtime activity between adventures, and odds are it won't spoil the encounter. If they choose to pass on the opportunity, the players have no one to blame but themselves when your monster lays them out.

Tactics

Monsters with a high challenge rating are far more complicated than their low-class comrades. This makes the DM's job harder, so it is essential to combat the ever-expanding powers characters attain at high levels. To mitigate the challenges of running encounters featuring complex creatures, each monster has a tactics section with recommended average, easier, and harder tactics. Use these suggestions to cut down on preparation time and as a reference when you aren't sure what your monster should do. No matter what your players' skill level, this section will help you craft a finely tuned encounter of any desired difficulty.

Plot Hooks

When you find a monster you'd like to include in your game, this section provides you with thematic scenarios to seamlessly implement it. These hooks can be small story elements to put your creature on the map or important plot threads that tempt players into going on a monster hunt that spans a dozen sessions.

Treasure

A hard-won victory deserves a suitable reward, and many of the creatures in the *Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 2* possess valuable equipment or are made of rare components that can be forged into useful items. When a monster has a treasure section, it is still at your discretion what the characters receive as a reward after defeating the monster. However, it is recommended you grant these rewards for particularly demanding encounters. On top of making victory taste all the sweeter, such treasures serve as trophies to remind players about their past conflicts and make for a good story to tell at the local tavern.

Ecology

Even the most fiendish of monsters have a home, and their ecology section details where they prefer to live, explore, and hunt. Use a creature's ecology when considering its role in your game. While you can certainly plop any monster into a dungeon without context, creatures of such immense power have a difficult time existing without making some impact on the world around them. By letting your creatures have something to do in their free time, you can foreshadow an encounter or motivate players to act against it.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Whether they be obnoxious do-gooders spreading virtue about your grimdark game world or self-serving murderers smashing your intricate narratives to pieces, eventually characters need a good old-fashioned beat down. To suffer defeat is a meaningful RPG experience, and to snatch victory from the jaws of failure is always a campaign highlight. While the "TPK" in the book's title need not be taken literally, every game needs a few moments when the players wonder, *Is this the end?*

To make best use of this book and its monsters, you will need the 5th Edition core rules on hand to construct encounters. Your skills as a DM will come into play while implementing this content into your world. While it's tempting to completely wreck your players with an impossibly powerful creature, the goal of the *Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 2* is to put the most powerful characters in 5th Edition through fights that challenge and excite them. You should familiarize yourself with the general rules of encounter building, particularly those concerning combat encounter difficulty.

Because these monsters are organized into groups, where there is one, there are often more. Running a monster from this book can be the characters' first introduction to what becomes an entire family of lethal beasts, making them ideal for recurring enemies that continually raise the difficulty bar. Most of the time, characters can observe and interact with monster groups without fighting. These monsters can be more than deadly threats that lurk in a dungeon. They can tell a story, facilitate world building, and provide character niches that intrigue and disgust your players.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: HIGH-LEVEL PLAY AND LADY LUCK

With high-level play in 5th Edition comes big numbers. As a creature's chance to hit, save DCs, AC, and other features improve, so too do its odds of success in its endeavors or chances of foiling its attackers. Where the d20 was once the biggest factor in determining success at lower levels, at high levels a creature's (or character's) significant bonuses to their advantages weigh more heavily. A creature with a +20 to hit is probably going to land most of its attacks regardless of its d20 rolls, and its damage rolls are going to be more consistent with a +10 bonus from its Strength. With the exception of the natural 1 and natural 20, this means you can expect a more average result from creatures in your encounters with fewer twists from wacky rolls. Beware: this consistency also applies to your encounter's weaknesses. Having no bonuses to an Intelligence saving throw means your creature has almost no chance of beating a DC 19 saving throw versus a *feeblemind* spell. While this truth requires more forethought when building your encounters, it also makes predicting encounter outcomes and dynamics a lot easier. Use this to your advantage to deliver on more precise results and encounter goals!

How the Bestiary Measures Challenge Rating

Every monster in 5th Edition has a challenge rating that indicates what its difficulty should be relative to characters of a certain level, and the ones found here are no different. Using challenge rating appropriately with these creatures can result in easy, medium, hard, and deadly encounters according to the general rules of encounter building. This section talks about using the *Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 2* and the 5th Edition rules for determining challenge rating to create a quality high-level experience you can find nowhere else.

What Changes at High Levels?

To a group of adventurers, death at 1st level is a catastrophe, at 6th level a significant inconvenience, at 10th level a pit stop, and at 15th level a speedbump. When you are dealing with characters who can exile their foes to other planes, *wish* reality into new forms, or enslave a small army of minions, providing a challenge means thinking about the game differently. While your encounter might technically be "deadly," killing a 16th-level fighter doesn't mean much when his cleric friend burns a single 3rd-level spell slot to cast *revivify*. When thinking about encounter difficulty for characters of 10th level or higher, we recommend changing the goals of encounters to reflect the following instead of their traditional explanations. When using monsters from the *Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 2* with encounter-building tools, these are the intended difficulty results. When using monsters from other resources, you probably have to assume the challenge ratings provided are actually lower than what they need to be to achieve these kinds of encounter results.

- **Easy.** An easy encounter requires almost no effort to overcome. High-level characters will blaze through these encounters quickly and efficiently (sometimes with a single spell cast), making them better suited for storytelling tools than actual challenges. Heroes of such caliber have better things to do than battle weak foes that do not test their abilities. A party can handle a near-unlimited number of these encounters in an adventuring day.

- **Medium.** A medium encounter should be dangerous to any party that does not take it seriously. Player arrogance, laziness, or ignorance should cost the party significant resources, while a well-prepared and focused group should not be in mortal danger unless they get supremely unlucky. A party can handle between four to five of these encounters in a single adventuring day.

- **Hard.** A hard encounter is a brutal experience. If a party goes in unprepared, they will suffer dire consequences: deaths, massive resource expenditures, and negative impacts to the story. Even a party fully prepared for the trials ahead will be tested, having to apply every ounce of their skill and creativity to succeed. A party can handle between two to three of these encounters in a single adventuring day.

- **Deadly.** A deadly encounter is an extraordinary event that can smash even the most powerful heroes into pieces. Every time you run one of these encounters, an unprepared party should be guaranteed defeat in one fashion or another. Nothing the party does should be enough to assure victory, only provide them a fighting chance. Your players should feel like the encounter threatens to end their adventuring career and should require an extraordinary amount of skill (and luck) to emerge unscathed. Most deadly encounters aren't lethal enough to actually end the campaign but should have significant consequences for failure. However, if you have the iron will required to let your game end based on the encounter's outcome, using an appropriate creature bearing the TPK brand can make that a reality. A party can handle one of these encounters in a single adventuring day, commonly requiring a long rest immediately afterward.

Bestiary by Challenge Rating

The monsters within the *Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 2* are presented here in order by ascending challenge rating.

BESTIARY BY CHALLENGE RATING

CHALLENGE RATING	CREATURE NAME	MONSTER GROUP	CREATURE TYPE	CLASSIFICATION	LEGENDARY	TITANIC	TPK BRAND
4	Lily Dragon, Wyrmling	Orchid Dragons	Dragon	Elite	-	-	-
5	Deadwood Servant	Mycelial Groves	Plant	Brute	-	-	-
5	Rose Dragon, Wrymling	Orchid Dragons	Dragon	Elite	-	-	-
6	Lotus Dragon, Wyrmling	Orchid Dragons	Dragon	Elite	-	-	-
9	Everpup	Bloodmoon Wolven	Fey	Controller	-	-	-
9	Lantern Hound	Wild Hunts	Fey	Brute	-	-	-
9	Lily Dragon, Young	Orchid Dragons	Dragon	Elite	-	-	-
10	Bone Splinter	Abhorrors	Undead	Lurker	-	-	-
10	Primary Ooze	Acrylic Oozes	Ooze	Brute	-	-	-
10	Prophetic Reverie	Living Dreams	Aberration	Controller	-	-	-
10	Red Jacket Swarm	Sovereign Swarm	Humanoid	Brute	-	-	-
10	Rose Dragon, Young	Orchid Dragons	Dragon	Elite	-	-	-
11	Autumnal Arborian	Centinels	Plant	Artillery	-	-	-
11	Flamiac Imp	Hellfire Lords	Fiend	Controller	-	-	-
11	Protean Initiate	Protean Proselytes	Monstrosity	Brute	-	-	-
12	Dreadmaw	Leviathans	Beast	Lurker	-	Y	-

BESTIARY BY CHALLENGE RATING

CHALLENGE RATING	CREATURE NAME	MONSTER GROUP	CREATURE TYPE	CLASSIFICATION	LEGENDARY	TITANIC	TPK BRAND
12	Flaritoid	Doomstars	Elemental	Skirmisher	-	-	-
12	Haruspollach	Hag Giants	Giant	Soldier	-	-	-
12	Lotus Dragon, Young	Orchid Dragons	Dragon	Elite	-	-	-
12	Maneki Neko	Neko Yokai	Fiend	Leader	-	-	-
12	Quillwolf	Bloodmoon Wolven	Fey	Skirmisher	-	-	-
12	Worldspawn Scout	Godspawn	Humanoid	Soldier	-	-	-
13	Beezerker	Sovereign Swarm	Humanoid	Controller	-	-	-
13	Falconer	Wild Hunts	Fey	Lurker	-	-	-
13	Forgespawn Commoner	Godspawn	Humanoid	Artillery	-	-	-
13	Grey Agent	Grey Wanderers	Aberration	Skirmisher	-	-	-
13	Springborn Softwood	Centinels	Plant	Soldier	-	-	-
14	Beldamari	Hag Giants	Giant	Lurker	-	-	-
14	Blast Elemental	Evolved Elementals	Elemental	Artillery	-	-	-
14	Deadwood Hollow	Mycelial Groves	Plant	Brute	-	-	-
14	Liberut	Inevitables	Construct	Controller	-	-	-
14	Tangle of Limbs	Abhorrors	Undead	Brute	-	-	-
15	Bakeneko	Neko Yokai	Fiend	Lurker	-	-	-
15	Dreamer	Tricksters	Fey	Controller	-	-	-
15	Glowing Garden	Mycelial Groves	Plant	Lurker	-	-	-
15	Lily Dragon, Adult	Orchid Dragons	Dragon	Elite	Y	-	-
15	Secondary Ooze	Acrylic Oozes	Ooze	Brute	-	-	-
15	Shame Eidolon	Living Dreams	Aberration	Controller	-	-	-
16	Bloodcount(ess)	Vampire Nobility	Undead	Leader	-	-	-
16	Matron of the Hunter's Moon	Bloodmoon Wolven	Fey	Controller	Y	-	Y
16	Midsummer Medlar	Centinels	Plant	Leader	-	-	-
16	Poterut	Inevitables	Construct	Brute	-	-	-
16	Voided Soul	Abhorrors	Undead	Brute	Y	-	Y
17	Bumbleblimp	Sovereign Swarm	Monstrosity	Controller	-	-	-
17	Drider Graveyard	Mycelial Groves	Plant	Elite	Y	-	Y
17	Emiteron	Doomstars	Elemental	Artillery	-	-	Y
17	Grey Officer	Grey Wanderers	Aberration	Controller	-	-	-
17	Kharactan	Leviathans	Beast	Brute	-	Y	-
17	Mimiking	Tricksters	Fey	Soldier	Y	-	-
17	Prismatic Fenghuang	Heavenly Phoenixes	Celestial	Artillery	-	-	-
17	Protean Disciple	Protean Proselytes	Monstrosity	Brute	-	-	-
17	Rose Dragon, Adult	Orchid Dragons	Dragon	Elite	Y	-	-
17	Stormspawn Martial Arts Adept	Godspawn	Humanoid	Skirmisher	-	-	-
17	Tide Elemental	Evolved Elementals	Elemental	Leader	-	-	-
18	Bethrezix	Hag Giants	Giant	Leader	-	-	-
18	Houndmaster	Wild Hunts	Fey	Soldier	-	-	-
18	Mortemut	Inevitables	Construct	Controller	-	-	-
18	Silencer	Vampire Nobility	Undead	Brute	-	-	-

BESTIARY BY CHALLENGE RATING

CHALLENGE RATING	CREATURE NAME	MONSTER GROUP	CREATURE TYPE	CLASSIFICATION	LEGENDARY	TITANIC	TPK BRAND
18	Sunspawn Knight	Godspawn	Humanoid	Leader	-	-	-
19	Looming Harvest	Tricksters	Fey	Artillery	Y	-	Y
19	Lotus Dragon, Adult	Orchid Dragons	Dragon	Elite	Y	-	-
19	Moonflame Seeker	Heavenly Phoenixes	Celestial	Lurker	-	-	-
19	Shroudling	Vampire Nobility	Undead	Lurker	-	-	-
19	Sourcespawn Swashbuckler	Godspawn	Humanoid	Controller	-	-	-
19	Winter Woad	Centinels	Plant	Elite	-	-	Y
20	Opalescent Ooze	Acrylic Oozes	Ooze	Controller	-	-	Y
21	Eye of Whispers	Elder Eyes	Aberration	Lurker	-	-	-
21	Fieldian	Wild Hunts	Fey	Skirmisher	-	-	-
21	Gem Elemental	Evolved Elementals	Elemental	Brute	-	-	-
21	Magniferi	Doomstars	Elemental	Brute	-	-	-
21	Xeltemput	Inevitables	Construct	Skirmisher	-	-	Y
22	Protean Incarnate	Protean Proselytes	Monstrosity	Elite	Y	-	Y
22	Vivictix	Prime Evils	Fiend	Lurker	Y	-	-
23	Benthiloct	Leviathans	Beast	Controller	-	Y	-
23	Elder	Vampire Nobility	Undead	Elite	Y	-	Y
23	Grey Director	Grey Wanderers	Aberration	Elite	Y	-	Y
23	Hive-Regnant	Sovereign Swarm	Humanoid	Artillery	Y	-	Y
23	Lily Dragon, Ancient	Orchid Dragons	Dragon	Elite	Y	-	-
23	Nekomata	Neko Yokai	Fiend	Elite	Y	-	Y
24	Goarigoth	Prime Evils	Fiend	Brute	Y	-	-
24	Hellfire Marilith	Hellfire Lords	Fiend	Elite	-	-	-
24	Nemesol	Doomstars	Elemental	Elite	-	-	-
24	Warspawn Warlord	Godspawn	Humanoid	Brute	Y	-	-
24	Zephyr Elemental	Evolved Elementals	Elemental	Artillery	-	-	Y
25	Caelut	Inevitables	Construct	Artillery	-	-	-
25	Crowned Sunwing	Heavenly Phoenixes	Celestial	Skirmisher	-	-	Y
25	Eye of the Deep	Elder Eyes	Aberration	Brute	-	-	-
25	Hellfire Wyrm	Hellfire Lords	Fiend	Lurker	Y	-	-
25	Morgaine Matron	Hag Giants	Giant	Elite	-	-	Y
25	Rose Dragon, Ancient	Orchid Dragons	Dragon	Elite	Y	-	-
25	Worst Nightmare	Living Dreams	Aberration	Lurker	Y	-	Y
26	Malekarnus	Prime Evils	Fiend	Controller	Y	-	Y
27	Charydra	Leviathans	Beast	Brute	-	Y	Y
27	Deathspawn Champion	Godspawn	Humanoid	Elite	-	-	Y
27	Lotus Dragon, Ancient	Orchid Dragons	Dragon	Elite	Y	-	Y
29	Dreadwyrm	Vampire Nobility	Undead	Elite	Y	-	-
29	Eye of Oblivion	Elder Eyes	Aberration	Artillery	Y	-	Y
29	Keeper of the Flame	Hellfire Lords	Fiend	Artillery	Y	-	Y
30	Deusut	Inevitables	Construct	Elite	Y	-	-
30	Erlking	Wild Hunts	Fey	Elite	Y	-	Y

Abhorrors

Lurking in graveyards and age-old battlefields, the abhorrors serve as a reminder that there are things worse than death and even undeath. They are a disease of death that seek to infect life wherever it may be found. Just as infection results from botched healing, the abhorrors spread in the wake of the malpractice of necromancy. Once the unchecked necrotic energy infects the remnants of the dead, a new type of life begins to spread. There are three known types of abhorror: bone splinters, tangles of limbs, and voided souls. All should be avoided by any who seek restful sleep ever again. Those who encounter an abhorror and survive are left changed, scarred. Not much is known of the abhorrors because they don't seem to have higher thought processes, let alone the physical capacity for them. They only seek to spread, to infect, to unmake. Only the brave—or the foolhardy—choose to seek out creatures this abhorrent.

BONE SPLINTER

When necromancy fails, you get bone splinters. They look much as the name implies, constructed of broken bits of bone tethered together with flesh, tendons, and sinew to form snaking tentacles of jagged bone that connect to a center mass that is usually buried in the ground. Like some horrid landlocked octopus, they spread from this center point like limbs reaching for more mass to add to their rancid collective. The smell of sawdust and chalk permeate the ground, alongside the copper tinge of blood, infected with this particular abhorror. The stench of decay is thick in the air and clings to any that dare invade a bone splinter's domain.



LORE

A character can learn the following information about a bone splinter with an Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

BONE SPLINTER LORE

DC	INFORMATION
11	Necromancers created bone splinters by accident, and the results are terrifying. These creatures can shatter your bones with a single strike and strip your skeleton from your unconscious body.
16	Bone splinters lie in wait for living prey to come close. Their senses allow them to detect creatures even while underground, burrowing forth to consume the bones of the living. Their blows are vicious, breaking bones and inflicting horrific wounds with every strike.
22	Badly wounded creatures are at risk of having their skeletons consumed by a bone splinter—needless to say, a fatal experience. Cover provides little protection from a hungry bone splinter, so either run for your life or press the attack.

TACTICS

Bone splinters are subterranean creatures thanks to their burrowing speed and tremorsense. This allows the creature to emerge and attack the characters with ease. Make sure the splinter is hidden before it strikes, and repeat the Hide action once the splinter has retreated underground between turns. Ideally the characters will be too busy dealing with the broken bones and bleeding wounds on their companions to mount an effective counterattack. If a character gets neglected by teammates and

The Bone Splinter

My fondness for undead lessens every passing day. Why do so many possess a hunger for the various components of the living? First blood, then life force, and now my very bones! Thankfully, I have robust companions such as Masako and Zau Hek to stand between me and the horrors of the bone splinter. I can't say the same for my latest intern., whose skeleton was torn free by a bone splinter I failed to notice when exploring a cavern.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Lurker

Favors: Barbarians, Clerics, Healing, Hit Points (High), Paladins

Foils: Bards, Cover, Rogues, Stealth, Warlocks



BEHIND THE CURTAIN

I have been a pharmacy technician for about twenty years and all that time spent fighting disease has led me here in my gaming. The abhorrors are just that...they are a virus, a bacterium, a cyst. They exist only to replicate and spread. There is no tactical mastermind. There is no mercy with these things. I can't help but mention the timing while brainstorming these creations—it was in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and when the first image of the virus came out I thought, "Oh my gods, it's a tangle of limbs but with fewer legs and arms." I have always been set on edge by the fiction genre of body horror. This is my attempt to add a nightmare or two to the collective dreamscape by exercising some of my own. It was the bone splinters.

– Jonathan Pruitt

goes down, move in and use Subsume at any cost. Any damage from opportunity attacks is offset by the hit points the splinter regains. Should the party attempt to flee, shoot them down with ranged attacks until the splinter can get close again.

Easier Tactics — Don't have the splinter use its burrowing speed, keeping the creature firmly above ground. While you can't stop its attacks from hurting, keep them all focused on one character. That way the party will get the most mileage out of their magical healing effects, removing multiple wounds and broken bones with a single powerful act of healing.

Harder Tactics — Grant the splinter surprise thanks to its stealth, using its burrowing speed to keep the creature below ground at the end of each of its turns. Thanks to its tremorsense, the bone splinter should be able to precisely target the characters on the ground, favoring the weakest among their number. Make sure to wound as many characters as possible, as this will limit the party's ability to both heal wounds and support each other in their efforts against the splinter.

Bone Splinter

Huge undead, unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 147 (14d12 + 56)
Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	5 (−3)	12 (+1	3 (−4)

Saving Throws Str +9, Dex +9
Skills Athletics +9, Perception +5, Stealth +13
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, stunned, unconscious
Senses tremorsense 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 15
Languages —
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Traits

Archer's Eye (1/Turn). As a bonus action, the bone splinter can add 6 (1d12) to its next attack or damage roll on a ranged weapon attack.

Sharpshooter. The bone splinter's ranged weapon attacks ignore half cover and three-quarters cover.

Actions

Multiattack. The bone splinter makes two attacks. It can forgo making one of these attacks to instead take the Hide action.

Bone Sliver. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d12 + 5) piercing damage. If the target is a flesh and blood creature, it suffers a bleeding wound. While so bleeding, the target loses 4 (1d8) hit points at the start of each of its turns. Each time the target is wounded again in this manner, this damage increases by 4 (1d8), to a maximum of 45 (10d8). All wounds on a target close if it magically regains 10 or more hit points from magical healing in a single turn.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage. If the target is a creature with a skeleton, it must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or have its bones broken by the impact. While its bones are so broken, the target's speed is reduced to 10 feet and it is vulnerable to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage. This effect lasts until the target magically regains 20 or more hit points in a single turn.

Subsume. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature at 0 hit points within reach that has a skeleton. *Hit:* The creature's skeleton is torn from its body, killing it instantly. If this attack kills a creature, the bone splinter regains 35 (10d6) hit points.

PLOT HOOKS

A Bone to Pick. An adult copper dragon has something caught in its teeth and requires a specific tool to remove it: a particularly sharp bone found only in a bone splinter. The dragon will pay handsomely for a pristine specimen, provided it's delivered promptly.

The Knight after the Marrow. A paladin is seeking the marrow of a bone splinter for a healing concoction to sooth his aging body. He was once the victim of a bone splinter and though he healed his broken bones, the ache remains.

A Marrow Escape. A halfling thief dropped the loot from a recent score right in the middle of a pit containing several bone splinters. He would like it back and is willing to split the bounty with whomever helps recover the lost items.

TREASURE

The body of a bone splinter is made extremely durable by the necromantic magic which sustains it. When slain, this durability remains within the many bones that once composed its body, with typically enough intact bones remaining from a typical splinter to create a powerful heavy armor known as bone armor. Doing so requires 24 hours of strenuous activity and a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Smith's Tools) check, spoiling the bones on a failure.

BONE ARMOR

ARMOR	COST	ARMOR CLASS	STRENGTH	STEALTH	WEIGHT
Bone	3,000 gp	17 + Dex modifier (max 2)	Str 16	Disadvantage	10 lb.

ECOLOGY

Abandoned cemeteries and forgotten mass graves serve as excellent places for this horror to form. After one has been created, a bone splinter begins to collect any available bone and connective tissues to add to its mass. Once its ossuaries have run dry, bone splinters venture far in search of new material to consume. The creatures keep to the darkness, spending the majority of their time below ground. Despite their low intelligence, the creatures are quite cunning. They wait patiently for their prey and hide the evidence of their attacks. Most communities fail to realize they have a bone splinter infestation until it's too late.

TANGLE OF LIMBS

Few horrors rival the disgusting undead known as a tangle of limbs. These creatures strip the bodies of the living for limbs, adding countless appendages to the grotesque collectives which form their bodies. A tangle of limbs isn't even a single entity but an entangled swarm, a rolling knot of arms and legs connected to a center mass of nerves and viscera. These creatures carry a stench of rotted meat and necrosis that overwhelms even the most stalwart of adventurers. The sound of its advance can be mistaken for a large host of soldiers marching in triple-step—but if you can hear it, it's already too late.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a tangle of limbs with an Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

TANGLE OF LIMBS LORE

DC	INFORMATION
14	What appears to be a large mass of limbs is actually a swarm of undead working in concert. This diffusion of agency makes a tangle of limbs difficult to stop. The limbs seize whatever they can, holding victims in place while the swarm tears them apart.
19	A tangle of limbs is terrifyingly fast and unrelenting in its attacks. Getting close to the creature is near suicide, as its mass overtakes all but the largest of creatures. Don't get its discharge on you, or next thing you know you'll be vomiting and helpless before the creature.
25	Stay away from a tangle of limbs at all costs, but don't believe that makes for a perfectly safe situation. The creature will hurl parts of its body at you, which will seize and slow you down until the creature can get close.

TACTICS

The tangle of limbs is a simple monster. It knows no strategy or tactics, only attack whatever it can reach. Movement is key to its strategy, as a tangle best slaughters its prey by containing them within its mass. Don't worry about provoking opportunity attacks—the tangle has more than enough hit points to spare. Note that the Shred attack only works on creatures grappled by the tangle. Because of its size, when the tangle moves it can easily drag any restrained targets along with it via its Limb Swarm feature, gathering up the characters one by one. Any heroes slain by the tangle should be immediately targeted with Assimilate. Use Hurl on spellcasters and other characters who manage to avoid the tangle, and use the Dash action to outrun all but the fastest characters should they try to escape.

Easier Tactics — Give the characters a good view of the tangle before it gets close. This should give them a chance to prepare a strategy and spread out. Once the tangle has engulfed a character via Limb Swarm, don't go for others. Keep the tangle's attention on that one character until it is defeated, then move to engulf another. Provide the party with a wide-open battlefield on which to maneuver, preferably one with an open sky.

The Tangle of Limbs

To think of my own hands attached to some foul undead monstrosity—what a terrific waste of my remains. The tangle of limbs is a testament to just how foul and depraved the black magic of necromancy can be. While I'm not opposed to the occasional skeleton minion or two, this is taking things too far. Not only is this abomination horrifically disgusting, but its nigh impossible to control. The last two I encountered were both the creations of misguided necromancers that proceeded to terrorize countless innocents. My only consolation is it seems most spellcasters perish in their attempt creating a tangle of limbs. Serves them right.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Brute

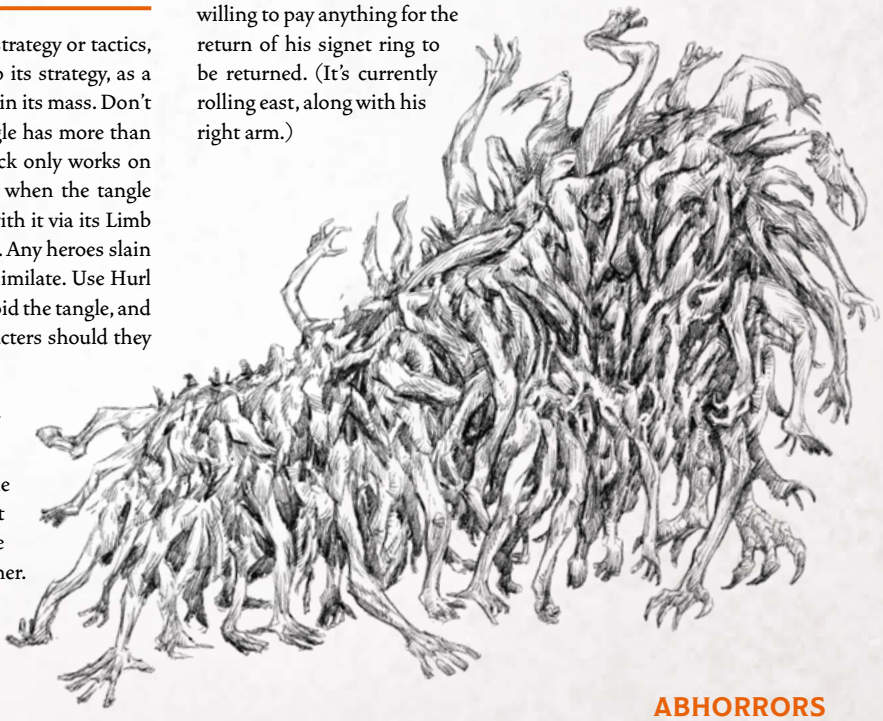
Favors: Flight, Mobility (High), Rangers, Rogues, Warlocks

Foils: Barbarians, Melee, Monks, Paladins, Spells (Somatic)

Harder Tactics — A worst-case scenario involving a tangle of limbs is one in which the characters cannot escape. A dungeon corridor or claustrophobic cavern are ideal, as the swarm can adjust its size to easily move through small spaces. Your goal is to isolate one particular character and engulf it, using Shred to hammer the poor sod into oblivion. If you are feeling particularly cruel, provide the tangle with nearby corpses to Assimilate for some extra hit points.

PLOT HOOKS

Right Hand of the King. A local king has lost something valuable to him while on a recent excursion and wants the party to get it back. He will not talk to them face to face but is willing to pay anything for the return of his signet ring to be returned. (It's currently rolling east, along with his right arm.)



Tangle of Limbs

Gargantuan swarm of Tiny undead, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 263 (17d20 + 85)
Speed 50 ft., climb 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	14 (+2)	21 (+5)	6 (−2)	18 (+4)	5 (−3)

Saving Throws Str +12, Con +10, Wis +9
Skills Athletics +17
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses tremorsense 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 14
Languages —
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Traits

Limb Swarm. The tangle can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny creature. At the end of each of its turns, the swarm deals 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage to each creature in its space, and a creature that takes this damage must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be grappled and restrained for as long as it remains within the swarm (escape DC 20).

Necrotic Discharge. When the tangle is hit by a melee weapon attack by a flesh-and-blood creature within 5 feet of it for the first time on a turn, it discharges a foul fluid upon that creature (no action required). The target must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or drop what it is holding, fall prone, and immediately end its turn as it vomits profusely.

Actions

Multiattack. The tangle makes two different attacks. It can forgo making one of these attacks to instead take the Dash or Assimilate action.

Hurl. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, range 60/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage, and if the target is a creature, it is seized by the thrown limb. The limb is an object (AC 12, 15 hit points), and while so seized a creature cannot speak and its speed is halved. The limb can be pulled off by a creature within reach succeeding on a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check, destroying the limb in the process.

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., each creature of the tangle's choice within reach. *Hit:* 33 (4d12 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Shred. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 0 ft., one grappled creature. *Hit:* 42 (10d6 + 7) slashing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or instead be critically hit.

Assimilate. The tangle absorbs the corpse of a flesh-and-blood creature within 5 feet of it, regaining 22 (4d10) hit points as it assimilates the components of the body into its form.

Best Foot Forward. The local mages guild is willing to pay a party of adventurers to deal with a problem created by one of its necromancy initiates. They request that the problem be dealt with quietly so as not to damage the guild's standing with locals.

An Arm and a Leg. An old Guard Captain has spent his life looking for the monstrosity that took his arm and his leg years prior. Nearing the end of his life, he is willing to pay the party an exorbitant amount to take him on one last foray, for his missing limbs and, more importantly, revenge.

TREASURE

The necrotic energies animating a tangle of limbs preserve its many components astonishingly well. Those poor souls whose bodies compose a tangle of limbs were either the creature's victims or the victims of grave robbing. In either case, the remains are deserving of burial, with many relatives happy to reward the return of what's left of their loved ones. There may be the occasional magical item hidden within a tangle as well, as the creature cares not for such trinkets is oblivious to a magical ring wrapped around a finger.

ECOLOGY

A tangle of limbs rolls tirelessly in whichever direction suits it. It is a collection of reactive tendencies, just waiting to be unleashed. As soon as it detects flesh to assimilate, the tangle charges forward with reckless abandon. While this suicidal aggression is terrifying, a community forewarned of the creature's approach can take appropriate countermeasures. A tangle possesses no animosity toward the living, only a ceaseless hunger for flesh that only they can satiate. Clever folk have evaded a rampaging tangle by distracting it with livestock or similarly expendable creatures while they make their escape.

The Voided Soul

I've warned more than a few necromancers that their dark arts would lead them to a fate worse than death... I just didn't expect I'd be this correct. The voided soul is a pitiable fate for those who arrogantly tamper with death. Even the most black-hearted spellcasters do not deserve this. So terrible is the existence of a voided soul that it is impossible to undo. All my attempts, from resurrection to divine intervention, were unable to release the specimen I encountered from its fate.

— Talien Vos Karven



Classification: Brute

Favors: Charisma (High), Clerics, Force (Damage), Paladins, Radiant (Damage), Warlocks

Foils: Barbarians, Condition (Incapacitated), Fighters, Hit Points (High), Wizards

VOIDED SOUL

A horrid fate awaits any necromancer who steals too many souls from the Old Ones and death gods that dwell in the beyond. A botched necromancy spell leads to abhorrors which kill the necromancer that gave them unlife, leaving the caster's soul voided. A black hole for souls in the area, the voided soul is without physical mass. Voided souls drift in search of any living thing with a soul. A voided soul is a conduit to the hereafter and is eternally starving and ever gaping. A bellow of intake can be heard while in the area of a voided soul, like a ceaseless breath before a scream that will never come.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a voided soul with an Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

VOIDED SOUL LORE

DC	INFORMATION
16	Voided souls are the worst kind of incorporeal undead. Their very presence curses you with crippling vulnerability, making you that much easier to kill. They are stubbornly resistant to nearly all forms of attack, enduring horrific damage that would destroy most other creatures several times over.
21	With a single touch a voided soul can take possession of another soul. These poor victims briefly exist in a state of living death before finally succumbing. The only way to get your soul back is to destroy the creature.
27	Expect deaths when encountering a voided soul. The creatures can split your spirit between the material world and the ethereal plane, beyond the help of your friends and an easy target for a voided soul.

TACTICS

Look at the voided soul's damage resistances and immunities. These statistics feel excessive—and they are. The voided soul is able to shrug off damage from almost every attack and effect. Only force and radiant damage prove effective, allowing the voided soul to tank the entire party with ease. Make sure to track the Aura of the Beyond effect, as that bonus necrotic damage quickly adds up over the course of a fight. Note that a curse lasts until removed by an effect that specifically targets curses. This is doubly dangerous when combined with Death Shroud, causing the soul to deal catastrophic damage when slain. Combine this with Living Death, and there should be a lot of bodies when the encounter is over.

Easier Tactics — Have the soul focus most of its efforts on making Withering Touch attacks against the character with the highest number of hit points, allowing the others to navigate the creature's unavoidable mechanics to the best of their ability. Don't use Living Death until the fight is nearly over. It's good to leave at least one body, and the party should be high enough level to recover from the effect with reasonable effort. Be careful not to reduce that creature to 0 hit points, as that will spell disaster for inexperienced players.



Harder Tactics — Living Death is your best tool, so use it constantly. Use legendary actions to recharge it each turn and take risks to deliver its deadly touch. Do everything in your power to draw out the fight, as the party is on a ticking clock. Use Incorporeal Movement to remain evasive, relying on the creature's prodigious defenses to ensure at least one character succumbs to the effects of Living Death.

PLOT HOOKS

The Soul's Afoot. A murder victim walks into a bar and declares "I'm dead" before collapsing. Soon, another victim turns up, and then another, each displaying the same bizarre symptoms. A voided soul is responsible, and it's up to the characters to track it down and solve the mystery.

Chicken Soup for the Healer's Soul. A cleric is writing a treatise on the hereafter and knows of a way to glimpse the beyond. This practice involves the capturing of a voided soul, requiring specialized equipment and a daring group of adventurers who will be well compensated for their efforts.

Lost and Found. An ashen-skinned woman with grey, lifeless eyes engages the party to help her find her soul. It's near the cemetery, she thinks. The truth is far more sinister. Her soul was torn from her body and fashioned into an undead abhorror known as a voided soul.

New Spell – Death Shroud

This spell is a class spell for clerics, warlocks, and wizards.

Death Shroud
6th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (a grey handkerchief)
Duration: 1 minute

You mantle yourself in necromantic magic, which stands ready to destroy those who would seek to destroy you. When an enemy creature reduces you to 0 hit points while the spell is in effect, the shroud erupts, dealing 10d10 necrotic damage to creatures of your choice within 60 feet of you, then the spell immediately ends.

TREASURE

Incorporeal undead are not known for carrying much around in their pockets, but the spirit of the necromancer which formed a voided soul still bears some knowledge. When destroyed, the spirit of a grateful necromancer may impart the knowledge of necromantic magic to a willing recipient. Should the creature accept, it permanently adds the spell *death shroud* to its class spell list, assuming it meets the prerequisites.

ECOLOGY

The ecology of a voided soul depends on the nature of the necromancer from which it was formed. Wherever a practitioner of that school of magic could be found, so too could a voided soul. However, once a voided soul is formed it quickly massacres any living thing it can find within its territory. The mind of the necromancer is shattered by the transformation into an abhorror, causing the creature to frequent places it once visited in life. A voided soul retraces the steps of its entire life, murdering anything that gets in its way as it travels. Once a voided soul returns to the place of its birth, it lingers for 1 month before finally vanishing to realms unknown.

Voided Soul

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 285 (30d8 + 150)
Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (−3)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)	21 (+5)	20 (+5)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Int +10, Wis +10, Cha +12
Skills Deception +12, Perception +10
Damage Resistances acid, bludgeoning, fire, lightning, piercing, slashing, thunder
Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages any languages it knew in life, but cannot speak
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

TRAITS

Aura of the Beyond. The soul emits an aura of antilife in a 60-foot radius. When a creature enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must succeed on a DC 20 Charisma saving throw or become permanently cursed. While so cursed, a creature is vulnerable to necrotic damage and cannot succeed on death saving throws.

Death Shroud. When the soul is slain, each living creature within 120 feet of it takes 55 (10d10 necrotic damage).

Incorporeal Movement. The soul can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 22 (4d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). When the soul fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The soul makes two attacks.

Withering Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 29 (4d10 + 7) necrotic damage.

Ethereal Ripple. The soul attempts to discorporate the physical form of a creature it can see within 60 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 20 Charisma saving throw or be partially banished to the ethereal plane until the end of its next turn. While so banished, a creature's speed is 0, it is incapacitated, and it is invisible to all creatures but the soul.

Living Death (Recharge 5–6). The voided soul steals the soul of a creature it is aware of within 60 feet. A creature with its soul so removed continues to move and act as normal, but its time is numbered. In this state it cannot regain hit points and cannot succeed on saving throws. If one minute passes before the affect creature's soul is restored, it is slain instantly and cannot be returned to life by any means other than by divine intervention or a *wish* spell. If the voided soul is slain before a creature dies from this effect, the creature's soul is restored and the effect ends.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The soul can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The soul regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Move. The soul moves up to its speed.

Withering Touch. The soul makes a Withering Touch attack.

Gather Strength (Costs 3 Actions). The soul recharges its Living Death action.

Acrylic Oozes

As anyone on the receiving end of a *prismatic spray* can tell you, there is magic in color. The artistically named acrylic oozes are living embodiments of this principle. The bodies of these colorful creatures are made up of dangerously magical paint which they slather on everything. Rarely does this interaction end well for anything other than these oozes. Few creatures can withstand being coated in magical paint, and so far, acrylic oozes have demonstrated no desires other than to cover the world in vibrant colors. The specifically aesthetic nature of these creatures implies deliberate, but certainly not intelligent, design. Whatever misguided force that created acrylic oozes is likely long gone, leaving their bizarre and dangerous creations to menace the world.

PRIMARY OOZE

The viscous primary ooze comes in three varieties: blue, red, and yellow. Each color corresponds to an elemental energy coursing through the ooze's every bubbling pustule. The vibrant hues of primary oozes are striking. The colors are perfect, even when the ooze is injured or in contact with dirty surfaces. Primary oozes have an instinctual drive to make everything look like they do, spreading their paint with admirable determination. Their sticky bodies ensure no surface these oozes encounter goes unpainted. Why or how these oozes gain anything from this act is a mystery, but so far no other behaviors have been observed.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a primary ooze with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

PRIMARY OOZE LORE

DC	INFORMATION
11	A primary ooze may be made out of paint, but that doesn't mean a brush will do you any good. If the creature manages to coat you in its magical fluids, you will suffer dangerous consequences made all the worse by the fact that it's extremely difficult to remove.
16	These precocious oozes can stick to anything, even the ceiling! Combine this with their ability to squeeze through tiny spaces, and they'll cover almost anything they find with colorful paint. Even hitting the ooze is likely to get you splattered, so keep your distance.
22	The color of a primary ooze determines the properties of its paint. Burning flames, freezing cold, or shocking lightning are all possibilities when encountering one of these creatures. The ooze will try to cover everything it can find with this paint, so keep it contained to save both your lives and your cleaning bill.

TACTICS

Oozes are simple creatures driven by instinct. In the case of a primary ooze, its two motivations are to protect itself and coat everything in

TALIEN'S NOTES

I failed all painting courses I took at the College of Lore. The colors just never seemed to behave the way I needed them to. Perhaps it is appropriate that these acrylic oozes prove just as difficult. Their only goal in "life" is to spread color over any solid surface they encounter, be it easel, house, or humanoid. Where other oozes seek to destroy, these specimens create. The final result of an acrylic ooze's artistic endeavors is rarely an improvement, however. The magical paint secreted by their bodies is highly destructive in nature and difficult to remove. Archmagister King naturally prescribed fire as an ideal countermeasure, but as usual his solutions would do more harm than good.

The Primary Ooze

My outfit was an adventurer's dream. It was fireproof, waterproof, and even dragonproof. Now it's ruined, coated in a layer of magical paint that has resisted all attempts at removal. I'm sure Masako possesses the requisite strength to scrub it all off, but I would never trust a barbarian with laundry. Next time I'll be sure to observe these deceptively beautiful oozes at a distance.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Brute

Favors: Damage (High), Fighters, Range, Rangers, Warlocks

Foils: Barbarians, Conditions, Melee, Monks, Paladins



paint, the latter of which the ooze accomplishes in two ways: moving about the battlefield and taking and landing hits. It's not intelligent enough to make good use of any advantages this strategy brings. If given the choice between attacking a painted or unpainted target, the ooze always chooses an unpainted target. Keep track of the areas affected by the ooze's Living Paint trait. Smaller battlefields can quickly fill up with painted surfaces, proving extremely hazardous to most characters. The ooze may even run from a fight if there is more space to paint and all nearby characters are sufficiently coated.

Easier Tactics — Keep the battlefield large, allowing characters to easily outrange the ooze if they'd prefer not to get close. Keep the ooze off the walls and ceilings, as that can be a tricky obstacle for a character to navigate. Let the ooze focus on the character closest to it rather than painting as many targets as possible.

Harder Tactics — Let the ooze start on the ceiling, dropping down onto characters. The battlefield should start mostly painted by the Living Paint feature, with the ooze cutting off the characters' escape as quickly as possible. Make use of the Dash action to paint up the room. Once all enemies have been affected, have the ooze flee the seen in search of unpainted surfaces, leaving the party to clean up the mess.

PLOT HOOKS

The Red Citadel. A princess has enlisted several captive primary oozes to paint her newest castle a brilliant crimson. An act of anarchic sabotage frees the oozes, which have elected to paint the entire town red—literally.

Dangerous Graffiti. A group of mischievous bards have released seven primary oozes into a museum, claiming the act to be a daring piece of performance art. The curators are desperate to have the creatures removed before they spoil countless, irreplaceable treasures.

Special Ingredient. A legendary artist requires a primary ooze to synthesize new paints for an in-progress masterpiece. The highly anticipated portrait is expected to revolutionize the painting scene, but only if the work can be completed.

TREASURE

The paint comprising a primary ooze's body is extremely dangerous but can be diluted and refined into a safely usable paint of striking color.

Primary Ooze

Large ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 172 (15d10 + 90)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	22 (+6)	1 (−5)	4 (−3)	1 (−5)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +10
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 7
Languages —
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

TRAITS

Amorphous. The ooze can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Primary Color. The ooze comes in three different varieties: blue, red, or yellow. The ooze gains the following benefits according to its color.

- **Blue.** The ooze is immune to cold damage and deals an extra 14 (4d6) cold damage on its weapon attacks.
- **Red.** The ooze is immune to fire damage and deals an extra 14 (4d6) fire damage on its weapon attacks.
- **Yellow.** The ooze is immune to lightning damage and deals an extra 14 (4d6) lightning damage on its weapon attacks.

Living Paint. The ooze produces a constant supply of magical paint from its body. When the ooze moves across a solid surface it leaves behind a trail of paint, which lasts until removed. When a creature other than the ooze enters a painted area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it takes 7 (2d6) damage of the type detailed here and suffers a corresponding effect according to the color of the ooze, as detailed in its Primary Color trait.

- **Blue.** The paint deals cold damage, and the affected area is difficult terrain for creatures other than the ooze.
- **Red.** The paint deals fire damage, and an affected creature is blinded until the end of the creature's next turn.
- **Yellow.** The paint deals lightning damage, and an affected creature can't take bonus actions or reactions until the end of the creature's next turn.

The paint can only be removed if completely immersed in water or if a creature within reach uses an action to attempt a DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check, removing the paint on a success.

Sticky. When the ooze is hit with a melee attack by a creature within 5 feet of it or when it hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, it coats the creature in paint. A creature so coated suffers the effects of the ooze's Living Paint feature as though it were in an area affected by the paint.

Additionally, the ooze can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ooze makes two attacks.

Fling. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 14 (4d6) damage (cold, fire, or lightning).

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 14 (4d6) damage (cold, fire, or lightning).

Refining three gallons of paint of the desired color requires a relatively intact body of a primary ooze and a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Calligrapher's Supplies) check. Not only is this paint extraordinarily vibrant, it never fades with the passage of time.

ECOLOGY

The original primary oozes were manufactured, but the creatures have since become self-replicating over the centuries. Over time a primary ooze slowly grows in size, apparently enriched by the painting of other surfaces and creatures. Once it has grown large enough, the creature divides into two identical, less girthy specimens which then continue on their journey. Due to their usual properties and simple behavior, primary oozes are often collected by powerful individuals looking for a peculiar pet. So long as the proper precautions are observed, there is little to fear from the creatures, especially if they are readily supplied with fresh surfaces to illustrate.

SECONDARY OOZE

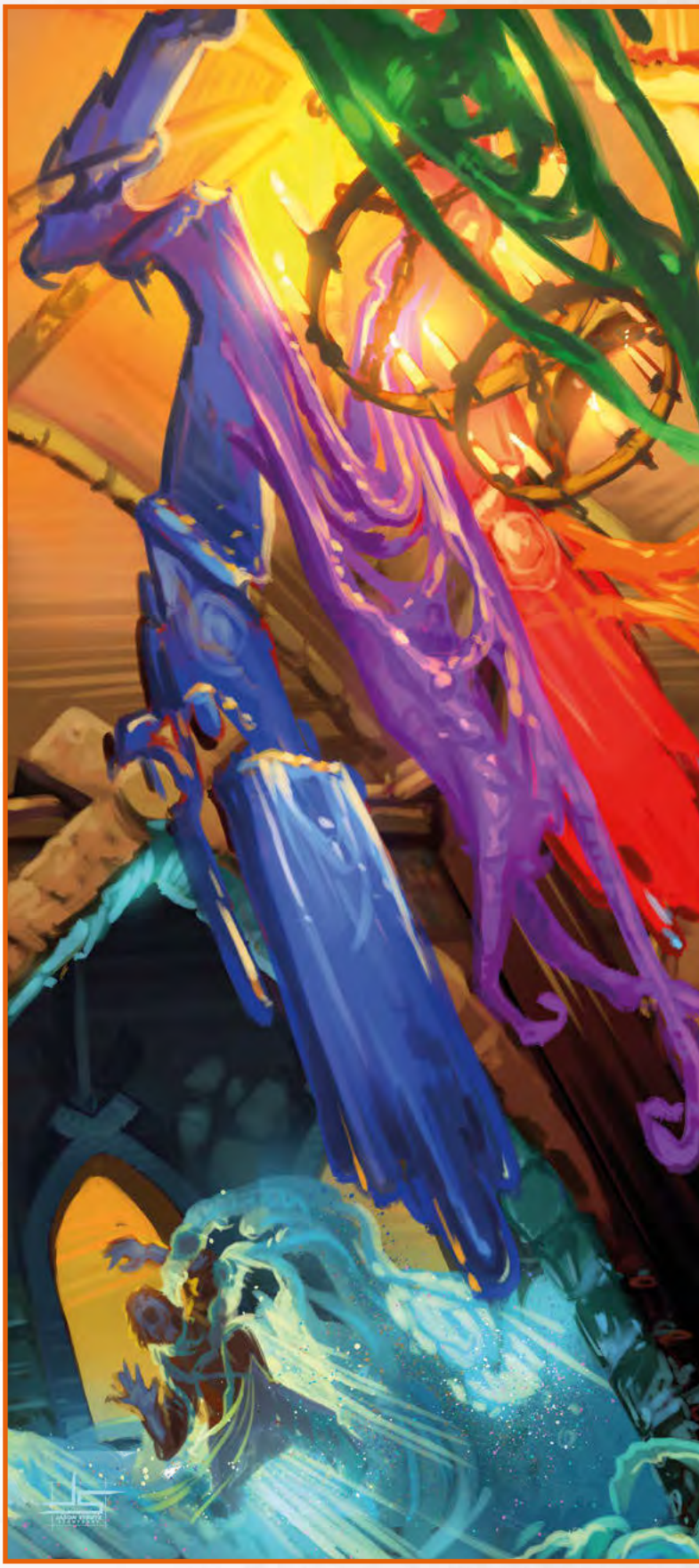
When two primary oozes of differing colors encounter one another, they may merge to form a far larger, more dangerous specimen known as a secondary ooze. They come in three colors: orange, green, and purple, merging the strengths of their lesser brethren into a fearsome whole. The dull wits of a primary ooze are replaced with a devious cunning coupled with destructive impulses. The colors of these oozes are no less vibrant, but their corpulent size and viscous bodies are grotesque to behold. The paint of a secondary ooze is even both more vitriolic and enduring than that of its sires, resulting in many messy deaths for adventurers who dared underestimate the living paint.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a secondary ooze with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

SECONDARY OOZE LORE

DC	INFORMATION
13	Secondary oozes are much like their primary parents, but worse in every way. They are faster and stronger, and their paint is more magical. The change in coloration is accompanied by new magical properties to their paint, which inflicts acidic, poisonous, or necrotic injuries to those that encounter it.
18	Possessing an animalistic cunning, secondary oozes engage in rudimentary battle tactics. The creatures appear to have a malicious streak, going to far greater lengths to harm and inconvenience other creatures. They can even leap vast distances, splashing paint everywhere when landing.
24	Exposure to a secondary ooze's paint can have serious consequences if you don't get the stuff off of you. The nature of these effect depends on the color, but they are all bad news. Keep magical water on hand to wash the paint off easily, otherwise get ready to use some elbow grease.



Secondary Ooze

Huge ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 256 (19d12 + 133)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	21 (+5)	25 (+7)	1 (−5)	21 (+5)	1 (−5)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Wis +10
Skills Perception +10
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 20
Languages —
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Traits

Amorphous. The ooze can move through a space as narrow as 1 foot wide without squeezing.

Secondary Color. The ooze comes in three different varieties: orange, green, or purple. The ooze gains the following benefits according to its color.

- **Orange.** The ooze is immune to acid damage and deals an extra 21 (6d6) acid damage on its weapon attacks.
- **Green.** The ooze is immune to poison damage and deals an extra 21 (6d6) poison damage on its weapon attacks.
- **Purple.** The ooze is immune to necrotic damage and deals an extra 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on its weapon attacks.

Living Paint. The ooze produces a constant supply of magical paint from its body. When the ooze moves across a solid surface it leaves behind a trail of paint, which lasts until removed. When a creature other than the ooze enters a painted area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it takes 13 (2d12) damage of the type detailed here and suffers a corresponding effect according to the color of the ooze, as detailed in its Secondary Color trait.

- **Orange.** The paint deals acid damage. Creatures that take this damage must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or become vulnerable to acid damage for as long as they remain in contact with the paint.
- **Green.** The paint deals poison damage. Creatures that take this damage must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for as long as they remain in contact with the paint.
- **Purple.** The paint deals necrotic damage. Creatures that take this damage must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or have their hit point maximum reduced to their current hit points. This reduction lasts until they are no longer in contact with the paint.

The paint can only be removed if completely immersed in water or if a creature within reach uses an action to attempt a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check, removing the paint on a success.

Sticky. When the ooze is hit with a melee attack by a creature within 5 feet of it or when it hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, it coats the creature in paint. A creature so coated suffers the effects of the ooze's Living Paint feature as though it were in an area affected by the paint.

Additionally, the ooze can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Actions

Multiattack. The ooze makes two attacks.

Fling. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 60/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d12 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 21 (6d6) damage (acid, poison, or necrotic).

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (4d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 21 (6d6) damage (acid, poison, or necrotic).

Launch (Recharge 5–6). The ooze jumps up to 120 feet in a straight line in a direction of its choice. When it lands, the ooze splashes paint around itself in a 30-foot-radius sphere, affecting the area with its Living Paint feature.

TACTICS

Secondary oozes employ similar tactics to their primary ooze parents, but with a greater degree of cunning. The ooze gains a rudimentary understanding of characters' abilities and strengths after fighting with them, adjusting its tactics accordingly. Note the Constitution saving throw effects on the ooze's Living Paint feature. These effects can prove extremely dangerous, especially since they cannot be ended unless the creature either removes the paint covering it or gets out of the area. The ooze notices when a creature fails this saving throw and does everything in its power to keep the target coated in paint. Secondary oozes have a Launch action, which can be used to fling the ooze at creatures who are staying safely out of range or even cut off their escape. Remember, cunning isn't the same as smart. The ooze cannot deduce the properties of things it has not encountered before; it only adapts its strategies based on its experiences.

Easier Tactics — Don't launch the ooze into the characters, as the party will struggle to recover from everyone being covered in paint. Keep the ooze's attacks focused on one target per turn to minimize the spread of paint. Have the ooze spend lots of time on the walls and ceilings where the characters aren't likely to tread, reducing the creature's "footprint" on the battlefield.

Harder Tactics — Use Launch as soon as possible to maximize the spreading of paint. Make full use of the ooze's movement each turn to saturate the battlefield, leaving no safe haven for the characters. Don't fret about opportunity attacks, because the party can face serious consequences for making them due to the ooze's Sticky feature. The ooze is devious enough to respond to serious threats, so focus fire on those characters who deal the most damage.

PLOT HOOKS

The Great Green Glob. A green secondary ooze has emerged from the city's sewers and is turning entire city blocks a particularly noxious shade of green. Unless the creature is destroyed quickly, the clean-up costs will rapidly escalate to absurd amounts.

Secret Ingredient. A halfling brewmaster has concocted a wondrous recipe for the ultimate alcoholic beverage but lacks one ingredient to complete the recipe: a globule of purple paint from a secondary ooze. The good news is the halfling will pay handsomely for a sample; the bad news is the only known secondary ooze was spotted underground by a colony of deep gnomes.

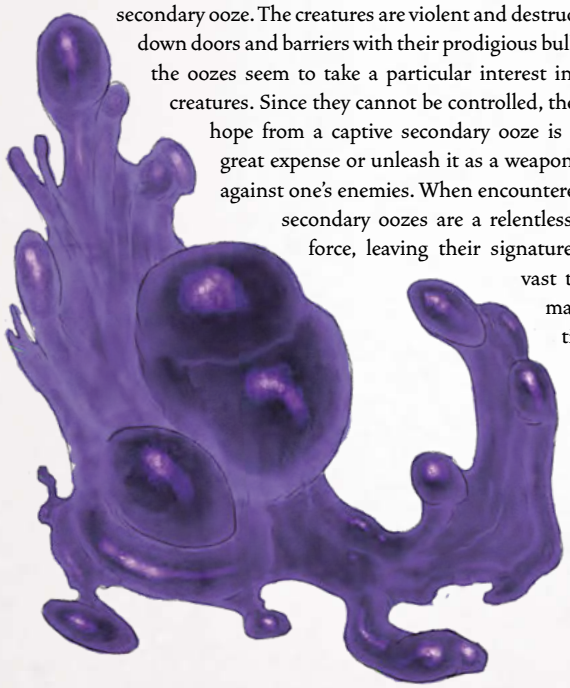
Trial of Colors. A barbarian tribe uses a bizarre initiation ritual to determine its strongest warriors. Aspiring champions must endure an entire minute soaked in the paint of a secondary ooze, earning the tribe's acceptance and admiration should they survive, a useful avenue toward forming a relationship with the powerful tribe.

TREASURE

The paint of a secondary ooze is far too virulent to be made safe, but that doesn't preclude its usefulness in art. There exists an alchemical process by which the remains of a secondary ooze can be fashioned into a magical primer that possesses the ability to animate portraits painted upon it. Creating this primer requires the relatively intact remains of a secondary ooze and a challenging DC 25 Intelligence (Alchemist's Supplies) check, producing only 1 gallon of the primer on a success. Portraits benefiting from the primer are worth up to ten times their normal value and are the jewel in many esteemed collections.

ECOLOGY

Primary oozes themselves are rare, so unless intentionally bred a secondary ooze is unlikely to be found anywhere. While their lesser kin are often kept in captivity, such an arrangement is far more difficult with a secondary ooze. The creatures are violent and destructive, breaking down doors and barriers with their prodigious bulk. Even worse, the oozes seem to take a particular interest in killing other creatures. Since they cannot be controlled, the best one can hope from a captive secondary ooze is to study it at great expense or unleash it as a weapon of last resort against one's enemies. When encountered in the wild, secondary oozes are a relentlessly destructive force, leaving their signature color across vast territories like maniacal, gigantic painters.



The Secondary Ooze

Purple is my favorite color, but there is such a thing as overdoing it. These secondary oozes are remarkable in both their abilities and life cycle. I have never encountered a species that came into existence by combining with another. In an attempt to witness this remarkable process, I locked a blue and red primary ooze in an enclosure for months, to no avail. Perhaps there is a stimulus I am neglecting that would instigate the combination process? I asked Ionia what may excite an ooze, which did not go well. How am I supposed to know druids know nothing of such matters?

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Brute

Favors: Constitution (High), Fighters, Flight, Rangers, Warlocks

Foils: Bards, Druids, Melee, Mobility (Low), Paladins

OPALESCENT OOZE

A fluidic creature of vibrant beauty, the lethal opalescent ooze is a sight to behold. The creature's gigantic body is awash with color, like a giant balloon filled with swirls of paint. The colors within an opalescent ooze emit a metallic sheen, never blending despite the movements of the ooze. As the creature moves, it leaves behind a trail of flowing color, its many patterns and whorls never repeating no matter how much the ooze paints. This display is highly magical in nature, hypnotizing victims that are swiftly engulfed by the ooze. The mind-rending properties of the creature can not only kill but also damage memory, depriving mighty heroes of their skills and defenses.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about an opalescent ooze with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

OPALESCENT OOZE LORE

DC	INFORMATION
15	Opalescent oozes have transcended the material violence of their lesser kin in favor of psychic power. Their paint damages the mind when trod upon, while their bodies can hypnotize any who come too close. They're big too, and require a ton of punishment to bring down.
21	Once you are inside an opalescent ooze, the real trouble starts. The creature can rend the minds of those trapped within, even damaging their memories beyond repair. You can try to move or swim out, but it's no easy task.
26	These oozes compound the defenses of all acrylic oozes into one formidable whole. They resist most forms of attack while stripping victims of their defenses. When angered, the oozes can charge forward, engulfing anything that gets in their way.

TACTICS

Opalescent oozes are massive and use that to their advantage. Every movement coats a large amount of space in paint, quickly overwhelming the battlefield. The creature can use its Engulf to optimize this process, placing creatures within its body and painting over defensive positions simultaneously. Once the ooze has engulfed at least two targets, it's time to use Kaleidoscopic Display. This effect can be devastating, especially to characters that experience it more than once, as Intelligence is not a save most characters favor. The first time they fail, characters will likely choose to lose proficiency in a saving throw they don't need to fight the ooze, but they don't have many they can give up. The second or third time this happens can be crippling for characters, on top of the significant damage they are receiving. Remember, creatures within the ooze can't be seen by those outside, making supporting an engulfed character particularly difficult.

Easier Tactics — Never engulf more than one character at a time, and don't use Kaleidoscopic Display more than once on a character. Remember, the ooze is barely more intelligent than a brick. Make stupid decisions like chasing elusive characters or attacking resilient ones. They won't complain so long as the ooze fights well at least every other round.

Harder Tactics — Focus on using Engulf until at least two characters are inside the ooze, then use Kaleidoscopic Display every turn. Watch out for characters immune to psychic damage or the charmed condition. Try to separate those characters from their teammates, particularly if doing so would end those advantages. Maneuver the ooze to maximize interactions with its Opalescence feature, capitalizing on those who fail the saving throw. Don't underestimate the ooze's ability to just wail on incapacitated creatures. Its attacks can still deal a ton of damage to more fragile characters.

The Opalescent Ooze

It is rare that such a simple creature proves dangerous to one's mind, but the opalescent ooze is just such a foe. Its many shifting colors can render you defenseless through what I can only surmise is a form of magical hypnotism. Once inside the ooze this experience escalates dramatically, fragmenting your memory until you even start to question who you are. A mind such as mine cannot risk such an experience. Imagine the loss the scholarly community would suffer without my talents. I'll make sure to send Zau Hek and Masako in first. Their profession requires they only remember how to swing a sword.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Controller

Favors: Psychic (Protection from), Rogues, Sorcerers, Teleportation, Wizards

Foils: Barbarians, Fighters, Monks, Resistances, Saving Throws

PLOT HOOKS

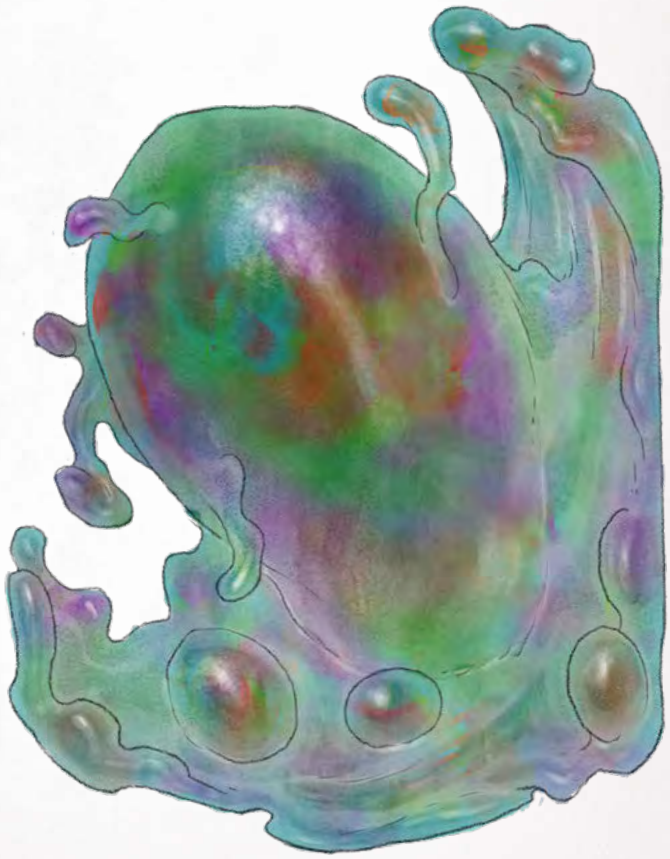
Installation Art. The Illustrated Queen, a fey ruler of mercurial reputation, commissions the breeding of an opalescent ooze, handsomely rewarding any who bring a required acrylic ooze to her court. The queen claims the ooze is to be a piece of installation art, but many doubt her intentions.

Prismatic Falls. An opalescent ooze is swimming in a mountain spring upriver, contaminating the water supply with its paint. While the effects are stunningly beautiful and attract tourists, those who live downriver are suffering horribly from the pollution.

Sweet Ride. A gnome madman (or absolute genius) has discovered a means to "ride" an opalescent ooze, concealing himself in a ball of force within the creature. Since the gnome can breathe within the creature, he can drive it around by tapping on the sphere, triggering the ooze's feeding response to movement.

TREASURE

An opalescent ooze creates incidentally what many artists struggle to accomplish their entire lives. These colorful trails are highly prized by collectors, especially if the surfaces the ooze painted are ideal surfaces for illustration. Metal plates, smooth stone, or canvas are ideal mediums for the paint, with Large or larger objects worth more than 2,000 gp to a collector. Clever heroes have made fortunes by battling opalescent oozes in locations ideal for recovering such objects.



ECOLOGY

Opalescent oozes require the merging of red, blue, and yellow primary oozes, along with orange, green, and purple secondary oozes. When such a confluence occurs, the oozes rush together in a mad frenzy, their bodies twisting and entwining over the course of several days. When an opalescent ooze emerges, it is a terror to all living creatures. In its wake the creature leaves an extraordinary body count, the remains eternally preserved in colorful layers of dangerous paint. The environmental damage inflicted by an opalescent ooze is extreme. Its massive size ensures any area is thoroughly coated, and the danger of the paint makes any restoration project a dangerous prospect.

Opalescent Ooze

Gargantuan ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 8
Hit Points 425 (23d20 + 184)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	6 (−2)	26 (+8)	1 (−5)	22 (+6)	1 (−5)

Saving Throws Str +13, Wis +12, Cha +1
Skills Perception +12
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, poison
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 22
Languages —
Challenge 20 (25,000 XP)

TRAITS

Amorphous. The ooze can move through a space as narrow as 5 feet wide without squeezing.

Living Paint. The ooze produces a constant supply of magical paint from its body. When the ooze moves across a solid surface it leaves behind a trail of paint, which lasts until removed. When a creature other than the ooze enters a painted area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw or take 22 (4d10) psychic damage, or half as much on a success.

The paint can only be removed if completely immersed in magical water or if a creature within reach uses an action to attempt a DC 21 Strength (Athletics) check, removing the paint on a success.

Opalescence. The ooze's body is a shifting mass of beautiful colors that are hypnotic to behold. When a creature that can see the ooze starts its turn and within 60 feet of it, it must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed for as long as it has line of sight to the ooze. While so charmed, a creature is incapacitated, and its speed is zero. At the end of each of its turns, an affected creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. If an affected creature succeeds on this saving throw or the effect ends for it, it is immune to this feature for 24 hours.

Permeable. Other creatures can enter the ooze's space, but a creature that does so is immediately coated in paint, as per the ooze's Sticky feature, and immediately subjected to the ooze's Engulf (no action required by the ooze) with disadvantage on the saving throw against that action. A creature inside the ooze experiences the following effects.

- Total cover against creatures and effects outside the ooze, and vice versa.
- Speed is reduced to a 5-foot walking speed and a 20-foot swimming speed.
- The creature moves with the ooze wherever it moves or is moved, retaining its relative position inside of the ooze.
- If the creature is within 5 feet of the edge of the ooze, it can free itself or be freed by another creature within reach through spending an action to attempt a DC 21 Strength (Athletics) check, freeing the creature on a success.

Sticky. When the ooze is hit with a melee attack by a creature within 5 feet of it or when it hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, it coats the creature in paint. A creature so coated suffers the effects of the ooze's Living Paint feature as though it were in an area affected by the paint.

Additionally, the ooze can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ooze makes four attacks, each of which must be against a different target. It can forgo making two attacks in this manner to instead use its Engulf or Kaleidoscopic Display.

Fling. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, range 60/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (4d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 33 (4d12 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Engulf. The ooze moves up to half its speed in a straight line. While doing so it can enter a Huge or smaller creature's space. Whenever the ooze does so, the creature must attempt a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw.

On a successful save, the creature can choose to be pushed ahead or to the nearest side of the ooze and out of its path. A creature that chooses not to be pushed suffers the effects as though it had failed the Dexterity saving throw.

On a failed save, the ooze enters a creature's space, and the creature is engulfed, suffering the effects as detailed in the ooze's Permeable feature.

Kaleidoscopic Display. The ooze's body writhes in a colorful display that overwhelms the senses. Creatures inside the ooze must attempt a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw, taking 44 (8d10) psychic damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Additionally, on a failed save a creature's memory is damaged until it receives the benefits of a *greater restoration* or *heal* spell or a similar effect. Each time a creature fails this saving throw, it loses proficiency in a single saving throw and skill of its choice. If an affected creature cannot lose proficiency in a saving throw or skill, the creature forgets who it is and these effects become permanent, beyond all help save for a *wish* spell or divine intervention.

Bloodmoon Wolven

The conflict between the sanctity of the natural world and the progression of civilization has persisted since ancient times. Armed with a desire to tame the wilderness, civilized races have expanded greedily and bolstered themselves with the slow churn of technology, naively believe that they are the only side of the conflict actively advancing.

The ancient magics that thrive within the pristine natural locations of the world are revered by sage druids as the most powerful force of creation. Foreseeing the inevitable vulnerability of beasts, these forces began to alter creatures to better defend themselves against what would assuredly be an ever-daunting threat. From the vast diversity of beasts, the loyal and vigilant wolf was deemed the best hope to safeguard the vulnerable balance of the land. Over generations, as civilizations refined their crafts, wolves too began to evolve under the transmuting powers of the blood moon, augmenting their forms and abilities, borrowing from the natural world around them. With each cycle of the foreboding orange hunter's moon, the wolves rose higher and higher into their new role as bestial protectors and equalizers.

As experience grew through conflict, eventually the bloodmoon wolven came to recognize the weaknesses of their inevitable foes and adapted not just to defend against their trespasses, but to prey upon their predictability and hubris. With an immutable purity of purpose, the bloodmoon wolven pushed more toward a return to savagery, seeking

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Wolves have always played an iconic role in fantasy, cast as everything from loyal companions to menacing creatures in the dark wilderness. My goal for this monster group was to expand upon these beloved themes and enrich the choices available for telling stories about wolves within your games. The three wolves in this group each try to encourage and exploit specific feelings from players. The everpup hopes to tap into the desire to bond with and befriend adorable creatures, while the quillwolf seeks to engage more primal fears of a terrifically volatile and dangerous creature lurking in the shadows. The matron of the hunter's moon is designed to offer the potential for a sweeping, epic narrative that pits wolves of all types against the party over the course of a wolf-themed story arc.

To use the wolves presented here to greatest emotional and thematic effect, I encourage DMs to embrace foreshadowing and manipulation of player expectations about what encountering each one will be like prior to encounters ever taking place. Go out of your way to believably lull players into a sense of security around everpups, leave evidence of the ferocious destructive power of quillwolves for characters to find, and saturate your world with ominous folklore about the matron of the hunter's moon gradually turning entire villages into part of her pack. I hope the bloodmoon wolven can fill your game with narrative intrigue and rewarding mechanics for everyone. Enjoy!

— Casey Machado





TALIEN'S NOTES

The bond between fey and beast has always proved resistant to comprehension. Is nature a reflection, refinement, or perversion of the fey, or vice versa? Species such as the bloodmoon wolven are all three, simultaneously displaying the best and worst qualities of wolves and fey. Their baleful howls even ruffled the scales of Haloa, whom I've never known to show fear throughout his many years of ranging. At least they aren't members of the fey courts, whose endless parade of increasingly absurd courtiers threatens to clog up my work with insignificant notations.

not to simply survive the advances of the civilized world, but to destroy it, returning it to nature.

Each autumn, when the blood moon bathes the night in its sinister glow, a chorus of howls can be heard from deep in the forest. Wolves of all shapes and sizes call out to the sky. Be they alluringly adorable, bristling with spines, or huge beyond belief, each one is cunning, nimble, ferocious, and lethal. They call out, silhouetted against the pallid night sky, not as a warning but as a battle cry. The beasts of the wilds are no longer the prey—they have become the hunters.

EVERPUP

Relying on an irresistibly adorable appearance to assuage any fear of danger, everpups thrive on establishing a closeness with their prey. When fully grown, their dusty, fluffy-haired bodies reach only the size of an adolescent wolf pup. A patchwork of cheetah-like spots which shift colors to match their surroundings decorate their grayish hide providing a whimsical camouflage against the wildflower meadows in which they often frolic. Large, curling ears extend above their wide, welcoming eyes and rounded features, giving their faces an irresistibly wholesome cuteness. Everpups are inclined to many vocalizations. When one is nearby, a perceptive observer may hear mews, yips, or even sing-song howls from a cheery everpup.

Despite appearances, everpups delight in feasting upon the life force of content humanoids; the calmer and more tranquil their mood, the more deliciously flavored the meal. To this end, they patiently follow, befriend, and form loyal companionship with their prey before devouring their life essence while they sleep peacefully.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about an everpup with an Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Medicine) ability check.

EVERPUP LORE

DC	INFORMATION
13	Beware young wolves found alone, for they may be fey everpups hunting for their next victim. They may look disarming and vulnerable, but they are truly parasites hoping to endear themselves to you with their adorable magic charms.
18	Exposure to the dust on one of these forever-young wolves results in drowsiness and, ultimately, sleep. Once you're asleep, an everpup happily feeds on your life energy. If it consumes enough, you won't wake up.
24	An everpup feeds while its prey is sleeping. If you must be near one, make sure someone unlikely to succumb to its charms is awake at all times and the creature remains unable to flee or hide nearby.

TACTICS

Everpups are most frequently encountered first in noncombat situations; they seek to encourage contentment in their prey prior to consumption. To this end, it is not unusual for an everpup to act as an ally, helping adventurers. A victorious character makes for an unsuspecting, delicious snack. As the DM, be as patient as possible while letting players come to trust this lovable creature. Players love pets; this fact should allow you to exploit them with ease. If a player shows particular interest in the everpup, perhaps discuss rules for having pets with them out of game to further sell the ruse. The moment you believe the players have let their guard down, such as while resting or while distracted by another foe, commence feeding!

If the players learn the true nature of the everpup, there is potential for them to attempt to befriend it and form a lasting bond despite its nature. This creates opportunities to explore what it means to be content with companionship and what constitutes a helpful and productive relationship.

When a long, patient setup is not desired, an everpup makes a great random encounter to interrupt a long rest providing temptation during a watch. Regardless of the length of the buildup, be sure to stage the encounter in terrain that gives the everpup plenty of places to hide and climb to safety out of easy reach of the characters. Try to keep as many sleeping creatures within range of the Vitality Consumption aura as possible while using the everpup's evasion and charm abilities to minimize damage taken. The primary goal is to stay alive as long as possible to let the levels of exhaustion take their toll on a party.

Easier Tactics — The fewer the number of sleeping party members at the beginning of the encounter, the more manageable it is for the characters. If a party is struggling, keep the everpup in open in areas, out of cover and accessible to attacks.

Harder Tactics — Have the everpup strike a wounded party as they start a long rest after a tough encounter. The Vitality Consumption aura can be activated without any immediate clue to its source, so multiple rounds may pass before the everpup is suspected. Once discovered, target any awake, grouped characters with its Soporific Exhale ability, aiming to put as many to sleep as possible. On the next turn, use the Imploring Bleat to attempt to charm any characters still awake and call another strategically placed dangerous creatures from nearby into the fray.

PLOT HOOKS

Sleepy Little Hamlet. An entire small village is found in a deep, unnatural sleep save for a single child, but some of the villagers never awaken. Little do they know, the new pet of that single adventurous child was responsible. What caused this? Why was the child spared? The villagers demand answers and protection.

When the Dust Settles. A mysterious illness is ravaging the countryside, rendering victims unable to sleep and eventually dying of exhaustion. A respected herbalist claims he has found the cure, made from the dust in the fur of an everpup; however, a much larger quantity is needed to save all those afflicted with the disease. The herbalist asks the party to journey several days into the wilderness to the meadow where the everpups are found and return with as many as they can but does not have much information regarding the creatures themselves. Will the party realize the full danger of the everpups in time to ensure safe transport?

They Called It Puppy Love. An enemy of the adventuring party secretly arranges for them to be delivered an everpup under the auspices of good fortune and gratitude. The enemy hopes that the party (or at least enough of them) will fall in love with the creature and that it will eventually turn on them. The enemy plans to follow the party, waiting for this moment to then swoop in and finish them once and for all.

The Everpup

Had my feline familiar not intervened, I would likely still be the proud, unfortunate owner of an adorable everpup. For this twist of fate I am most grateful, for custody of these fey creatures can only end in tragedy. Endearing though they may seem, everpups play upon the sympathy of others in what can become a deadly parasitic relationship. The urge to indulge and fawn over the creature's endearing displays must be opposed at every turn. My advice? Place the pup in the nearest catapult and launch it somewhere far, far away.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Controller

Favors: Barbarians, Clerics, Range, Rogues, Sleep (Immunity)

Foils: Constitution (Low), Fighters, Mobility (Low), Paladins, Sorcerers



Everpup

Small fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 13 (19 with Adorable Visage)
Hit Points 90 (20d6 + 20)
Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (−3)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	6 (−2)	18 (+4)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Dexterity +7, Wisdom +8
Skills Deception +14, Insight +12, Perception +8, Persuasion +10, Stealth +7
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion
Senses passive Perception 18
Languages Wolven, understands Common but can't speak
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Traits

Adorable Visage. The everpup relies heavily on its lovable appearance to dissuade hostility. While it is not incapacitated, it adds its Charisma bonus to its AC.

Vitality Consumption. As a bonus action on each of its turns, the Everpup creates a 30-foot aura around itself which drains the vitality of other creatures. When a creature enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, the everpup can choose to force it to attempt a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. If a creature is unconscious, it attempts the saving throw at disadvantage. On a failed save, the creature suffers one level of exhaustion. For each level of exhaustion so inflicted, the everpup magically regains 10 hit points. As a bonus action while the aura is active, the everpup can use a bonus action to end the effect. If a sleeping creature succeeds on a saving throw against this effect, that creature immediately regains consciousness.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Imploring Bleat. When in danger, the everpup lets out a piteous cry, hoping to coerce other creatures to come to its aid. Each creature of its choice within 60 feet of it that can hear the everpup must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the everpup and regard any creature hostile to the everpup as an enemy. A creature so charmed acts to protect and aid the everpup to the best of its ability, attending to the pup's every desire. A creature may attempt the saving throw again at the end of each of its turns. On a successful save, a creature is immune to this effect for the next 24 hours. If a creature fails the saving throw three times, the duration of the effect becomes permanent, lasting until the everpup is killed or the effect is magically removed.

Soporific Exhale (Recharge 4–6). The everpup adorably sneezes a dusty exhalation which extends from it in a 15-foot cone. Roll 12d10. Each creature in the cone must attempt a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature with hit points less than or equal to the number rolled falls prone and collapses unconscious into a deep slumber. On a success, a creature takes half the amount rolled as psychic damage as it strains to resist falling asleep. This sleep ends if an affected creature takes damage or if another creature uses an action to shake the affected creature awake.

Reactions

Drowsy Getaway. As a reaction to when the everpup is hit with a melee weapon attack made from within 5 feet of it, the everpup can create a puff of dust from its hide that momentarily clouds the area of the attacker. The attacker must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or have its speed halved and be unable to use reactions until the end of its next turn.

TREASURE

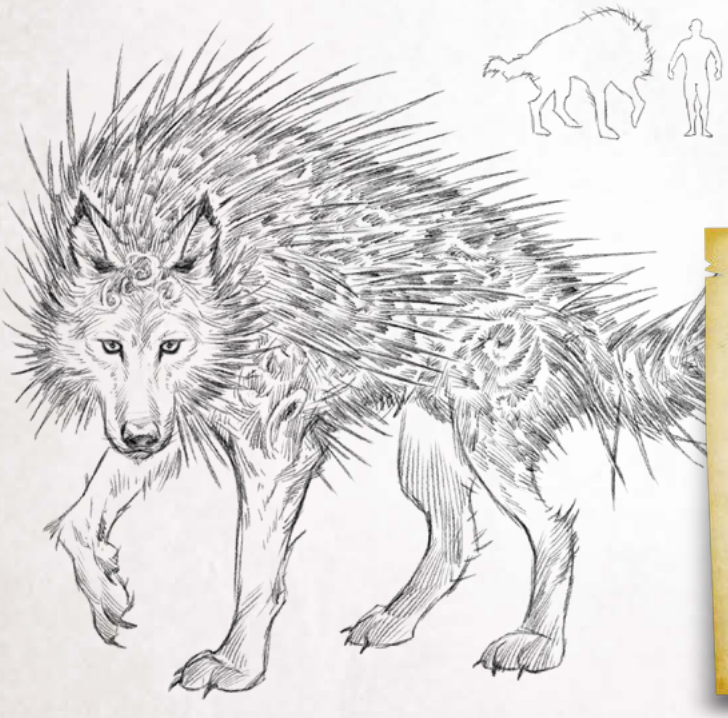
Once killed, an everpup's luxuriously soft pelt can be carefully harvested and the dust from it collected into a container with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check. Though everpup dust is an obscure ingredient, a proficient herbalist is able to make use of the dust collected from one everpup hide to create a single serving of sleep-inducing liquid. If the dust is mixed into a small amount of liquid, such as a potion or vial of poison, the liquid gains the following effect:

> Any creature that ingests this liquid must attempt a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failure the creature is poisoned for 24 hours. While poisoned in this way the creature is unconscious. On a success, the creature suffers one level of exhaustion.

ECOLOGY

With happy humanoids as their primary food source, everpups are consummate observers of people and what makes them happiest. As such, they inhabit the outskirts of lazy hamlets, areas crossed by well-traveled trade routes, sprawling farming communities, or anywhere civilization is content alongside nature. Idyllic settings brimming with natural splendor make for perfect homes. Wildflower meadows are of particular interest, as everpups graze on petals for meager sustenance between larger meals and bathe themselves in the dusty pollen which, once combined with their bodies' natural oils, takes on powerful sedative properties.

A group of everpups is called a snuggle. Despite their overwhelmingly social disposition toward humanoids, they tend to be fairly solitary creatures, forming only fleeting bonds to mate so as not to risk becoming too content, thus making themselves a tasty target to their kind. As a result, if an everpup is ever seeking to truly bond with another creature, it often acts mischievously and irritates the object of its affection just enough to sour them as a meal.



QUILLWOLF

A wolf the size of a bear is intimidating, but one whose pelt also bristles with long, needle-like quills is truly terrifying to behold. Quillwolves blend the canine ferocity of a direwolf with the innate dangers of a porcupine, creating a beast that is as difficult to engage as it is to fend off. Nestled among tufts of soft fur, the quills lay flat against the quillwolf's sleek body when it is docile. Were observers able to survive getting close enough to describe what they saw, they would likely report remnants of former prey skewered among the matted hide. When motivated to aggression, its quills stand on end, extending up to a foot in length, wreathing the creature's body in a halo of spikes. As new quills grow to replenish their coats, quillwolves have learned to vigorously shake their bodies, like a dog drying itself, sending a shower of quills out in all directions around them. This behavior is not only an effective form of defense, but it is also a means to force the movements of their prey if they wish to avoid the newly formed pincushion terrain of pointy obstacles.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a quillwolf with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

QUILLWOLF LORE

DC	INFORMATION
15	Quillwolves are silent predators and rarely hunt alone. They remain hidden until the perfect moment arises. Their uncannily sharp quills penetrate even the toughest materials with ease.
20	The quills which cover the bodies of quillwolves serve several purposes, both offensive and defensive. Striking a quillwolf from too close usually results in collateral damage to the attacker. These wolves have also been known to throw their spiked bodies against prey running at full speed in hopes of delivering a quick killing blow.
26	With no effective means to climb, quillwolves struggle with verticality in combat. Those who survive encounters with them typically do so by quickly moving out of their reach or keeping them at a distance. Despite their speed, quillwolves have no defense or recourse against ranged assault. If a safe distance can be maintained, their threat is minimized.

The Quillwolf

The humble porcupine is a respectable creature. Its painful quills are a just punishment for any foolish enough to antagonize the beast. One cannot say the same about the quillwolf. I would rather die upon teeth and claws than by the sting of a thousand needles. Another example of unintentional (perhaps) fey cruelty which seems to forever plague us mortals.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Skirmisher

Favors: Conditions (Incapacitated), Druids, Monks, Perception (High), Rogues

Foils: Barbarians, Fighters, Hit Points (Low), Melee, Rangers

TACTICS

The quillwolf is a terrifying, volatile, and potentially deadly damage dealer. They are most effectively used in packs of three to five depending on party level, though a single quillwolf can make for an interesting encounter for mid-level characters. To make the best use of its increased critical hit range, it should attack with advantage as often as possible. The easiest ways this can be done are through use of its Pack Tactics feature and by knocking targets prone using its Bite attack.

Impaling Slam is a great surprise to increase the tension in combat by closing distance to a target while also potentially taking a character down in one hit. Since quillwolves prefer to be hidden, Impaling Slam is a perfect way to reveal them with surprise or in the first round of combat.

Lastly, its Quill Spray ability provides options to control space by blocking retreat paths or tactically splitting a party. It also provides modest area-of-effect damage which is enough to force casters to make checks to maintain spell concentration. Furthermore, characters who try to prevent damage caused by movement through an area affected by Quill Spray must use valuable class resources to do so. Highly mobile characters like rogues and monks must use bonus actions or ki points to disengage or choose to take damage.

Easier Tactics — If the dice are running in your favor, quillwolves can chew through a party quickly. To back off on the aggression or provide an easier encounter, keep the wolves separate from each other (negating the benefits of Pack Tactics), and always attack with the claws first, ending with a bite when using Multiattack. This greatly reduces the number of attacks made at advantage. Using Quill Spray on only a couple targets (especially dexterous ones) can offer a "break" round from high damage while still keeping combat exciting. Avoid using Impaling Slam on weak targets in favor of offering tank characters a heroic moment to endure through it.

Harder Tactics — Set an ambush for the party, remembering that these wolves are clever, tactical hunters. Keep the creatures hidden and enter the fight with full distance, using Impaling Slam on spellcasters and healers. Strategically place Quill Spray to separate and isolate the backline, forcing the frontline melee combatants to move through quilled areas in order

QUILLWOLF

Large fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 157 (21d10 + 42)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	8 (−1)	14 (+2)	2 (−4)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Wis +6
Skills Acrobatics +9, Perception +6, Stealth +13
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Wolven
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

TRAITS

Agile Stalker. The quillwolf is immune to difficult terrain and is lightly obscured while moving.

Barbed Quills. The quillwolf's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20. Additionally, when a flesh and blood creature is struck by a critical hit in this manner, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer a severe wound. At the start of each of its turns, a creature so wounded loses 4 (1d8) hit points for each wound it has. A creature within reach can take an action to attempt a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check, stanching all wounds inflicted on a target in this manner on a success. The wound also closes if the target receives magical healing.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The quillwolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The quillwolf has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the quillwolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Prickly Defense. If a creature touches the quillwolf or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it and the quillwolf isn't incapacitated, the quillwolf can choose to deal 4 (1d8) piercing damage to the creature.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The quillwolf makes one bite attack and two claw attacks. The quillwolf can forgo making its bite attack to instead use its Impaling Slam or take the Hide action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Impaling Slam. If the quillwolf moves at least 10 feet straight toward a creature it can see and ends that movement within 5 feet of the target, it can attempt to impale and stun the target with its body. The target must attempt a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 45 (10d8) piercing damage plus an additional 4 (1d8) damage for each 10 feet the quillwolf moved toward it beyond the first 10 feet.

Quill Spray (1/Day). The quillwolf vigorously shakes its body, sending a hail of sharp quills from it in a 20-foot radius centered on the quillwolf. The quills pierce through any cover provided by nonmagical objects and structures, which in turn provide no benefits on saving throws against this action's effects. Enemy creatures in the affected area must attempt a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) piercing damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a success. Additionally, the ground in the affected area becomes difficult terrain. Creatures other than a quillwolf moving within the area take 3 (1d6) piercing damage for every 5 feet they move unless they are benefiting from the Dodge or Disengage action.

REACTIONS

Elusive Predator. As a reaction when the quillwolf is attacked by an enemy creature it can see, the wolf can move up to 15 feet. If this movement places the wolf outside the range or reach of the attack, the attack automatically misses.

to come to their aid. Maximize opportunities for advantage by fighting together as a pack (utilizing Pack Tactics), and always attack with the bite first when using Multiattack. Given quillwolves' high damage output, a couple rounds of focused targeting should leave any party in rough shape with at least a couple characters down in a sea of quills.

PLOT HOOKS

Needle in a Haystack. A farmer is found dead in a haystack in a field, impaled by a single quill. The prominent leader of the hunter's guild directs the adventurers to the quillwolf den to dispense with the menace. The guild leader has been losing profit competing with the quillwolves but is unable to remove them alone. Can the party discern whether this is the act of the quillwolves or a clever play by the guild to frame their competition in the region?

A Prickly Situation. A local entertainment manager had been tasked with providing an exotic surprise for the local gladiatorial fights. The acquisition of two quillwolves would surely provide an irresistible attraction; however, the wolves managed to escape into the city, leaving a wake of destruction behind them. Can the heroes stop the wolves before too much damage is done? Will they return the wolves to the manager for a healthy reward or ensure their release back into the wild?

A Spike in the Action. The party is asked to protect a caravan of supplies from a local merchant attempting to blaze a new, much shorter trail for goods through the heart of an ancient forest. The route will guarantee much faster access to remote settlements ensuring they can thrive. The caravan is ambushed deep in the wilderness by a pack of quillwolves, angered and determined to eliminate all trespassers to their territory.

TREASURE

A fresh quill from a recently slain quillwolf retains the magic which allows it to penetrate materials with ease. If undamaged, a fresh, fully grown quill from the hide of a quillwolf can be harvested with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check, and it can be crafted into a dagger or shortsword with a successful DC 18 (Wisdom) Survival check. The porous keratin that forms each quill is exceptionally strong while also being incredibly lightweight, offering advantages to those who rely on striking quickly. As a result, finesse weapons crafted from these quills receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. If used to do piercing damage, the weapon does an additional damage die of damage on a hit due to the ease of its penetration.

ECOLOGY

Quillwolves' reliance on stealth to sneak up on their prey unsuspectingly leads them to prefer dense forested areas of wilderness, especially those at the bases of mountains or around other rocky terrain. Boulders, fallen trees, and other large obstacles make for perfect ambush locations, limiting escape paths and offering opportunities to chase prey into dead ends, newly created by a scattering of their quills. While quillwolves are difficult to see or hear approaching, a savvy tracker can often identify a quillwolf's territory by finding shed quills or, more ominously, the remains of a previous kill impaled with half a dozen of them.

Quillwolves, though menacing to others, are social and even playful with each other, living in packs of up eight, inhabiting a shared den in a sheltered area where they return between hunting excursions. It takes quillwolf offspring several months to grow their first quills, and while in that vulnerable state the eager pups are relegated to stay within the den under the watchful eye of the pack.

MATRON OF THE HUNTER'S MOON

The regal and ancient matron of the hunter's moon emanates an aura demanding awe and reverence. This tremendous creature seamlessly blends aspects of both wolf and lion, inspiring adoration and terror in equal measure. Her distinctly canine head and muzzle are framed by a luxurious silvery mane, while her muscular lion's body comes to an end with a bushy lupine tail. Her chilling howl can be heard for miles, and her thunderous roar can knock enemies to the ground.

Two brilliantly glowing jade eyes pierce through her surroundings with an unquestionably magical nature. This jade energy manifests in the eyes of wolves around the matron, revealing the otherworldly nature of their loyal connection to her and her pack.

Matrons of the hunter's moon exhibit a hubris in the purity of their pristinely wild heritage, looking upon ever-advancing civilizations as distasteful trespassers on their sacred, natural territory. Matrons act with the singular motivation that a lupine form is the pinnacle of true wild existence, actively seeking to assimilate civilized creatures into their packs by altering them to become wolves. They look upon creatures afflicted with lycanthropy with particular contempt and disgust, regarding them as abominations and distortions of true lupine nature. If lycanthropes are discovered in nearby territory, matrons rabidly fixate on their destruction.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a matron of the hunter's moon with an Intelligence (Nature) or Intelligence (History) ability check.

MATRON OF THE HUNTER'S MOON LORE

DC	INFORMATION
12	Matrons of the hunter's moon are ancient, terrible wolves whose howls can be heard for miles. They are able to turn those that hunt them into wolves, forcing them to join the pack.
17	The terrifying revelation of encounters with matrons of the hunter's moon is that the loyal wolves fighting alongside her were once likely in your position. She seeks to use her powerful curse not to kill but to bolster the ranks of her pack.
23	A matron never strays far from her pack as she would be quite vulnerable, losing many means of both aggression and protection. If she is lured away and kept from howling to call the pack for aid, the fight will be much easier.

TACTICS

Encountering a matron of the hunter's moon typically requires adventurers to reach a remote wilderness location after having traveled through wolf territory, so it is rare their arrival will be unexpected. The matron should fortify herself with allies from her pack in the form of other wolves, direwolves, quillwolves, or perhaps even everpups. If caught unprepared, she quickly acts to summon nearby wolves to her and conjure magical wolves as immediate protection. Whatever the circumstance of the encounter, the matron has a single driving goal: transform as many of her adversaries into wolves for her pack as possible. Any creature that seems more resistant to her Lupine Curse becomes a primary target for damage. A good way to adjust the difficulty of the encounter is managing the number and types of wolves present in support of the matron. The threat of the arrival of more wolves (whether you plan to add more or not) should be a great way to add a sense of urgency to the encounter.

Easier Tactics — Start with a set number of wolves in support of the matron, and avoid using the Call of the Hunt or Conjure Wolves abilities until players clear out any wolves from the start of the encounter. Split the matron's actions on her turn between using Multiattack and her powerful recharge ability rather than using them anytime they are available.

Harder Tactics — Use the Conjure Wolves ability as soon as possible followed by Call of the Hunt to buff all the wolves in the encounter. Anytime Lupine Curse is available, use it to target the character most likely to fail the saving throw. If the matron's positioning becomes less than ideal, immediately use Wolf Step to reposition—this can be a devastating way to set up a Thunderous Roar on your next turn.

PLOT HOOKS

A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing. Insisting that he is not crazy, a hunter beseeches the adventuring party for aid after a tragedy while taking his child with him for the first time on a hunt. The two were ambushed by a giant wolf, and while the hunter narrowly escaped, his child was transformed into a wolf. Can the party rescue the child and end the curse?

Missing Heir. The heir to the kingdom is missing! He was last seen hunting for wolves in a fey wood, against the advice of his counselors and peers. The poor youth is now counted among a moon matron's pack, which boasts more than one hundred wolves and other lupine creatures. Figuring out which poor beast is the prince, let alone freeing him, is a monumental task that commands a hefty reward from a desperate queen.

Gmork and Mindy. A couple live in a wooded cabin on the outskirts of a village. Locals are correctly suspicious that they are werewolves; however, they've always been peaceful and friendly when encountered. Recently there have been several disappearances and increased wolf sightings. While the townsfolk believe the couple is to blame, they too have been targeted by the recent wolf aggressions. Can the party clear the couple's name and find the real cause behind the wolf attacks?

The Matron of the Hunter's Moon

I often have looked in pity upon those cursed with lycanthropy, but perhaps my judgment was too hasty. Those souls, while bestial, retained an element of their humanity, however slim—a glimmer of hope in an otherwise troubled existence. Those unfortunate enough to fall victim to the fey matrons of the hunter's moon are not so lucky. Eternally bound by a malevolent curse to lupine forms, countless innocents now serve these monsters. While the life of a wolf may not always be miserable, it was not a life they chose. Do these creatures even recall their former lives? I cannot know for sure, but the thought haunts me to this day.

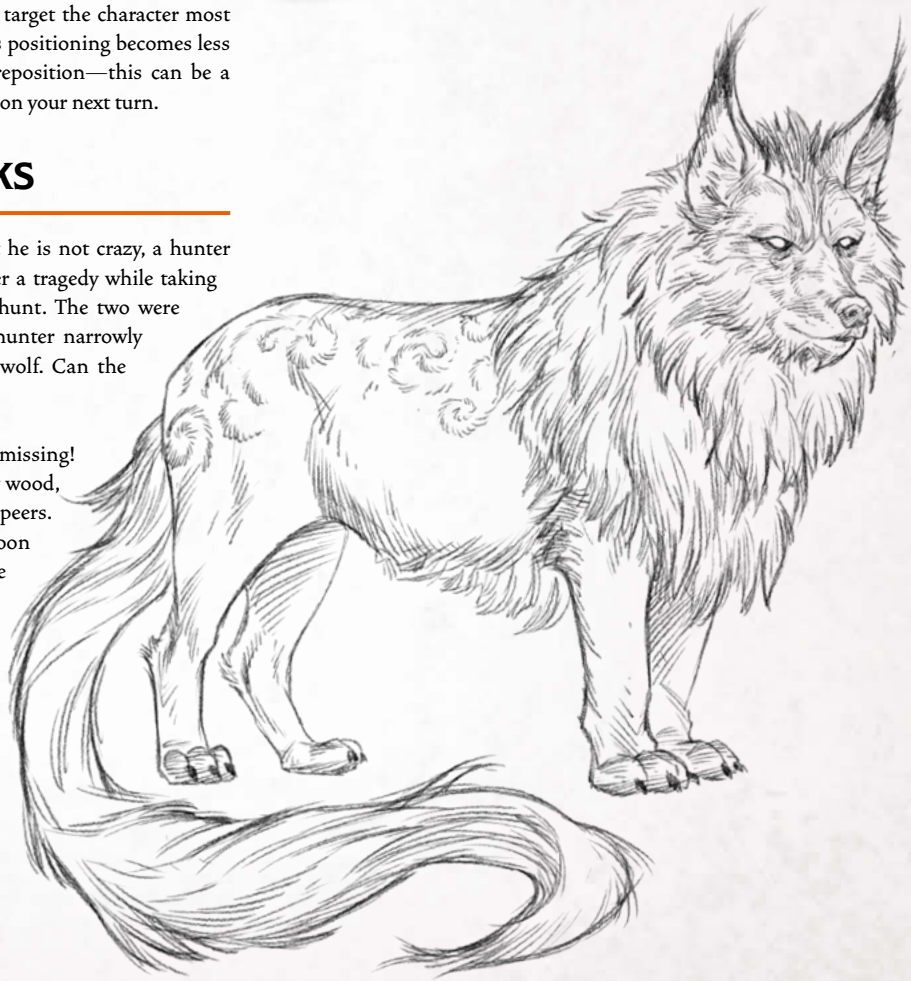
— Talien Vos Karven



Classification: Controller

Favors: Bards, Clerics, Druids, Shapechanging, Specific Spells (*remove curse*)

Foils: Barbarians, Hit Points (High), Rangers, Rogues, Stealth



TREASURE

The matron is always accompanied by a pack of other wolves, most of whom have been victims of her Lupine Curse. Upon their deaths, these cursed wolves revert back to their original form. The revelation of their former nature may be shocking—whether the lingering corpses are unfortunate adventurers or hapless commoners, they still posthumously retain whatever equipment they previously carried or wore in life, preserved in pristine condition. As a result, a cleared den of a matron of the hunter's moon is typically a cornucopia of adventuring gear, from common useful items to specialized magical weapons or armor—if one is willing to pick through the multitude of corpses.

ECOLOGY

A matron of the hunter's moon seeks out a pristinely wild locale in which to situate her den and support her pack. The profound aura of natural magic that radiates from her enriches the surrounding land for miles around her den, transforming forests into thriving, fairy-tale wilderness with towering trees, dense underbrush, and a bountiful population of animals. The longer these timelessly ancient creatures reside in a location, the more far reaching the transformation of the land becomes, eventually abutting civilization. Though meant to provide a natural haven for all manner of creatures, these lands inevitably tempt civilization's greed and, through that greed, unwanted trespassers.

Matron of the Hunter's Moon

Large fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 237 (19d12 + 114)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	23 (+6)	12 (+1)	24 (+7)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dexterity +8, Constitution +11, Wisdom +12
Skills Animal Handling +12, Insight +12, Perception +17, Survival +17
Damage Resistances poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 27
Languages Wolven, understands Common, Druidic, and Sylvan but can't speak
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

TRAITS

Call of the Hunt (2/Day). As a bonus action the matron lets out a rallying howl to her pack. All wolves and lupine creatures of CR 4 or lower within 1 mile of the matron hears her call and becomes charmed by her for 1 hour, and immediately rally to her location by the safest possible route. Any wolf or lupine creature that hears this call can use its reaction to join the baleful howl. A creature that does so has advantage on attack rolls and ability checks for 10 minutes.

Innate Spellcasting. The matron's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). The matron can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material or somatic components:

At will: *dispel magic, druidcraft, gust, resistance*
3/day each: *beast sense, dominate beast, entangle, polymorph* (wolf only), *spike growth, tongues* (self only), *transport via plants*

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the matron fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Pack Tactics. The matron has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the matron's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Shapebound. The matron is immune to any spell or effect that would alter her form.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The matron makes three Piercing Bark attacks and takes one other action.

Fey Bite. *Melee Spell Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 34 (6d8 + 7) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) poison damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or be unable to take bonus actions or reactions until the start of its next turn.

Piercing Bark. *Ranged Spell Attack*: +13 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) force damage.

Lupine Curse. The matron chooses one creature it can see within 30 feet of it that it has transformed into a wolf via the *polymorph* spell. The target must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or become cursed. A creature that remains so cursed for the *polymorph* spell's duration becomes permanently transformed and charmed by the matron, and the matron no longer needs to concentrate to maintain the effect. If the target or the matron is slain, the curse and spell both immediately end.

Thunderous Roar (Recharge 5–6). The matron exhales a thunderous roar in a 40-foot cone. Each enemy creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 20 Constitution saving throw, taking 54 (12d8) thunder damages and being knocked prone on a failure, or half as much damage on a success.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The matron can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The matron regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Eyes of the Pack. The matron gains truesight to a range of 60 feet until the end of her next turn, and she takes the Search action.

Pack Leader. The matron directs one wolf or lupine creature she can see within 120 feet of her to make a single attack against a target of her choice.

Wolf Step (Costs 2 Actions). The matron magically teleports to an unoccupied, heavily obscured space within 60 feet of her.

Conjure Wolves (Costs 3 Actions). The matron conjures 4 (1d4 + 2) direwolves in unoccupied spaces she can see within 60 feet of her. These wolves act immediately after the matron in the initiative order and disappear when they reach 0 hit points or after 5 minutes. This effect immediately ends of the matron uses this action again before its duration ends.

Centinels

Nature is change incarnate. Nothing is permanent but the ever-shifting cycle of destruction and new life. Watching over this process is a race of formidable guardians tasked with ensuring all is as it should be. With unrelenting determination and eternal vigilance these centinels rank among nature's most stalwart defenders. Each is committed to an aspect of one of the four seasons: autumn, winter, spring, and summer. The centinels refer to this wonder of nature as "The Great Cycle" and fight ferociously in its defense. Each is a gigantic arborous being wielding formidable magic. Only a fool would attribute a tranquil or defensive demeanor to these mighty warriors, for centinels only awaken to wage war. Even druids know better than to attempt to parlay with the wardens of The Great Cycle, for mercy is afforded to none that oppose the will of nature's champions.



The Autumnal Arborian

I don't fear old age. Or at least, I wouldn't if the autumnal arborian didn't exist. How can the taking of life without consent be considered merciful? Just because it works for plants and animals doesn't mean it works for the rest of us. Haloa scoffed at my indignation. He calls it "a civilized approach to death." I don't know what that means, and I'm not sure I want to.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Artillery

Favors: Barbarians, Mobility (High), Rogues, Stealth

Foils: Armor Class (High), Fighters, Paladins, Range (Long), Warlocks

AUTUMNAL ARBORIAN

Autumn is the season of ending. Plants wither and fade, while the lives of busy mortals slow in preparation for the coming winter. The autumnal arborian understands this cycle well. Wielding a titanic bow and deadly accuracy, these creatures ensure a timely death to those whose end has come. In the arborian's eyes, this swift death is a mercy preferable to the agony of decay. Each arborian is formed from a tree unique to its biome, though they all share an expressionless face, a myriad of roots instead of legs, and piercing eyes ever searching for targets.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about an autumnal arborian with an Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) ability check.

AUTUMNAL ARBORIAN LORE

DC	INFORMATION
10	Autumnal arborians wield gigantic magical bows with terrific range. These centinels roam their lands in search of creatures whose lives (in the arborian's opinion) are no longer worth living. Their arrows rarely miss, as the arborian's keen eye and expert skills are unrivaled in the forest.
15	Beware an arborian that has taken root. While you may think this to be to your advantage, in reality the centinel has steadied itself to maximize the reach and accuracy of its bow. There have been reports of autumnal arborians landing shots from nearly a quarter mile away.
21	While its movement is slow, the reflexes of an arborian are lightning quick. It can snipe a creature as soon as it leaves cover, striking with such force that the target is often thrown back from the impact. It takes extreme stealth to sneak up on an arborian, even with magic.

TACTICS

The arborian's only weapon is its greatbow, so shooting is the name of the game. The more space an arborian has to snipe characters, the better. This can make for a huge battlefield, as the centinel can easily hit creatures more than 300 feet away, especially if rooted with its Take Root action. If the arborian is expecting the characters, it should use Take Root before combat starts. In some cases, this may make the arborian imperceptible to the characters due to range, allowing the creature to strike with surprise. Few ranged characters can match an arborian in a shooting contest, forcing the party to close the gap. Use the Strength saving throw on Greatbow attacks to push characters away and hamper this strategy. Note this also works when the arborian makes attacks of opportunity as well, punishing characters who attempt to dodge between cover.

Easier Tactics — Don't start combat with the arborian until the characters are within 120 feet of the creature. Many characters can close this gap in two or fewer turns, allowing the centinel to stop some—but not all—of the party's desperate melee attacks. To make things even easier, have the arborian spend its first turn of combat using Take Root. This gives the characters a generous window during which to devise a strategy before engaging the arborian. If they choose to shoot it out, they have only themselves to blame.

Harder Tactics — If your characters don't know what it's like to be sniped, they are about to find out. Have the arborian engage at maximum range while benefiting from Take Root. This gives the creature an effective range of 1,200 feet, a mind-boggling distance. Note that with Archer's Eye, the arborian can easily compensate for the disadvantage imposed on the attack due to distance. If you are lucky, the arborian will score a critical hit on its first shot, pinning the characters down as they struggle to figure out what's happening.

PLOT HOOKS

Judgement of the Forest. An autumnal arborian has taken root upon a hill overseeing a small town, protecting its people in times of crisis. The tradeoff is the arborian brings a swift death to the aged and dying, a practice many have taken severe issue with. The locals are torn on whether to evict their protector or accept the judgement of the centinel as a price worth paying.

Hunting Accident. An aged king is slain by an autumnal arborian while on a hunting trip. Furious with the creature, the kingdom's people wish to burn the forest down in vengeance. The local druidic circle is desperate to prevent such a catastrophe, but is such an outcome even possible unless the arborian is brought to justice?

Tests of Skill. A captured autumnal arborian is forced to compete in archery competitions, winning a fortune in prizes for its captors. While many frown on this arrangement, the law is on the captor's side, as a plant is not afforded personhood in most realms. Perhaps a wager could be made to free the beleaguered creature, as the captors have grown overconfident in the skills of their meal ticket.

TALIEN'S NOTES

I have learned not to take nature for granted, but even I was surprised to learn of the ferocious nature of the centinels. While not evil in nature, these mighty treants inflict such violence as to turn my stomach. Innocence, mercy, and compassion are either beyond their comprehension or utterly irrelevant. Not that it makes much of a difference to their victims, butchered by powerful limbs or torn asunder by primal magic. An encounter with a centinel is like boxing a glacier. Only overwhelming power can oppose their indomitable might and unshakable will. According to Ionia and her druidic circle, "To oppose the centinels is akin to opposing the seasons. You can hide in your homes or flee to new lands, but they come regardless. Fear them, anticipate them, and learn from them."

AUTUMNAL ARBORIAN

Huge plant, lawful neutral

Armor Class 16
Hit Points 172 (15d12 + 75)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Int +5
Skills Nature +5, Perception +10, Survival +6
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, necrotic, piercing
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, stunned, unconscious
Senses passive Perception 20
Languages Druidic
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

TRAITS

Archer's Eye (1/turn). The arborian can add 6 (1d12) to an attack or damage roll it makes with a ranged weapon.

Arrows of Autumn. The arborian's ranged weapon attacks are magical and generate magical arrows from thin air. When the arborian hits a target that is not a plant, the attack deals an additional 14 (4d6) necrotic damage (included in the attack).

ACTIONS

Greatbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 300/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be pushed 20 feet away from the arborian in a straight line.

Eyes of the Forest (1/Short or Long Rest). The arborian gains truesight out to 600 feet for 1 minute.

Take Root. If the arborian is atop loose earth, it can extend its roots into the ground and take root. When the arborian does so, it gains the following properties for as long as it remains rooted.

- It cannot move from its space and cannot be pushed, pulled, thrown, or magically teleported.
- The range of its ranged weapon attacks is doubled and score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.
- It regains 20 hit points at the start of each of its turns.

This effect ends if the arborian is slain or if it uses an action to end the effect.

Volley (Recharge 5–6). Arrows rain from the sky a 40-foot-radius cylinder that is 100 feet high, centered on a point the arborian can see within 300 feet of it. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (4d10 + 6) piercing damage and 14 (4d6) necrotic damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

REACTIONS

Quick Shots. As a reaction, when a creature it can see leaves cover, the arborian can make a single Greatbow attack against it.



TREASURE

The greatbow of an autumnal arborian is too massive to be used by other creatures, and its magic fades upon the arborian's death. However, even in death an arborian is a creature of grace and beauty, its remains forming a living tree locked within a perpetual autumn. The leaves that fall from this tree are incredibly sturdy and ideal for the fletching of arrows. An arrow benefiting from this fletching becomes a magical item known as an *unerring arrow*.

Unerring Arrow

Weapon (arrow), uncommon

As a bonus action when you nock this arrow, you must speak either the druidic word for "truth" or "fate." When fired, this arrow adds 1d12 to either the attack roll (if you said "truth") or damage roll (if you said "fate"). Once an *unerring arrow* hits or misses, it becomes a nonmagical arrow.

ECOLOGY

Like its centinel kin, autumnal arborians are creatures of the forest. They can be found in nearly any biome containing trees and an autumn season, though arborians have been heard saying they prefer temperate climates. A region containing an arborian is a realm of peace, the suffering of countless creatures ended by the timely arrows of the centinel. While non-sentient creatures take little issue with this activity, intelligent beings rarely have a favorable opinion of the centinel's actions. To the arborian, the act of killing a suffering creature is a kindness, one that its fellows and friends will grow to understand in time. Some communities have learned to live in peace with arborians, either by accepting and appreciating its beliefs, or by being adept at hiding.



REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region around an autumnal arborian is influenced by its presence. The following effects occur within 1 mile of the arborian's location:

- The season is always autumn, and the outdoor temperature never rises above the average temperature for the region's season.
- Creatures other than beasts and plants have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) ability checks while on the ground.
- Fires in the affected area automatically extinguish after 1 minute.

If the arborian is slain, these effects fade within 1d10 hours.

SPRINGBORN SOFTWOOD

Few creatures are as beloved as the centinels known as springborn softwoods. These unusual creatures parade through the forests singing whimsical songs that nourish the body and embolden the spirit. A softwood exists to celebrate life and all its pleasures, taking great joy in inspiring others to join in its revelries. Towering over almost everything, a springborn softwood's face is always a toothy smile. Its girthy body moves with surprisingly delicacy, careful not to trod on even the smallest flower in bloom. Life in all its forms surrounds a softwood. Local creatures flock to its presence, eager to share in the softwood's happiness and prosperity.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a springborn softwood with an Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) ability check.

SPRINGBORN SOFTWOOD LORE

DC	INFORMATION
11	Friends of the forest and incorrigible performers, springborn softwoods are beloved by all. It will try to make friends with you at every opportunity, only turning to violence if given no other choice. A softwood is a good ally to have, healing, inspiring, and assisting comrades in equal measure.
16	When a springborn softwood enters battle, it is with an obnoxiously upbeat attitude and relentless enthusiasm. Its infectious laughter is magical, providing considerable benefits to any creatures it deems allies. Don't underestimate a softwood's strength, which has been known to flatten overconfident poachers.
22	If a springborn softwood starts laughing at you, watch out. Every time you make a mistake, you will pay double for it as the magic of the softwood's laughter gets in your head. If you plan on killing a softwood—you monster—bring a lot of firepower. The creature has a lot of wood to hack through.

TACTICS

The springborn softwood fights best when standing shoulder to shoulder with its allies. The radius of Jolly Green Giant allows allies to get some distance for the softwood, which in turn optimizes their attacks and keeps them healthy. Plants and beasts of any shape and size make appropriate allies for the softwood, though rarely are they creatures with

an agenda beyond living peacefully. The softwood prioritizes the lives of these allies over its own, a cost it can often incur thanks to its massive amount of hit points. Use Helping Hands to keep badly injured creatures from death, healing their wounds with the Mirthful Laughter option from Jolly Green Giant. When the softwood feels the need to press the attack, use the Joyous Hope option coupled with the Rock or Slam attacks. Troublesome enemies should be targeted with Mocking Melody, as that action can get a lot of mileage over the course of combat.

Easier Tactics — Keep the softwood's allies in the small, weak, and adorable spectrum of creatures. This will lessen the impact of Jolly Green Giant and make the uses of Helping Hands less impactful. The characters will likely have many turns to hack away at the softwood with little consequence and won't be punished severely for focusing all attacks on the centinel.

Harder Tactics — The softwood has gathered powerful allies and charges into battle. With its massive bulk the softwood should stand as close to the characters as possible, moving its allies into optimal attack position with Helping Hands and empowering their attacks through Joyous Hope via Jolly Green Giant. Target a class that makes lots of attacks—such as a fighter, ranger, or paladin—with Mocking Melody to maximize its chances of applying. Once the softwood gets below half its hit point maximum, turn on the healing with Jolly Green Giant and don't stop. The healing from Mirthful Laughter can quickly stack up, causing characters to run out of resources to take the softwood down.

The Springborn Softwood

My job is rarely fun, but when such a rare moment comes, it almost makes it all worth it. The experience of encountering springborn softwoods is one I heartily recommend. The creatures are always on the lookout for a wholesome good time that includes everyone and everything. Even in battle, softwoods don't stop celebrating, using their magical voices to shelter allies through troubling times. One must actively try to make an enemy of a springborn softwood. If for some idiotic reason you have cause to battle one, you need to go home and rethink your life.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Soldier

Favors: Bards, Damage (High), Movement (Forced), Rogues, Warlocks

Foils: Damage (Area of Effect), Monks, Paladins, Saving Throws (Low), Wizards

Springborn Softwood

Gargantuan plant, lawful good

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 280 (17d20 + 102)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	6 (−2)	23 (+6)	8 (−1)	21 (+5)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +11, Wis +10
Skills Animal Handling +10, Insight +10, Medicine +15, Performance +14, Persuasion +14
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, radiant
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Druidic
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Traits

Friend of the Forest. The softwood has advantage on Wisdom (Animal Handling) and Charisma (Persuasion) checks against animals and plants.

Jolly Green Giant. The softwood emits an aura of vitalizing joy in a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on it. At the start of each of its turns if it is not incapacitated, the softwood can choose to cause one of the following effects.

- **Mirthful Laughter.** Creatures of the softwood's choice in the affected area magically regain 21 (6d6) hit points.
- **Gleeful Enthusiasm.** The softwood ends the charmed, frightened, paralyzed, and stunned conditions on a creature of its choice in the affected area.
- **Joyous Hope.** Creatures of the softwood's choice in the affected area become bolstered by hope until the start of the softwood's next turn. When a creature so bolstered makes an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check, it rolls 1d4 and adds that to the result.

Overgrowth. Wherever the softwood treads, plant life springs up in its wake. When the softwood stands upon a space containing earth and is not incapacitated, it immediately creates a patch of natural plant growth. The space is difficult terrain for creatures not native to the region.

Actions

Multiattack. The softwood makes two slam attacks. It can forgo making one of the slam attacks to instead take the Help action or use its Helping Hand action.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 50/100 ft., one target. *Hit:* 39 (10d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d12 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, the softwood can choose to push it up to 20 feet away in a straight line.

Helping Hand. The softwood picks up a willing creature of Large size or smaller and moves it to another space within 20 feet of the softwood or throws the creature up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space the softwood can see. A creature so thrown does not land prone nor take damage from any falling that occurs as a result of the throw.

Mocking Melody. The softwood sings a magical melody to a creature it is aware of within 300 feet of it. If the creature can hear the softwood, every time the creature fails a saving throw, fails an ability check, or misses an attack roll, it takes 18 (4d8) psychic damage. The softwood must take a bonus action on its subsequent turns to continue singing and can stop singing at any time. The singing automatically ends if the softwood is incapacitated or the target becomes unable to hear the softwood.

PLOT HOOKS

The Green Migration. A herd of a dozen spring softwoods escorts a rare species of dinosaur to more fertile lands. The centinels attract huge numbers of creatures joining in the journey, overrunning civilized lands with countless plants and animals. Adventurers are sought to drive the herd in a safe and efficient manner to their new home.

The Gully of Ferns. A secret wildlife refuge hidden within an industrialized nation has been discovered. The gully's warden, a springborn softwood, desperately seeks the aid of outsiders to conserve what little nature is left. This task is no mean feat, as the industrialists have constructed terrifically destructive constructs to harvest the refuge.

Celebration of Life. A benevolent druidic circle is holding a massive festival, and the guest of honor is an ancient springborn softwood named Petalbee. But before the festivities can begin, Petalbee goes missing! The guests must be interrogated and the fate of the softwood discovered so the festival can continue.

TREASURE

Springborn softwoods are too busy enjoying themselves to be troubled with treasure. These centinels see companionship to be a far more meaningful use of their time and energy, and it's likely a springborn softwood knows every beast and plant in its region by name. Those who seek rare and elusive creatures would do well to speak to a softwood, who happily (and often naively) give up the names and locations of such creatures in the hopes of forming new friendships. Exploiting a softwood in this manner is the only way to forever lose its friendship should the centinel discover the truth.

ECOLOGY

Prolific life is essential to a springborn softwood. The centinels only dwell where they can regularly encounter other creatures, singing their joyful songs to all who care to listen. Most creatures appreciate the presence of a softwood, though their relentless enthusiasm can prove exhausting to even the most patient of creatures. A softwood makes a point of getting to know everything and everyone in its domain. They obsessively catalogue and question others, regardless of whether their conversation partner understands them or not. The passing of a springborn softwood is marked by an explosion of life, and the centinels are quick to personally repair any damage dealt to the lush forests they call home.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region around a springborn softwood is influenced by its presence. The following effects occur within 1 mile of the softwood's location:

- The season is always spring, and the outdoor temperature never falls below the average temperature for the region's season.
- Beasts and plants in the area can understand Druidic.
- The softwood senses when a beast or plant in the area is slain.

If the softwood is slain, these effects fade within 1d10 hours.

MIDSUMMER MEDLAR

The sun is an uncaring force. It scorches those who doubt the strength of flame and nurtures those who respectfully cower before its fury. It is this power the midsummer medlar brings to bear, empowered by the fragment of the sun stored within a druidic crystal embedded within it. Around this magical crystal is a hulking form of living wood supported by sturdy legs. From the creature's articulate hands are woven spells of terrific power, smiting the medlar's enemies and healing injured allies. A medlar's voice echoes with cruel authority, as—like the sun—these centinels suffer no impudence in the face of unrelenting power. Medlars embody the destructive nature of life, the ability to take from others without care or remorse. It is not cruelty that drives these centinels, but rather acceptance that suffering and life are temporary, insignificant aspects of a grand, uncaring existence.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a midsummer medlar with an Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) ability check.

MIDSUMMER MEDLAR LORE

DC	INFORMATION
12	The magic of a midsummer medlar can both heal and harm with the same spell. Don't ask how this is accomplished, as nobody truly knows. What is known is this perversion of magic makes its spells nigh irresistible, so make sure you packed some fire protection.
17	Within a midsummer medlar's chest is a magical crystal containing a fragment of the sun. It is this crystal that gives the medlar its unique power as well as a pretty spectacular light source. This magic is druidic in nature, which the medlar can call upon to inscribe potent healing runes.
23	These centinels can call upon stone to aid them in battle, creating magical menhirs which protect the medlar without impairing its magic. Within its arsenal the medlar counts several terrific spells which, while it cannot use them often, are devastating enough to only be needed once.

TACTICS

The midsummer medlar is an unusual creature. It possesses the ability to heal and harm in equal measure, using magic traditionally meant for defense and support as a devastating offensive too thanks to the Burning Life trait. Note that spells such as *mass cure wounds* and *heal* can target *any* creature, meaning the medlar can deal huge amounts of fire damage without affording a saving throw to prevent it. Use these spells to keep the medlar's allies in play and down key characters. In cases like *mass cure wounds*, you can do both at the same time, making that spell choice particularly powerful when paired with powerful allies. Burning Life also applies to the medlar's Rune of Life, which is ideal to heal the medlar and devastate nearby enemies. As soon as you spot a character below half its hit point maximum, use *power word heal* to down the target instantly. Should the characters develop countermeasures to the medlar's fire damage, *dispel magic* is often a good go-to.

Easier Tactics — Start the fight off slowly, showcasing the effects of Burning Life through *mass cure wounds* before ramping up to cast *heal* or use Rune of Life. *Scorching ray* is a great spell choice here, as it can target multiple creatures with low damage effects that feel much more dangerous than they are. Don't use *power word heal*, and be mindful of how much damage *firestorm* can do on an unlucky roll. If the medlar has allies, *firestorm* can be used to "accidentally" clear them out while trying to kill the characters.

Harder Tactics — Save *power word heal* for the medlar, and spend almost every turn casting *mass cure wounds*. This should keep most of the centinel's allies in play while still doing quite a bit of damage. When you drop Rune of Life, follow up with the medlar's Banishing Strike to move characters into the area for lots of damage. Don't forget that *healing word* is a bonus action, allowing the medlar to cast that spell almost every turn.

PLOT HOOKS

Wildfire. A logging town is rendered destitute by a wildfire that obliterated the nearby natural resources. Not satisfied with burning down the forest, the midsummer medlar plans to burn what's left of the community as a warning to others who would dare presume to hold power over nature.

Confluence of Seasons. A gathering of centinels is called, with seven representatives from each season meeting at a secret location known only to druids. There is great concern among beasts, fey, and plants, for the last time the centinels gathered it was in preparation for a reordering of the entire world.

Day of Destruction. A midsummer medlar is searching for a way to instigate an eruption in a long-dormant volcano. While such a cataclysm would kill thousands, the land would be seeded with nutrient-rich soil ideal for the cultivation of new life. Many fanatics of all creeds and backgrounds are drawn to the medlar's cause, which happily accepts all aid in this monumental task.

TREASURE

Nestled within the chest cavity of a midsummer medlar is a magically contained fragment of the sun. This fragment is an astonishing piece of arcana that has never been replicated. How a midsummer medlar gained this item is a complete mystery, but its origins are clearly druidic in nature. When slain, a medlar's *sunstone* is typically shattered and the energy released in a blinding flash of light. In rare instances, however, the *sunstone* may survive the creature's death and be recovered.

Sunstone

Wondrous item (legendary, requires attunement)

This large druidic stone contains a fragment of the sun, which can be used to change the nature of certain magics. While you hold the *sunstone*, it sheds daylight in a 120-foot radius and dim light for 120 feet beyond that. Additionally, while holding the sunstone, if you cause a creature within 120 feet that you can see to magically regain hit points, you may instead cause it to regain no hit points and take fire damage equal to the amount of hit points it would have regained.

MIDSUMMER MEDLAR

Huge plant, lawful neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 195 (17d12 + 85)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	7 (−2)	21 (+5)	18 (+4)	23 (+6)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +10, Int +9, Wis +11
Skills Arcana +9, Nature +9, Perception +11
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing
Damage Immunities fire
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages Druidic
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

TRAITS

Burning Life. When the medlar causes a creature to regain hit points, it can instead choose to have that creature not regain hit points and take fire damage equal to the amount of hit points it would have regained.

Sunshard. The shard within the medlar's chest sheds daylight in a 120-foot radius and dim light for 120 feet beyond that.

Additionally, at the start of each of its turns the medlar can choose for a creature in the affected area to either regain 3 (1d6) hit points or take 3 (1d6) fire damage.

Innate Spellcasting. The medlar's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). The medlar can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

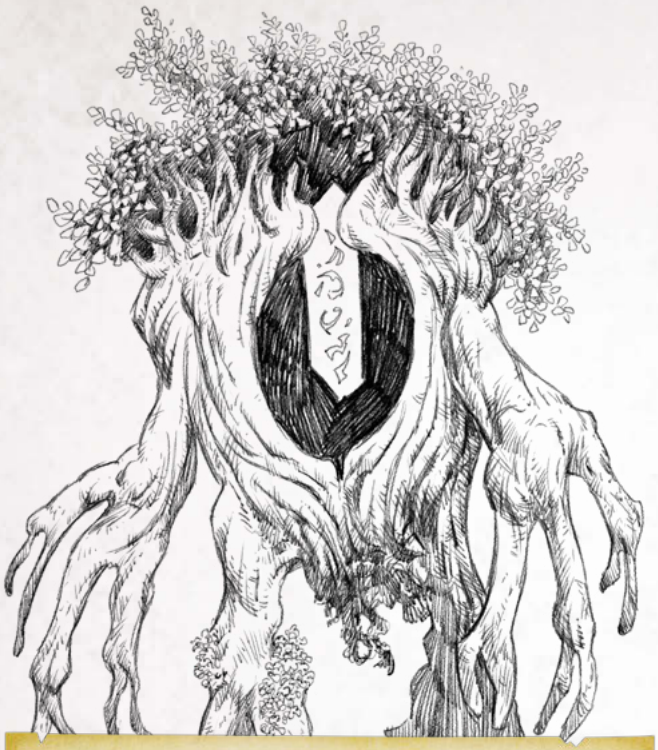
At will: *dispel magic*, *healing word* (3rd level), *scorching ray* (3rd level)
2/day each: *fire shield*, *heal*, *mass cure wounds*
1/day each: *firestorm*, *power word heal*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The medlar casts two spells, one of which must be a spell it can cast at will. The medlar can forgo casting one of the spells to instead make a single attack.

Banishing Strike. *Melee Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target must succeed on a DC 19 Charisma saving throw or be magically teleported to an unoccupied space the medlar can see within 120 feet.

Rune of Life (Recharge 5–6). The medlar creates a magical druidic rune in a 40-foot square on the ground within 120 feet of it, which begins to charge with magical energy. At the end of the medlar's next turn, the rune vanishes and creatures within the area magically regain 55 (10d10) hit points.



The Midsummer Medlar

Summer used to be my favorite time of year. No longer. There is something uniquely frustrating about expecting to be healed and instead getting smote with burning fire. Should you encounter a midsummer medlar and fail to demonstrate the appropriate deference to its strength, prepare for an experience similar to mine. While a silver tongue can prevent this conflict, escaping with one's dignity is rare. If I were a less charitable man, I would say these centinels enjoy the suffering endured by creatures of flesh. That's certainly what Johan believes, and for once I'm inclined to agree.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Leader

Favors: Bards, Druids, Fire (Protection from), Invisibility, Wizards

Foils: Clerics, Line of Sight, Monks, Paladins, Saving Throws (High)

ECOLOGY

The attitude and destructive nature of a midsummer medlar makes the creature an unwelcome inhabitant in most environments, but that doesn't bother the centinel in the slightest. These creatures roam far and wide in search of mortal hubris to correct. The lessons imparted by a midsummer medlar are always destructive in nature, rarely intended to teach its victims so much as inspire legends in those who witness their destruction. To the medlar, the sacrifice of many today ensures a respectful balance that preserves millions over the centuries. Few can appreciate the forward-thinking goals of the medlar, however, particularly when such destructive methods are employed. Even those who count themselves a medlar's allies would be wise to treat the alliance with caution. There is little a medlar will not sacrifice to accomplish its mission, all in the name of the greater good.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region around a midsummer medlar is influenced by its presence. The following effects occur within 10 miles the medlar's location:

- The season is always summer, and the outdoor temperature never falls below the highest temperature for the region's season.
- Objects and structures that take fire damage immediately catch fire.
- The medlar can sense the presence of creatures in the area exposed to daylight.

If the midsummer medlar is slain, these effects fade within 1d10 hours.

WINTER WOAD

The winter woad are bringers of deathly cold and heralds of the winter storm. These creatures take the form of great barren trees lumbering across the landscape, great icicles hanging heavily off their slender frames. Despite their massive size, a winter woad moves with a cold silence, slipping between the trees in search of foes. The bark of a winter woad is carved with gnarled runes, imbuing it with an ancient magic beyond the understanding of all but the most learned druids. The senseless killing of trees and wildlife can awaken a winter woad, who will not rest until those responsible are embraced by death's icy clutches. Though they rarely speak, a winter woad's voice creaks and splinters like dead wood, agonizing over every syllable as if it loathes to communicate.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a winter woad with an Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) ability check.

WINTER WOAD LORE

DC	INFORMATION
13	The cold winds of winter follow a winter woad wherever it travels. The creatures are notoriously difficult to track and are quite proficient at hiding despite their great size. Their magic is formidable and fueled by ancient powers unknown to modern spellcasters.
19	If you are being assaulted by icy magic from an unseen force, it is likely a winter woad is responsible. Their magic can chill targets to the bone, preventing victims from retaliating unless they break free from the ice.
24	Fire is the only thing that will save you from the frozen wrath of a winter woad. Burn yourself if you must, but any flame should serve to counter its power. Be warned: interfering with a winter woad's magic can have dangerous consequences for the perpetrator. Do so at your own risk.

TACTICS

The winter woad is a combination of lurker and artillery. It likes to be hidden and unleash magic, only engaging in melee if it has no cover or cannot conceal itself. Use forested areas to allow the creature to hide and

ambush the party with a salvo of magic. *Freezing sphere* and *sleet storm* on the same turn make for an effective combination, much more so if the party is unable to locate where the effects came from. Note that while the party may not know exactly where the woad is, they can probably get the gist based on available cover. Make sure the creature uses its full movement after attacks to change positions, preventing clever players from deducing its location without having to take the Search action. If the party is unusually perceptive, have the woad cast *pass without trace* on itself for the +10 bonus to Stealth checks. The spell requires concentration to maintain, but the effect is well worth it. Keep Artic Chill and *whirlwind* in reserve for when things get hairy, and always remember that *transport via plants* will serve as a great getaway in a pinch.

Easier Tactics — Don't have the winter woad start hidden, and don't let Artic Chill and *whirlwind* be in effect at the same time. Use the Hide action at least once during battle via its Icy Shadow action, abandoning the strategy if it fails. Alternate between using Multiattack and Multispell to avoid dogpiling powerful magic on the party and keeping the woad in melee. If the players are still struggling at that point, make use of the *thorn whip* cantrip in place of more powerful spells.

Harder Tactics — If the characters aren't expecting to get ambushed, give the winter woad surprise when it casts *whirlwind* from a hidden position. Note that since it's already rolled for its Hide attempt, the woad won't mind dropping concentration on *pass without trace* in place of the mightier spell. As the characters are dealing with the effects of *whirlwind*, hurl *freezing spheres* at choice targets and apply Artic Chill on as many characters as possible. If it all goes well, most of the party should be restrained by either Hoarfrost or *whirlwind* and quite low on hit points.



The Winter Woad

The cold is something you get used to in my line of work. When pursuing a winter woad I foolishly believed my dire beaver furs would prove more than a match for its wintery chill. I was mistaken. While I only lost a few toes to frostbite, I chose to not restore one to serve as a reminder of what happens when you underestimate your quarry. The costs were well worth it. I was able to not only observe the winter woad up close, but converse with the creature as well. It had already laid waste to a nearby ranger conclave that hunted a local species to extinction, leaving the creature in an uncharacteristically good mood. Hopefully my findings can be used to educate others and prevent these tragic conflicts with nature. My colleagues have expressed doubts, but I have faith that the common folk will heed my findings and spare themselves the wrath of the centinels.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Elite

Favors: Barbarians, Druids, Fire (Damage), Paladins, Perception (High)

Foils: Abjuration, Bards, Rogues, Strength (Low), Wizards

PLOT HOOKS

Winter Is Coming. An unseasonably cold summer turns bizarre when snow begins to fall. At the center of the localized winter is a small logging down, which has earned the ire of a very angry winter woad. A local druid recommends "letting nature take its course," but the town is offering a hefty bounty for any willing to save the community.

Frozen March. Four winter woad have descended from the frozen northlands, bringing winter with them. The creatures are searching for a legendary hunter who slew the tarrasque long ago. The hunter has since retired and sired a large, loving family, all of whom will do anything to protect their beloved matriarch.

Circle of Winter. A druidic circle calling itself "the Circle of Winter" has learned to command winter woads using the same ancient magic the creatures wield. With such mighty creatures in service to the circle, their dreams of reducing the world to an "eternity of frozen beauty" is likely to become a reality.

TREASURE

Etched upon the wood of a winter woad are ancient druidic symbols that tell of powerful primal magic from when the world was young. A creature that spends 1 hour of strenuous activity reading these symbols and succeeds on a DC 21 Intelligence (Nature) check as a part doing so can add the spell *artic chill* to its known spells or spells it can prepare. A creature that fails this check is instead affected by a *geas* spell (save DC 21). The source of this effect is unknown, but the affected creature clearly receives instruction to defend the natural order at any cost.

ECOLOGY

When not on the warpath, a winter woad rests in perfect stillness, secluded and alone. The regional effects of the creature are easy to notice, even in perpetually cold climates. Local creatures often refer to these areas as "ice hollows" and keep a fair distance. While it is unlikely the woad will be provoked by the presence of other beings, it is a risk few

are willing to take. Brave (or foolish) druids sometimes seek out a winter woad to further their understanding of nature. Such efforts rarely bear fruit unless the aspirant demonstrates a zeal comparable to the centinel's own. Animal and plant life adapted to wintery conditions flourish around a woad's home, creating nature preserves few are willing to exploit.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region around a winter woad is influenced by its presence. The following effects occur within 10 miles the winter woad's location:

- The season is always winter, and the outdoor temperature never rises above the lowest temperature for the region's season.
- Creatures leave no tracks when walking upon snow.
- Fires cannot be started by nonmagical means.

If the winter woad is slain, these effects fade within 1d10 hours.

New Spell – Artic Chill

This spell is a class spell for druids.

Artic Chill
8th-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S, M (an icicle)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You generate a blast of artic temperatures in a 15-foot-radius sphere centered on a point you can see within range. Creatures in that area must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or become vulnerable to damage for the duration as their body temperatures are reduced to lethal levels. If an affected target takes fire damage, the spell ends on the target. Creatures immune to cold damage are immune to this effect.

WINTER WOAD

Gargantuan plant, lawful neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 346 (21d20 + 126)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	9 (−1)	22 (+6)	17 (+3)	24 (+7)	8 (−1)

Saving Throws Con +12, Int +9, Wis +13, Cha +5
Skills Nature +13, Perception +13, Stealth +6, Survival +13
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing
Damage Immunities cold
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages Druidic
Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)

TRAITS

Ancient Magic. If the woad is hidden and casts a spell, the act of casting the spell does not reveal its position (though the effects of the spell may indicate its general direction). Additionally, if an enemy creature counters or dispels a spell or magical effect produced by the woad, the creature takes 26 (4d12) psychic damage.

Large and in Charge. The woad has advantage on attack rolls and ability checks against creatures smaller than it. Additionally, on each of its turns, the woad can spend half its movement to deal 20 bludgeoning damage to an object or structure within 5 feet of it.

Natural Camouflage. The woad has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to hide in forested or arborous areas.

Overwinter. When the woad deals cold damage to a creature for the first time on a turn, that creature must succeed on a DC 21 Strength saving throw or become restrained by ice covering its body. This effect ends if the affected creature takes fire damage or takes an action to attempt a DC 21 Strength (Athletics) check, ending the effect on a success.

Additionally, when the woad deals damage with a spell of a type other than cold damage, it can instead deal cold damage.

Innate Spellcasting[1]. The woad's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 21, +13 to hit with spell attacks). The woad can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *create or destroy water*, *dispel magic*, *pass without trace*, *sleet storm*, *thorn whip*
5/day: *blight*, *heal*, *legend lore*, *transport via plants*
3/day: *antipathy/sympathy*, *control weather*, *freezing sphere*
1/day: *whirlwind*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The woad makes three attacks, two of which must be branch attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) cold damage. If the target is under the effects of a spell or magical effect, the woad may choose to end the effect.

Branch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Icy Shadow. The woad takes the Hide action and then makes a single attack or casts a spell.

Multispell. The woad casts two spells, one of which must be a spell it can cast at will.

Arctic Chill (Recharge 6). The woad reduces the temperature to an arctic cold in a 60-foot-radius sphere centered on a point it can see within 300 feet of it. Creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or become vulnerable to all damage as their body temperatures are reduced to lethal levels. If an affected target takes fire damage, the spell ends on the target. Creatures immune to cold damage are immune to this effect.

[1] Some of the spells presented here can be found in the official 5E supplement, *XGE*.

Doomstars

Since ancient times, astronomers have turned their gaze toward the heavens, dreaming of the twinkling diamond-like wonders that fill the sky. If only they knew the horrors lurking above, ready to descend and wreak terrible ruin upon mortal realms. From the black void of space come the doomstars—elemental harbingers of destruction. Each is composed of bizarre stellar matter imbued with alien properties. When patrolling the heavens, doomstars appear as harmless stellar bodies: comets, stars, and other cosmic phenomena. Whether this facade is intentional or coincidental is unknown, but often the only warning of a doomstar attack is the colossal impact when it makes landfall. Where doomstars hail from none can say, as few researchers possess the capacity to seek out the creatures' home among the stars.



The Flaritoid

I've long suspected the sun to be a ball of burning fire, and now I have proof! Those fools at the college won't be so smug once I present my research on the elementals known as flaritoids. Then again, they always say, "Bring more proof than you need." Perhaps I should look into purchasing a fireproof cage to bring them one in person. I imagine Zau-Hek could recommend a good metallurgist.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Skirmisher

Favors: Clerics, Range (Long), Rangers, Skill (Medicine), Warlocks

Foils: Fighters, Fire (Damage), Paladins, Radiant (Damage), Rogues, Stealth

FLARITOID

The volatile and brilliant flaritoid is a tiny sun given sentience. These doomstars are terrific forces of destruction, with radiant flames that consume everything in their path. While other doomstars may be more powerful, it is the flaritoids that often make the biggest impression. The light of a flaritoid can turn night into day. The baleful glow of these elementals is barely enough of a warning to those caught in its path. Those with the fortitude to gaze directly into a flaritoid witness a burning eye within a swirling sphere of flame, its gaze forever searching for new matter to burn.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a flaritoid with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

FLARITOID LORE

DC	INFORMATION
12	Flaritoids are peculiar elementals from beyond the stars with bodies like miniaturized suns. Their forms are awash in violent flames which stubbornly defy extinguishing. Getting near a flaritoid risks igniting oneself, so best keep your distance.
17	When damaged, flaritoids can emit blinding explosions of flame. They can even flare in and out of existence, appearing in a flash next to whomever dares assault them. Extinguishing the deadly fire of a flaritoid requires time or a convenient body of water to dunk oneself in.
23	When a flaritoid teleports, its body erupts with radiant fire to damage those nearby. The creatures are surprisingly dexterous and extremely fast. They quickly close the gap on those who avoid their touch, setting everything alight in a rampant act of destruction.

TACTICS

A flaritoid is all about movement but, unlike other skirmishers, cares little for terrain thanks to its Flickering Flames feature. The elemental should dart about the battlefield using this feature, repositioning itself for optimal carnage. Note that this feature *can* fail if the flaritoid attempts to teleport to an occupied space, but with the creature's blindsight range this should almost never happen. The flaritoid's goal is a relatable one: light everything on fire. Characters who think themselves safe from the burning power of the creature's Ignition trait will soon be disappointed as they suffer considerable radiant damage as well. Once all the characters are on fire, close in on the most injured one to score a kill.

Easier Tactics — The fewer characters on fire from the Ignition feature, the easier things will be for them. If you are feeling every generous,



provide the party with a ready source of water to quench any fires. The flaritoid should pick a single character, preferably a hearty one, to be the primary target for its attacks. Don't teleport every turn, allowing the characters a chance to get meaningful results for their movement choices and positioning.

Harder Tactics — With a considerable flying speed and the ability to hover, there is no reason to keep the flaritoid close to the ground except for the purposes of making attacks. Don't won't about provoking attacks of opportunity—use Flickering Flames to teleport away. Use Flash as often as possible to blind the party. Remember that spellcasters often need to see their spellcasting targets, so this advantage can prove tremendous.

PLOT HOOKS

High Noon. A large city is plagued by a second sun hovering above its streets. The flaritoid responsible refuses to move, but so far it has proved nonviolent. The blinding light has proven most distressing for citizens, which in turn engage in increasingly aggressive behavior toward the flaritoid, threatening to escalate the situation to violence.

By the Light. Religious fanatics known as the Cult of Light have captured a flaritoid and imprisoned it within an ancient cathedral. Using the light of the elemental, the cult has inspired hundreds to flock to its banner, much to the chagrin of more moderate faiths. The cult is known for its reckless religious practices, leaving many concerned about what may occur should the flaritoid's exploitation continue.

Sunchaser. A flaritoid has been assaulting skyships transporting cargo between the floating citadels of an aerial empire. In response, the nation has commissioned a formidable vessel, *Sunchaser*, to hunt the elemental down and put an end to the attacks. All she needs is a daring crew willing to risk it all.

TALIEN'S NOTES

I've spent so long researching dungeon-dwelling terrors and hell-born fiends, I never conceived of an apocalyptic threat from the stars. What makes the doomstars so unusual is their elemental nature. I've only ever found elementals natively on other planes, so the presence of these creatures in the skies above the material plane begs the questions: Where do they come from? Are they natives, unique to an inhospitable environment we have yet to explore? Or are they alien visitors from worlds forever beyond our reach? In any case, the doomstars have proven themselves a foe on every front. Their visits are difficult to predict and tough to counter, requiring highly skilled adventurers or a total evacuation in response to a doomstar landing. On a personal note, their nature makes the creatures nigh impossible to study and I am forced to content myself with the sobering remains of their passing. I can't say I'd be lucky to witness a doomstar landing, but how else can one obtain reliable observations?

TREASURE

When a flaritoid is slain and its body remains mostly intact, the remains begin to consume themselves in a white-hot blaze of plasma which lasts for 1 minute. If a creature or object touches this blaze, it takes 11 (2d10) fire damage and 11 (2d10) radiant damage. However, a spellcaster who thrusts a hand into the blaze can claim its power, requiring a successful DC 18 Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (Arcana) check to do so. Claiming this power adds the spell *flickering flame* to the spellcaster's class spell list, assuming they meet the prerequisites.

ECOLOGY

Like the other doomstars, the true ecology of a flaritoid is a mystery. When traversing the realms flaritoids prefer to be seen, shedding their light for miles wherever they travel. For whatever reason, these elementals seem to crave attention, dedicating much of their behavior toward fiery displays of light. This practice may hide sinister purpose, as inevitably flaritoids turn to acts of violence, conveniently when all eyes are upon them. Whether this is pure depravity or some kind of feeding cycle is unknown, but those not seeking a fight with a flaritoid would do well to flee the area as quickly as possible.

New Spell – Flickering Flame

This spell is a class spell for druids, sorcerers, warlocks, and wizards.

Flickering Flames

4th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (a wax candle)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Your head becomes lit with a harmless fire for the duration of the spell, and you gain the ability to teleport between spaces in a flash of fire. Once on each of your turns for the duration, you can an spend your movement to magically teleport to an unoccupied space you can see within 30 feet of you. The distance of the teleport is equal the amount of movement spent. When you enter a space for the first time on a turn using this feature, you erupt in an explosion of flame that deals 5 (2d4) fire damage and 5 (2d4) radiant damage to each enemy creature within 5 feet of you.

FLARITOID

Medium elemental, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16
Hit Points 152 (16d8 + 80)
Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (−1)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)	1 (−5)

Saving Throws Con +9, Int +6, Wis +8
Skills Acrobatics +14, Perception +8
Damage Resistances radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious
Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 18
Languages —
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

TRAITS

Flickering Flames (1/Turn). The flaritoid can spend its movement to magically teleport to an unoccupied space. The distance of the teleport is equal to the amount of movement spent. When the flaritoid enters a space for the first time on a turn using this feature, it erupts in an explosion of flame that deals 10 (4d4) fire damage and 10 (4d4) radiant damage to each enemy creature within 5 feet of it. If the flaritoid attempts to teleport to a space that is occupied, its movement is wasted, and the effect fails.

Ignition. When the flaritoid hits a target with an attack, it deals an additional 7 (2d6) fire damage and 7 (2d6) radiant damage (included in the attack). Additionally, targets hit by the flaritoid's attacks catch fire for 1 minute, taking an additional 3 (1d6) fire damage and 3 (1d6) radiant damage at the start of each of its turns. The fires can be extinguished by an affected target becoming completely immersed in water.

Living Sun. The flaritoid sheds daylight in a 1-mile radius and dim light for an additional 9 miles.

Super Heavy. The flaritoid is made of dense stellar matter, weighing over 100,000 pounds. The flaritoid cannot be pushed, pulled, or forcibly moved against its will and cannot be magically teleported unless the flaritoid allows it.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The flaritoid makes up to two Collide attacks, each of which must be against a different target.

Collide. *Melee Spell Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage plus 7 (2d6) radiant damage.

Solar Flare (Recharge 5–6). The flaritoid emits a burst of magical solar energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or have its concentration broken (if concentrating on a spell or effect), and all spells of 6th level or lower affecting it immediately end.

REACTIONS

Flash. When the flaritoid is hit by an attack, it can use a reaction to emit a blinding flash of light. Each creature that has line of sight to the flaritoid and is within 1 mile of it must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or become permanently blinded. Additionally, if the source of the attack fails this saving throw, it takes 27 (6d8) radiant damage.

EMITERON

The titanic power of the cosmos is inconceivable to most beings. Great neutron stars emit streams of matter that traverse the cosmos, obliterating anything in their path. Even when miniaturized in the form of the nefarious emiteron, the forces at play are difficult to comprehend. These elementals appear as glowing, white spheres of nebulous energy, floating lazily through the air toward whatever tempts their fancy. When they feel destructive (which is almost always), emiterons can project destructive beams of force which cut through nearly anything. With almost scientific curiosity and precision, emiterons apply this beam toward anything they come across, leaving only ruin in their wake.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about an emiteron with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

EMITERON LORE

DC	INFORMATION
13	Emiterons are capable of destroying anything at terrific distances. The beam projected from the creature's body can reduce you to dust and grows with intensity when the emiteron is angered. Stay more than a mile away from an emiteron or out of that beam's path, and you should be fine.
18	An emiteron can easily change the direction of its beam, which cuts through most anything as it moves. If approached, emiterons can emit deadly radiation or, in extreme cases, a powerful pulse that repels attackers.
24	While an emiteron's range is impressive, its senses can miss a cleverly disguised rogue or sneaky ranger. The farther away the creature sees you coming, the worse your problems will be. Once an emiteron has activated its beam, it cannot do so again until it recovers, so consider a tactical retreat before coming back for another go.

TACTICS

As artillery monsters, emiterons need lots of range to make full use of their abilities. Thankfully, these creatures aren't too fussed by challenging environments, as their Matter Stream feature can literally carve mountains in two, given enough time. The emiteron should be placed somewhere that allows clear line of sight to any approaching creatures. The creature's range means it has little to fear from approaching foes, which it can lay out using Matter Stream. The party will spend the majority of combat getting close to the emiteron, which means Intensify or the Dodge action will be the creature's only action options for a while. Once the characters close the gap, it's time for Irradiate or Gravity Pulse if things get dire.

Easier Tactics — The emiteron should remain unaware of the approaching characters until they get within 300 feet of it. This gives the creature plenty of time to open fire while still providing the party with the navigational challenge of getting close to the emiteron. Refrain from using Gravity Pulse unless the characters are assured victory, as forcing them to close the gap on the emiteron all over again is miserable in the extreme.

Harder Tactics — Obviously, the more range you give an emiteron the better, but this is doubly true if you provide little cover behind which the characters can hide. Rogues and other sneaky heroes require solid objects to be hidden. Remember that even if the emiteron can't see the party, unless they are hidden, it can still sense where they may be. Keep the emiteron low to the ground so that when it changes the angle of its beam via Matter Stream, it can sweep the beam through as many characters as possible. Remember, this effect can also cut through objects and structures, even destroying precious cover the rogue was using to hide.

PLOT HOOKS

The Guardian of Mount Xelai. An emiteron has landed atop the sacred mountain of Xelai, holy ground to an order of monks who ascend its peak every year as a test of their dedication and strength. The emiteron has made this ritual impossible to complete, so the monks turn in desperation to any who can dislodge the deadly elemental.

The Emiteron

What wonders wait among the stars! I long to witness what stellar body forms the basis of the emiteron doomstar. Such power must dwarf anything we mortals can create. However, I have yet to encounter a material which can withstand the full power of an emiteron, which will serve as my baseline for what forces I shall contend with among those heavenly bodies. Once I have determined a suitable material for my vessel—and once my interns have tested it—I shall attempt to persuade my companions to join me. So far, they have deemed the idea "insane" or "gnomish nonsense," but I think I can bring them around.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Artillery

Favors: Mobility (High), Monks, Rogues, Stealth, Wizards

Foils: Armor Class (High), Barbarians, Melee, Paladins, Warlocks



A Boring Tale. A dwarven mining corporation uses a captured emiteron as a mining tool, boring into mountains with staggering efficiency. A rival business seeks to subvert this advantage and will pay mischievous adventurers a handsome price to sabotage the device containing the emiteron.

Dance of Entropy. Four emiterons land in a desolate wasteland and appear to have no interest in leaving. While most are content to leave the dangerous elementals be, a circle of druids has observed the creatures "dancing" in a strange performance, ceaselessly for days on end. At minimum the event warrants investigation, and perhaps grave concern.

TREASURE

Like the neutron stars they emulate, emiterons are incredibly dense. When slain, an emiteron's body crashes to the ground, becoming an inert lump of matter of terrific weight. The incredible properties of these remains are unlike any terrestrial matter, just begging for creative minds to find a use for a boulder weighing 1,000,000 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Emiterons are slow compared to their doomstar brethren and enjoy wide-open spaces that provide plenty of time to disintegrate anything that comes within range. When not obliterating creatures, an emiteron is prone toward investigating natural formations and geography. Once an observation has been concluded—a process that can take months—the emiteron reduces the subject to dust. Just what the emiteron is looking for or learning from these experiences is unknown, but many natural wonders lie in ruin thanks to an emiteron's destructive curiosity.

The Magniferi

I never considered that stars could die, but I suppose it makes sense. Looking up at our own sun, I am forced to wonder just how long it has before it becomes like the magniferi: bloated, ugly, and all consuming. Likely such an event will not happen in my lifetime, but the prospect it could occur at all is chilling. Thankfully, magniferi doomstars are less apocalyptic in nature, but they're still quite dangerous. After the one we encountered exploded, I must recommend battling these creatures as far from civilization as possible. Archmagister King still waxes poetic about the crater left in the magniferi's wake, one the kingdom of Hasforth is unlikely to forgive us for anytime soon.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Brute

Favors: Barbarians, Damage (High), Fighters, Hit Points (High), Warlocks

Foils: Clerics, Healing, Paladins, Saving Throws, Wizards

EMITERON

Huge elemental, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 332 (21d12 + 196)
Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	22 (+6)	17 (+3)	26 (+8)	1 (−5)

Saving Throws Str +7, Int +9, Wis +14
Skills Perception +14
Damage Immunities force; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 24
Languages —
Challenge 17 (62,000 XP)

TRAITS

Fallen Sun. The emiteron sheds dim light in a 60-foot radius.

Matter Stream (1/Day). At the start of each of its turns, the emiteron can choose to begin projecting a stream of matter in a 1-mile-long line that is 5 feet wide. A creature that starts its turn in the matter stream or enters the area for the first time on a turn takes 44 (8d10) force damage. Any unattended objects or structures caught in the path of the stream take 100 force damage at the end of each of the emiteron's turns.

Additionally, on each of its turns the emiteron can change the orientation of the stream to another orientation of its choice, sweeping the beam across the space between both orientations by the shortest possible distance. Creatures caught in the path of the stream as it changes orientation must succeed on a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw or take 28 (8d6) force damage, or half as much on a success.

Finally, creatures, objects, and structures reduced to 0 hit points by the Matter Stream trait are disintegrated.

Super Heavy. The emiteron is made of dense stellar matter, weighing over 1,000,000 pounds. The emiteron cannot be pushed or forcibly moved against its will and cannot be magically teleported unless the emiteron allows it.

ACTIONS

Gravity Pulse (Recharge 5–6). The emiteron emits a pulse of force in a 300-foot radius. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 22 Strength saving throw or be pushed in a straight line to the edge of the affected area, or 60 feet away from the emiteron in a straight line on a success.

Intensify. The emiteron increases the damage dealt by its Matter Stream effect by two damage dice, and it loses 22 (4d10) hit points. The benefits of this action last until the emiteron finishes a short or long rest.

Irradiate. The emiteron contaminates a creature it can see within 60 feet of it with cosmic radiation. The target must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw or take 36 (8d8) poison damage and become poisoned. While so poisoned in this manner, a creature's vision and senses are reduced to 10 feet. At the end of each of its turns, an affected creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success.

MAGNIFERI

The largest and most unstable of the doomstars, the malevolent magniferi brings the apocalyptic power of the cosmos to bear upon unsuspecting worlds. These elementals are in a state of perpetual decay, their bloated bodies rippling with the rotting energies of a dying sun. Ponderous and ill-tempered, magniferi resemble titanic red suns. Within the roiling surface of a magniferi, a face of perpetual agony and despair is visible, a reflection of the terminally induced rage that boils beneath its surface.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a magniferi with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

MAGNIFERI LORE

DC	INFORMATION
14	Magniferi get up close, embroiling all they encounter within their furnace of a body. If angered or threatened, the creatures have been known to explode with terrific force, reducing everything around them to a smoking ruin.
19	Within a magniferi is a core of molten metal. This is the creature's weak point, and when damaged it inflicts catastrophic agony on the elemental. Getting in is another matter, and staying inside such a creature is dangerous in the extreme.
25	The healthier a magniferi is, the more powerful its explosion should the creature choose to end its life. This can prove extremely troublesome, as the ludicrous fortitude of a magniferi means that even when injured, the creature is sure to emit an explosion that puts even a *meteor swarm* to shame.

TACTICS

A magniferi possesses a ludicrous number of hit points—and it needs them. The creature's damage is relatively low, but it makes up for it by being quite a prickly punching bag. Note the creature's Unstable trait, which punishes characters for laying the hurt too heavily on the creature. In order to cut through a magniferi efficiently, the party will need to go inside and attack the core. This is about as fun as it sounds, as those inside a magniferi are beyond the help of those outside it thanks to the total cover element of its Molten Core feature. Don't worry about the magniferi taking damage. The creature should roll over the characters with reckless abandon, using its Stellar Collapse if reduced to fewer than 200 hit points. Don't forget to take the Dash action to compensate for the creature's poor speed.

Easier Tactics — Have the magniferi remain stationary, drawing the party in with Gravitational Pull. That way, the majority of characters within the elemental are those who want to be there. Be kind with Eruption, only affecting a single character at a time, and use the Dodge action to modestly complement the magniferi's low AC. Use Stellar Collapse once the creature is below 100 hit points and no sooner.

Harder Tactics — The strategies presented previously should prove effective, but with one key difference. As soon as the magniferi gets



below 400 hit points, it's time to use Stellar Collapse. This devastating effect—along with anything that causes 300 or more damage—is one few characters can stand after, let alone survive. In the event some characters manage to endure, they have to contend with the massive crater left in the magniferi's wake, which can be a formidable obstacle all on its own.

PLOT HOOKS

Under the Blood-red Sun. An angry magniferi looms over a temple dedicated to the moon, scaring away all worshipers. Every time heroes try to assault the magniferi, it prepares to explode, forcing a retreat. The elemental must be lured away, for the artifacts in the temple are priceless relics of great religious significance.

Crimson Constellation. Five magniferi form a new constellation in the sky: that of a crimson, five-pointed star. The land beneath this constellation begins to warp and twist, mutilated by horrific radiation given off by the collection of magniferi.

Red Dawn. A curse has befallen a kingdom of forest fey. Their realm is plagued with a vicious magniferi which rises each morning, blocking the sun and setting the fey to despair. The sensitive creatures are ferociously depressed by the elemental's presence and desperately seek a solution that doesn't endanger their home.

TREASURE

The bitter spirit of a magniferi leaves nothing to be claimed by those who fail to prevent it from using its Stellar Collapse action. However, those rare few who manage to destroy a magniferi before this action is performed can reap great power from its putrid remains. To do so, a creature must immerse itself in the burning sludge a slain magniferi leaves behind, taking 55 (10d0) fire and 55 (10d10) necrotic damage in the process. A creature that does so and survives has its Constitution score permanently increased by 3, and its maximum for that ability score is increased by an equivalent amount.

ECOLOGY

Where other doomstars exhibit a cold, emotionless evil, magniferi are sinister. It is clear these creatures not only care nothing for lesser beings but delight in their suffering. This malevolence is born of a magniferi's own agony, as the creatures are slowly dying a painful death that takes centuries to complete. Even when charmed and controlled, magniferi are petulant and bitter. Every act they take is in service of petty destruction. Nothing is spared this cruelty, with the exception of other magniferi. In the presence of its kin these doomstars show a modicum of joy, reveling in their collaborative capacity to inflict even more suffering.

NEMESOL

The enigmatic nemesol is the most mysterious of an already reclusive family. Shrouded in an impenetrable aura of stellar darkness, a nemesol brings the black void of space to earth. This disastrous pairing leaves the land decimated, stripped of everything hospitable to life. These creatures are enemies of all light, earning the nickname "daybreakers" from those that bear witness to a nemesol's power. Should one peel back the protective shroud that always surrounds these doomstars, one would find a curious geometric cube of alien metal. Humble in size, this is the true body of a nemesol, which is composed of supremely dense matter of terrific weight and durability. A nemesol's body also displays musical traits, emitting strange, deep tones and vibrating like a tuning fork when struck.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a nemesol with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

NEMESOL LORE

DC	INFORMATION
15	A nemesol thrives in darkness and suppresses all light. Even magically produced illumination has little to no effect against the nemesol's power. You will likely encounter a nemesol long before you see it, its presence heralded by a colossal sphere of utter blackness.
21	Many of the nemesol's powers only work against creatures shrouded in darkness. However, striking the creature with weapons can cause a dangerous sonic reaction that proves quite harmful to any caught in its blast. Don't bother trying to hide from a nemesol, which can detect anything that comes near with flawless precision.
26	Daylight is the only force to counter a nemesol's darkness and requires powerful magic to produce artificially. You must defeat the elemental quickly, for a nemesol rarely stays earthbound for long. When the creature departs, it takes everything nearby with it, leaving behind an apocalyptic crater and no survivors.

MAGNIFERI

Gargantuan elemental, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 604 (31d20 + 279)
Speed 0 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	1 (−5)	29 (+9)	8 (−1)	21 (+5)	1 (−5)

Saving Throws Str +13, Con +16, Wis +12
Skills Perception +12
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities fire, necrotic
Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 22
Languages —
Challenge 21 (33,000 XP)

TRAITS

Immense. The magniferi's size is tremendous. Its body typically occupies a 50-foot-radius space.

Molten Core. The magniferi can occupy another creature's space and vice versa. Creatures within the magniferi have total cover against creatures and effects outside its space, and vice versa. When a creature starts its turn within a magniferi's space, it takes 13 (2d12) fire damage and 13 (2d12) necrotic damage.

Additionally, within the magniferi's space is its core. The core is a Medium molten sphere of metal that moves with the magniferi and has total cover against creatures outside the magniferi's space. A creature that deals damage to the core of the magniferi instead deals double damage.

Super Heavy. The magniferi is made of dense stellar matter, weighing over 10,000,000 pounds. The magniferi cannot be pushed or forcibly moved against its will and cannot be magically teleported unless the magniferi allows it.

Unstable. If the magniferi takes 50 or more damage in a single turn, it emits a pulse of solar radiation in a 120-foot-radius sphere. Each creature in the affected area takes 11 (2d10) fire damage and 11 (2d10) necrotic damage.

ACTIONS

Erupt. The body of the magniferi emits a column of molten stellar matter in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 24 Dexterity saving throw or be coated in molten sludge. A creature so coated cannot regain hit points, and at the start of each of its turns it takes damage (half fire, half necrotic, rounded down in each case) equal to its Constitution score. A creature within reach can use an action to attempt a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check, removing the sludge on a success.

Gravitational Pull. The magniferi afflicts a creature it can see within 120 feet of it with a powerful gravitational pull. The target must succeed on a DC 24 Strength saving throw or be pulled 60 feet toward the magniferi by the quickest available route and restrained until the end of the magniferi's next turn. A creature restrained in this manner is suspended in the air.

Stellar Collapse. The magniferi dies in a tremendous explosion that erupts from its body in a 1-mile-radius sphere. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 24 Constitution saving throw or take damage (half fire, half necrotic, rounded down in each case) equal to the number of hit points the magniferi possessed before it died from this effect.

TACTICS

A nemesol's greatest strength is the darkness created by its Dark Aura of Doom feature. This is no mere *darkness* spell. This effect blocks *all* vision, including truesight and the Devil's Sight trait, but not blindsight. This is key to running a successful encounter, as the nemesol's senses allow it to perfectly perceive any foes that come too close. Use of the creature's Deep Impact feature is situational and should be used as a tool to ambush the party or be the first technique in the fight to keep everything close to the ground. A nemesol's defensive abilities extend well beyond its formidable damage resistances and immunities. Many spells and class features cannot target the creature a hopeful character cannot see, protecting the elemental from most targeted spells. Players will have to move their characters close *and* have a source of daylight in order to hit a nemesol hard with magic, and martial characters fare little better. Because a nemesol is not a legendary creature its damage comes from the Resonance feature. The harder the paladin or barbarian hits the creature, the more damage they take in response. Keep Brightbane in reserve in case the players devise an effective strategy involving daylight, preferably targeting characters who enjoy being close to allies.

Easier Tactics — Forget about using Deep Impact on the party. Use it on something they love instead. Their favorite tavern or even their personal fortress are great options. Spread the nemesol's attacks generously between characters and avoid clobbering a single target over and over with Resonance. The creature isn't dumb, but it's hardly a tactical genius. It's reasonable to infer a nemesol understands nothing about those it fights until it has had some personal experience. It will move into dangerous areas, provoke opportunity attacks, and generally make "mistakes" more sensible or worldly creatures wouldn't make.

Harder Tactics — The nemesol should hang just over 500 feet in the sky like a shadowy second sun. At the first sign of danger the creature uses Deep Impact. The falling damage is worth it, particularly if it hangs over a large population center. Once the nemesol has figured out who is a threat, it should use Brightbane until at least half of the targets are cursed. Resonance should be used against as many targets as possible in every situation. Remember that no one is safe from Shadowbrand as long as the nemesol can perceive them. The attack has no projectile, passing through barriers and magical protections with ease.

PLOT HOOKS

Unscheduled Eclipse. High in the sky lurks a cunning nemesol that keeps moving in front of the sun and casting a titanic shadow on the lands below. Seen as a dark omen of the end times, this "living eclipse" has driven the realms into a panic. The high altitude of the nemesol and its great strength require heroes of the highest caliber to take the fight to it.

The Negative Engine. What happens when you take one ambitious artificer, a captured nemesol, and too much free time? You get a space-faring flying machine powered by an irate elemental. The artificer claims the "negative engine" is perfectly safe and plans on a launch test next week, inviting thousands to witness this genius firsthand.

The Stars Are Dead. A nemesol appears above each of the seven largest cities on the material plane. The creatures have not moved for weeks, only attacking when approached. A doomsday cult claims they summoned the creatures to bring about Armageddon, but skeptics believe the elementals are waiting for a sign from some greater authority. The prospect of a being that could command a single doomstar is terrifying, let alone seven.



The Nemesol

When I saw the terrific blackness of the night sky resting in a crater where once a bustling village had stood, I knew things were bad. As we drew closer the colors of life faded to a dull grey, an apparently harmless but unsettling experience. Even the blazing light of the noonday sun failed to pierce the inky blackness produced by the nemesol, and even the gift of magical *truesight* utterly failed in my attempts to perceive the creature. Only Ava Sonos did not fear the dark before us, leading us to victory against the doomstar, though a narrow one. I must remember to never doubt the usefulness of rogues.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Elite

Favors: Barbarians, Range, Truesight, Warlocks, Wizards

Foils: Fighters, Rangers, Rogues, Sight, Stealth

TREASURE

It is likely a nemesol does not grasp the concept of wealth. However, the body of a nemesol is made of extraordinary metal and can be used to fashion alien weapons by the hand of a skilled smith. Processing the super-heavy metal of a nemesol takes highly specialized equipment and a small army of laborers (or a small team of giants) just to lift the material. Processing the material requires a DC 30 Strength (Smith's Tools) check, creating a material known as nemesteel. Nemesteel can then be used to craft incredible weapons.

Nemesteel Weapon

Weapon (any melee weapon made of metal), legendary (requires attunement)

These weapons are made of an iridescent grey metal from beyond the stars. While you are attuned to the weapon you (and only you) can lift it. In the hands of all other creatures, the weapon's mass is considered infinite, though it still retains its ordinary mass when falling or being transported.

When you deal bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage with the weapon, you deal additional thunder damage equal to the damage dealt. Additionally, targets reduced to 0 hit points by this weapon detonate in a harmless (but cacophonous) explosion.

ECOLOGY

The home of the nemesols is a complete mystery, as is the space they travel to reach the material plane. However, when the creatures arrive, they almost always prefer populated areas. Whether this is due to instinct or malevolence none can say. In either case, the nemesol makes efforts to be as visible as possible. Its Dark Aura of Doom gives the impression of a massive black sun that shrouds the land in darkness and stifles light. Seemingly without warning a nemesol will vanish, taking any foolish enough not to flee back to the home of the doomstars. Any attempt at mass evacuations seems to provoke the doomstar, which moves to prevent any would-be heroes from interfering with its ominous task. Nemesols can't speak (or don't want to) but can be commanded telepathically through powerful enchantments. When ordered to communicate by such forces, all that results is a resentful and cryptic silence.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region around a nemesol becomes cursed by its presence. The following effects occur within 10 miles the nemesol's location:

- All areas of nonmagical bright light become areas of dim light.
- Once per hour, a single heavy tone echoes throughout the area. This tone can be heard and felt by all creatures in the area, including deaf creatures.
- The spectrum of visible light changes to black, white, and shades of grey.

If the nemesol is slain, these effects fade immediately.

NEMESOL

Medium elemental, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 368 (32d8 + 224)
Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	1 (−5)	25 (+7)	12 (+1)	24 (+7)	1 (−5)

Saving Throws Con +14, Int +8, Wis +14
Skills Perception +14
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning
Damage Immunities poison, radiant, thunder
Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious
Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 24
Languages —
Challenge 24 (62,000 XP)

TRAITS

Dark Aura of Doom. The nemesol is surrounded by magical darkness in a 120-foot-radius sphere that moves with the nemesol and is centered on the creature. Creatures can't see through this darkness by any means, and any light other than daylight cannot illuminate it. The illumination provided by a source of daylight that affects this area is always reduced to 15 feet.

Resonance. When the nemesol takes bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, it emits a shockwave (no action required) in a 300-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Creatures, unattended objects, and structures in that line take thunder damage equal to half the damage the nemesol took (rounded down).

Super Heavy. The nemesol is made of dense stellar matter, weighing over 100,000,000 pounds. The nemesol cannot be pushed or forcibly moved against its will and cannot be magically teleported unless the nemesol allows it.

Void Banishment. When the nemesol finishes a long rest, it can choose to vanish, transporting itself and all creatures, objects, and structures within the area of its regional effects to an unknown location. No one knows where the nemesol and its victims go when this effect occurs, only that none but the nemesol are ever seen again.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The nemesol makes three Shadowbrand attacks, or one Shadowbrand attack and one other action.

Shadowbrand. *Melee* or *Ranged Spell Attack:* +14 to hit, range 120 ft., one target in darkness. *Hit:* 34 (6d8 + 7) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or become vulnerable to all damage until it is illuminated by daylight.

Brightbane. The nemesol attempts to curse a single creature it can see within 120 feet of it with a fear of light. The target must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or become cursed. A creature so cursed is frightened of sources of daylight and cannot take actions other than the Dash action for as long as it remains in an area of daylight.

Deep Impact (1/Day). The nemesol begins to fall, plummeting downward at terrific speed. At the end of each of its turns, it descends 500 feet until it encounters the ground or a solid object. If the nemesol has traveled at least 500 feet before it lands, the impact generates a shockwave of tremendous force in a 300-foot-radius sphere.

Each creature in that area must attempt a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw, taking 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage and 70 (20d6) force damage and being knocked prone on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a success. Unattended objects and structures in the area take 100 bludgeoning damage and 100 force damage.

Elder Eyes

Experienced adventurers have learned to fear a floating mass of teeth and eye stalks, their eyes erupting with magical beams of destruction. While such aberrant terrors are indeed deadly, they pale in comparison to the dreaded elder eyes—twisted ocular horrors empowered by the most heinous of the Great Old Ones. Each elder eye is an unrivaled herald of madness and destruction. They possess unique powers in theme with the Great Old One that spawned them, bringing reality-shattering power to bear on any who would oppose the will of the ancient gods. It is theorized that when an eye tyrant meets a Great Old One within its darkest dreams, an elder eye is born from that encounter. Which Great Old One was witnessed determines the type of elder eye conceived, and even then, no two elder eyes are alike. Only those who capitulate utterly to the influence of an elder eye stand a chance of surviving, and cults dedicated to the madness of the Great Old Ones always follow in an elder eye's wake. Battling an elder eye is unwise in the extreme. As conduits for the Great Old Ones, their power is nearly divine in strength.

Any victory against an elder eye is pyrrhic, for such blasphemy disrupts the merciful indifference of the Great Old Ones toward the affairs of mortals. Madness and death soon follow, a sad conclusion to what was once a heroic adventuring career.

EYE OF WHISPERS

The King in Yellow has many servants, but few are as fearsome as the sinister eye of whispers. This golden-scaled orb possesses only a single, gigantic eye quivering beyond an ivory mask magically affixed to its face. From beneath this fearsome visage a profane muttering issues forth, said to be the words of Hastur itself come to torment the mortal realms. The eyes of whispers bring glory to the Great Old One. Their presence ensnares hapless fools into forming diabolical cults, while their whispers spread the word of Hastur to countless realms. Entire cities have fallen to the eyes of whispers, swept away to Hastur's realm of Carcosa, an unenviable fate worse than death.

The Eye of Whispers

One shudders to think about the horrors that lie behind its mask. The eye of whispers provides only a hint of what horrors are in store for those who dare oppose Hastur, but it's one hell of a hint. Their telepathic whispers worm their way into your brain like a song you can't get out of your head, only instead of obnoxious the sound is agonizingly horrific. My former assistant deafened himself with his quill in a futile attempt to drown out the noise. Shame too. The injury stopped him from hearing the mutant hydra we encountered a few weeks later, and now I'm again in need of a new assistant.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Lurker

Favors: Clerics, Monks, Paladins, Psychic (Protection from), Truesight

Foils: Barbarians, Damage (High), Fighters, Melee, Rogues, Wisdom (Low)



LORE

A character can learn the following information about an eye of whispers with an Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Religion) check.

EYE OF WHISPERS LORE

DC	INFORMATION
15	An eye of whispers is a powerful servant of the Great Old One Hastur. It is naturally invisible unless you are within its gaze, and from beneath its mask unnatural whispers throttle your sanity. Its psychic power is impressive and can reduce even the most stalwart wills to ruin.
21	The whispers of the eye are not audible, but telepathic messages that are nigh-impossible to drown out. The creature is talented at stealth, remaining hidden while it reduces foes to gibbering wrecks. By the time you can see an eye of whispers, it may already be too late.
26	If you discover strange walls of pulsating flesh, you are within the domain of an eye of whispers. The creatures are out of sync with reality, shrugging off ferocious attacks and mighty spells as if they did not exist. Once you can see the creature, hit it with everything you have as quickly as possible.

TACTICS

As a lurker, an eye of whispers always approaches while hidden, waiting for the precise moment to strike. It keeps its central eye closed to remain invisible, using its blindsight to navigate toward its targets. It tries to catch only a single creature in its gaze at a time, leaving the poor soul's companions completely befuddled as to what is going on. Note that since its Maddening Whispers and Eye of Hastur are neither attacks nor visible effects, they do not betray the location of the eye. Use this to keep the eye hidden from as many characters as possible, only revealing the presence of the eye once victory is assured or if remaining hidden becomes more trouble than it's worth.

Easier Tactics — The eye should still be stealthy, but once the fight has started it should abandon all pretense of hiding. It subjects as many creatures as possible to its Eye of Hastur feature, preferably all at once in a grand reveal when it attacks. Make sure to use Telepathic Entanglement on characters with a lot of hit points. Keep the eye close to the ground to avoid frustrating melee characters like paladins, and be careful about using Maddening Whispers on characters with low health.

Harder Tactics — To make the fight truly devious, start attacking the characters with Maddening Whispers at maximum range. Coupled with a maze-like dungeon, tracking down the eye of whispers can be frustratingly difficult, especially when the characters are receiving psychic assaults every turn. Keep the eye about 30 feet off the ground whenever possible, and use Grisly Manifestation to split the party from healers who are preventing them from a devastating knockout via Maddening Whispers. Remember to use cover to keep the eye concealed, even when using its Gaze of Hastur feature. At best, the characters should only see the creature peeking its eye out from behind some obstacle, forcing them to work hard to get a clear view of their enemy.

PLOT HOOKS

Whispers in the Dark. From deep within the city's sewers, strange whisperings can be heard. The rats and other sewer dwellers soon flee in droves as one by one the townspeople begin succumbing to the dark force dwelling within. To make matters worse, strange horrors have been flocking to the city, drawn by the presence of an eye of whispers beneath the city.

EYE OF WHISPERS

Medium aberration, unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 294 (28d8 + 168)
Speed 0 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (−5)	14 (+2)	23 (+6)	19 (+4)	24 (+7)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Con +15, Int +11, Wis +14
Skills History +11, Perception +14, Religion +11, Stealth +16
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities prone, stunned, unconscious
Senses blindsight 10 ft., truesight 120 ft.
Languages telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 21 (33,000 XP)

TRAITS

Gaze of Hastur. At the start of each of its turns, the eye can choose to open or close its central eye. While its central eye is open the creature projects a 120-foot cone of reality-warping energy in a direction of its choice, which becomes the direction the eye faces. When the eye moves on his turn, it can choose to change the direction it faces, changing the orientation of the cone. To creatures outside this area, the eye is invisible. Creatures within the area have disadvantage on attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks and cannot gain advantage on attack rolls, saving throws, or ability checks.

Maddening Whispers. While the eye is not incapacitated, it can choose to be constantly telepathically whispering into the minds of creatures it is aware of within 120 feet of it. When an affected creature starts its turn, it must succeed on a DC 23 Intelligence saving throw or take 39 (6d12) psychic damage. If a creature is reduced to 0 hit points by this effect or takes damage from this effect while at 0 hit points, it is instead reduced or restored to 1 hit point and its Wisdom score is reduced to 1. A *wish* spell is required to restore an affected creature to its normal state. Doing so always causes the caster to suffer the spell's stress effects.

Out of Touch (1/Round). The eye is out of sync with reality. When the eye takes damage or is affected by an enemy creature, it can choose to be immune to that damage or effect.

ACTIONS

Grisly Manifestation. The eye creates up to a 20-foot cube of matter from nothing in an unoccupied space it can see. The matter is composed of strange, pulsating flesh and is an object with AC 15 and 60 hit points. The flesh appears in any configuration the eye desires, so long as it does not make direct contact with creatures in the affected area. The matter lasts until the eye is slain or if the eye is not on the same plane of existence as the matter for 24 hours.

Present the Yellow Sign. The eye causes the Yellow Sign of Hastur to appear in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of it. Enemy creatures that can see the sign when it appears must succeed on a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw or prostrate themselves, falling prone. A creature that falls prone in this manner cannot stand up from prone until it takes an action to praise the glory of Hastur.

A creature can avert its eyes when the Yellow Sign appears to automatically succeed on the saving throw. However, a creature that does so is cursed by Hastur until the end of its next turn. A creature so cursed is vulnerable to all damage and cannot succeed on any saving throws.

Telepathic Entanglement. The eye attempts to link its mind with a creature it can see. If the creature's Intelligence is 4 or higher, it must succeed on a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw or become telepathically linked to the eye for 1 minute. An affected creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

When the eye takes damage, it can take a reaction to instead take half damage and cause a creature linked telepathically to it via this feature to take the other half of the damage as psychic damage.





The Yellow Court. A cult has repurposed a crumbling cathedral into a house of worship for the Great Old One Hastur. Known as the Yellow Court, this dedication has pleased the Great Old One, which has dispatched two eyes of whispers to oversee the society. As the cult grows, the surrounding lands call for mighty heroes to clear out the worshipers before madness overtakes the land.

Triumvirate. An eye of whispers was discovered counseling a mighty empress and subsequently slain. Oracles have divined the presence of two more eyes within the city, their purpose unknown. Before discovery, the eye had been pushing the empire to restore an ancient city of eldritch power. It is likely the other two eyes are working toward the same purpose, though to what end none can yet say.

TALIEN'S NOTES

I always balked at warlocks willing to shackle themselves to Great Old Ones. After encountering an elder eye, I can confirm that my initial reaction was quite justified. These creatures are not of this, or any, world. The rational mind recoils at their presence, and to be in one's gaze is, to date, the most unsettling experience to which I have ever been subjected. It is as if the Great Old Ones themselves see through their elder eyes, witnesses to our pathetic irrelevance in the face of cosmic power. There is no reasoning with a Great Old One, and by extension an elder eye. I cannot recommend taking on such a creature, as you will undoubtably attract the attention of its sponsor. I have yet to hear a tale concerning one so cursed that has ended well.

TREASURE

Once an eye of whispers of slain, its yellow hood can be removed. Doing so causes the eye's body to immediately vanish in a puff of noxious smoke before its true form can be glimpsed. The hood itself is a potent magical item that carries a foul curse. The details of the hood are found here.

Yellow Hood

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

While wearing this hood you have telepathy out to a range of 120 feet. Additionally, when you make telepathic contact with a creature and its Wisdom score is less than yours, you can choose to bombard it with telepathic whispers. A creature so bombarded has disadvantage on saving throws and ability checks against you. Once you have used this feature, you cannot use it again until the target of your telepathic whispers is slain or until 1 minute has passed.

Cursed. The hood is cursed. While you are attuned to the hood you feel compelled to cover your face with a mask or other suitable article of clothing. If another creature sees your face in person, you sense its gaze, and you become stunned until your face is concealed from the creature.

ECOLOGY

An eye of whispers is an agent of Hastur, dispatched only when the Great Old One has dark designs for sane worlds. The creatures are extremely agoraphobic, preferring quiet, shadowy corners where they can plot in peace. Their cunning and cruelty is not to be underestimated. They lurk among even the most unassuming or insignificant towns, slowly and unrelentingly destroying its population. An eye of whispers is drawn to the emotions and thoughts of other creatures. It spends a tremendous amount of time simply observing, transmitting all that it experiences directly to Hastur. There are a curious number of encounters with eye of whispers in which the aberration does nothing but harmlessly witness the actions of others. Those few who are aware of the elder eye's presence find this experience profoundly unsettling.

EYE OF THE DEEP

In the watery depths of eldritch oceans lurk cosmic horrors beyond comprehension. While none can say whether such horrifying beings will someday awaken from their dark slumber, their influence spreads nonetheless. For one particular Great Old One this takes the form of deadly agents dedicated to infecting the world with their corrupting presence. The greatest among these foul beings are the eyes of the deep. These elder eyes are tentacled reflections of their dark master. Their faces are a mass of writhing tentacles, with two horrifically long, barbed arms for grasping prey. With putrid green flesh perpetually glistening with seawater, an eye of the deep emerges from the darkest depths to bring corruption and ruin to all.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about an eye of the deep with an Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Religion) check.

EYE OF THE DEEP LORE

DC	INFORMATION
16	If you witness a sickly green light moving toward you from beneath the water, flee. You are a likely target for an eye of the deep and could suffer a fate worse than death. Its grasping tentacles have a terrifying reach, with horrific strength to match.
22	An eye of the deep can do more than crush you with its mighty arms. It can force you to behold its dark master or infect you with a disease that corrupts healing magic. Those who fall to its might risk becoming permanent servants of a Great Old One should they fail to receive aid in time.
27	These elder eyes are tough, but not invincible. They can dismiss paltry magics, but more powerful spells can give them trouble. Though they can shrug off most assaults to their psyche, doing so angers their master, who punishes the eyes for their weakness. Keep your backs to each other and you might just make it through.

TACTICS

An eye of the deep is not a subtle creature. It uses brute strength to overpower all enemies, dragging away the strongest foes to be converted into servants of Cthulhu. It has a massive number of hit points, so don't worry about damage until it gets below half its maximum. The Will of the Deep feature is extremely powerful so long as the creature has hit points to spare, so use it as often as possible. Pesky spellcasters trying to lock down the eye with effects like *hold monster* or *banishment* will be frustrated, but at least they get some damage for their efforts. The eye isn't stupid, so make sure to remove magical effects with *dispel magic*. *Freedom of movement*, *death ward*, and *invulnerability* are huge problems for the eye of the deep, so eliminate enemies with those abilities with extreme prejudice.

Easier Tactics — The eye should use its Wave of Mutilation feature once per encounter at most. Even a single use is devastating against a party that lacks the means to remove disease. Do the same for the Witness feature, especially if the eye is overwhelming the party with its many attacks. Target strong characters with the tentacle attacks, as they stand the best chance of escaping a grapple. As with most flying creatures, keep the eye low to the ground and within melee range. Your paladin players will appreciate the kindness.

Harder Tactics — Your first goal with an eye of the deep is to get a character to 0 hit points as quickly as possible. Once a couple of characters are below their hit point maximum, hit them with Wave of Mutilation to prevent healing. Then focus on one character infected with the disease with all your might. The rest of the party may panic and try to heal that character, making a bad situation worse. Anyone incapacitated by the Gaze of Cthulhu feature is likely done for the fight. Don't try to transform the entire party in deep ones. Only one or two of them are likely worthy, plus it's more trouble than its worth. For a truly nefarious strategy, have the eye lift grappled creatures into the air. Once they are safely in the eye's clutches, massacre them with Multiattack before dropping their lifeless bodies at the party's feet.

EYE OF THE DEEP

Huge aberration, unaligned

Armor Class 23 (natural armor)
Hit Points 637 (51d12 + 306)
Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover), swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	8 (−1)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)	21 (+5)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +14, Int +12, Wis +13
Skills Athletics +17, Perception +13, Religion +11
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities prone, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages Aquan, Deep Speech
Challenge 25 (75,000 XP)

TRAITS

Amphibious. The eye can breathe both air and water.

Gaze of Cthulhu. At the start of each of its turns, the eye can choose to open or close its central eye. While its central eye is open, the creature projects a 120-foot cone of bright green light in a direction of its choice, which becomes the direction the eye faces. When the eye moves on its turn, it can choose to change the direction it faces, changing the orientation of the cone. Creatures illuminated by the light are forced to assume their true form. Additionally, a flesh-and-blood creature illuminated by the light that is reduced to 0 hit points or slain is instead reduced to 1 hit point and becomes incapacitated for 8 hours, during which time it does not need to eat, drink, or breathe. A creature so incapacitated begins a horrific transformation into a deep one (see the Deep One Template sidebar). A *greater restoration* or *heal* spell targeting the transforming creature halts the transformation, but once fully transformed, the creature can only be restored with the casting of *wish* or greater magic.

Will of the Deep (1/Turn). When the eye fails an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw, Cthulhu can intervene and cause the eye to succeed instead. When the Great Old One does so, the eye takes 39 (6d12) psychic damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The eye chooses one of the following options:

- The eye makes two tentacle attacks.
- The eye makes four arm attacks.
- The eye makes one tentacle attack and two arm attacks.

Arm. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d6 + 9) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) acid damage. When the eye would make an arm attack, it can instead choose to forgo that attack to cast *dispel magic* (spellcasting ability Wisdom), requiring no components.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 50 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 28 (3d12 + 9) bludgeoning damage plus 28 (8d6) acid damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 25). At the end of each of its turns, a creature grappled in this manner takes 28 (8d6) acid damage and the eye can choose to pull the target 30 feet closer toward it.

Wave of Mutilation (Recharge 5–6). The eye emits a blast of sickly energy in a 60-foot-radius sphere centered on it. Each creature of its choice within the affected area must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw or be infected with a vile disease known as living rot. When a creature so infected would regain hit points, it instead regains no hit points and takes necrotic damage equal to the number of hit points it would have regained.

Witness. The eye chooses a creature it can see to behold the dark horror of Cthulhu. The target must succeed on a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw or have its mind sent to the Great Old One until the start of the eye's next turn. A creature so affected cannot move or take actions as its consciousness beholds the cosmic, eldritch horror that is a Great Old One. When the creature's mind returns, it is traumatized by the experience. It cannot gain advantage on attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks, and it cannot speak by any means. This effect only ends when a creature forgets its memories of the experience.

PLOT HOOKS

The Call of Cthulhu. Four eyes of the deep emerge from a part of the ocean best left unexplored and make their way toward land. It is said if even one reaches shore, it will call fourth the Great Old One Cthulhu and end the world.

Wrath of the Deep. A swarm of deep ones invades a port town, dragging victims back to an eye of the deep for transformation. At their head is a black dragon deep one calling itself "the despoiler," poised to lead further raids up and down the coast.



The Eye of the Deep

Once again, the ocean proves it cannot be trusted. Watching one of these tentacled horrors drag my latest intern overboard was the second most disturbing thing I'd seen that year. The first was when the same intern returned a few days later, horribly mutated into a fishy monstrosity by the eye's foul influence. Such malevolence and cunning are frightening to see in such powerful creatures. More and more I find I prefer the straightforward ferocity of dragons to the eldritch horror of the elder eyes—a viewpoint I never expected to claim.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Brute

Favors: Barbarians, Fighters, Hit Points (High), Teleportation, Wizards

Foils: Clerics, Healing, Monks, Rogues, Strength (Low)

House of Horrors. An eye of the deep has been captured by a powerful transmuter, who is forcing the creature to transform countless beings into deep ones. The wizard is attempting to create a new species of true breeding creature, with failed experiments cast loose upon the surrounding lands. For obvious reasons, the locals would prefer this activity to stop. But what to do with the elder eye?

TREASURE

The only gift an eye of the deep can bestow is the transformation into a deep one. See the Deep One Template sidebar and the eye of the deep's Gaze of Cthulhu trait for information on this "treasure."

Deep One Template

Deep ones are twisted creatures infested with the essence of a Great Old One. Their skin becomes rubbery and fish-like, they sprout gills, and their minds are invariably twisted toward evil. Their eyes are bulbous like those of a fish, while their voices gurgle as if constantly chocking on fluid. When a flesh-and-blood creature becomes a deep one, it retains its statistics except as described here. A creature that is not composed of flesh and blood cannot become a deep one.

Type. The creature's type becomes aberration.

Ability Scores. The creature's Strength and Charisma scores increase by 3, to a maximum of 22, and its Wisdom score decreases by 4 to a minimum of 2.

Senses. The creature gains darkvision out to range of 120 feet and can see in magical darkness.

Languages. The creature can speak, read, and write Deep Speech.

Challenge. The creature's challenge rating increases by 3 and its proficiency bonus increases to match its new challenge rating.

TRAITS

Traits. The creature gains the following traits.

- **Amphibious.** The creature can breathe both air and water. Additionally, the creature has a swimming speed equal to its walking speed or a walking speed equal to its swimming speed (whichever is greater).
- **Beneath the Waves.** When fully submerged the creature has total cover against creatures that are not submerged in the same body of fluid as it.
- **Foul Mucus.** The creature's body is coated in an acidic mucus, making it immune to acid damage and the grappled condition. Additionally, a creature that touches the deep one or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage.
- **Servant of Darkness.** The creature must obey any commands given by a Great Old One or those who act in its name. The creature follows the commands to the best of its ability and can never willingly act in a manner that goes against the intentions of the creature giving the commands.

Hit Dice. The creature gains four additional Hit Dice and recalculates its hit point maximum using its new Hit Dice total.

ECOLOGY

Eyes of the deep come from the darkest depths of any given world. They are aquatic by nature and prefer to spend their days in the murky blackness where no light can reach. When hunting for victims, an eye of the deep stays close to its body of water. It never strays too far from its lair, which it uses to store victims in various stages of transformation into deep ones. Given enough time, an eye of the deep will conquer large territories, forming a massive army of deeps ones enslaved to its will. All eyes of the deep have one purpose: to drag the civilizations of land and air beneath the waves to serve their dark master. They tolerate the presence of other creatures not aligned toward this goal so long as said creatures prove useful. Only a fool would put any faith in this alliance, as the eye of the deep will quickly turn on any ally should it prove more helpful as a deep one.

EYE OF OBLIVION

None can touch the mind of great Azathoth and live. Born of the cataclysmic conception of the Nuclear Chaos, eyes of oblivion are the mightiest of the elder eyes. These horrors can unmake reality with a single glance. An eye of oblivion's body barely contains the horrific powers of the greatest of the Great Old Ones. Its chitinous, mouthless sphere of a body bursts with crimson energies and shudders with ominous rumblings. Its empty eye socket is occupied by a barely contained reaction of destructive energies: a miniature singularity emitting corrosive radiation at frightening intensities. Orbiting the sphere are miniaturized versions of the elder eye, zooming about so that none can escape the destructive gaze of Azathoth.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about an eye of oblivion with an Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Religion) check.

EYE OF OBLIVION LORE

DC	INFORMATION
17	An eye of oblivion can kill you just by looking at you. If it opens its central eye, find cover immediately and pray it does not find you. The many eyes that orbit its grotesque form can be sent out as scouts, hunting for fresh victims to obliterate.
23	The gaze of an eye of oblivion melts not only flesh but inorganic material and magic. Its smaller eyes are not as deadly but can unleash chaotic beams of destruction that shatter minds, rot flesh, and pummel with magical force. Killing the smaller eyes injures the eye of oblivion but is not enough to kill it.
29	If angered, an eye of oblivion can concentrate eye beams into a single blast of annihilating force. The more eyes the creature has orbiting itself, the worse this effect will be. If it has yet to unleash this deadly ability, make sure to stand well away from your friends, lest more than one unfortunate soul suffer a grim fate.

TACTICS

An eye of oblivion has no goal other than utter destruction, which is reflected in its tactics. It scouts out suitable victims with its Eyes of Azathoth feature, moving into an optimal position to expose everything to its Gaze of Destruction. With an impressive range on almost all its attacks and features, the eye never moves into melee unless it fails to spot hidden enemies. Note that with a Wisdom of 1, an eye of oblivion is completely insane, incapable of even basic rationalizations. It gives no quarter and is utterly ruthless when provoked. Keep one legendary action in reserve for the eye's Mythic Resistance feature, and don't use Chomp unless an area of antimagic prevents the use of Chaos Eye Beams. Note the importance of facing with the eye, which should always aim to affect as many important creatures and objects as possible. With its poor Wisdom, the eye rarely understands the value of quality over quantity.

Easier Tactics — Disperse about half of the eye of oblivion's orbiting eyes, keeping them clustered so that characters can easily destroy them. Keep the creature close to the ground, and never use Oblivion Beam on more than a few targets. Keep sending out orbiting eyes until the creature has none left, which makes the fight substantially easier.

Harder Tactics — Start the fight with several orbiting eyes already dispersed about the battlefield, and open with Oblivion Beam on the first turn. Knock out weak players with Force Beam, and use Mindbreaker Beam on any character that is doing well. A particularly nasty combo is to use a legendary action to use Mindbreaker Beam on a character, then focus fire on that same target with everything the eye has on its turn. Note that the longer the fight drags on, the lower each character's hit point maximum becomes due to Gaze of Destruction, so don't be afraid to have the eye Dash away from targets to draw out the encounter.

PLOT HOOKS

Call of the Great Old Ones. A malicious cult has taken things too far and summoned an eye of oblivion. Their "reward" was instant annihilation, and now the kingdom is paying the price for their ignorance and hubris. A ritual has been prepared to banish the creature, which must be lured to the site by a squad of daring (or foolhardy) heroes.

The End of Days. Seven comets will soon impact the material plane, each containing an eye of oblivion. Should the eyes not be slain within one week, the Great Old One Azathoth will awaken and all of existence will end.

Lullaby. An eye of oblivion peacefully slumbers within a tomb below a bustling metropolis. Once a year, the entire city sings a lullaby to ensure the creature rests comfortably. However, a local terrorist group has pledged to disrupt the performance and so awaken the monstrous aberration.

TREASURE

There is no reward for slaying an eye of oblivion. As a herald of the most destructive force in existence, an eye of oblivion visits only entropy upon those who encounter it, even in death. When an eye of oblivion is slain, the Great Old One Azathoth, the nuclear chaos whose dreams make up reality, stirs in its slumber and gains brief awareness of those responsible. Any creatures who harmed the eye of oblivion are cursed by this event, which is so powerful that it can only be removed by a *wish* spell or direct intervention from a deity.

While cursed in this manner, a creature cannot gain benefits from finishing a short or long rest unless it has killed a creature in Azathoth's name within the last 24 hours. Additionally, if the creature is slain while so cursed, its soul is consumed by Azathoth, beyond the help of even the gods.

ECOLOGY

Nothing can withstand an eye of oblivion's gaze for long, so any environment they occupy is swiftly reduced to ashen wastes. However, powerful cults dedicated to Great Old Ones have been known to wrangle these creatures through herculean feats of magic. Successfully subdued eyes of oblivion can be unleashed on those who would threaten the cult and are typically used in profane rituals to honor the Great Old Ones. Eyes of oblivion are living weapons of mass destruction and chaos, and as such, nothing can hold one forever. Due to their insanity, it is unlikely eyes of oblivion truly comprehend anything around them, and those who have encountered the creatures and lived report bizarre and inconsistent behaviors. An eye of oblivion may believe nothing around it is even real and therefore unworthy of destruction one day and have the exact opposite opinion the next. Only a fool would consider an eye of oblivion's madness an advantage. In truth, it only serves to make them more dangerous and unpredictable.

The Eye of Oblivion

I don't know what is going on with these elder eyes, and I don't want to. My research assistant was spotted by an eye of oblivion and instantly reduced to a smoking pile of ashes. That was the third one that year, and I'm swiftly developing an undeserved reputation for recklessness with my interns. I am forced to observe the affairs of these creatures at a distance until I discover a countermeasure for their destructive gaze. They drift about with no purpose, observing and obliterating whatever takes their fancy. I can find no pattern to their interests, and nothing they have witnessed has survived for more than a few seconds. Even the cultists who worship their presence are not spared, and I must admit I take some grim satisfaction in watching their misguided devotion pay off so horrifically. I should probably quit while I'm ahead, as the attention of the Great Old One is something I doubt even I could survive.

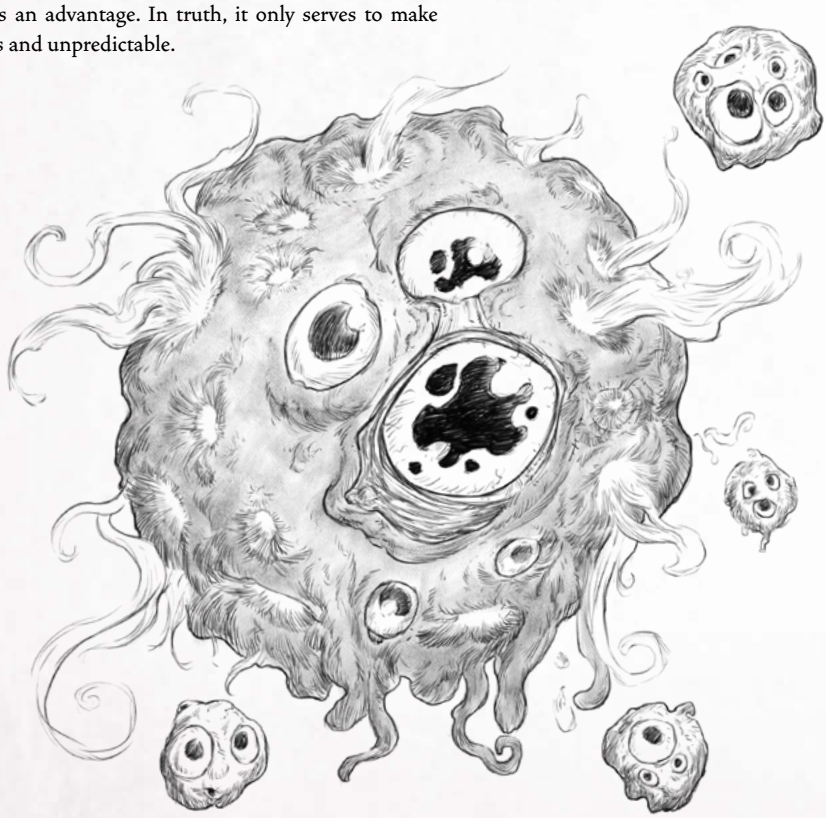
– Talien Vos Karven



Classification: Artillery

Favors: Force (Protection from), Mobility (High), Monks, Paladins, Specific Spells (*lesser restoration*, *greater restoration*), Spells (Protection from)

Foils: Constitution (Low), Force (Damage), Melee, Mobility (Low), Psychic (Damage), Wisdom (Low)



Eye of Oblivion

Huge aberration, unaligned

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 553 (41d12 + 287)
Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	25 (+7)	21 (+5)	1 (−5)	29 (+9)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Con +16, Cha +18
Skills Perception +13
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities force, psychic
Condition Immunities prone, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 300 ft.
Languages —
Challenge 29 (135,000 XP)

Traits

Eyes of Azathoth. Up to ten miniature eyes orbit the eye, occupying the same space as the eye of oblivion. While it has at least one of these eyes, it has advantage on saving throws against being blinded and on Perception checks.

Additionally, the eyes can leave the creature's space and move about the battlefield when directed, up to 300 feet away from the creature. While away from the eye of oblivion, an eye is a unique creature with a flying (hover) speed of 120 feet and shares the eye of oblivion's statistics. An eye has only 40 hit points, and its size is Small. The eye of oblivion is always aware of what these eyes perceive, and if an eye is ever more than 300 feet away from the eye of oblivion, it magically reappears in orbit around the creature. If an eye is destroyed while out of orbit, the eye of oblivion loses 40 hit points.

When the eye of oblivion finishes a long rest, it can regrow a single destroyed eye, up to a maximum of ten eyes.

Gaze of Destruction. At the start of each of its turns, the eye can choose to open or close its central eye. While its central eye is open, the creature projects a 1,000-foot-long cone of disintegrating force, which becomes the direction the eye faces. When the eye moves on its turn, it can choose to change the direction it faces, changing the orientation of the cone. A creature that starts its turn in the affected area or enters the area for the first time in a round must succeed on a DC 26 Constitution saving throw or have its hit point maximum reduced by 27 (5d10). If a creature's hit point maximum is reduced to 0 by this feature, it, along with any equipment it is carrying, is disintegrated and reduced to a noxious slime.

Additionally, spells and magical effects within the affected area of 8th level or lower with a duration greater than instantaneous have their durations reduced to 1 round.

Finally, unattended objects and structures within the affected area immediately take 55 (10d10) force damage at the end of each of the eye's turns.

Mythic Resistance. When the eye fails a saving throw, it can expend one of its unexpended legendary actions to succeed instead.

Will of Azathoth. When the eye attempts an Intelligence or Wisdom saving throw, it may choose to attempt a Charisma saving throw instead.

Actions

Chaos Eye Beams. The eye of oblivion shoots an eye beam from each of its miniature eyes (via its Eyes of Azathoth feature) at a creature it can see within 120 feet of the eye shooting the beam, choosing from the following eye beam options. The eye of oblivion cannot target a single creature more than once each time it takes this action.

1. *Necrosis Beam.* The target must succeed on a DC 26 Constitution saving throw or have its hit point maximum reduced to its current hit points. This effect ends if the creature is subjected to a *heal* or *greater restoration* spell. If the creature has hit points equal to its hit point maximum, this beam has no effect.
2. *Mindbreaker Beam.* The target must succeed on a DC 26 Wisdom saving throw or be unable to have advantage and always roll with disadvantage on all ability checks and saving throws until the end of the target's next turn.
3. *Force Beam. Ranged Spell Attack:* +18 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 36 (5d10 + 9) force damage.

If the eye has no eyes via its Eyes of Azathoth feature, it cannot take this action.

Chomp. *Melee Spell Attack:* +18 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 64 (10d10 + 9) piercing damage.

Oblivion Beam (Recharge 6). The eye of oblivion unleashes a beam of utter destruction from its face in a 15-foot-wide, 1-mile-long line. Creatures in the area must attempt a DC 26 Dexterity saving throw, taking 65 (10d12) force damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. For each miniature eye currently orbiting the eye of oblivion (via its Eyes of Azathoth feature), the damage of this effect increases by 6 (1d12). Additionally, objects and structures in the area take damage from this effect. Any object, structure, or creature reduced to 0 hit points by this effect is utterly obliterated, reduced to fine ash.

Legendary Actions

The eye of oblivion can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The eye of oblivion regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Chaos Beam. The eye of oblivion uses Chaos Eye Beam from a miniature eye of its choice (via its Eyes of Azathoth feature).

Float. The eye of oblivion moves up to its speed.

Gaze. The eye of oblivion faces a direction of its choice.

Scout. The eye of oblivion moves one of the miniature eyes orbiting it (via its Eyes of Azathoth feature) up to the eye's speed.

Evolved Elementals

As a primal force in the multiverse, elementals have been around a long time. While most live out their existence as a roaring flame or graceful breeze, a few strays find themselves deep in the churning energies of elemental power where even the natives cannot survive. Where other elementals are snuffed, crushed, saturated, or scattered to the wind, a few are instead enhanced by the experience. Called evolved elementals, these beings are pure, concentrated elemental energy given sentience. They are hotter than fire, more graceful than air, denser than stone, and purer than water. They are also frightfully powerful. Each evolved elemental is a catastrophic force, bringing the greatest power of its respective elemental plane to bear against those that stand in its way. Evolved elementals are among the most mysterious creatures in the multiverse, the subject of much scientific speculation and worship. It is believed that if one can understand the power of evolved elementals, then true mastery over the elements is soon to follow.

BLAST ELEMENTAL

Fire is already an unpredictable element, so when the blast elemental was first discovered, it came as no big surprise. These creatures are living explosions, existing in a constant state of devastating violence toward everything and everyone around them. Even on their home plane, these evolved fire elementals are dangerous, rarely surviving for more than a few years. It's not uncommon for a blast elemental to accidently destroy itself, either through an unintentional explosion or by inadvertently provoking a powerful creature with a wayward detonation. When the creatures can be observed, they appear as a roiling humanoid furnace of burning energy, erupting with furious power at every opportunity.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a blast elemental with an Intelligence (Nature) check.

BLAST ELEMENTAL LORE

DC	INFORMATION
13	Blast elementals are dangerously unstable. They constantly emit thunderous bursts of fire, even if they would prefer not to. Their explosions are particularly dangerous, knocking most creatures flying or unconscious with ease.
18	The range at which blast elementals can generate their explosions is quite long, and they can use them to destroy walls or buildings as easily as they destroy cocky heroes. Any battlefield featuring a blast elemental quickly becomes a crater-filled ruin.
24	When in grave danger, blast elementals prefer to go out in a blaze of glory—literally. Once one has begun to destroy itself, you have only a few short seconds to escape. Better make 'em count, as getting caught in this cataclysmic blast is something most can't survive.

The Blast Elemental

I once attempted to converse with a blast elemental. Big mistake. Trying to discern what the creature was saying from a safe distance in between the cacophony of thunderous explosions was too much stress for my delicate ears. Slate is always reminding me to "find a balance" with other creatures, but I don't think even his prodigious monastic wisdom could handle a living explosion.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Artillery

Favors: Dexterity (High), Range (Long), Rangers, Rogues, Warlocks

Foils: Clerics, Fighters, Melee, Mobility (Low), Paladins

TACTICS

Blast elementals have one objective in combat. Blow everything up. The Detonation feature always occurs whether the elemental likes it or not. Combine this feature with Blasting Power or Pressure Wave to make its effect even more dangerous. Obviously, clustered targets are ideal for the elemental's many explosions. While you can't stack Kaboom, you can use Blasting Power to throw characters close to each other, increasing the potential damage of the blast elemental's powers. Use Pyroclasm when the elemental drops below 60 hit points. The characters will have to decide whether to try to kill the elemental or run for it. Either way will make for a tense moment at the table.

Easier Tactics — The blast elemental does well when it keeps melee characters away from it, so don't use Blast Power against characters that need to get close. They already have the Detonation to deal with anyway, so it's a good break to cut them. Don't use Pyroclasm until the elemental is below 30 hit points. That should make finishing the elemental pretty easy for the party while still keeping a lot of the excitement.

TALIEN'S NOTES

Evolution is one of my favorite subjects, so I was delighted to learn that even elementals possess the capacity for this wondrous process. Suffice it to say, I was overeager. The difference between an evolved elemental and its lesser kin is tremendous. I have more in common with my cat than an evolved fire elemental has in common with its fellows. An evolved elemental's power is increased by an order of magnitude, taking on an aspect of elemental energy so extreme I can hardly believe it exists in nature. When I described my encounter with the blast to Archmagister King, he observed I "looked like a cooked goblin." I fail to see the amusement.



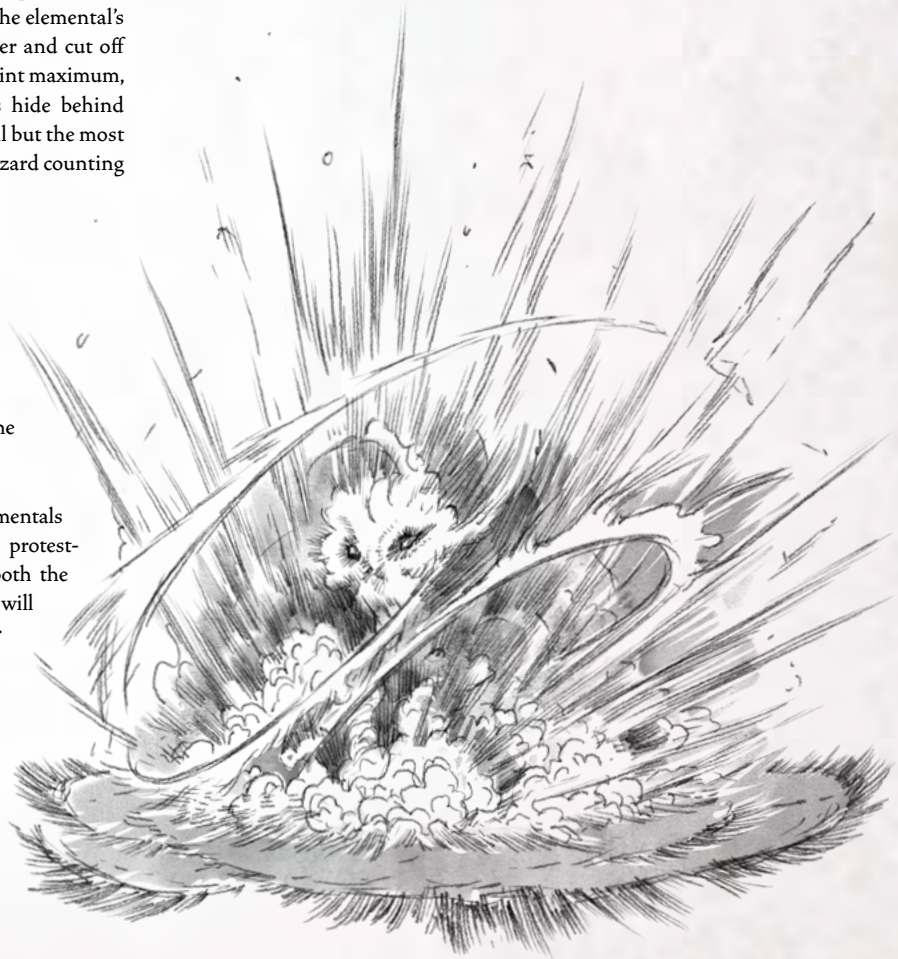
Harder Tactics — Stage the combat in a space that keeps as many characters as possible within range of Detonation. Use the elemental's ability to damage objects and structures to destroy cover and cut off escape routes. Once the elemental is below half its hit point maximum, use Pyroclasm. Remember that even if the characters hide behind something, Pyroclasm's damage can easily cut through all but the most robust objects and structures—a rude surprise for the wizard counting on *wall of stone* to save them.

PLOT HOOKS

Renewable Energy. An arctic city uses a bound blast elemental to heat the entire community. While the noise is obnoxious, so far the unusual energy source seems to be paying off. That is, until a mischievous thief releases the creature as a distraction.

Mining Mayhem! Dwarves are summoning blast elementals to strip-mine an entire mountain. A circle of druids is protesting the operation, claiming the miners are exploiting both the environment and the elementals for profit. The dwarves will pay handsomely to stop the druids interfering with their operation, while the druids offer magical potions to any willing to put an end to the dwarves' exploits.

Exotic Pet. An efreeti sultan's prized pet blast elemental has escaped to the material plane. The sultan demands the elemental's return in two weeks or he will personally come to retrieve it. Finding the elemental shouldn't be hard—capturing it will be the problem.



TREASURE

As a living explosion, blast elementals have little to offer in terms of physical treasure. Instead, their nature can prove particularly educational to those wishing to learn more about the elemental power of fire. Druids who witness a blast elemental destroy itself via its Cataclysm feature can learn much from that experience, provided they first succeed on a DC 22 Intelligence (Nature) check. On a success, they add the spell *pyroclasm* to their class spell list.

ECOLOGY

An evolved fire elemental is not welcome anywhere, even among its own kind. Driven to barren lands devoid of life, these elementals eke out a lonely existence, unable to enjoy anything but the perpetual destruction they inflict on the world around them. When summoned, blast elementals are a catastrophic force. Most planes, let alone their startled inhabitants, cannot handle their raw power. However, many mighty creatures have recognized the value of a sentient explosion, going to great lengths to safely accommodate a blast elemental in return for its service. Such service invariably turns toward acts of destruction, which the elemental happily supplies in return for the opportunity to form relationships. Those that bind blast elementals would do well to respect their feelings, as the creatures are neither stupid nor forgiving when wronged.

New Spell – Pyroclasm

This spell is a class spell for druids.

Pyroclasm
7th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self (30-foot-radius sphere)
Components: V, S, M (a match)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You imbue your body with destructive power which erupts from you in powerful explosions. At the end of each of your turns for the duration, you emit a powerful explosion in a 30-foot-radius sphere. Creatures other than you in the affected area must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 13 (3d8) fire damage plus 13 (3d8) thunder damage, or half as much on a success. This effect deals double damage to unattended objects and structures in the affected area.

Blast Elemental

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class 16
Hit Points 178 (21d8 + 84)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (−2)	22 (+6)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +11, Int +8, Cha +11
Skills Perception +9
Damage Immunities fire, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Ignan, Primordial
Challenge 14 (18,000 XP)

TRAITS

Blasting Power (1/Turn). When the elemental deals bludgeoning, fire, or thunder damage to a creature it can see within 120 feet of it, it can choose to force the target to attempt a DC 19 Strength saving throw. On a failure, the target is thrown 30 feet in a straight line in a direction of the elemental's choice and lands prone.

Detonation. At the start of each of its turns, the elemental emits a thunderous blast of fire in a 60-foot-radius sphere. Creatures in the affected area must attempt a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 13 (3d8) fire plus 13 (3d8) thunder damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. This effect deals double damage to unattended objects and structures in the affected area.

Illumination. The elemental sheds bright light in a 120-foot radius and dim light for an additional 120 feet.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The elemental uses its Kaboom action three times, no two of which can target a space within 15 feet of another.

Pyroclasm. The elemental gathers energy into a tremendous explosion. At the start of the elemental's next turn, if it is still alive, it destroys itself in a titanic blast in a 120-foot-radius sphere. Creatures in the affected area must attempt a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 33 (6d10) fire, 33 (6d10) thunder, and 33 (6d10) bludgeoning damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Additionally, on a failed save an affected creature is permanently deafened. This effect deals double damage to unattended objects and structures in the affected area.

Kaboom. The elemental generates an explosion centered on a space it can see within 120 feet of it, which erupts in a 5-foot-radius sphere. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) fire damage plus 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. This effect deals double damage to unattended objects and structures in the affected area.

REACTIONS

Pressure Wave. As a reaction when a creature the elemental can see within 120 feet of it fails a saving throw against an effect the elemental has generated, the elemental can force the target to attempt a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, causing the creature to fall unconscious until the start of its next turn on a failure.

TIDE ELEMENTAL

As any fisher could tell you, the tide is a fickle creature. One day it's your best friend, bringing fortune and profit. The next, it's your worst enemy, dashing your livelihood on the rocks with disturbing ease. This behavior is echoed in the mysterious tide elemental, an evolved creature of water with a fickle array of abilities. Tide elementals are elegant creatures composed of turbulent seawater, their humanoid-shaped forms swirling and flowing in a constant, elegant dance.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a tide elemental with an (Intelligence) Nature check.

TIDE ELEMENTAL LORE

DC	INFORMATION
14	Tide elementals possess the remarkable ability to both heal and harm simultaneously. Their watery blasts rejuvenate allies and savage enemies with remarkable strength in both categories. This dual capability makes tide elementals ideal teammates, perfect for mass or close-quarters combat.
19	Surprisingly, tide elementals do very well outside the water. They can even call down a torrent of rain that scalds enemies with acid and refreshes allies. When forced into direct confrontation, tide elementals can strike with their whip-like appendages, flinging enemies away like ragdolls.
25	The area around a tide elemental hinders enemies and accelerates allies. However, as long as you keep off the ground or out of the water you have nothing to worry about. Get yourself or the elemental's allies behind cover to avoid its blasts, and you are well on your way to victory.

TACTICS

Due to the large areas of its Tidal Blast and Deluge actions, a tide elemental benefits from large numbers of allies. Creatures with a challenge rating around 5 are ideal, because they typically have enough hit points to survive a few hits and give the elemental a chance to heal them. Use Deluge early in the fight, and don't underestimate its effects. The constant acid damage every turn is great for forcing death saving throws on downed creatures and preventing weak healing from getting characters back on their feet. Tidal Blast should naturally be used to strike as many creatures as possible, getting tons of healing and damage in each time. The elemental should also stay within 30 feet of its allies to make good use of its Shifting Tides feature.

Easier Tactics — Don't give the elemental more than three allies, and make sure they don't make good tanks for their healer. This will allow the characters to focus on the elemental without suffering dire consequences. Give the battlefield lots of cover so characters can avoid Tidal Blast easily, and feel free to add protection from the sky to help with Deluge. The elemental isn't required to throw targets hit by Water Whip, so don't do that to melee characters who just want to whale on the creature.

Harder Tactics — Keep the elemental on the defensive. Every foot it moves away from the characters is costly to match, which can be particularly frustrating for slower characters. The range of Tidal Blast is so big it will hardly matter, and the elemental's allies will have no trouble keeping up. Use Water Whip to throw characters vertically to maximize fall damage, then capitalize on the prone character with attacks from the elemental's allies. Don't forget to use Rime as often as possible. The −5 penalty from that effect is huge and can render some characters completely impotent.

PLOT HOOKS

Song of the Sea. A choir of water elementals lead by an evolved specimen begin singing a mysterious song in the middle of the ocean, opening a portal to their home and drawing more "singers" to the material plane. As the number of elementals increases, locals become concerned about what will happen when the performance is concluded.



The Tide Elemental

Water is by far my favorite element. It is both a giver and taker of life, essential for our existence but full of mystery and danger. I see these traits in the tide elementals, which heal and harm with equal efficacy. While I find it difficult to trust a creature as mercurial as the sea, the power of these elementals makes them ideal for summoning. I attempted to convince Elkus to try, but the curmudgeonly cleric refused before I could even finish my request. I suspect it has something to do with his inability to swim, but pressing the matter would be most unwise.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Leader

Favors: Cover, Druids, Flight, Rogues, Wizards

Foils: Barbarians, Damage (High), Fighters, Monks

Tide Elemental

Medium elemental, neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 178 (21d8 + 84)
Speed 30 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	23 (+6)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +10, Cha +8
Skills Nature +15, Perception +12
Damage Immunities cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 22
Languages Aquan, Primordial
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Traits

Rime (1/Turn). When a creature the elemental can see fails a saving throw against the elemental, the elemental can choose to coat the creature in a layer of rime. A creature so coated has a −5 penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks. The rime can be removed by the affected creature taking fire damage or by a creature using an action to wipe it off.

Shifting Tides. The elemental exudes a film of water on the ground and in the water within a 60-foot radius. The area is difficult terrain for enemy creatures, and allied creatures in the affected area have their base walking speed increased by 20 feet.

Water Form. The elemental can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Actions

Multiattack. The elemental makes two water whip attacks.

Water Whip. *Melee Spell Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (4d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, the elemental can force it to attempt a DC 21 Strength saving throw, becoming grappled and restrained on a failure. If the target fails the saving throw, the elemental can immediately use a reaction to throw the target up to 30 feet in a straight line, causing the target to land prone.

Deluge (Recharge 5–6). The elemental causes a downpour of rain in a 120-foot-radius cylinder that is 300 feet high, centered on a point it can see within 500 feet, that lasts for 1 hour. At the end of each of the elemental's turns, the rain deals 3 (1d6) acid damage to nonmagical objects, structures, and enemy creatures directly exposed to the rain. Allied creatures in the affected area instead take no damage and magically regain 3 (1d6) hit points.

Tidal Blast. The elemental projects a blast of water in either a 120-foot line that is 5 feet wide, a 60-foot cone, or a 30-foot-radius blast centered on itself. Enemy creatures in the affected area must succeed on a DC 21 saving throw or take 33 (6d10) cold or bludgeoning damage (elemental's choice). If the damage dealt is cold damage, the saving throw is Constitution, and if the damage dealt is bludgeoning damage, the saving throw is Dexterity.

Additionally, friendly creatures in the affected area magically regain 33 (6d10) hit points.

Tides of War. An army of sea elves supported by a tide elemental invades a coastal city, declaring it to be a first step toward establishing a border between the peoples of land and sea. The inland kingdoms are unwilling to commit their troops to battle while the tide elemental remains in play, leaving the people caught in occupation in dire straits.

Downpour. A tide elemental is showering a city in torrential rains, which burn some citizens with scalding acid while soothing others with healing waters. How or why the elemental is choosing to spare some citizens and harm others is unknown, but someone better investigate and find out!

TREASURE

When a tide elemental is slain and its body remains intact, the salt within its water can coalesce into a magical substance known as *seastone*. *Seastone* is a powerful resource when combined with spells, endowing harmful magic with healing properties.

Seastone

Wondrous item, very rare

This aquamarine crystal can be used as a material component in spellcasting. While holding the *seastone*, if you cast a spell that deals damage in an area and has a material component, you can instead substitute the *seastone* for that component. If you do so, the *seastone* is consumed and allied creatures in the affected area take no damage from the spell, instead regaining a number of hit points equal to the damage they would have taken.

ECOLOGY

Tide elementals are creatures of change. They constantly seek out places of conflict and diversity, venturing far from their home planes in search of adventure. This mercurial nature extends toward the elementals' relationships. Many creatures have found themselves trusted allies of a tide elemental one day and dire enemies the next. Any creature that attempts to curb this behavior—or, worse, enslave the elemental—must be opposed by the elemental at all costs. Those who learn to accept this truth about tide elementals find them acceptable neighbors and friends, particularly if they respond nonviolently to its provocations.

The Gem Elemental

I once saw Masako cut through the diamond-hard skin of a gem elemental. Never before had I seen a barbarian struggle so mightily to injure an enemy, which made me once again thankful for my spellcasting career. Not that I would have fared much better against such a creature. I've seen an evolved earth elemental walk right through a prismatic wall without injury and withstand a dozen eldritch blasts from Johan without batting an eye. Not that they have eyes—it's just a figure of speech.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Brute

Favors: Barbarians, Constitution (High), Damage (High), Paladins, Rogues

Foils: Druids, Hit Points (High), Monks, Spells (Duration), Warlocks

GEM ELEMENTAL

Wondrous beauty hides beneath the dull earth. Like the gems from which it takes its name, the evolved earth elemental is a creature of natural resplendence, a nigh-indestructible living testament to the potential slumbering beneath the land. Evolved earth elementals appear as gigantic uncut gems in humanoid shape, their every grinding movement an act of colossal strength. These creatures have little comprehension of injury, pain, or even death, plowing through obstacles with all the compassion of a rolling boulder. Their voices are like crackling glass, though few are ever privileged to hear a gem elemental speak.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a gem elemental with an (Intelligence) Nature check.

GEM ELEMENTAL LORE

DC	INFORMATION
15	Gem elementals are frustratingly hard to damage. They repel all but the most powerful of attacks with ease. Your best bet is to hit one as hard as possible rather than going for a bunch of weaker strikes. That, or attack the creature's mind. It's the only part that isn't diamond-like in its durability.
20	Magic does little to impede an angry gem elemental. They will walk right through most spells like they were paper and smash spellcasters with similar ease. Meatier heroes fare little better, as a gem elemental can literally crush even a mighty barbarian into paste.
26	Gem elementals are slow in both mind and body. Keep out of its powerful grip and you just might survive. If you lack the strength or skills to harm it, help your teammates who can by tripping or entangling the elemental. Sure, you may get crushed in the process, but you are the one picking a fight with a living diamond.

TACTICS

Overwhelming physical power is the solution to all of a gem elemental's problems. Pesky barbarian chipping away at its body? Smash it. Wizard bombarding the elemental with damage spells? Smash it too. Bards doing...bard stuff? Definitely smash it. The elemental's only real weakness is powerful ranged characters and psychic damage. Rogues are extremely powerful against the creature, able to keep out of reach and do lots of damage in a single hit, bypassing the protection of Diamond Form. However, all it takes is one slam to capture the pesky character, with an astonishingly high escape DC of 25 to break free. Crystallizing Presence is icing on the cake, allowing the elemental to defeat characters who come within range without making a single attack. Use Magic Immunity to avoid pesky spells. Don't feel bad if the elemental isn't attacking. Crystallizing Presence is more than enough to ruin most characters' days.

Easier Tactics — Give the characters a large battlefield with lots of room to spread out. This helps prevent multiple characters from being exposed to Crystallizing Presence at a time. Remember, a petrified character is almost as good as dead—almost. Should the elemental manage to petrify any characters, don't smash them to smithereens. Keep the elemental focused on one target, preferably a character with good mobility, allowing the character to kite the elemental around the battlefield with ease.



Harder Tactics — Have the gem elemental burrow out of the earth right in the middle of the party. This is a disaster of epic proportions, as not only will several characters likely be exposed to Crystallizing Presence, but they may even provoke opportunity attacks as they try to get away. If anyone gets petrified, destroy them immediately with a single slam attack.

PLOT HOOKS

The King's Quest. A gnome king demands a throne carved from the body of a gem elemental. A grand expedition deep beneath the earth is planned, with the hopes of tracking one down. The group is in desperate need of adventurers.

Jewel of the Collection. An adult red dragon has captured a gem elemental for its hoard, taking immense satisfaction in possessing the living jewel. A dao friend of the elemental is plotting a heist to free its trapped companion but needs someone to distract the dragon in the meantime.

Time Capsule. A message from an ancient civilization is discovered to be hidden within a gem elemental. Historians are desperate to destroy the creature and recover the priceless knowledge, while conservationists rush to shield the elemental from destruction.

TREASURE

An evolved earth elemental is a living gem of staggering value. However, with each chip, cut, or blow landed upon its form, the value of the creature decreases. If a gem elemental is destroyed and its body remains intact, it can be salvaged and sold for up to 50,000 gp to the right jeweler. However, if the elemental is slain in a way that avoids damaging its body (such as by psychic damage or effects like *power word kill*), its remains can easily be worth double that, if not more. Granted, a gem elemental typical weighs well over 40 tons, making any salvage operation a significant effort.

Gem Elemental

Huge elemental, neutral

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)
Hit Points 379 (33d12 + 165)
Speed 40 ft., 20 ft. burrow

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	1 (−5)	21 (+5)	14 (+2)	22 (+6)	1 (−5)

Saving Throws Str +17, Con +12, Int +9
Skills Athletics +17, Perception +13
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Damage Immunities poison, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages Primordial, Terran
Challenge 21 (62,000 XP)

TRAITS

Crystallizing Presence. If a creature starts its turn within 15 feet of the elemental, the elemental can force the creature to attempt a DC 21 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature magically begins to crystallize and is restrained for 1 hour. If a creature fails this saving throw a second time within 24 hours of failing the first, it is also paralyzed. If a creature fails this saving throw a third time within 24 hours of failing the first, it is petrified.

This effect also transforms unattended nonmagical objects and structures into crystal at a rate of one 5-foot cube of material per round, which occurs at the end of each of the elemental's turns.

Diamond Form. If the elemental takes 20 or less damage of a type other than psychic from a single attack or effect, it instead takes no damage.

Indomitable. The elemental cannot be moved or magically teleported against its will.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 36 (4d12 + 10) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it is also grappled (escape DC 25).

Crush. The elemental attempts to crush a creature it is grappling, forcing the target to attempt a DC 25 Constitution saving throw, taking bludgeoning damage equal to its hit point maximum on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Magic Immunity. The elemental becomes immune to spells and magical effects until the end of its next turn.

ECOLOGY

Gem elementals are formed when earth elementals become trapped by tectonic forces and compressed over thousands of years. This can occur on almost any plane, but always with far greater frequency on the elemental plane of earth. This experience has left gem elementals with a frustratingly slow perception of time. When not antagonized to violence, the creatures take an agonizing amount of time to do anything. Their speech is so ponderous it can take them nearly a minute to speak a single word, let alone a sentence. Any social interaction with a gem elemental requires great patience, though the rewards can be well worth the effort.

ZEPHYR ELEMENTAL

High in the sky where even clouds cannot venture lies the home of the zephyr elemental. Beings composed of thin atmosphere and possessing terrific speed, these creatures peacefully explore the skies of countless planes. While zephyr elementals are invisible to the naked eye, their presence is easily felt by those who breathe. It thins the air around it to unbearable levels, suffocating any creatures it comes into contact with. While this fate is grim indeed, these creatures are not evil. It is their nature to bring the fatal properties of air to those around them, regardless of the consequences. Mysterious and deadly, evolved air elementals are a part of the world which mortals were never meant to experience.

The Zephyr Elemental

I've been strangled but once before. It ranks among one of the most unpleasant sensations I have ever experienced. While I've found a workaround for a Zephyr elemental's unusual suffocating properties, the challenge of persuading a specimen to come down from its lofty home remains unsolved. I've considered summoning one, but I suspect such a solitary creature would not appreciate such rudeness. Ionia once told me she heard the voice of the wind while climbing a mountain that stretched higher than the clouds. I suspect it may have been one of these creatures! I've been constructing a research station atop a nearby summit to see if I can perhaps open a line of dialogue, but I've yet to find a formal greeting that guarantees a favorable response. Curse elementals and their lack of a coherent culture.

— Talien Vos Karven



Classification: Artillery

Favors: Bards, Constitution (High), Sorcerers, Truesight, Wizards

Foils: Barbarians, Fighters, Healing, Hit Points (High), Paladins, Weapons (Damage)

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a zephyr elemental with an (Intelligence) Nature check.

ZEPHYR ELEMENTAL LORE

DC	INFORMATION
16	Zephyr elementals can change the density of air around them, causing all nearby creatures to suffocate. They are normally found at inaccessibly high altitudes and are excellent flyers.
21	If you think holding your breath will save you from an angry zephyr elemental, think again. They can pull the air from your lungs with a single blow and emit deafening sonic booms if they feel particularly threatened.
27	The elemental's suffocating effect has a tremendous range, so there is little hope of battling it while outside the effect. However, their natural invisibility is their primary defense against potent magic. Once you can see a zephyr elemental, it can be dispatched with powerful spells.

TACTICS

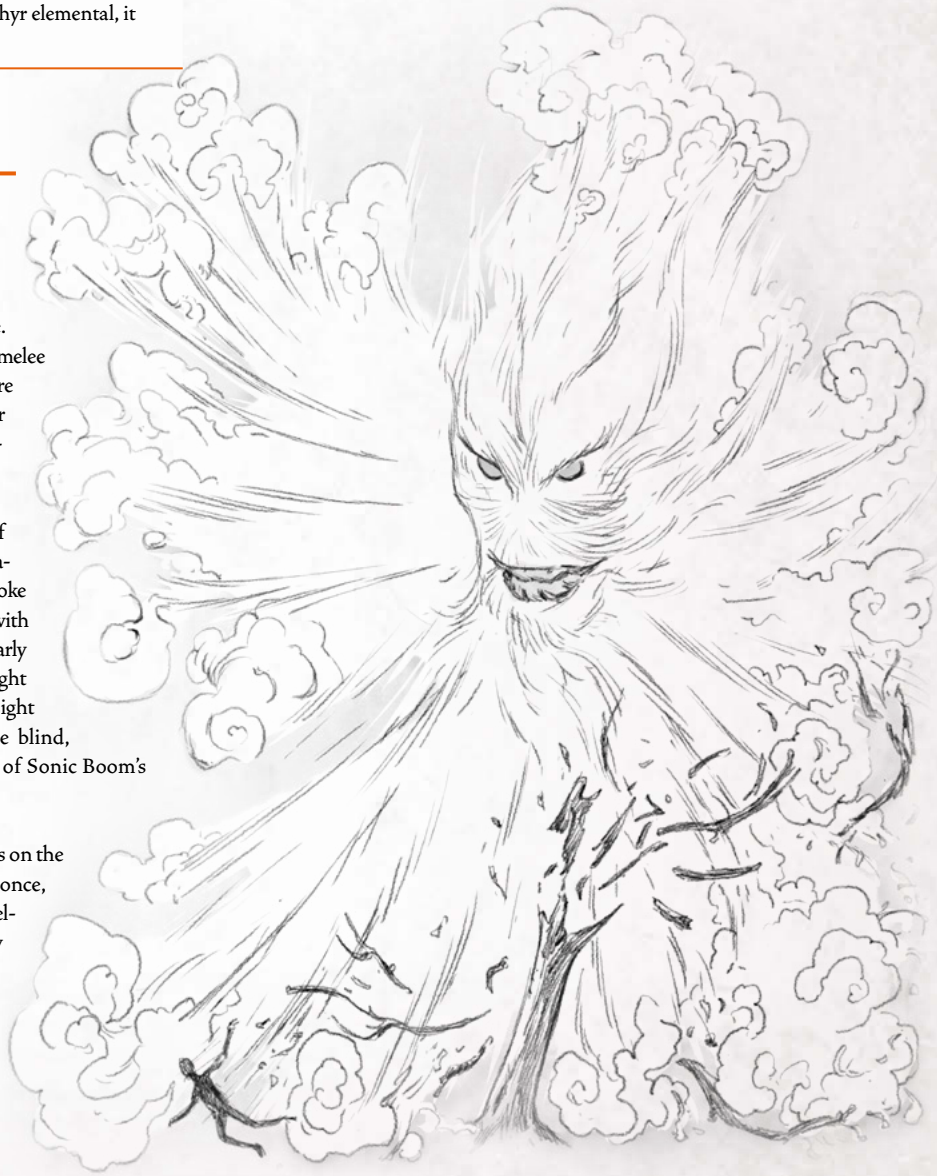
Zephyr elementals are slow to anger, but they're deadly combatants once provoked. If facing opponents immune to its Thin Air feature, a zephyr elemental immediately disengages, as such a disadvantage is almost impossible for the elemental to overcome. Otherwise, the elemental quickly maneuvers into melee range, exposing everything it can to its Thin Air feature and keeping targets within reach of its Extract Air attack. Once the elemental has identified enemy spellcasters, it uses its massive body to share spaces with those creatures. Doing so exposes the spellcasters to the Vacuum Form trait, which prevents the casting of spells with verbal components. Additionally, any creatures that move through the elemental's space provoke opportunity attacks from it, which it gladly makes with its Extract Air attack. If the elemental feels particularly threatened, it unleashes Sonic Boom early in the fight to gain an edge in combat. Even creatures with truesight cannot detect the elemental's invisible form while blind, which is a likely outcome considering the high DC of Sonic Boom's saving throw.

Easier Tactics — Never use Extract Air multiple times on the same target in a single turn. Only use Sonic Boom once, and do so toward the end of the battle. If you are feeling particularly benevolent, have the elemental stay in the air to avoid exposing creatures to its Vacuum Form. The elemental is particularly vulnerable to area-of-effect spells, so doing so allows the characters to throw out a lot of damage without interference.

Harder Tactics — While the elemental is not proficient in Stealth, it has a +9 bonus to Dexterity ability checks. Have it start hidden, exposing the characters to the Thin Air feature for as long as possible until they realize what is going on. Even if one character perceives the elemental, the others may not unless they have pretty good Perception. Once combat starts, open with Sonic Boom to blind as many characters as possible, and follow up with concentrated Extract Air attacks. The goal is to get as many characters suffocating as possible, as that status is extremely deadly and cannot be removed unless an affected character leaves the 500-foot radius of Thin Air.

PLOT HOOKS

Down to Earth. A zephyr elemental is summoned to an underground location on the material plane by dwarven researchers and immediately experiences an extreme episode of claustrophobia, lashing out in terror. The dwarves quickly lose control of the situation and are looking for a squad of brave adventurers to help guide the angry elemental to the surface.



Air Pollution. A titanic volcanic eruption pollutes the atmosphere with ash and smoke, driving several zephyr elementals from their home. There have already been several deadly encounters with the wayward creatures, which are exploring lower altitudes in search of purer air.

Eye of the Hurricane. A zephyr elemental has taken up residence at the center of a massive hurricane. What's worse, the creature's movement has dramatically increased the hurricane's strength. As the storm barrels toward a seaside metropolis, plans are being made to dislodge the evolved air elemental from its dangerous home.

TREASURE

Zephyr elementals understandably do not carry treasure. However, powerful druids and wizards who spend at least a month studying the ways of a Zephyr elemental firsthand can develop a powerful spell that they can add to their known spells. Developing the spell requires 72 hours of strenuous activity and 10,000 gp of material components, in addition to the time spent studying the elemental and other costs associated with learning a spell (such as adding it to a spellbook).

New Spell – Vacuum Chamber

Vacuum Chamber
6th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a perfect vacuum in a glass sphere)
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You strip the air from a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on a point you can see within range, creating a perfect vacuum. Creatures within the area cannot breathe and must hold their breath or begin suffocating. Additionally, no sound can be created within or pass through the vacuum. As an action on each of your turns, you can increase the dimensions of the sphere by 5 feet (or 50 feet over the course of 1 minute).

When the spell ends, the vacuum collapses and air rushes back into the area at terrific speed. Creatures in the area must succeed on a Strength saving throw or be pulled to an unoccupied space closest to the center of the affected area and be knocked prone.

ECOLOGY

An evolved air elemental spends all of its days in flight, preferring impossibly high altitudes where the air is thinnest. These creatures value freedom above all other aspects of life and suffer severe emotional and physical distress when in proximity to anything that would limit their agency (especially the ground). When on their home plane, zephyr elementals are typically left alone, even by others of their kind. These elementals have no interest in sharing the skies with those who do not live as they do and give little respect to all but the most powerful creatures. Zephyr elementals jump at the chance to venture to new realms. An unexplored sky is a delight that satisfies an evolved air elemental for centuries, whose knowledge of the plane carries a unique and valuable perspective thanks to their almost satellite-like view of the world.

Zephyr Elemental

Gargantuan elemental, neutral

Armor Class 19
Hit Points 379 (23d20 + 138)
Speed 0 ft., fly 120 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (−5)	28 (+9)	23 (+6)	17 (+3)	21 (+5)	9 (−1)

Saving Throws Dex +16, Con +13, Cha +7
Skills Acrobatics +23, Perception +12
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, cold, piercing, slashing
Damage Immunities poison, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 22
Languages Auran, Primordial
Challenge 24 (62,000 XP)

TRAITS

Invisibility. The elemental is invisible.

Massive. The elemental can take the shape of a stream of thin air up to 200 feet long and 5 feet wide. On the battlefield the elemental typically fills a 40-foot-by-40-foot cube.

Thin Air. Creatures within 120 feet of the elemental cannot breathe and must hold their breath or begin suffocating.

Vacuum Form. The elemental can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Additionally, no sound can be created within or pass through the elemental's space.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The elemental makes four Extract Air attacks, no more than two of which can be against the same target.

Extract Air. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit., reach 0 ft., one creature holding its breath. *Hit:* The time the target can hold its breath is reduced by 1 minute. If this effect reduces to the time the target can hold its breath to 0 minutes, it immediately begins suffocating.

Sonic Boom (Recharge 4–6). The elemental emits a deafening wave of thunderous energy in a 60-foot-radius sphere centered on itself. Enemy creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 24 Constitution saving throw or take 70 (20d6) thunder damage and become permanently blinded and deafened. A successful saving throw halves the damage and prevents the blinded and deafened conditions.

REACTIONS

Pursuit. When a creature the elemental can see moves or magically teleports away from it, the elemental can take a reaction to move up to its speed toward that creature if it can still see the creature.

Godspawn

Gods walk among mortals far more often than the average cleric would like to admit. During these secretive ventures, a divine being may conceive a child with a mortal race, leading to a strange being known as a godspawn. These powerful beings are indistinguishable from others of their kind until their divine power manifests. Once a godspawn is discovered and its powers unleashed, the world is changed forever. The divine heritage of a godspawn grants them extraordinary power, along with a cosmic significance that is difficult to understate. Each is granted an aspect of their progenitors' power, with a few "types" of godspawn proving to be the most common (though still ultimately rare). No matter its goals in life, a godspawn is drawn toward its divine destiny, worshiped, and feared by those it once called equals.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a godspawn with an Intelligence (Religion) check.

GODSPAWN LORE

DC	INFORMATION
16	Godlings are seemingly ordinary humanoids with a deity for a parent. This grants these creatures a fragment of divine power, including deadly abilities the likes of which no mortal has never seen. They come in countless variations, with strengths and weaknesses determined by their parents' portfolios.
21	A godspawn's powers are not revealed until the creature reaches maturity. Most godspawn can barely control their powers, which is bad news for everyone. Assume each to have few weaknesses and many attributes far beyond those of ordinary mortals.
27	Whoever a godspawn was before its powers manifest is still relevant. Some may be lowly commoners with no combat skills, while others may be powerful wizards whose magic is complemented by gifts from a parent god of magic. Learn all you can about a godspawn's life to find a weakness. You'll need it.

TALIEN'S NOTES

I'm an ecologist, not a theologian. Penning tactical and ecological information about the children of deities feels like a poor career move, but here I am sharing with you the means by which you can battle these divine spawn. Should you encounter a godspawn, please do not mention my name. My list of enemies is long enough without adding the occasional deity to the mix. That said, be sure to report to me your findings. I was only able to catalogue a few varieties on my travels, and I suspect many more have yet to reveal themselves.

TACTICS

Detailed in this section are several types of godspawn, each of which dramatically changes how well your creature will perform. Thankfully most humanoids are generally simplistic in design, so picking the right creature to which to bestow divine gifts should be a clear choice. Synergy between the chosen creature and your godspawn template is key. A warspawn spellcasting NPC will be constantly stuck between two extreme styles of play, and likely to not do either particularly well. All godspawn are extraordinarily good at saving throws thanks to their Divine Essence feature, and they possess a slew of additional traits beyond that. Note each godspawn's battlefield classification. This will help you build an ideal godspawn for your campaign's needs and help you avoid creating an impotent flop.

Easier Tactics — Build the godspawn from a creature that synergizes poorly with its divine traits. An archmage warspawn, a thief worldspawn, and similarly inefficient combinations make a fight with a godspawn dramatically easier. Even without any synergy these creatures can still be dangerous. Each has an action with a recharge element that is powerful, so be mindful how you use it.

Harder Tactics — Take your time picking out the perfect NPC upon which to build your godspawn. Look for key ability score, saving throw, and skill synergies to maximize the creature's capabilities. If you are feeling particularly cruel, afford a godspawn a selection of magic items to complement its arsenal. It's likely if the godspawn has been in operation for some time it will have acquired quite a few useful resources, allies, and other tools to have at its disposal.

The Godspawn

Classification: Special (See Tactics)
Favors: Attacks, Barbarians, Cover, Paladins, Warlocks
Foils: Clerics, Damage (High), Saving Throws, Wizards

PLOT HOOKS

Clash of the Titans. Two mighty warspawns are at war with one another. One is a steel-fisted paladin leading forces of law and order, dedicated to subjugating the realms under one banner. The other is a wild, freedom-loving barbarian with an army of ragtag mercenaries at her back. As both armies march toward each other, a climactic conflict seems inevitable. Which side will the party choose?

The Undertaker. A benevolent deathspawn uses her powers to grant others a peaceful, painless death. However, a death cult has taken a particular interest in her activities, seeking to claim her as a sacrifice to summon her father: a god of death known for his cruelty and malevolence.

Lord Admiral Thundergun. The high seas are menaced by a stormspawn pirate king. Calling himself "Lord Admiral Thundergun," this raucous rogue has sent countless vessels to the bottom of the sea with no sign of stopping.





TREASURE

As humanoids, godspawn amass all kinds of valuables throughout their lives. However, one aspect of their existence provides a unique reward to any who manage to slay them. When a godspawn is killed, the divine essence within its body lingers for a single round before vanishing, returning to the god who sired it. If a humanoid creature manages to touch this essence before it vanishes, the creature can choose to attempt to absorb it. Doing so requires a successful DC 26 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature is overwhelmed by the divine energy and explodes. On a success, a creature carries the fragment of divinity within it. By spending 1 hour of strenuous activity, a creature can activate the divine power within it, granting it the godspawn template which belonged to the original. This template lasts for 24 hours, at which point both it and the essence fade, never to return.

ECOLOGY

Gods have peculiar taste, so godspawn can be found wherever there are humanoids. Once its nature is revealed, a godspawn immediately becomes a figure of great significance to its culture. Worshippers of the godspawn's parent often flock to these creatures, viewing them as divine gifts from their deity. This could not be farther from the truth. Most godspawn are accidents, unwanted or unknown to their divine parent. Those few who receive recognition from their godly sire are torn between two worlds. They will never be fit to live among the deities, but neither do they truly belong among mortals. This sad fate leads many godspawn toward violence, a desperate rage against the hand dealt by destiny until their rampage is put to an end.



The Worldspawn

Classification: Soldier

Favors: Barbarians, Cover, Paladins, Warlocks

Foils: Clerics, Damage (High), Saving Throws, Wizards

WORLDSPAWN

Champions of nature and life, worldspawn are brought into existence by the love of creator deities. Fiercely protective of their friends and family, worldspawn wield tremendous elemental power through which they shape the world. Worldspawn are the ideal naturalists, always seeking to live in harmony with the land and encouraging others to do the same. These godspawn can be identified by their emerald eyes and extreme emotions. They feel anger, love, sadness, and joy with an extreme intensity that only a god could muster.

WORLDSPAWN TEMPLATE

When a worldspawn's power awakens, a startling evolution occurs. The divine power within warps body and mind, allowing a worldspawn to command the elements with godlike authority. When these powers manifest, a humanoid retains all its statistics except as noted here.

Type. The creature's type includes the titan subtype.

Hit Dice. The creature gains 20 additional Hit Dice, and its hit point maximum adjusts accordingly.

Speed. The creature gains a burrowing speed equal to its walking speed.

Ability Scores. The creature's Constitution and Wisdom scores increase by 10 to a maximum of 30. The creature also increases one other ability score of its choice by 4, to a maximum of 30.

Saving Throws. The creature gains proficiency in Wisdom saving throws and two other saving throws of its choice.

Skills. The creature gains proficiency in the Animal Handling, Medicine, Nature, and Survival skills. If the creature would gain proficiency in a skill in which it is already proficient, its proficiency bonus is instead doubled for any ability check it makes using that skill.

Damage Resistances. The creature is resistant to acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage, as well as bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

Senses. The creature gains tremorsense out to 120 feet.

Challenge Rating. A creature with a challenge rating of less than 1 has its challenge rating increased to 12. Otherwise, the creature's challenge rating increases by 12, and its proficiency bonus adjusts accordingly.

Traits

The creature gains the following traits.

- **Divine Essence.** When the creature attempts a saving throw other than a Wisdom saving throw, it may instead attempt a Wisdom saving throw (the save DC remains the same).
- **Elemental Conflux.** When the creature deals damage other than bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, it can choose to change the type of damage dealt to either acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage.

  Additionally, when the creature hits with any attack, it can choose to deal an additional 7 (2d6) acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage (included in the attack).
- **Indomitable.** While the creature is on the ground and not incapacitated, it cannot be pushed, pulled, forcibly moved, or magically teleported unless it chooses to be.

- **Innate Spellcasting**[1]. The creature's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC = 8 + proficiency + Wisdom modifier, + [proficiency + Wisdom modifier] to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material or somatic components:
  - At will: *animal friendship*, *cure wounds*, *goodberry*, *lesser restoration*, *purify food and drink*
  - 1/day each: *commune with nature*, *grasping vine*, *heal*, *plant growth*, *reincarnate*

[1] Some of the spells presented here can be found in the official 5E sourcebook, *XGE*.

Actions

The creature gains the following actions. Additionally, when the creature uses its Multiattack action, it can take one of these options in addition to that action.

- **Elemental Burst.** The creature projects a blast of elemental power in either a 30-foot cone, a 120-foot line that is 5 feet wide, or a 15-foot-radius sphere. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC (8 + proficiency + Wisdom modifier) Dexterity saving throw, taking 65 (10d12) acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage (DM's choice) on a failure, or half as much on a success. Additionally, on a failed save a creature is thrown in a straight line away from the creature to the edge of the affected area, landing prone.

Worldspawn Scout

Medium humanoid (any race, titan), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 299 (23d8 + 196)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	22 (+6)	11 (+0)	23 (+6)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +4, Wis +10
Skills Animal Handling +10, Nature +8, Medicine +10, Perception +10, Stealth +8, Survival +14
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Traits

Divine Essence. When the worldspawn attempts a saving throw other than a Wisdom saving throw, it may instead attempt a Wisdom saving throw (the save DC remains the same).

Elemental Conflux. When the worldspawn deals damage other than bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, it can choose to change the type of damage dealt to either acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage.

Additionally, when the worldspawn hits with any attack, it can choose to deal an additional 7 (2d6) acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage (included in the attack).

Indomitable. While the worldspawn is on the ground and not incapacitated, it cannot be pushed, pulled, forcibly moved, or magically teleported unless it chooses to be.

Innate Spellcasting[2]**.** The worldspawn's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC = 8 + proficiency + Wisdom modifier, + [proficiency + Wisdom modifier] to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material or somatic components:

At will: *animal friendship*, *cure wounds*, *goodberry*, *lesser restoration*, *purify food and drink*
1/day each: *commune with nature*, *grasping vine*, *heal*, *plant growth*, *reincarnate*

Keen Hearing and Sight. The worldspawn has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The worldspawn makes either two melee attacks or two ranged attacks, and then uses either its Elemental Burst or World Shaping action.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) plus 7 (2d6) acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage (worldspawn's choice).

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 120/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) plus 7 (2d6) acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage (worldspawn's choice).

Elemental Burst. The worldspawn projects a blast of elemental power in either a 30-foot cone, a 120-foot line that is 5 feet wide, or a 15-foot-radius sphere. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC (8 + proficiency + Wisdom modifier) Dexterity saving throw or take 65 (10d12) acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage (DM's choice), or half as much on a success. Additionally, on a failed save a creature is thrown in a straight line away from the worldspawn to the edge of the affected area, landing prone.

Worldshaping (Recharge 5–6). The worldspawn forms a solid object composed of elemental material, which consists of up to twenty 5-foot cubes of material, which must be contiguous and appear in unoccupied spaces on the ground within 300 feet of the worldspawn. Each cube is an object (AC 12, 40 hit points) and has the following properties according to the material from which they were formed.

- **Air.** The object is permeable and translucent but prevents any projectiles or ranged weapon attacks from passing through it.
- **Earth.** The object has resistance to all damage.
- **Fire.** The object is permeable and opaque. A creature that touches the object for the first time on a turn takes 9 (2d8) fire damage.
- **Water.** The object is permeable but is difficult terrain for creatures without a swimming speed. Creatures completely within the object must swim.

An object created in this manner lasts for up to 1 hour, or until the worldspawn uses an action to dismiss it.

[2] Some of the spells presented here can be found in the official 5E sourcebook, *XGE*.

- **Worldshaping (Recharge 5–6).** The creature forms a solid object composed of elemental material, which consists of up to twenty 5-foot cubes of material, which must be contiguous and appear in unoccupied spaces on the ground within 300 feet of the creature. Each cube is an object (AC 12, 40 hit points) and has the following properties according to the material from which they were formed.
  - **Air.** The object is permeable and translucent but prevents any projectiles or ranged weapon attacks from passing through it.
  - **Earth.** The object has resistance to all damage.
  - **Fire.** The object is permeable and opaque. A creature that touches the object for the first time on a turn takes 9 (2d8) fire damage.
  - **Water.** The object is permeable but is difficult terrain for creatures without a swimming speed. Creatures completely within the object must swim.

  An object created in this manner lasts for up to 1 hour, or until the creature uses an action to dismiss it.

An example of a possible worldspawn is detailed in this section. This worldspawn is based on the scout creature as detailed in the 5th Edition core rules.

FORGESPAWN

Master crafters and builders, forgespawn possess a divine talent for the creation of weapons, armor, and architecture. These godspawn easily conceal their true nature unless confronted, content to while away the hours before the comforting heat of the forge. When roused forgespawn live up to their lineage, with skins as thick as armor and enough strength to rival a siege engine. Forgespawn can be identified by their smoky eyes and incredible pain tolerance.



FORGESPAWN TEMPLATE

When a forgespawn's power awakens, a startling evolution occurs. The divine power within bestows the gift of armor-like skin and prodigious physical might. When these powers manifest, a humanoid retains all its statistics except as noted here.

Type. The creature's type includes the titan subtype.

Hit Dice. The creature gains 30 additional Hit Dice, and its hit point maximum adjusts accordingly.

Ability Scores. The creature's Constitution and Strength scores increase by 10 to a maximum of 30. The creature also increases one other ability score of its choice by 4, to a maximum of 30.

Saving Throws. The creature gains proficiency in Strength saving throws and two other saving throws of its choice.

Skills. The creature gains proficiency in the Athletics, History, Investigation, and Perception skills. If the creature would gain proficiency in a skill in which it is already proficient, its proficiency bonus is instead doubled for any ability check it makes using that skill.

Damage Resistances. The creature has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

Senses. The creature gains truesight out to 120 feet.

Challenge Rating. A creature with a challenge rating of less than 1 has its challenge rating increased to 13. Otherwise, the creature's challenge rating increases by 13, and its proficiency bonus adjusts accordingly.

Traits

The creature gains the following traits.

- **Divine Essence.** When the creature attempts a saving throw it is not proficient in, it may instead attempt a Strength saving throw (the save DC remains the same).
- **Armor Up.** As a bonus action on each of its turns, the creature gains 50 temporary hit points, which cannot be replaced by temporary hit points from another source unless the creature allows it. While it has temporary hit points in this manner, the creature cannot fail saving throws or be critically hit.
- **Devastator.** The creature deals double damage to objects and structures.

  Additionally, when the creature hits a creature with a weapon attack, the target must succeed on a DC (8 + proficiency + Strength modifier) saving throw or be knocked prone.
- **Magical Weaponry.** The creature's attacks are magical, and it adds its Wisdom modifier to attack and damage rolls (included in the attack).

  Additionally, at the start of each of its turns the creature can create a single simple or martial weapon in one of its free hands (no action required). This weapon vanishes instantly if it leaves the creature's possession.

The Forgespawn

Classification: Artillery

Favors: Damage (High), Sorcerers, Spells, Warlocks, Wizards

Foils: Critical Hits, Fighters, Paladins, Range (Long), Rogues

Forgespawn Commoner

Medium humanoid (any race, titan), any alignment

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 294 (31d8 + 155)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +10, Wis +7
Skills Athletics +10, History +5, Investigation +7, Perception +7
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 13 (18,000 XP)

Traits

Divine Essence. When the forgespawn attempts a saving throw it is not proficient in, it may instead attempt a Strength saving throw (the save DC remains the same).

Armor Up. As a bonus action on each of its turns, the forgespawn gains 50 temporary hit points, which cannot be replaced by temporary hit points from another source unless the forgespawn allows it. While it has temporary hit points in this manner, the forgespawn cannot fail saving throws or be critically hit.

Magical Weaponry. The forgespawn's attacks are magical, and it adds its Wisdom modifier to attack and damage rolls (included in the attack).

Additionally, at the start of each of its turns the forgespawn can create a single simple or martial weapon in one of its free hands (no action required). This weapon vanishes instantly if it leaves the forgespawn's possession.

Devastator. The forgespawn deals double damage to objects and structures.

Additionally, when the forgespawn hits a creature with a weapon attack, the target must succeed on a DC (8 + proficiency + Strength modifier) saving throw or be knocked prone.

Actions

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (1d4+7) bludgeoning damage.

Hurl Object. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* + 10 to hit, range 120/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (4d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Siege Strike (Recharge 5–6). The forgespawn conjures a gigantic piece of siege ammunition and hurls it, making the following attack. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 600/1,200 ft., every target in a 20-foot cube. *Hit:* 59 (8d12 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Keen Eye. Until the end of its next turn, the forgespawn has advantage on ranged weapon attacks.

Actions

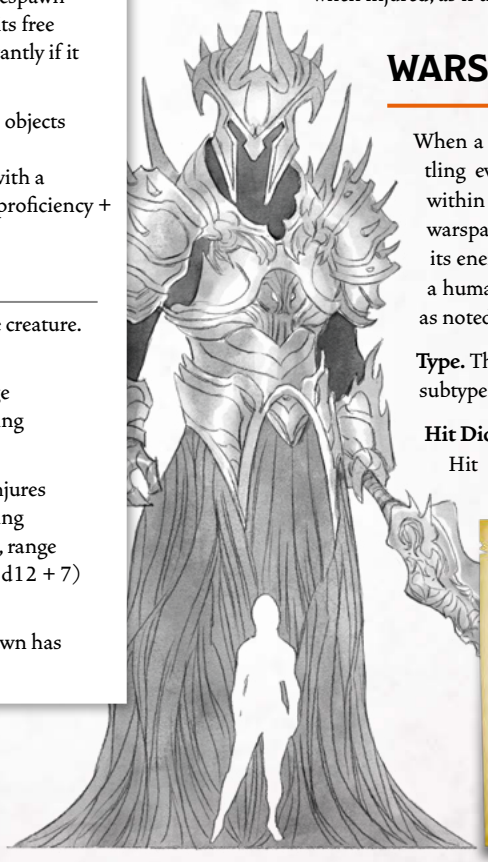
The creature gains the following actions. Additionally, when the creature uses its Multiattack action, it can take one of these options in addition to that action.

- **Hurl Object.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* + (proficiency + Strength modifier) to hit, range 120/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* (4d10 + Strength modifier) bludgeoning damage.
- **Keen Eye.** Until the end of its next turn, the creature has advantage on ranged weapon attacks.
- **Siege Strike (Recharge 5–6).** The creature conjures a gigantic piece of siege ammunition and hurls it, making the following attack. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* + (proficiency + Strength modifier) to hit, range 600/1,200 ft., every target in a 20-foot cube. *Hit:* (8d12 + Strength modifier) bludgeoning damage.

An example of a possible forgespawn is detailed in this section. This forgespawn is based on the commoner creature as detailed in the 5th Edition core rules.

WARSPAWN

Bloody conflict calls to warspawn as surely as the sun rises. These godspawn are recklessly violent, reveling in the swinging of steel and taste of blood. While warspawn come in all shapes and sizes, it is difficult to reconcile their wanton violence with most civilized societies. Warspawn care not for this discrepancy, for when nations march to war and have need of mighty champions, there is none better equipped to fill the role. Warspawn can be identified by their crimson eyes and bestial mannerisms. A particularly disturbing trait is the raucous laughter they emit when injured, as if their own pain amuses them.



Warspawn Template

When a warspawn's power awakens, a startling evolution occurs. The divine power within warps body and mind, allowing a warspawn to unleash terrific violence upon its enemies. When these powers manifest, a humanoid retains all its statistics except as noted here.

Type. The creature's type includes the titan subtype.

Hit Dice. The creature gains 25 additional Hit Dice, and its hit point maximum adjusts accordingly.

The Warspawn

Classification: Brute

Favors: Barbarians, Cover, Druids, Hit Points (High), Wizards

Foils: Armor Class (High), Damage (Low), Fighters, Monks, Rangers

Ability Scores. The creature's Strength and Constitution scores increase by 10 to a maximum of 30. The creature also increases one other ability score of its choice by 6, to a maximum of 30.

Saving Throws. The creature gains proficiency in Strength saving throws and two other saving throws of its choice.

Skills. The creature gains proficiency in the Athletics, Intimidation, and Perception skills. If the creature would gain proficiency in a skill in which it is already proficient, its proficiency bonus is instead doubled for any ability check it makes using that skill.

Damage Resistances. The creature has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Condition Immunities. The creature is immune to the charmed, exhaustion, and frightened conditions.

Senses. The creature gains truesight out to 120 feet.

Challenge Rating. A creature with a challenge rating of less than 1 has its challenge rating increased to 12. Otherwise, the creature's challenge rating increases by 12, and its proficiency bonus adjusts accordingly.

Traits

The creature gains the following traits.

- **Divine Essence.** When the creature attempts a saving throw other than a Strength saving throw, it may instead attempt a Strength saving throw (the save DC remains the same).
- **Bloody Triumph.** When the creature deals damage with a weapon attack, it can immediately take a bonus action to gain temporary hit points equal to the damage dealt. These temporary hit points last until the creature finishes a short or long rest.
- **Master of Battle.** When the creature hits with a weapon attack, it rolls three additional weapon damage dice (included in the attack).

  Additionally, the creature scores a critical hit on a roll of 17–20.

  Finally, the creature's weapon attacks are magical and grant a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls (included in the attack).

Warspawn Warlord

Medium humanoid (any race, titan), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 702 (52d8 + 468)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	16 (+3)	28 (+9)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +17, Dex +10, Con +16, Int +8, Cha +11
Skills Animal Handling +24, Intimidation +18, Perception +18
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 28
Languages any two languages
Challenge 24 (62,000 XP)

Traits

Bloody Triumph. When the warspawn deals damage with a weapon attack, it can immediately take a bonus action to gain temporary hit points equal to the damage dealt. These temporary hit points last until the warspawn finishes a short or long rest.

Divine Essence. When the warspawn attempts a saving throw it is not proficient in, it may instead attempt a Strength saving throw (the save DC remains the same).

Indomitable (3/Day). The warspawn can reroll a saving throw it fails. It must use the result of the new roll.

Master of Battle. When the warspawn hits with a weapon attack, it rolls three additional weapon damage dice (included in the attack).

Additionally, the warspawn scores a critical hit on a roll of 17–20.

Finally, the warspawn's weapon attacks are magical and grant a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls (included in the attack).

Survivor. The warspawn regains 10 hit points at the start of each of its turns if it has at least 1 hit point but fewer hit points than half its hit point maximum (351).

Actions

Multiattack. The warspawn makes two attacks and uses either its War Cry, Killing Spree, or Spellbreaker action.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +20 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 41 (8d6 + 13) slashing damage. This attack scores a critical hit on a roll of 17–20.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (4d6 + 6) piercing damage. This attack scores a critical hit on a roll of 17–20.

Killing Spree (Recharge 5–6). The warspawn makes a single weapon attack against each creature of its choice within the reach or range of its weapon.

Spellbreaker. The warspawn makes a single weapon attack against a spell effect within reach or range of its weapon. If the result of the attack roll is greater than the spell save DC of the effect, the effect ends immediately.

War Cry. The warspawn emits a ferocious war cry, which can be heard by creatures up to 1 mile away. Enemy creatures that can hear the cry must succeed on a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of its next turn, or until it does not have line of sight to the warspawn, whichever is longer.

Legendary Actions

The warspawn can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. The warspawn regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Weapon Attack. The warspawn makes a weapon attack.

Command Ally. The warspawn targets one ally it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see and hear the warspawn, the target can make one weapon attack as a reaction and gains advantage on the attack roll.

Frighten Foe (Costs 2 Actions). The warspawn targets one enemy it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see and hear the warspawn, it must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of the warspawn's next turn.

Actions

The creature gains the following actions. Additionally, when the creature uses its Multiattack action, it can take one of these options in addition to that action.

- **Killing Spree (Recharge 5—6).** The creature makes a single weapon attack against each creature of its choice within the reach or range of its weapon.
- **Spellbreaker.** The creature makes a single weapon attack against a spell effect within reach or range of its weapon. If the result of the attack roll is greater than the spell save DC of the effect, the effect ends immediately.
- **War Cry.** The creature emits a ferocious war cry, which can be heard by creatures up to 1 mile away. Enemy creatures that can hear the cry must succeed on a DC (8 + proficiency + Strength modifier) saving throw or be frightened until the end of its next turn, or until it does not have line of sight to the creature, whichever is longer.

An example of a possible warspawn is detailed in this section. This warspawn is based on the warlord creature as detailed in the 5th Edition core rules.

STORMSPAWN

Stormspawn are endowed with the unrelenting and chaotic power of a hurricane. Creatures of action, stormspawn are driven to make a difference wherever they venture. Depending on the stormspawn in question, this can be a very good or very bad thing. Those that stand in a stormspawn's path witness godlike fury firsthand as they are torn asunder by the power of storm, sea, and wind. Stormspawn can be identified by the tremendous static electricity they give off, along with an unearthly grace reminiscent of flowing water.



STORMSPAWN TEMPLATE

When a stormspawn's power awakens, a startling evolution occurs. The divine power within warps body and mind, allowing a stormspawn to command the elements with godlike authority. When these powers manifest, a humanoid retains all its statistics except as noted here.

Type. The creature's type includes the titan subtype.

Hit Dice. The creature gains 30 additional Hit Dice, and its hit point maximum adjusts accordingly.

Speed. The creature gains a swimming speed equal to its walking speed.

Ability Scores. The creature's Constitution and Charisma scores increase by 10 to a maximum of 30. The creature also increases one other ability score of its choice by 8, to a maximum of 30.

Saving Throws. The creature gains proficiency in Charisma saving throws and two other saving throws of its choice.

Skills. The creature gains proficiency in the Deception, Insight, Religion, and Stealth skills. If the creature would gain proficiency in a skill in which it is already proficient, its proficiency bonus is instead doubled for any ability check it makes using that skill.

Damage Resistances. The creature has resistance to cold, lighting, and thunder damage, as well as bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

Senses. The creature gains truesight out to 120 feet.

Challenge Rating. A creature with a challenge rating of less than 1 has its challenge rating increased to 14. Otherwise, the creature's challenge rating increases by 14, and its proficiency bonus adjusts accordingly.

Traits

The creature gains the following traits.

- **Divine Essence.** When the creature attempts a saving throw it is not proficient in, it may instead attempt a Charisma saving throw (the save DC remains the same).
- **Guile of the Wind.** As a bonus action on each of its turns, the creature can take the Dash, Disengage, Dodge, or Hide action.
- **Strength of the Sea.** When the creature hits a Huge or smaller creature with an attack, it can choose to push the target up to 20 feet away from it in a straight line or pull the target 20 feet closer in a straight line.
- **Thunder of the Storm (1/Turn).** When the creature deals damage to a creature it can see, it can choose to call down a bolt of lightning upon the creature, adding 70 (20d6) lightning damage to the triggering attack or effect.

The Stormspawn

Classification: Skirmisher

Favors: Barbarians, Cover, Mobility (High), Monks, Rogues

Foils: Bards, Clerics, Concentration, Saving Throws, Wizards





Actions

The creature gains the following actions. Additionally, when the creature uses its Multiattack action, it can take one of these options in addition to that action.

- **Storm Whip.** *Melee Spell Attack:* + (proficiency + Charisma modifier) to hit, reach 30 ft., one creature. *Hit:* (10d10 + Charisma modifier) lightning damage.
- **Thunderclap (Recharge 5–6).** The creature emits a clap of thunder in a 120-foot cone. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC (8 + proficiency + Charisma modifier) Constitution saving throw or take 45 (10d8) thunder damage, become permanently deafened, and become stunned until the end of its next turn. A successful save halves the damage and prevents being stunned.

An example of a possible stormspawn is detailed in this section. This stormspawn is based on the martial arts adept creature as detailed in the 5th Edition core rules.

SOURCESPAWN

Sourcespawn are gifted with enough magic to make an archmage jealous. Thankfully, their godlike heritage bestows considerable Intelligence, though that is no guarantee a sourcespawn will make responsible use of its gifts. It's not uncommon for the magic to go to a sourcespawn's head, leading to all kinds of magical mayhem. Once they master their powers, however, sourcespawn are always a tremendous force in the world, shaping destiny with every spell. Sourcespawn reveal their true nature when casting spells: their eyes become filled with stars, and magic dances around them as if alive.

SOURCESPAWN TEMPLATE

When a sourcespawn's power awakens, a startling evolution occurs. The divine power within warps body and mind, allowing a sourcespawn to wield magic with startling precision. When these powers manifest, a humanoid retains all its statistics except as noted here.

Stormspawn Martial Arts Adept

Medium humanoid (any race, titan), any alignment

Armor Class 20
Hit Points 430 (41d8 + 246)
Speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	23 (+6)	11 (+0)	24 (+7)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Wis +13, Cha +11
Skills Acrobatics +9, Insight +19, Religion +6, Stealth +15
Damage Resistances cold, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

TRAITS

Divine Essence. When the stormspawn attempts a saving throw it is not proficient in, it may instead attempt a Charisma saving throw (the save DC remains the same).

Guile of the Wind. As a bonus action on each of its turns, the stormspawn can take the Dash, Disengage, Dodge, or Hide action.

Strength of the Sea. When the stormspawn hits a Huge or smaller creature with an attack, it can choose to push the target up to 20 feet away from it in a straight line or pull the target 20 feet closer in a straight line.

Thunder of the Storm (1/Turn). When the stormspawn deals damage to a creature it can see, it can choose to call down a bolt of lightning upon the target, adding 70 (20d6) lightning damage to the triggering attack or effect.

Unarmored Defense. While the stormspawn is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Wisdom modifier.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The stormspawn makes three unarmed strikes or three dart attacks and uses either its Thunderclap or Storm Whip action.

Dart. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Storm Whip. *Melee Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 30 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 61 (10d10 + 6) lightning damage.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, the stormspawn can choose one of the following additional effects.

- The target must succeed on a DC 21 Strength saving throw or drop one item it is holding (stormspawn's choice).
- The target must succeed on a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.
- The target must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of the stormspawn's next turn.

Thunderclap (Recharge 5–6). The stormspawn emits a clap of thunder in a 120-foot cone. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or take 45 (10d8) thunder damage, become permanently deafened, and become stunned until the end of its next turn. A successful save halves the damage and prevents being stunned.

REACTIONS

Deflect Missile. As a reaction to when the stormspawn is hit by a ranged weapon attack, it can attempt to deflect the missile. The damage it takes from the attack is reduced by 8 (1d10 + 3). If the damage is reduced to 0, the stormspawn catches the missile if its small enough to hold in one hand and the stormspawn has a free hand.

Type. The creature's type includes the titan subtype.

Hit Dice. The creature gains 35 additional Hit Dice, and its hit point maximum adjusts accordingly.

Speed. The creature gains a flying (hover) speed equal to its walking speed.

Ability Scores. The creature's Constitution and Intelligence scores increase by 10 to a maximum of 30. The creature also increases one other ability score of its choice by 10, to a maximum of 30.

Saving Throws. The creature gains proficiency in Intelligence saving throws and three other saving throws of its choice.

Skills. The creature gains proficiency in the Arcana, History, and Persuasion skills. If the creature would gain proficiency in a skill in which it is already proficient, its proficiency bonus is instead doubled for any ability check it makes using that skill.

Damage Resistances. The creature has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

Senses. The creature gains truesight out to 120 feet.

Challenge Rating. A creature with a challenge rating of less than 1 has its challenge rating increased to 16. Otherwise, the creature's challenge rating increases by 16, and its proficiency bonus adjusts accordingly.

Traits

The creature gains the following traits.

- **Divine Essence.** When the creature attempts a saving throw it is not proficient in, it may instead attempt an Intelligence saving throw (the save DC remains the same).
- **Mystical Spellcasting.** The creature's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC = 8 + proficiency + Intelligence modifier, + [proficiency + Intelligence modifier] to hit with spell attacks). The creature has a number of spell points equal to five times its CR and regains expended spell points when it finishes a long rest. The creature can cast the following spells without the need for material components. When the creature casts a spell of 1st level or higher, it can choose to cast a spell using its spell points in lieu of other required resources. To do so, the creature must expend a number of spell points equal to the spell's level.
  - **1st level:** 4 spells of the creature's choice from any class spell list
  - **2nd level:** 4 spells of the creature's choice from any class spell list
  - **3rd level:** 3 spells of the creature's choice from any class spell list
  - **4th level:** 3 spells of the creature's choice from any class spell list
  - **5th level:** 3 spells of the creature's choice from any class spell list
  - **6th level:** 2 spells of the creature's choice from any class spell list
  - **7th level:** 2 spells of the creature's choice from any class spell list
  - **8th level:** 1 spell of the creature's choice from any class spell list
  - **9th level:** 1 spell of the creature's choice from any class spell list
- **Spell Resistance.** The creature has resistance to damage from spells and magical effects, and advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

Actions

The creature gains the following actions.

- **Multispell.** The creature casts two spells, one of which must be a spell of 5th level or lower.
- **Arcane Vortex (Recharge 5–6).** The creature generates a vortex of magical energy in a 30-foot radius centered on a point it can see within 300 feet of it. Each spell effect of 8th level or lower in the affected area immediately ends, and the creature gathers the arcane power of the spells in its hand, which it holds for as long as it concentrates (as though concentrating on a spell). As an action the creature can unleash this energy in a 300-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC (8 + proficiency + Intelligence modifier) saving throw or take 27 (5d10) force damage for each spell ended by the vortex, to a maximum of 110 (20d10).

An example of a possible sourcespawn is detailed in this section. This sourcespawn is based on the swashbuckler creature as detailed in the 5th Edition core rules.



SUNSPAWN

Sunspawn are endowed with the glory and power of the sun. This holy light allows a sunspawn to bless allies with healing light and smite foes with radiant power. Sunspawn are identified by their pleasant demeanor, soft voices, and, when angered, glowing golden eyes. Of all the godspawn sunspawn are least likely to resent their gifts. Most make the world a better place, serving as healers, spiritual guides, and diplomats of the highest caliber.

SUNSPAWN TEMPLATE

When a sunspawns's power awakens, a startling evolution occurs. The divine power within blesses the sunspawn with holy abilities to smite foes and bless allies. When these powers manifest, a humanoid retains all its statistics except as noted here.

Type. The creature's type includes the titan subtype.

Hit Dice. The creature gains 35 additional Hit Dice, and its hit point maximum adjusts accordingly.

Speed. The creature gains a flying speed (hover) equal to its walking speed.

Ability Scores. The creature's Constitution and Wisdom scores increase by 10 to a maximum of 30. The creature also increases one other ability score of its choice by 6, to a maximum of 30.

Saving Throws. The creature gains proficiency in Wisdom saving throws and two other saving throws of its choice.

Skills. The creature gains proficiency in the Insight, Investigation, Perception, and Persuasion skills. If the creature would gain proficiency in a skill in which it is already proficient, its proficiency bonus is instead doubled for any ability check it makes using that skill.

Damage Resistances. The creature has resistance to radiant damage, as well as bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

Senses. The creature gains truesight out to 120 feet.

Challenge Rating. A creature with a challenge rating of less than 1 has its challenge rating increased to 15. Otherwise, the creature's challenge rating increases by 15, and its proficiency bonus adjusts accordingly.

SOURCESPAWN SWASHBUCKLER

Medium humanoid (any race, titan), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (leather armor)
Hit Points 493 (47d8 + 282)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	22 (+6)	24 (+7)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Con +12, Int +13, Cha +8
Skills Acrobatics +10, Arcana +13, Athletics +7, History +14, Persuasion +14
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)

TRAITS

Divine Essence. When the sourcespawn attempts a saving throw it is not proficient in, it may instead attempt an Intelligence saving throw (the save DC remains the same).

Lightfooted. As a bonus action on each of its turns, the sourcespawn can take the Dash or Disengage actions.

Mystical Spellcasting. The sourcespawn's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 28, +13 to hit with spell attacks). The sourcespawn has 95 spell points and regains expended spell points when it finishes a long rest. The sourcespawn can cast the following spells without the need for material components. When the sourcespawn casts a spell of 1st level or higher, it can choose to cast a spell using its spell points in lieu of other required resources. To do so, the sourcespawn must expend a number of spell points equal to the spell's level.

1st level: *charm person*, *disguise self*, *dissonant whispers*, *hideous laughter*
2nd level: *detect thoughts*, *knock*, *phantasmal force*, *shatter*
3rd level: *dispel magic*, *hypnotic pattern*, *tongues*
4th level: *dimension door*, *freedom of movement*, *greater invisibility*
5th level: *cone of cold*, *dominate person*, *dream*
6th level: *eyebite*, *mass suggestion*
7th level: *forcecage*, *prismatic spray*
8th level: *power word stun*
9th level: *prismatic wall*

Spell Resistance. The sourcespawn has resistance to damage from spells and magical effects, and advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

Suave Defense. While the sourcespawn is wearing light or no armor and wielding no shield, its AC includes its Charisma modifier.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sourcespawn makes three attacks: one with its dagger and two with its rapier.

Multispell. The sourcespawn casts two spells, one of which must be a spell of 5th level or lower.

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Arcane Vortex (Recharge 5–6). The sourcespawn generates a vortex of magical energy in a 30-foot radius centered on a point it can see within 300 feet of it. Each spell effect of 8th level or lower in the affected area immediately ends, and the sourcespawn gathers the arcane power of the spells in its hand, which it holds for as long as it concentrates (as though concentrating on a spell). As an action the sourcespawn can unleash this energy in a 300-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw or take 27 (5d10) force damage for each spell ended by the vortex, to a maximum of 110 (20d10).

Traits

The creature gains the following traits.

- **Divine Essence.** When the creature attempts a saving throw it is not proficient in, it may instead attempt a Wisdom saving throw (the save DC remains the same).
- **Light of Dawn.** As a bonus action on each of its turns, the creature begins emitting daylight in a 120-foot radius, and dim light for 120 feet beyond that. The creature must take a bonus action on its subsequent turns to continue emitting light. The emission of light ends if the creature becomes incapacitated.

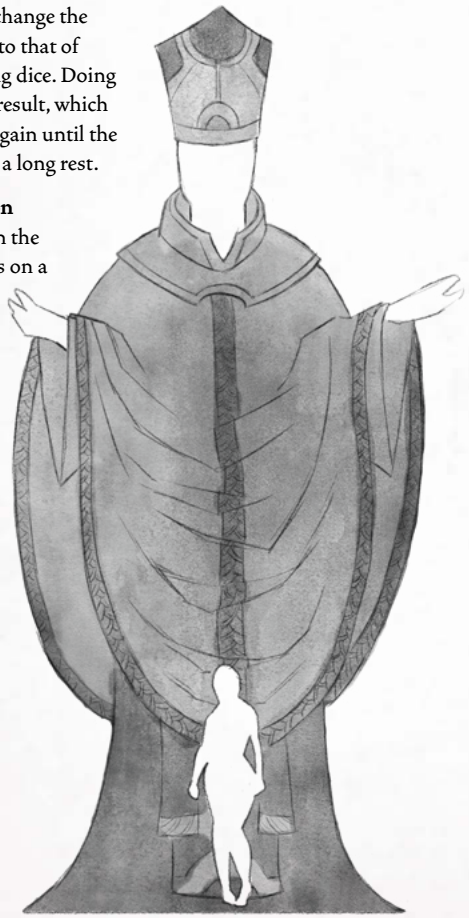
  Friendly creatures of the creature's choice in the area of daylight have three-quarters cover (+5 to AC and Dexterity saving throws), and enemy creatures in the area have disadvantage on saving throws.
- **Sacred Blessings.** When the creature finishes a long rest, it rolls 10d20 and records the results, which form its pool of blessing dice. When a friendly creature the creature can see within 120 feet of it makes an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check, the creature can expend one of these blessing dice to change the result of the roll to that of one of its blessing dice. Doing so expends that result, which cannot be used again until the creature finishes a long rest.
- **Spell Absorption (1/Turn).** When the creature succeeds on a saving throw against a spell or magical effect, it regains 22 (4d10) hit points and the spell immediately ends.

The Sunspawn

Classification: Leader

Favors: Bards, Conditions (Incapacitated), Range (Long), Rangers, Wizards

Foils: Attacks, Barbarians, Damage (High), Fighters, Rogues



Actions

The creature gains the following actions. Additionally, when the creature uses its Multiattack action, it can take one of these options in addition to that action.

- **Sunstrike.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* + (proficiency + Wisdom modifier) to hit, range 120/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* (5d10 + Wisdom modifier) radiant damage.
- **Gift of Light.** A creature the creature can see within 120 feet of it magically regains 52 (8d12) hit points.
- **Resurrection (Recharge 5–6).** The creature touches the corpse of a dead creature within reach. If the creature's soul is free and willing, the creature is restored to life at 100 hit points or its hit point maximum, whichever is fewer. The resurrected creature grows any missing limbs when it returns to life.

An example of a possible sunspawn is detailed in this section. This sunspawn is based on the knight creature as detailed in the 5th Edition core rules.

DEATHSPAWN

Where other godspawn are blessed by their heritage, deathspawn rarely appreciate the "gifts" bestowed upon them by their progenitors. These creatures are recognizable by pitch-black eyes that speak of doom and death. A deathspawn's voice echoes with menace, promising a swift end to any who dare defy it. A deathspawn's power ensures the creature is either feared or attacked, leaving them jaded, misanthropic loners that grow to resent all life.

DEATHSPAWN TEMPLATE

When a deathspawn's power awakens, a startling evolution occurs. The divine power within warps body and mind, allowing a deathspawn authority over life itself. When these powers manifest, a humanoid retains all its statistics except as noted here.

Type. The creature's type includes the titan subtype.

Hit Dice. The creature gains 40 additional Hit Dice, and its hit point maximum adjusts accordingly.

Speed. The creature gains a flying speed (hover) equal to its walking speed.

Ability Scores. The creature's Constitution and Charisma scores increase by 10 to a maximum of 30. The creature also increases one other ability score of its choice by 10, to a maximum of 30.

Saving Throws. The creature gains proficiency in Charisma saving throws and three other saving throws of its choice.

Skills. The creature gains proficiency in the Deception, Perception, and Religion skills. If the creature would gain proficiency in a skill in which it is already proficient, its proficiency bonus is instead doubled for any ability check it makes using that skill.

Damage Resistances. The creature is resistant to radiant and necrotic damage, as well as bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

Senses. The creature gains truesight out to 120 feet.

Challenge Rating. A creature with a challenge rating of less than 1 has its challenge rating increased to 18. Otherwise, the creature's challenge rating increases by 18, and its proficiency bonus adjusts accordingly.

Traits

The creature gains the following traits.

- **Divine Essence.** When the creature attempts a saving throw that it is not proficient in, it may instead attempt a Charisma saving throw (the save DC remains the same).
- **Fear the Reaper.** The creature adds its Charisma modifier to its attack and damage rolls (included in the attack)

  Additionally, when the creature hits with a weapon attack against a living creature, it can do an additional 28 (8d6) necrotic damage to the target, and the target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage dealt. This reduction ends if a creature gains the benefits of a *heal* or *greater restoration* spell.
- **Life Harvester.** The creature emits an aura of death in a 60-foot-radius sphere. At the start of each of its turns, it can choose to force each creature of its choice in the affected area to attempt a DC (8 + proficiency + Charisma modifier) Constitution saving throw, losing a number of hit points equal to the target's Constitution score on a failure. For each creature that fails a saving throw in this manner, the deathspawn magically regains 10 hit points.

Actions

The creature gains the following actions. Additionally, when the creature uses its Multiattack action, it can take one of these options in addition to that action.

- **Shadowstep.** The creature magically teleports to an unoccupied space within magical darkness that it can see within 120 feet of it.
- **Silence of the Grave (Recharge 5–6).** The creature curses a 60-foot cube centered on a point it can see within 300 feet of it. No sound can be emitted in the affected area, nor can creatures in the area other than the deathspawn regain hit points or succeed on death saving throws.

Sunspawn Knight

Medium humanoid (any race, titan), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 494 (43d8 + 301)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	11 (+0)	24 (+7)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +12, Con +13, Wis +11, Cha +8
Skills Insight +11, Investigation +11, Perception +11, Persuasion +8
Damage Resistances radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 18 (18,000 XP)

Traits

Divine Essence. When the sunspawn attempts a saving throw it is not proficient in, it may instead attempt a Wisdom saving throw (the save DC remains the same).

Light of Dawn. As a bonus action on each of its turns, the sunspawn begins emitting daylight in a 120-foot radius, and dim light for 120 feet beyond that. The sunspawn must take a bonus action on its subsequent turns to continue emitting light. The emission of light ends if the sunspawn becomes incapacitated.

Friendly creatures of the sunspawn's choice in the area of daylight have three-quarters cover (+5 to AC and Dexterity saving throws), and enemy creatures in the area have disadvantage on saving throws.

Sacred Blessings. When the sunspawn finishes a long rest, it rolls 10d20 and records the results, which form its pool of blessing dice. When a friendly creature the sunspawn can see within 120 feet of it makes an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check, the sunspawn can expend one of these blessing dice to change the result of the roll to that of one of its blessing dice. Doing so expends that result, which cannot be used again until the sunspawn finishes a long rest.

Spell Absorption (1/Turn). When the sunspawn succeeds on a saving throw against a spell or magical effect, it regains 22 (4d10) hit points and the spell immediately ends.

Actions

Multiattack. The sunspawn makes two melee attacks and uses either its Gift of Light, Sun Strike, or Resurrection action.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

Sunstrike. *Ranged Spell Attack:* + 11 to hit, range 120/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 32 (5d10 + 5) radiant damage.

Gift of Light. A creature the sunspawn can see within 120 feet of it magically regains 52 (8d12) hit points.

Leadership (1/Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the sunspawn can utter a special command or warning whenever a friendly creature it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear the sunspawn. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the sunspawn is incapacitated.

Resurrection (Recharge 5–6). The creature touches the corpse of a dead creature within reach. If the creature's soul is free and willing, the creature is restored to life at 100 hit points or its hit point maximum, whichever is fewer. The resurrected creature grows any missing limbs when it returns to life.

- **Snuff Life.** The creature attempts to snuff the life of a living creature at 10 or fewer hit points that it can see within 120 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC (8 + proficiency + Charisma modifier) Constitution saving throw or die instantly. A creature slain in this manner cannot be restored to life unless the deathspawn is slain or the deathspawn allows it.

An example of a possible deathspawn is detailed in this section. This deathspawn is based on the champion creature as detailed in the 5th Edition core rules.





Deathspawn Champion

Medium humanoid (any race, titan), any alignment

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 713 (62d8 + 434)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	24 (+7)	10 (+0)	24 (+7)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Str +13, Dex +10, Con +15, Wis +15, Cha +14
Skills Athletics +13, Deception +14, Intimidation +14, Perception +23, Religion +8
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 33
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 27 (105,000 XP)

Traits

Divine Essence. When the deathspawn attempts a saving throw it is not proficient in, it may instead attempt a Charisma saving throw (the save DC remains the same).

Fear the Reaper. The deathspawn adds its Charisma modifier to its attack and damage rolls (included in the attack).

Additionally, when the deathspawn hits with a weapon attack against a living creature, it can do an additional 28 (8d6) necrotic damage to the target, and the target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage dealt. This reduction ends if a target gains the benefits of a *heal* or *greater restoration* spell.

Indomitable (2/Day). The deathspawn rerolls a failed saving throw.

Life Harvester. The deathspawn emits an aura of death in a 60-foot-radius sphere. At the start of each of its turns, it can choose to force each creature of its choice in the affected area to attempt a DC 22 Constitution saving throw, losing a number of hit points equal to the target's Constitution score on a failed saving throw. For each creature that fails a saving throw in this manner, the deathspawn magically regains 10 hit points.

Second Wind (1/Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the deathspawn can regain 20 hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. The deathspawn makes three attacks with its greatsword or light crossbow, and it uses either its Silence of the Grave, Snuff Life, or Shadowstep action.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d6 + 11) slashing damage plus 28 (8d6) necrotic damage, and the target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage dealt. This reduction ends if a creature gains the benefits of a *heal* or *greater restoration* spell.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (1d8 + 11) piercing damage plus 28 (8d6) necrotic damage, and the target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage dealt. This reduction ends if a creature gains the benefits of a *heal* or *greater restoration* spell.

Shadowstep. The deathspawn magically teleports to an unoccupied space within magical darkness that it can see within 120 feet of it.

Silence of the Grave (Recharge 5–6). The deathspawn curses a 60-foot cube centered on a point it can see within 300 feet of it. No sound can be emitted in the affected area, nor can creatures in the area other than the deathspawn regain hit points or succeed on death saving throws.

Snuff Life. The deathspawn attempts to snuff the life of a living creature at 10 or fewer hit points that it can see within 120 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw or die instantly. A creature slain in this manner cannot be restored to life unless the deathspawn is slain or the deathspawn allows it.

Grey Wanderers

Every culture has its mythologies about visitations from otherworldly beings. Tales of unexplainable lights in the sky, waking dreams of metal operating rooms, or close encounters with grey-skinned beings appear again and again. Despite what some would lead you to believe, these beings do indeed exist. The greys are creatures who serve an unfathomable purpose, but the pursuit of this purpose takes them across time and space, to intercede in events when required. Very little is known of the greys but encounters with them always leave lasting impressions.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a grey wanderer with an Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

GREY WANDERER LORE

DC	INFORMATION
15	Throughout living memory, there have always been tales of visitations from grey-skinned creatures from beyond the stars. These stories often speak of abductions, strange lights in the sky, flying ships, and people drained of their memories. The existence of such beings is not proven, and government officials deny the validity of these stories.
21	While information is widely unconfirmed, stories seem to suggest several different types of grey wanderers exist. These different types possess different abilities that allow them to manipulate how they are perceived, move at incredible speeds, and extract information directly from the minds of their targets.
26	The few researchers willing to study the grey wanderers mostly agree that they are never encountered alone. They possess technologically advanced vessels that allow them to travel between the planes of existence. Crews of grey wanderers pilot these ships using technology powered by their sophisticated minds. These mental abilities enable them to influence the thoughts of others, forcing creatures to see reality as the greys wish them to view it.

A GREY WANDERER'S LAIR

When greys travel to other worlds and planes, they almost always do so via a mysterious interplanar vessel. These metallic propulsion devices house a crew and can safely navigate planar space, actual space, and even across dimensions. These massive ships do not possess traditional controls, but rather attune to the psychic capabilities of a designated officer among the grey crew. While onboard one of these ships, the chosen grey officer can activate the vessel's capabilities.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the greys take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. The greys cannot use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- The ship activates environmental controls to pump a neurotoxin into the air of the vessel. Enemy creatures in the affected area must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned. While poisoned, if a creature would roll a 6 or higher on a Wisdom saving throw, it instead rolls a 5. On a successful save, a creature is immune to the effects of the toxin for 24 hours.
- The gravity of this vessel changes to a direction of the officer's choice. Creatures that would fall as a result of this effect can attempt a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, grabbing onto a solid surface and preventing the fall on a success. A creature with no available free hand cannot succeed on this saving throw.
- The ship charges the air with a pulse of electric energy. A blast of electricity bursts from the floor centered on a point within the ship, completely filling a 10-foot cube. Each creature in that area must attempt a DC 21 Constitution saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) lightning damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.
- The vessel magically teleports a grey crew member in the area to an unoccupied space within the vessel.

TALIEN'S NOTES

I will admit, when an acquaintance of mine asked me to look into this bizarre legend, I openly laughed. To humor them, I began to collect these fragmented stories and quickly realized that the string of commonalities was far too convenient to write off as myth. Few facts about these beings are known, but I have compiled what little is available here.

The grey wanderers are wholly "unterrestrial" beings who travel through time and space in pursuit of their unknown agenda. These beings are hyper-intelligent and use their technology to gather a seemingly endless collection of data. They appear to take extraordinary measures to move through our world unnoticed, so if you do happen to encounter one, I suggest you immediately head out for a long holiday somewhere far away.



REGIONAL EFFECTS

The grey ship is augmented by alien technology, which creates one or more of the following effects within it:

- As long as the grey ship is properly functioning, it is invisible.
- Energy emissions from the grey ship eventually cause local flora to die. Plants within 1 mile of the ship cease to grow and ultimately become brittle and grey after 1 hour of direct exposure.
- Unidentified lights in the sky are occasionally seen within a 5-mile radius of the grey ship. These odd-colored flashes are harmless and can only be seen at night or if the sky is dark.

  If all crew members of a grey vessel die, these effects fade after 1d4 days.

ECOLOGY

The greys come from a world far beyond the scope of our galaxy. When the greys travel to other planes, they do so in ships piloted by a crew. The vast majority of these crews arrive to gather data, conduct scientific research, and then depart. These ships serve as bases where grey directors typically remain on board and send out grey agents to collect data and return to report their findings. The experiments performed by the greys are often extreme but rarely lethal. Most greys prefer to wipe the minds of their victims in an effort to remain indiscreet and unnoticed. The motivations of these aliens are completely inscrutable. One cannot even begin to comprehend their culture and technology let alone their plans and schemes.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

What I find most exciting about 5th Edition is the ability to interact with legends. I grew up on tales of dragons, fey, knights, and wizards, so seeing those appear in my games gives me the same sense of wonder I had when I first discovered them. Defining American mythology is certainly a mire, but I think I can safely stake that we have done a lot *to contribute to the legends of invasion from outer space. Through cinema and written fiction, we have built a vast mythology about grey-skinned beings from beyond the stars. I conjure that collection here as another way to bring familiar legends to life at your game table.*

— Celeste Conowitch

GREY AGENT

Grey agents are the most subtle of their kind. These beings possess several mental abilities that allow them to hide among crowds of everyday people without being noticed. Only the most perceptive creatures are likely to spot a grey agent among a group—their forms are frequently just a tad too tall, or their eyes are a little too blue to be natural. These agents possess an alien serenity that may read as aloofness to other creatures. Grey agents carry metallic briefcases with them during missions off world. These strange devices are exceedingly mysterious and have never been successfully opened by non-greys in a manner which preserves their contents.

TACTICS

Grey agents are master manipulators and prefer to avoid confrontation to get the information they need. An agent on a mission works to collect the required information first through observation then through direct contact with terrestrials only when strictly necessary. To avoid alarming a local population, grey agents rely heavily on their Reality Engine to

The Grey Agent

The greatest challenge when classifying these agents has been confirming the occurrence of an actual encounter. These "greys" are highly intelligent in their operations. If they do not outright drain your memory of the encounter, you'll inevitably insist they appeared to you as some other creature altogether. Even worse, if greys are spotted, sometimes they simply transport themselves out of reach. Slate is the fastest person this side of the material plane, and even they could not catch up to one of these creatures on the run.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Skirmisher

Favors: Constitution (High), Monks, Rangers, Teleportation, Warlocks

Foils: Barbarians, Fighters, Melee, Mobility (Low), Paladins

GREY AGENT

Small aberration, lawful neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 110 (20d6 + 40)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +10, Wis +7, Cha +8
Skills Deception +8, Insight +12, Investigation +10, Perception +7
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

TRAITS

Avoidance. If the grey agent is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a saving throw and take only half damage on a success, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds and only half damage if it fails.

Disengage. As a bonus action on each of its turns, the grey agent can take the Disengage action.

Displacement. While the grey agent is not incapacitated, it projects a magical illusion that makes it appear to be standing near its actual location, causing attack rolls against it to have disadvantage. If it is hit by an attack, this trait's effects are suppressed until the end of its next turn.

Power Shield. At the start of each of its turns, the grey agent generates a magical barrier of force around its body, granting it 20 temporary hit points which cannot be replaced by temporary hit points from another source unless the grey agent allows it. While the grey agent has temporary hit points from this effect, it is immune to critical hits.

Reality Engine. While it is not incapacitated, the grey agent projects a psychic aura that makes reality appear as the grey agent wills. The grey agent can affect objects, creatures, or visible phenomena within a 10-foot radius of itself with these illusions. These appear real, fooling all auditory, olfactory, and visual senses, though physical interaction with the image reveals the illusion. A creature can use the Search action to examine the effect, revealing its illusory nature with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check. Additionally, on a success a creature becomes immune to the effect for 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The grey agent makes two Matter Scatter attacks.

Matter Scatter. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a flesh-and-blood creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. If a creature succeeds on a saving throw against this effect, it becomes immune to all subsequent instances of this effect (regardless of source) for 24 hours.

Mind Probe. *Melee Spell Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one incapacitated or willing humanoid. *Hit:* The target takes 55 (10d10) psychic damage as the grey agent extracts information or memories from the creature's mind. On a successful hit, the grey agent can choose for this effect to deal no damage. If it does so, it can instead erase up to 1 hour of the target's memory of any events that have occurred within the last 24 hours.

Antimagic Pulse. As an action, the grey agent uses its briefcase to create an area of antimagic in a 10-foot-radius sphere centered on it, which lasts for 1 minute. This effect suppresses all spells and magical effects in the affected area and moves with the grey agent wherever it moves.

REACTIONS

Contingency Plan. As a reaction when the grey agent is hit by an attack, the grey agent can teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

disguise themselves as average citizens. If they do attract unwanted attention, they later revisit the observers to pull the memory of the encounter from their minds.

Easier Tactics — When pushed into combat, a grey agent aims to take the information required and then use its superior mobility to leave the scene as quickly as possible. To avoid suspicion, a grey agent does not slay defeated characters, but instead incapacitates them then uses Mind Probe to remove memories of the encounter. For an easier battle, use a solo agent rather than the usual pair.

Harder Tactics — Grey agents train to operate in pairs to optimize mission success, with one agent working in the open and one always concealed by the reality engine. If agents seek to eliminate the party, they first stalk and gather data about how the party operates. Based on what they see, they formulate an optimal strategy for how best to slay the party. If at all possible, the agents lure the party into an enclosed space with poor visibility. They use their Reality Engine ability to appear as other members of the party or make party members look and sound like grey agents. They sow confusion and fear as they teleport around the battlefield, always moving to make quick attacks and avoiding heavy-hitting melee fighters. If there are spellcasters in the group, the agents place their antimagic spheres in such a way that they can retreat to the domes just before the spellcasters have an opportunity to attack.

Briefcase

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement by a creature with an Intelligence of 18 or higher)

A briefcase is designed for use by the alien intellect of the grey wanderers. A creature that attempts to pick up the briefcase without being attuned to it must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or immediately go mad, rolling on the Short-Term Madness table[1] to determine duration and effect.

While holding a closed briefcase, you can use an action to name a location that you are familiar with on any plane of existence, attempting a DC 15 Intelligence check as you do so. On a success, you instantly cast the spell *plane shift* without the need for any components. On a failure, you and each creature and object within 15 feet of you travel to a random destination. Roll a d100. On a 1–60, you travel to a random location on the plane you named. On a 61–100, you travel to a randomly determined plane of existence within your universe.

The grey agent who owns the briefcase is the only being capable of opening the case without destroying its contents. What actually is within the case is left deliberately mysterious, to be determined by the DM.

[1] The Short-Term Madness table is detailed in the 5th Edition core rules.

PLOT HOOKS

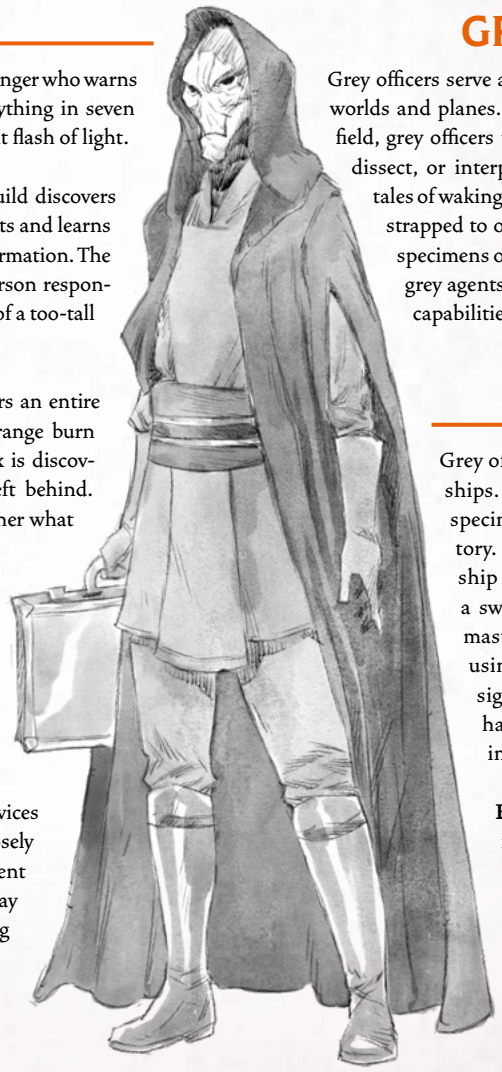
We Come in Peace. A town is visited by a stranger who warns that a massive earthquake will destroy everything in seven days. The stranger then disappears in a bright flash of light.

Counterintelligence. A powerful thieves guild discovers the exposure of one of their undercover agents and learns that the thief was seemingly tortured for information. The guild places a bounty on the head of the person responsible, but all they have is a vague description of a too-tall stranger with electric-blue eyes.

A Walk to Remember. The party encounters an entire village that has had its memory wiped. Strange burn marks scorch the ground, an odd metal box is discovered, and other bizarre clues have been left behind. The villagers need help trying to piece together what happened.

TREASURE

All grey agents carry a specialized device to extract themselves from their situation if a mission goes entirely wrong. These devices appear to be metallic boxes with a handle that resembles a modern briefcase. These devices are created for each agent, and that agent closely guards the case while off world. Should an agent perish accidentally or be defeated, its case may be left behind as spoil for an adventuring party.



GREY OFFICER

Grey officers serve as enforcers and leaders for missions to other worlds and planes. While grey agents gather information in the field, grey officers usually remain on board the ship to process, dissect, or interpret collected knowledge. Creatures who tell tales of waking in strange laboratories and finding themselves strapped to operation tables have likely been the unwilling specimens of grey officers. More scientifically minded than grey agents, grey officers rely on technology for defensive capabilities and disturbing research.

TACTICS

Grey officers are rarely encountered outside of their ships. They mainly rely on agents to retrieve data or specimens to be examined in the officer's laboratory. While onboard, grey officers have access to ship defensive controls that allow them to bring a swift end to conflict. Grey officers are tactical masterminds and assess combatants quickly, using their solutions to shut down the most significant threats. A grey officer avoids direct hand-to-hand combat whenever possible, relying on grey agents to be the mobile hitters.

Easier Tactics — For an easier fight, a grey officer aims to incapacitate rather than outright kill. They use their dominate, hold, and other debilitating solutions to create chaos before ordering a retreat. Make use of the officer's array of spells, focusing on the less lethal

options such as *charm person*, *sleep*, and *blindness/deafness*. The officer should play a tactical game, seeking to learn as much about the characters as possible with no interest in killing them.

Harder Tactics — Encountering a grey officer onboard its ship considerably stacks the odds against a party. The grey officer cycles between pulling gravity and confusing targets with ship controls, attempting to destroy their ability to move. The officer employs its most powerful spells via its Solution Deployment Mechanism, such as *feeblemind* and *forcecage*, which can completely shut down characters who lack the appropriate countermeasures. Remember, because these spells are cast without any components, characters cannot *counterspell* their effects, as they lack the necessary visual cues to do so.

PLOT HOOKS

Andromeda Strain. An odd disease begins to afflict a population, healing magic can do nothing to slow its spread, and the source of the disease needs to be discovered to create a cure. Unbeknown to the people, this disease spawns from an abductee who was returned to their home after a set of grey wanderers' experiments.

Abduction. Several farmers report seeing an unidentified flying object soar through the sky, and the next morning a local government official is discovered missing. The terrified population needs adventurers to investigate what happened.

GREY OFFICER

Medium aberration, lawful neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 228 (24d8 + 120)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (−1)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	24 (+7)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +10, Int +12, Wis +9
Skills Arcana +12, Investigation +12, Medicine +9, Perception +9
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Common, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

TRAITS

Magic Resistance. The grey officer has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Power Shield. At the start of each of its turns, the grey officer generates a magical barrier of force around its body, granting it 30 temporary hit points which cannot be replaced by temporary hit points from another source unless the grey officer allows it. While the grey officer has temporary hit points from this effect, it is immune to critical hits.

Reality Engine. While it is not incapacitated, the grey officer projects a psychic aura that makes reality appear as the grey officer wills. The grey officer can affect objects, creatures, or visible phenomena within a 30-foot radius of itself with these illusions. These appear real, fooling all auditory, olfactory, and visual senses, though physical interaction with the image reveals the illusion. A creature can use the Search action to examine the effect, revealing its illusory nature with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check. Additionally, on a successful ability check a creature becomes immune to the effect for 24 hours

Solution Deployment Mechanism. This weapon allows the grey officer to fire syringes and sprays of different solutions. When using the mechanism, a grey officer is considered a 19th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks).

The mechanism has 50 charges and regains 6 (1d12) charges whenever the officer finishes a long rest.

When using the mechanism, the grey officer can expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells without the need for any components. When the officer casts a spell in this manner, it can expend additional charges to increase the level of the spell by 1 for each additional charge it expends in this manner.

(1 charge) *charm person*, *identify*, *sleep*
(2 charges) *acid arrow*, *blindness/deafness*, *ray of enfeeblement*
(3 charges) *counterspell*, *dispel magic*
(4 charges) *confusion*, *phantasmal killer*
(5 charges) *dominate person*, *hold monster*
(6 charges) *disintegrate*, *mass suggestion*
(7 charges) *forcecage*, *prismatic spray*
(8 charges) *feeblemind*
(9 charges) *power word kill*

ACTIONS

Matter Scatter. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a flesh-and-blood creature, it must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. If a creature succeeds on a saving throw against this effect, it becomes immune to all subsequent instances of this effect (regardless of source) for 24 hours.

Mind Probe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one incapacitated or willing humanoid. *Hit:* The target takes 77 (14d10) psychic damage as the grey officer extracts information or memories from the creature's mind. On a successful hit, the grey officer can choose for this effect to deal no damage. If it does so, it can instead erase up to 1 hour of the target's memory of any events that have occurred within the last 24 hours.

REACTIONS

Molecular Acid (Recharge 5–6). As a reaction when the grey officer takes damage, it can excrete a spray of its acidic blood. Each creature within 30 feet of the officer that isn't a grey wanderer must attempt a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) acid damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much on a success. If a creature is reduced to 0 hit points from this effect, its body is dissolved and it dies instantly.

Crash Landing. A bizarre metal ship crashes to the ground during a storm. The ship is like nothing ever seen before, and a team of arcane specialists are called to discover a way inside. Within is a single injured grey officer, the only survivor of the crash, and it is in desperate need of medical attention.

TREASURE

Grey officers are master alchemists and have devised special weapons to use their knowledge in combat. Solution deployment mechanisms function similarly to spring-loaded crossbows that fire solutions rather than bolts. Grey officers have thoroughly studied terrestrial magic, and many of their solutions are designed to replicate devasting magical effects. If a grey officer is defeated, its weapon may be left behind.



The Grey Officer

Waking up in steel rooms, finding odd pieces of metal embedded in skin, vague memories of whirring medical instruments...these are just a few examples of the stories told about encounters with grey officers. I can firmly say that if I have ever encountered one of these creatures, I am more comfortable not being able to recall the experience.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Controller

Favors: Clerics, Monks, Paladins, Spells (Protection from), Wisdom (High)

Foils: Mobility (High), Sorcerers, Spells, Warlocks, Wizards

Solution Deployment Mechanism

Weapon (crossbow), very rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster with an Intelligence of 18 or higher)

This remarkable weapon designed by grey officers allows you to fire syringes and sprays of different solutions. For the purposes of combat, treat the use of these solutions as spellcasting. The mechanism can be wielded as a magic crossbow that grants a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it.

The mechanism has 50 charges for the following properties. The mechanism regains 6 (1d12) charges when you finish a long rest.

Solutions. While holding the mechanism, you can use an action to expend some of its charges to use one of the following solutions from it, using your spell save DC and spellcasting ability: *acid arrow* (2 charges), *blindness/deafness* (2 charges), *confusion* (4 charges), *counterspell* (3 charges), *disintegrate* (6 charges), *dispel magic* (3 charges), *hold monster* (5 charges), *phantasmal killer* (4 charges), *ray of enfeeblement* (2 charges).

GREY DIRECTOR

A grey director is the pinnacle of grey wanderer evolution. These beings have evolved beyond the need for a body and exist as collective clouds of thought and plasma. Grey directors have mastered the manipulation of matter and understand the cosmic secrets of creation that common beings cannot possibly fathom. These aliens do not frequently leave the grey home world, but if they do, it is to oversee missions of only the gravest importance.

TACTICS

Grey directors are never encountered outside the confines of a grey wanderer ship. Their devotion to pure thought renders them incapable of the disguise and subtlety that is a signature of other grey wanderers. When a director does accompany a crew on a mission to the material plane, it dwells in vast spherical chambers at the center of grey vessels. On occasion, a group of notable heroes may catch the attention of a grey director and be invited to a grey ship to converse with these powerful beings. In the majority of scenarios, a grey director simply eliminates those who enter a grey ship uninvited. In combat, directors are masters of spatial manipulation. The damage from their Antimatter Manifestation can reduce several heroes to dust, while their Atomic Pulse keeps pesky melee characters at bay. More powerful effects such as Black Hole and Tesseract Bridge can remove characters entirely from the battlefield, banishing them to realms beyond the reach of their desperate allies. A director always applies overwhelming firepower, for its safety is rarely worth risking, even in the name of science.

Easier Tactics — Note many of the director's abilities have serious long-term consequences, so be careful whom you choose to affect. Any targets of its Antimatter Manifestation, Black Hole, or Tesseract Bridge should be those who stand a good chance of passing the director's prodigious save DC. In the event the characters get unlucky or fail to counter these effects, feel free to have the director withdraw. Grey wanderers rarely have reason to kill, and a director happily flees the field and leaves lesser of its kind to clean up the mess.

Harder Tactics — The grey director immediately moves to the most advantageous position to use its Black Hole ability to pull in any spellcasters or long-range fighters in the party. Once these low-Strength characters are caught, it routinely uses its Atomic Pulse and Antimatter Manifestation actions to take them down. Don't discount the director's Immaterial Form feature, which allows it to move into spaces where the party cannot follow. Use Tesseract Bridge as often as possible, as putting the characters out of reach of each other is devastating for groups that rely on teamwork. Few characters can solve all the problems a director throws at them without help.



PLOT HOOKS

Harbinger. An entire group of scholars who refer to themselves as "alienists" are found wandering in the wilderness, their minds shattered by madness. They manage to communicate that there is a terrible being hidden in a metal ship somewhere in the region. They cannot give too many details, but they insist this being must be stopped before it destroys the world.

Take Me to Your Leader. A festival or event is interrupted as an unidentified ship lands just outside of town. A group of odd-looking agents appears with an invitation for any powerful heroes to come to speak with their leader onboard the ship.

Unusual Acquisition. A grey director cannot return home without first acquiring a live ancient draconic specimen and has lost nearly its entire crew in the attempt. In a surprising turn of events, the alien turns to the party for aid, offering strange and powerful technology as a reward.

TREASURE

As immaterial beings, grey directors carry nothing of value. However, defeating a director often provides access to its formidable arsenal of technology. Most of this equipment is either too dangerous or too complex for a creature to operate without a lifetime of experience, practice, and education, though many of the grey wanderers' basic weapons are comparatively simple by design. The details of futuristic items and their statistics can be found in the 5th Edition core rules; however, operating a grey wanderer weapon requires a creature possess an Intelligence of 18 or higher.

The Grey Director

A colleague of mine (whom I admittedly turned to for assistance trying to piece together this collection of information) who was a dear friend and self-proclaimed "alienist" made it her life's mission to encounter one of these beings. She was convinced a grey director was the only creature capable of truly explaining the cosmic truths of the universe. I cannot say if her search was genuinely successful. She was discovered some months ago wandering in a cornfield, with an utterly shattered psyche.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Elite

Favors: Bards, Charisma (High), Force (Protection from), Paladins, Warlocks

Foils: Druids, Monks, Rogues, Stealth, Strength (Low)

Grey Director

Gargantuan aberration, lawful neutral

Armor Class 16
Hit Points 264 (16d20 + 96)
Speed 0 ft., fly 120 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (−5)	22 (+6)	23 (+6)	26 (+8)	21 (+5)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +13, Con +13, Int +14
Skills Arcana +15, Insight +12, Investigation +12, Perception +19
Damage Resistances acid, cold, lightning, necrotic, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 29
Languages telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 23 (50,000 XP)

Traits

Immaterial Form. The grey director can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the grey director fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Power Shield. At the start of each of its turns, the grey director generates a magical barrier of force around its body, granting it 40 temporary hit points which cannot be replaced by temporary hit points from another source unless the grey director allows it. While the grey director has temporary hit points from this effect, it is immune to critical hits.

Reality Engine. While it is not incapacitated, the grey director projects a psychic aura that makes reality appear as the grey director wills. The grey director can affect objects, creatures, or visible phenomena within a 60-foot radius of itself with these illusions. These appear real, fooling all auditory, olfactory, and visual senses, though physical interaction with the image reveals the illusion. A creature can use the Search action to examine the effect, revealing its illusory nature with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check. Additionally, on a success a creature becomes immune to the effect for 24 hours.

Actions

Antimatter Manifestation. The grey director manifests antimatter in up to a 20-foot cube centered on a point it can see within 120 feet of it. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 23 Constitution saving throw, taking 27 (5d10) force damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Unattended objects and structures in the affected area take 50 force damage. Anything reduced to 0 hit points by this effect is disintegrated and reduced to dust.

Atomic Pulse. The grey director emits a pulse of radiation in a 30-foot radius. Enemy creatures in the affected area must succeed on a DC 23 Strength saving throw or take 36 (8d8) force damage and be pushed up to 30 feet away from the grey director.

Black Hole (1/Short or Long Rest). The grey director creates a black hole in an unoccupied space it can see within 120 feet of it, which lasts for 1 minute. The hole is a sphere which generates a titanic gravitational pull toward the hole in a 30-foot radius. When a creature enters the affected area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must succeed on a DC 23 Strength saving throw or be pulled 15 feet toward the hole in a straight line and restrained for as long as it remains within the area. A creature drawn into the black hole vanishes, banished into a maelstrom of destruction, and takes 55 (10d10) force damage at the start of each of its turns. At the end of each of its turns, a creature so banished can attempt a DC 23 Charisma saving throw, appearing in an unoccupied space of its choice within 120 feet of the space from which it first vanished on a successful saving throw.

Scan. The grey director takes the Search action. When the grey director perceives a creature with this action, it learns that creature's current hit points, knows its hit point maximum, and gains advantage on saving throws and ability checks against that creature for 1 hour.

Tesseract Bridge. The grey director inflicts a creature it is aware of within 120 feet of it with a dimensional curse. The target must succeed on a DC 23 Charisma saving throw or be cursed. While so cursed, a creature is banished at the end of each of its turns to a dimensional prison built by the grey wanderers where it is experimented upon and observed. The creature reappears at the start of each of its turns in an unoccupied space nearest to the space where it vanished. Each time an affected creature disappears or reappears in this manner, the grey director can choose to deal 14 (4d6) psychic damage to the target or cause it to suffer one level of exhaustion

Legendary Actions

The grey director can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The grey director regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Antimatter Manifestation. The grey director uses its Antimatter Manifestation action.

Atomic Pulse. The grey director uses its Atomic Pulse action.

Move. The grey director moves up to its speed.

Cosmic Horror (Costs 2 Actions). The grey director reveals a cosmic secret that breaks the mind of a creature it can see within 120 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 23 Intelligence saving throw or take 35 (10d6) psychic damage and be incapacitated until the start of its next turn.

Tesseract Bridge (Costs 3 Actions). The grey director uses its Tesseract Bridge action.

Hag Giants

When the world was young and the great civilizations of giants reigned supreme, magic was slave to the whim of mighty runecasters who enslaved its wild power with binding glyphs. A cabal of giantesses saw the cruelty and arrogance of this practice and were disgusted. Seceding from their compatriots, the giantesses retreated to the shadowy corners of the world to perfect their arts. Today these "hag giants" and their descendants are known as the progenitors of witchcraft and the weird. Dangerously aggressive against authority in any form, these giants wield formidable "young magic" that defies reason or explanation. What strange designs the hag giants have for the world none can say, for they only make friends with those like themselves: frustratingly whimsical and exceedingly cryptic.

HARUSPOLLACH

Ancient masters of alchemical magic, the hag giants known as haruspollachs brew potions fit only for the deranged or desperate. Each of these hunchbacked giants hefts a titanic cauldron upon her back, spooning the noxious chemicals within using an equally oversized ladle. Their voluminous robes hide an entire pharmacy of medicinal components, most of which are dangerously experimental. Haruspollachs use their impressive skills in alchemy to test the effects of their potions on others, gathering desperate "patients" of all species eager to benefit from the giants' magic. To these hag giants there is nothing more virtuous than exploring the potential found within natural ingredients, even if the result is an agonizing death.



LORE

A character can learn the following information about a haruspollach with an Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Nature) check.

HARUSPOLLACH LORE

DC	INFORMATION
13	The hag giants known as haruspollachs brew strange potions with unpredictable effects. They are often accompanied by lesser creatures eager to taste these brews, resulting in startling magical effects that can be as dangerous as they are helpful.
18	While the many potions a haruspollach can brew are powerful, she needs time to prepare them. The creatures dispense the potion from a gigantic cauldron carried on their backs. You could probably take a drink yourself, so long as the haruspollach isn't able to stop you.
24	Watch out for a haruspollach's alchemical grenades. These powerful potions are unpredictable and potent, afflicting their victims with long-term effects that are difficult to remove. Don't count on the giant to care much for her allies either. In her eyes, it's all one big experiment promising fascinating results.

TACTICS

Soldiers need allies to make good use of their abilities, so provide the haruspollach with at least three different allied creatures. What creatures you select should determine what potion the haruspollach brews via her Cauldron of Wonders feature, aiming to synergize the effect with her minions. Bev-Rage is ideal for any attack-focused minions, Frobscottle helps with mobility, while Vitamix serves allies with high hit point maximums particularly well. Alchemical Grenade is a great tool to use early in the fight, giving the haruspollach a good chance of

The Haruspollach

Precision is essential to experimentation with magic, with extreme consequences facing those who recklessly pursue every possibility. How the haruspollach hag giants managed to survive for this long practicing such irresponsible magic would almost be surprising if it weren't for the hordes of test subjects eager to taste their noxious brews. Even the benevolent specimens I spoke to claimed they were not taking advantage of the desperate but allowing them a chance to live a life (or death) of greater purpose. One of my research fellows made a questionable comparison between interns in my programs and those poor souls voluntarily sacrificing themselves to the haruspollachs' whims—a poor joke, I assume.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Soldier

Favors: Bards, Constitution (High), Crowd Control, Warlocks, Wizards

Foils: Clerics, Damage (High), Paladins, Rangers, Specific Spells (*dispel magic*)

recharging it. Don't be afraid to let the giant stand shoulder to shoulder with her allies. She has a lot of hit points and good defenses, and she requires melee range to hand out her potions anyway.

Easier Tactics — Be careful about how many characters you affect with *cloudkill* and Alchemical Grenade. A few too many unlucky saves can prove too much for an inexperienced party. A combination of *acid arrow* and a good smacking with the Ladle attack are a good use of the haruspollach's time, particularly against different targets. Make sure the giant's allies are simple creatures with unimpressive stats, mitigating the benefits Cauldron of Wonders can provide.

Harder Tactics — Grant the haruspollach formidable allies with a strong battlefield presence. Use Cauldron of Wonders to brew Bev-Rage or Frobscottle before combat starts, letting the giant's allies gain the potion's benefits before initiative is rolled. This frees up the haruspollach and her team to hit hard on the first round of combat, using Alchemical Grenade or *cloudkill* on as many characters as possible. *Flesh to stone* is also an excellent choice if there appears to be a target with low Constitution, particularly if said target is melee.

PLOT HOOKS

The Great Bubbling. A coven of haruspollachs gather in a fey forest in preparation for an event they call "the great bubbling." The hag giants convert a nearby lake into a massive cauldron, dumping thousands of noxious ingredients into the mix. The water table in the surrounding area has become overwhelmingly contaminated by the ritual, causing all kinds of strange effects to the locals.

HARUSPOLLACH

Huge giant, any chaotic

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 207 (18d12 + 90)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	12 (+1)	21 (+5)	14 (+2)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +9, Wis +10
Skills Arcana +10, Perception +10
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages Giant, Sylvan
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

TRAITS

Cauldron of Wonders (1/Day). The haruspollach carries around a magical cauldron on her back from which she can brew wondrous magical concoctions. As a bonus action on the haruspollach's turn, she can create a magical potion within the cauldron, choosing from the following. The potion remains magically potent for up to 1 hour (when it becomes inert and useless) or until the haruspollach uses this feature again to transform it into another potion. If the haruspollach is willing or incapacitated, a creature can use its action to drink from the caldron, gaining the benefits of the potion for its duration. The cauldron generates enough liquid in each potion for twenty doses.

- **Bev-Rage.** A creature that drinks this potion enters a psychotic rage for 1 minute. For the duration it has advantage on attack rolls, scores a critical hit on a roll of 18–20, and cannot communicate verbally or produce verbal components. When this effect ends, a creature gains three levels of exhaustion.
- **Frobscottle.** A creature that drinks this potion becomes endowed with tremendous alacrity for 1 minute. For the duration, its speed, long jump distance, and high jump height are doubled. Additionally, it has advantage on Dexterity saving throws and ability checks.
- **Parting Gift.** A creature that drinks this potion has its body chemistry altered to become a volatile explosive for 1 hour. When the creature dies, its body explodes in a 30-foot-radius sphere. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (5d8) fire damage plus 22 (5d8) acid damage, or half as much on a success.
- **Vitamix.** A creature that drinks this potion is cured of any diseases and poisons and regains 35 (10d6) hit points.

Innate Spellcasting. The haruspollach's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *acid arrow*, *charm person*, *lesser restoration*, *stinking cloud*
3/day: *cloudkill*, *flesh to stone*, *reincarnate*

Weird Magic. Spells and magical effects produced by the haruspollach are immune to spells and magical effects from the abjuration school.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The haruspollach casts a spell and uses either her Alchemical Grenade, Ladle, or Taste Test action, if available.

Ladle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (3d12 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Taste Test. The haruspollach feeds a potion she is brewing via her Cauldron of Wonders feature to a willing or incapacitated creature of her choice within 15 feet of her.

Alchemical Grenade (1/Short or Long Rest). The haruspollach hurls a magical potion at a space she can see within 60 feet of her, which explodes on impact with a solid surface in a 15-foot-radius sphere. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or suffer one of the following effects (chosen randomly).

1. **Inflatulence.** The creature inflates to comedic proportions and becomes buoyant for 1 hour. While so inflated, its walking speed is 5 feet and it gains a flying speed of 5 feet (hover).
2. **The Greens.** The creature becomes cursed as its skin turns green. While so cursed, the creature cannot be immune to poison damage or the poisoned condition.
3. **Fiery Tongue.** For 24 hours, whenever the creature attempts to speak or produce a verbal component, it catches fire. While on fire, the creature takes 9 (2d8) fire damage at the end of each of its turns. The flames can be extinguished by complete immersion in water or if a creature uses an action to extinguish them.
4. **Bonelessness.** The creature's bones become flexible and unable to support its body for 1 minute. Its speed is 10 feet and it cannot take bonus actions, cannot take reactions, and cannot make more than a single attack on each of its turns.



TRUENAMES AND EPIC LEGACY

If you are using 2CGaming's Epic Legacy system, in lieu of using Wisdom (Insight) to learn the target fiend's truename, you may instead allow characters to make a Charisma (Truespeech) ability check, provided they have the ability to do so. The DC for learning the truenames of Epic fiends is equal to 40 + the fiend's Charisma modifier.



TALIEN'S NOTES

Giants and hags don't rate highly on my list of personable creatures, so you can imagine my feelings on hag giants. While the "hag" description is apt, it does not do justice to the formidable magic and bizarre nature of these giantesses. Their spontaneous behavior is made all the more unsettling by their tremendous size and mysterious demeanor. "Whimsical" isn't a descriptor I would give to any giant, but hag giants have certainly come the closest. Failure to mistake their kooky nature for benevolence is a mistake you don't live to repeat, so keep your guard up in their presence. Where once I dismissed hag magic as "amateur witchcraft," I now see they were tapping into unique arcana that I lacked the insight to understand. My experiences with dark mothers have been a harsh lesson in my own ignorance about the affairs of magic and the nature of our world.

Lost and Found. A mighty wizard has acquired a haruspollach's cauldron for her own alchemical purposes. The hag giant claims the object was stolen, while the wizard argues she purchased the item from a reputable trader and could not possibly have known the cauldron was stolen. A diplomatic solution is sought before the situation comes to blows.

The Utensil. A haruspollach wielding an artifact known as the *spoon of secrets* claims it can brew a potion that imparts divinity, and she is looking for test subjects. A veritable army of volunteers answers the call, ready to enjoy the first taste of godhood...or so they think.

TREASURE

A haruspollach's lifestyle demands she carry countless medicinal and arcane ingredients, many of which are extraordinarily rare or components of her own design. These items are valuable to any practitioner of magical alchemy, but the true gem of the haruspollach's collection is her gigantic cauldron.

Cauldron of Wonders

Wondrous item, very rare

This humongous pewter cauldron is a Large object weighing 1,000 pounds. The cauldron's magic allows a creature to mass-produce potions with startling efficiency, provided they have the requisite skills.

To perform this extraordinary feat using the cauldron, you must spend 1 hour of strenuous activity adding alchemical ingredients to the cauldron and readying the resulting mixture. At the end of this time, any potion poured into the cauldron converts the entire mixture into that potion, enough for twenty individual potions of the same type. However, the magic of these potions is significantly diluted, causing their properties to last for 24 hours before they become inert.

This entire process also requires a successful Wisdom (Alchemist's Supplies) ability check, the DC of which is determined by the rarity of the potion added to the mixture as detailed in the Cauldron of Wonders table, with a failure resulting in the entire mixture becoming spoiled and the potion wasted.

CAULDRON OF WONDERS

POTION RARITY	ALCHEMIST'S SUPPLIES DC
uncommon	13
rare	15
very rare	18
legendary	22

ECOLOGY

All haruspollachs are obsessed by the mysteries of alchemy. The bubble of a percolating cauldron followed by the thrill of the unexpected brings endless joy to these giants. There is no explaining this behavior, which fails to follow even the most basic protocols of science. A haruspollach may test the same potion over and over just because she enjoys its effects, forgetting the recipe as soon as it grows boring. This habit requires a haruspollach to collect ingredients and test subjects in significant volumes.

It's not uncommon to see these giants wandering about the land in search of the next exciting ingredient to try. Those who encounter a haruspollach are inevitably offered a job as the giant's test subject. This deal rarely works out for those brave enough to accept, but the haruspollach's potent magic ensures a steady supply.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region within 1 mile of the haruspollach's lair is warped by her weird magic, which creates the following effects in the area:

- All sources of natural water become saturated with nutritious green algae.
- When the haruspollach brews a potion while in the area, the smell can be easily detected throughout the entire area.
- Creatures in the area have advantage on ability checks using Alchemist's Supplies.

If the haruspollach is slain, these effects fade over the course of 1 hour.

BELDAMARI

When the world was young, the benevolent beldamari used to dance with a ferocious whimsy, leading fey in legendary festivities beyond mortal conception. Today these hag giants are monstrous killers, their emaciated bodies sporting metallic spider legs upon which the lithe giants skitter about with deadly intent. Surprisingly stealthy, especially for a giant, beldamari take depraved joy in eviscerating those who wrong them. To a beldamari there is no greater crime than ingratitude, regardless of whether it is reasonable to expect it. The only exception to this rule is children, which the beldamari never harm, regardless of species. In a twisted inversion of traditional fairy tales, some cultures have taken to warning adults of the dangers of mistreating their offspring, lest the beldamari pay them a visit.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a beldamari with an Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Nature) check.

BELDAMARI LORE

DC	INFORMATION
14	Beldamari are masters of stealth and guile, able to hide their massive bulk behind surprisingly small objects, even fitting with ease through doors and corridors meant for humanoids. Their metal legs allow these hag giants to climb on walls and ceilings, allowing them to strike without warning.
19	Like a spider with prey in her web, beldamari can sense the presence of any nearby creatures. Once they have decided on which target to slay, they strike with a devastating blow that can slay mighty heroes in a single hit.
25	Beldamari are surrounded by a supernatural aura that grants you advantages against the creature, but at the cost of leaving yourself open to attack. Be careful when making this wager, as the beldamari never offer it unless she has something sinister to gain.

TACTICS

Due to her Lithe Form feature, you can have the beldamari hide behind objects that would ordinarily be impossible for other Huge creatures to utilize. Make good use of this feature, particularly if the characters are on the lookout for a giant assassin. They will be very surprised when the gigantic beldamari emerges from behind a tree or some other seemingly impossible space. Death Strike is key to the beldamari's strategy, requiring her to be hidden from whichever target she wishes to attack. If the beldamari can't be hidden from her ideal prey, she happily settles for the next available target. Use Oppressive Darkness followed by the Hide action to maneuver the hag giant into strategic positions. If the beldamari must use her entire turn trying to hide from characters, that is perfectly fine. Make sure to use the creature's Spider Climb and climbing speed to put her in usual positions. For a particularly nasty combo, use Oppressive Darkness to hide the beldamari within striking distance of many characters, then use Dark Bargains to help the characters try to find her. With the hag giant's +18 Stealth, this will prove to be an extremely difficult task, even with advantage, and it allows the beldamari to make opportunity attacks that benefit from Death Strike.

Easier Tactics — Have the beldamari start combat out in the open, moving to hide on her first turn of combat. This will dramatically aid the characters' efforts in tracking her general location, even if they can't determine the beldamari's exact position. Use Death Strike only on characters that can handle a serious hit like that, and only offer Dark Bargains to characters that can handle the consequences of making a bad call. The beldamari should attempt to hide every other round rather than each turn, giving the characters plenty of time to put the hurt on.

Harder Tactics — Unless the characters have a warlock with Devil's Sight, open with Oppressive Darkness and hide. Make sure the beldamari has lots of vertical space to use her climbing speed, preferably with some cover to facilitate hiding on walls and ceilings. Use Razor Web on characters with low Strength who will struggle mightily to beat a DC 21 Strength ability check. This will make the offer of Dark Bargains very tempting, allowing the beldamari a chance to use Death Strike on an attack of opportunity.

PLOT HOOKS

Other Mother. The adults of a small village are found eviscerated and the children missing. The culprit is a beldamari, which has punished the ungrateful parents and spirited the kids away to her lair. There, she showers them in shallow tokens of affection, chafing at their ingratitude at being provided a "better" life.

Iron Web. Deep beneath the earth a family of beldamari spin a web of metal that catches the souls of the dead. The giants are feasting upon the captured souls, a blasphemy that angers several religious orders. Various

BELDAMARI

Huge giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18
Hit Points 262 (21d12 + 126)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	27 (+8)	23 (+6)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Dex +13, Int +7, Wis +9
Skills Deception +12, Perception +9, Sleight of Hand +13, Stealth +18
Senses blindsight 120 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 19
Languages Common, Giant, Sylvan
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

TRAITS

Dark Bargains. The beldamari generates a profane aura around herself in a 60-foot-radius sphere. When a creature the beldamari can see attempts an attack, ability check, or saving throw against her, the beldamari can offer to grant the creature advantage on the roll. If the creature accepts, the beldamari can immediately make an opportunity attack against it with a weapon attack of the beldamari's choice.

Death Strike (1/Turn). When the beldamari makes an attack against a creature from which she was hidden prior to making the attack, she can choose to make that attack a death strike. If the attack hits, the target must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or take an additional 70 (20d6) damage from the attack, or half as much on a success. A creature that fails this saving throw by 10 or more takes double damage from the attack.

Lithe Form. Despite her size, the beldamari can gain total cover from Medium or larger objects and structures and fit through spaces meant for Medium creatures without squeezing.

Reactive. The beldamari can take one reaction every turn in a combat.

Spider Climb. The beldamari can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The beldamari uses the Hide action and makes two attacks. The beldamari can forgo making two attacks in this manner to instead use the Oppressive Darkness action.

Needle. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, range 60/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d8 + 8) piercing damage.

Piercing Leg. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d10 + 8) piercing damage, and the target's speed is halved until the end of its next turn.

Razor Web. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, range 60/120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target is restrained by the webbing. As an action, the restrained target can attempt a DC 21 Strength check, ending the effect on a success. On a failed check, the creature takes 14 (4d6) slashing damage. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 18; 40 hit points).

Oppressive Darkness. The beldamari exhales a cloud of magical darkness in a 60-foot-radius sphere centered on her, which lasts until the end of her next turn. The beldamari can immediately use a bonus action to magically teleport to an unoccupied space within the affected area.

faiths put aside their differences to put a bounty on the beldamari's heads, promising divine reward to any brave enough to fell the giants.

The White Widow. An ancient beldamari known as the white widow claims the title of fey lord through a blood coup. Using her newfound resources, the widow intends to retake the material plane and restore it to a time when it and the fey realm shared much in common. Unfortunately, to make this a dream a reality the blood of many fey and mortal must be spilled.



The Beldamari

The hag giants continue to be an invaluable source of prerecorded history. Take these beldamari. Their cultural memory predates any recorded text, maintaining grisly traditions for longer than my people have walked the realms. Thankfully my prodigious intellect is enough for these hag giants, though they still won't answer my questions. Last time Ionia and I went to visit one, she told me a bizarre tale of the spider that ensnared the sun in lieu of discussing the origins of her steel appendages. Was this some kind of metaphor? I can't tell, but my druidic friend was enraptured by every word.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Lurker

Favors: Barbarians, Constitution (High), Perception (High), Rangers, Rogues

Foils: Armor Class (High), Line of Sight, Paladins, Warlocks

TREASURE

Beldamari have a strange fascination with mundane trinkets, knick-knacks, and other miscellaneous household objects. They obsessively gather these objects, arranging them in a disturbing mockery of a common household, using their remarkable dexterity to delicately navigate cramped spaces despite their bulk. Among all this junk is always a single object sacred to the beldamari: a token from her past that she considers to be the most valuable treasure in the world. What this object is varies, though rarely is it remarkable next to the countless other objects in her collection. If this object is stolen, a beldamari will pay any price for its return. The hag giant will even barter in good faith with the thief, at least until the scoundrel continually proves incapable of honoring their word.

ECOLOGY

Few creatures willingly tolerate the presence of a beldamari. The hag giants are unpredictable allies at best, prone to behaviors few creatures can understand, let alone accommodate. Regardless, beldamari are inherently lonely creatures, seeking out other beings to observe from the shadows. The longer this spying goes on, the more antagonized the beldamari becomes as she witnesses countless acts of ingratitude by other creatures. Eventually when the giant can take no more, she reveals herself and punishes the offending creatures. This inevitably leads to confrontation, as while the beldamari is difficult to spot, signs of her presence are not. A clear indication a beldamari is creeping about are missing, worthless objects, and local children telling tales of an imaginary friend that protects and cares for them.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the beldamari can take a lair action to cause one of the following magical effects; the beldamari can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- The beldamari weaves a metallic web in a space in the lair up to a 40-foot square, at least one corner of which must be within 5 feet of the beldamari, and the corners of which must be attached to solid surfaces. When a creature without a climbing speed enters the web's space or starts its turn there, it must succeed on a DC 21 Strength saving throw or be restrained by the web. Each 5-foot-square section of the web is considered an object with an AC of 15 and 20 hit points.
- The beldamari extinguishes a source of light, magical or otherwise.
- The beldamari chooses a creature restrained by her webs within the lair that she can see within reach. The target must succeed on a DC 21 Strength saving throw or become paralyzed as it is completely wrapped in webs. The cocoon around a webbed creature is an object with an AC of 10 and 30 hit points. If this cocoon is destroyed, the creature is freed and the paralyzed condition ends.

BETHREZIX

Dealing with fiends is a risky endeavor, but it's one the mighty bethrezix have mastered. These beautiful hag giants appear as silver-haired women of stunning elegance, in stark contrast to their more haggard kin. Their most unusual feature is their additional arm which protrudes from their back, ideal for managing the complex task of wrangling malicious minions. Bethrezix are masterful spellcasters that specialize in summoning and controlling fiends. Their magic allows them to call forth the foulest monsters from the blackest pits, using the power of truenames to bind them to the their service. So flawless are these giants' contracts that even devils fear their power. And rightly so, for bethrezix see infernal beings as disposable tools to be exploited then discarded when convenient.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a bethrezix with an Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Nature) check.

BETHREZIX LORE

DC	INFORMATION
15	Wherever there are bethrezix hag giants, there are fiends. Probably quite powerful fiends too. Don't even try to convince these creatures to turn against their masters. A bethrezix's contracts are foolproof and are reinforced with the magic of truenames.
20	A bethrezix can channel magic through her fiendish allies, unleashing fiery bolts or healing her entire team with ease. These hag giants also possess far more potent magic, both for the summoning of fiends and the destruction of their enemies.
26	Should a bethrezix feel particularly threatened, she can empower one of her fiendish servants to frightening levels of strength. Bethrezix are loath to perform this act, as the fiend dies shortly after becoming empowered, and the giant can never again call the fiend to serve her.

The Bethrezix

There is an unfair stigma against summoning fiends. I'll admit, reckless or shortsighted pact-making with creatures from the lower planes does happen, but the pros far outweigh the cons! So long as they can be strictly controlled, fiends are an inexhaustible, highly effective resource. I will deign to learn all I can from the bethrezix on this matter, as their techniques are second to none! Perhaps then I can finally file that patent on the imp-powered oven.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Leader

Favors: Druids, Fire (Protection from), Mobility (High), Monks, Wizards

Foils: Bards, Damage (Area of Effect), Sorcerers, Specific Spells (*counterspell*), Warlocks

TACTICS

Much of your tactics will depend on what fiends the bethrezix has enlisted. With access to a 9th-level *planar binding*, the list of potential allies is long. Avoid binding a fiend more powerful than the bethrezix to her service, as this takes the focus off of her for the encounter. Something slightly weaker, such as a marilith, is ideal, preferably a creature without legendary actions to keep the action economy reasonable. Make sure to use lots of lesser fiends, as even a lowly imp can become quite dangerous when benefiting from Infernal Synergy. Use this trait to unleash a torrent of *firebolts* or keep powerful fiends alive with *cure wounds*. The bethrezix should know her best chance of success involves keeping her allies in the game, using most of her magic to aid her minions and saving spells like *power word heal* for herself.

Easier Tactics — Keep the bethrezix's entourage modest. No more than five fiends, only one of which should be higher than CR 5. Have the giant use *power word heal* on her allies rather than herself. Use Flame Whip every other turn at most to avoid overwhelming the characters with Infernal Synergy. That attack still hits hard, but it's usually preferable to five *firebolts*.

Harder Tactics — Open with Torturous Empowerment on the bethrezix's mightiest fiend. While it's tempting to give the giant an overwhelming number of allies, it's better to keep her team modest but powerful. Her bound fiends should all be CR 9 and up, and they should mostly consist of powerful front liners to soak up damage. Use *firestorm* and *fireball* to keep the characters on the defensive. Don't worry about hitting the fiends—most will be immune to fire, and the bethrezix wouldn't care if they aren't. For a truly devious encounter, keep one fiend in reserve with the ability to teleport the bethrezix, giving her an efficient escape plan should things go south.



PLOT HOOKS

Little Helpers. A bethrezix has enlisted an army of imps to serve the pleasant town of Wolfwater, payment for services rendered when she arrived wounded and in need of shelter. A holy order hears of the peculiar arrangement and dispatches a squadron of paladins to quell the "fiendish invasion," much to the disapproval of the local townsfolk.

Ancient Secrets. From within her *codex infernus* a bethrezix divines the truename of an ancient fiend predating the lower planes. As the ritual begins, an archdevil contacts the characters demanding they put a stop to this madness. According to the fiend, should the bethrezix succeeds, she will bring about a cataclysm of epic proportions.

Hellfire upon Us. In a critical lapse of judgement, a bethrezix calls fourth a hellfire lord to serve her needs. The fiend is proving difficult for the giant to control, as the corruptive nature of hellfire mixes poorly with the magic of truenames. To prevent catastrophe, the bethrezix imprisons the fiend, but for how long the containment can hold is anyone's guess.

TREASURE

Bethrezix have a mighty need for various magical materials to summon fiends. While this typically does not extend past the requirements of "ordinary" spellcasters, the occasional giant is known to possess a rare and powerful item known as a *codex infernus*. These strange tomes are believed to contain the truename of every fiend that has ever existed, or that ever will. These items are priceless, powerful, and possessing of extraordinary scholarly value. How these hag giants come to possess these tomes is unknown, and a bethrezix goes to extreme lengths to keep such a prize secret.

ECOLOGY

Summoning fiends is frowned upon in most civilized societies. While bethrezix are often far from sinister, their behavior makes them outcasts in almost any society. Those who accept them often only do so to weaponize their talents, attempting to exert authority over the giants. However, bethrezix are not accustomed to taking orders, only to giving them. Any arrangement that doesn't position the bethrezix as an equal partner at minimum is destined to end badly. Bethrezix have no respect for the fiends they summon, using them for all manner of menial tasks. This pairs well with the giants' affinity for luxury and comfort, forcing powerful creatures into roles they regard as demeaning such as cooks, maids, or butlers. Extraordinary speakers, bethrezix almost always prefer to talk than fight. They can convince all but the most dedicated fiendslayer to find a diplomatic solution. It is unwise to mistake this sociability for benevolence, as a bethrezix will happily feed rude guests to her minions just to make a point.

BETHREZIX

Huge giant, any chaotic

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 321 (30d12 + 126)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	8 (−1)	21 (+5)	22 (+6)	23 (+6)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Int +12, Wis +12, Cha +14
Skills Arcana +12, Insight +12, Persuasion +20, Religion +12
Damage Resistances fire
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Abyssal, Common, Giant, Infernal
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

TRAITS

Fiendbinder. Fiends in service to the bethrezix cannot act in a manner that would be contrary or a danger to the bethrezix's interests unless directly commanded to do so by her.

Infernal Synergy. When the bethrezix casts a spell she can cast at will, each allied fiend within 60 feet of her can immediately take a reaction to also cast that spell, requiring no material components and using the bethrezix's spell save DC and spell attack bonus. If there are no eligible targets for the spell a fiend casts in this manner, this effect fails.

Innate Spellcasting. The bethrezix's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 22, +14 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *burning hands*, *cure wounds* (2nd level), *firebolt*
3/day each: *bestow curse*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*
2/day each: *fireshield*, *heal*, *magic circle*
1/day each: *firestorm*, *power word heal*
1/month: *planar binding* (9th level)

Weird Magic. Spells and magical effects produced by the bethrezix are immune to spells and magical effects from the abjuration school.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The bethrezix casts two spells, one of which must be a spell she can cast at will.

Flame Whip. *Melee Spell Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 45 (10d8) fire damage.

Torturous Empowerment (1/Short or Long Rest). The bethrezix magically grants an allied fiend she can see within 60 feet of her the gift of overwhelming power for 1 minute. While so empowered, the fiend is immune to the paralyzed, stunned, and unconscious conditions, has advantage on attack rolls and saving throws, and can make an additional attack with its Multiattack feature on each of its turns. When the effect ends, the fiend dies instantly and the bethrezix can never again affect the fiend with a spell or magical effect.

REACTIONS

Swap. As a reaction when the bethrezix takes damage, she can magically swap places simultaneously with an allied fiend she can see within 60 feet of her, teleporting to each other's spaces or the nearest unoccupied space in the event either's size would prevent them from doing so.

Codex Infernus

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

This massive, red, leather-bound book is inscribed in a language belonging to a long-extinct race of fiends predating recorded history. The interior of the book is blank and possesses infinite pages. When a creature attunes to this book, it becomes cursed for as long as it remains attuned. While so cursed, if the creature ever visits a lower plane, the book vanishes, and the creature's soul is consumed by fiends.

You can spend 1 continuous week of strenuous activity, during which time you do nothing else, to pore through the contents of the book, which begins revealing the details of a single fiend you have seen in person. By learning every aspect of the fiend's existence through the book in this manner, you begin to discern its truename. This process requires you to succeed on a Wisdom (Insight) check, the DC of which is equal to 10 + the fiend's challenge rating, learning the fiend's truename at the end of the activity on a success. If you fail the check, you can never again attempt to learn that fiend's truename.

Once you have learned a fiend's truename in this manner, it can never willingly harm you and follows your every command willingly, so long as you personally addressed the fiend by its truename when you gave that command. The magic of truenames prevents you from ever forgetting the fiend's truename, nor can the sound of the truename ever be silenced or suppressed. The knowledge to speak the truename is magical and cannot be shared with or learned by other creatures except via the methods detailed here.

The Morgaine Matron

There is a saying among my people: "The bigger they are, the less you can trust them." This gnomish adage holds particularly true when considering the morgaine matron. Nothing could have prepared me for an encounter with one of these giantesses. Their magic is unlike anything I have witnessed—a strange combination of primordial power and occult ritual. Yet despite this *unconventional* practice, the dark mothers can accomplish feats I once believed impossible, even by magic. Each sires a strange "family" of creatures formed by the matron's own magic. These simulacrums are twisted models of the dark mother's victims, reshaped to serve her every whim. I shudder to consider the possibility of one of my friends becoming another one of a mother's "orphans."

— Talien Vos Karven



Classification: Elite

Favors: Clerics, Constitution (High), Damage (High), Paladins, Rogues, Wisdom (High)

Foils: Abjuration, Bards, Druids, Shapechanging, Wizards

MORGAINE MATRON

The greatest and most powerful of the dark mothers, a morgaine matron is a giantess witch that magically creates an entire family of "orphans" that serve her every whim. Possessing unrivaled magic and tremendous size, a morgaine matron rules her dark corner of the world with the authority of a domineering mother. Each is over twenty feet tall, with a tangled mane of hair that reaches to her ankles. These locks are no ordinary hair—each strand is as durable as steel and can move with alarming strength and precision. The skin of a morgaine matron is cobalt blue, while their teeth and nails are jet black. Their voices are deep and menacing, adopting kind tones only when speaking to the many "orphans" that surround them.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a morgaine matron with an Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Nature) check.

MORGAINE MATRON LORE

DC	INFORMATION
16	Morgaine matrons are powerful hags of gigantic size, or maybe powerful giantesses with hag-like features? In either case, their magic is weird and frightfully dangerous. They love to feast upon the flesh of powerful creatures, which serves as part of a bizarre ritual to fabricate "orphan" minions in the shape of those they have consumed.
21	Don't even try to counter or dispel a morgaine matron's spells; they don't follow the normal laws of magic. These giantesses are fond of transforming themselves and others into various shapes. Their lairs are well defended by hordes of minions in unshakeable service to their "mother."
27	If you want to deal with a morgaine matron, you need to go through her family first. The more orphans you take out, the easier the final confrontation will be. Protect yourself from a matron's network of spies and magic to prevent her from knowing everything about you, or risk facing a fully prepared and supremely angry hag giant.

TACTICS

The strength of the morgaine matron is measured by the size of her "family" created with her Create Orphan feature. The more orphans she has, the more deadly an encounter with the matron will be. Because these orphans can be any flesh-and-blood creature, you can include powerful beings such as dragons and even other giants among a matron's minions. If the matron is aware of the characters' presence, she should remain in her lair, using *scrying* and her family to soften them up and learn as much as possible. A matron starts combat with *shapechange* in effect and in the assumed form of another creature. When coupled with a few family members, this makes identifying which is the matron difficult. Once the ruse is exposed, the matron uses *mass polymorph* and grapples weak targets with her hair. Powerful spells like *chain lightning* and *harm* are cast strategically, as the matron is more than experienced enough to correctly guess who is the most vulnerable. The most dangerous of the characters is always subjected to the matron's Feast so she may create a simulacrum

of that target later on. A matron is not above bargaining for her life and rarely fights to the death unless the characters have proven particularly irksome.

Easier Tactics — The matron should attack the characters outside of her lair, assuming the fight doesn't warrant a tactical approach. Keep the number of family members at the matron's disposal low, and they should never be above CR 12. To make things even easier, have the matron not fight to win, but rather to accomplish a different objective. Dark mothers are strange enough that they may attack just for the fun of it, or merely to get a tasty bite of flesh before retreating.

Harder Tactics — The matron's family should be expansive, with the weakest members kept in reserve for when the matron requires her Sacrifice reaction. The most powerful family member should be kept close at hand at all times, while the matron uses *shapechange* to make herself appear identical to that family member. This maximizes confusion and should make the characters question whether or not they are even fighting the hag giantess until she reveals herself. Notice that many of the matron's spells require concentration. It's perfectly acceptable to use Sacrifice to keep concentration on a powerful spell like *mass polymorph* or *shapechange*, particularly if the matron is evil.

PLOT HOOKS

Grandma's House. A morgaine matron has founded a home for wayward children staffed by numerous simulacrums who constantly entertain and look after the disaffected youth. When a prince on the run ends up in her care, a mighty kingdom offers up a significant reward for his safe return. Unfortunately, the prince refuses to leave, and the matron is willing to defend the youth's right to choose.



Family Ties. Several powerful creatures have been found dead, their hearts removed and eaten by a morgaine matron. The hag giantess is seeking a specific "menu" of creatures to consume, with the intention of creating the "perfect family." An ancient gold dragon on the matron's list has put out a public call for a bodyguard, with the promise of its favor in return for the service.

Witching Hour. Four morgaine matrons and their families have come together to perform a magical pagan ritual over the course of an entire month. Each night the sounds of their spellcasting and riotous celebration of their families can be heard, causing no small amount of concern from nearby communities. An investigation team must be sent to find out exactly what is going on—preferably without angering the powerful giantesses.

TREASURE

Morgaine matrons have near-infinite lifespans and collect many objects over the course of their existence. These objects rarely have any value to creatures other than themselves, and they are easily mistaken for garbage, knickknacks, or other detritus. In actuality these items are components for the matron to craft her orphans. A morgaine matron takes their theft or destruction deadly seriously. Some matrons will have a powerful item in their possession called a *heartjewel*, which a matron only uses if she develops a particular fondness for one of her family members.

Heartjewel

Wondrous item, legendary

This expertly cut ruby is the exact size and shape of a human heart. As an action, you can thrust the gem into the form of a magically created duplicate (such as a clone or simulacrum) of another flesh-and-blood creature, which causes the gem to vanish. The target immediately gains a soul, becoming an independent creature freed from the bonds of magic. If the target was a magical effect, it becomes a flesh-and-blood creature, gaining its own goals and motivations befitting of a creature of its type. The target has no memories beyond its own experiences and was effectively "born" on the day it was created.

ECOLOGY

Morgaine matrons are powerful enough to easily carve out their own territories and choose to lair in areas that fit their unique tastes. Swamps, forests, and jungles are a matron's preferred locale, which they shape into fitting homes for their families. A morgaine matron's power and wisdom draws many creatures to her domain. Hags, giants, and powerful fey may seek out their prodigious wisdom and experience, but always with an air of caution. It pays to expect the unexpected when dealing with such powerful creatures, and a matron rarely meets visitors face to face. Only those who have proven themselves trustworthy after confronting the matron's family are permitted an audience, and fewer still walk away from such an experience with exactly what they wanted. Very rarely morgaine matrons form meaningful alliances with other creatures, always with an aim toward a grander plan in service of the old ways of magic.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the matron can take a lair action to cause one of the following magical effects; the matron can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- A creature the matron can see that is in a form other than its true form must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw or be forced to assume its true form. A creature so reverted cannot assume a new form for 1 minute.
- A creature with spell slots the matron can see within 120 feet of her must expend a spell slot of 4th level or higher or take 45 (10d8) necrotic damage.
- A patch of explosive mushrooms grows in a 15-foot square within 300 feet of the matron. The first creature to enter that square by any means causes the mushrooms to violently explode. Each creature within 15 feet of the patch when it explodes must attempt a DC 24 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) fire damage and being knocked prone on a failure, or half as much damage on a success. A boom shroom patch lasts for 24 hours or until the matron takes this action again.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region within 10 mile of the matron's lair is warped by her weird magic, which creates the following effects in the area:

- When a fey, giant, or humanoid finishes a short or long rest, their hair mysteriously grows long enough to reach their ankles.
- The hour is always twilight.
- The matron's lair cannot be found by those who do not know where it is. Any effect that would magically transport such a creature to the lair instead transports it to somewhere within the region around the lair.
- If the matron is slain, these effects fade over the course of 1 hour.

MORGAINE MATRON

Gargantuan giant, chaotic neutral or chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 420 (24d20 + 168)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	17 (+3)	24 (+7)	19 (+4)	21 (+5)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Str +15, Con +15, Wis +13, Cha +16
Skills Deception +16, Insight +13, Nature +20, Perception +13, Survival +13
Damage Resistances acid, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 300 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages Common, Giant, Sylvan
Challenge 25 (75,000 XP)

TRAITS

Animated Hair. The matron's hair is an extremity that forms thick, tentacle-like tendrils that move and exert fine motor control as though they were limbs, allowing her to interact with objects, make attacks, and even provide somatic spell components. A typical matron has enough hair to form up to ten "limbs" from her locks, which have a reach of 40 feet.

Create Orphan. By engaging in 1 hour of strenuous activity, during which time the matron takes no other actions and cannot move from her space, she can cast *simulacrum* without the need for material components. Instead of the spell's normal target, the matron can create a copy of a creature whose flesh she has consumed.

Additionally, when the matron casts *simulacrum* in this manner, any active duplicates created by this effect are not destroyed. A matron can never duplicate the same creature more than once with this effect.

Innate Spellcasting. The matron's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 24, +16 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *blight*, *dispel magic*, *giant insect*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *locate creature*, *polymorph*, *scrying*
2/day each: *chain lightning*, *harm*, *programmed illusion*, *transport via plants*
1/day each: *dominate monster*, *mass polymorph*[1], *shapechange*

Weird Magic. Spells and magical effects produced by the matron are immune to spells and magical effects from the abjuration school.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The matron chooses one of the following options:

- The matron casts two spells that she can cast at will. She may make two claw attacks instead of casting one of these spells.
- The matron makes six attacks, only two of which may be claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (4d8 + 7) slashing damage.

Feast (Recharge 4–6). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one grappled or restrained or incapacitated creature. *Hit:* 62 (10d10 + 7) piercing damage, and the matron regains hit points equal half the damage dealt (rounded down).

Hair Tendril. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 40 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target is grappled and may be pulled up to 35 feet toward the matron. The hair grappling the target is an object (AC 15, 40 hit points). Destroying a tendril grappling a creature frees the target from the grapple.

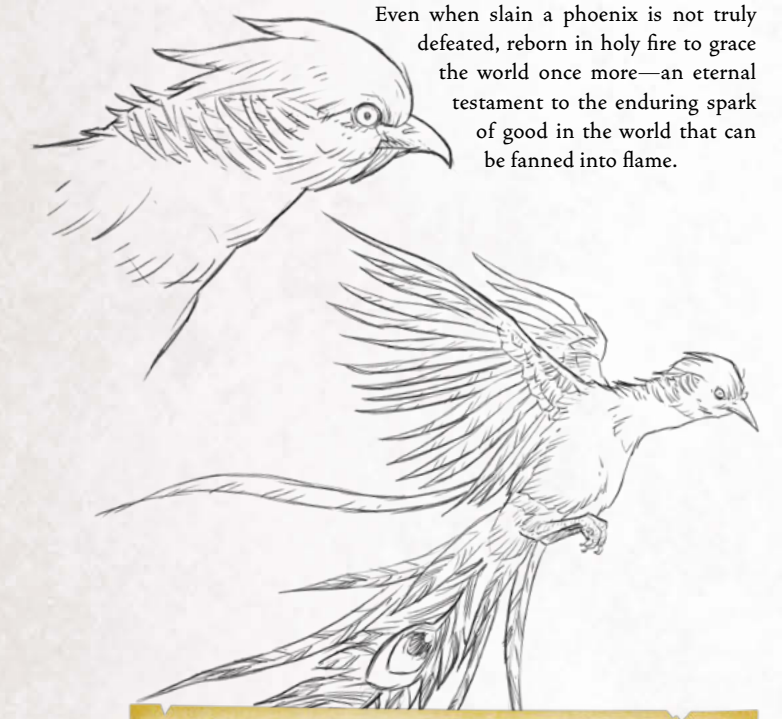
REACTIONS

Sacrifice. When the morgaine matron fails a saving throw, she can take a reaction to destroy one of the duplicates created by her Create Orphan feature to succeed instead.

[1] This spell can be found in the official 5E supplement, *XGE*.

Heavenly Phoenixes

The heavenly upper planes are home to many virtuous beings embodying all that is good. But even among their holy multitudes there are those that are beyond reproach, judgment, and corruption. Such is the case with the heavenly phoenixes: glorious celestial birds soaring the skies on wings of light, color, and flame. Sacred to even angels, these creatures are elusive, primal expressions of virtue. Each heavenly phoenix is a nigh-immortal being shaped by a perfect synergy of holy and elemental energies. The mere presence of one of these majestic birds is enough to redeem the most blackened heart or restore hope to a lost soul. In its wake a heavenly phoenix leaves glorious legends, inspired heroes, and evil smote beyond recognition. Even when slain a phoenix is not truly defeated, reborn in holy fire to grace the world once more—an eternal testament to the enduring spark of good in the world that can be fanned into flame.



The Prismatic Fenghuang

In a world where one's livelihood can be burned down at any moment by an angry dragon, it can be hard to find room for art. But thankfully for those who dare to create such works, the fruits of their labor can yield a mighty celestial guardian. The prismatic fenghuang is a heavenly phoenix of peculiar virtue. Not only is this formidable being a patron of creative endeavors, its very existence depends on it! The prismatic fenghuang's elegant beauty reflects the spirit essential to all great artistic endeavors. Watching one battle a rampaging clan of giants in defense of a heritage museum was one of the great privileges of my adventuring career.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Artillery

Favors: Bards, Cover, Flight, Warlocks, Wizards

Foils: Druids, Melee, Paladins, Rogues, Stealth

PRISMATIC FENGHUANG

Not all celestials hail from heavenly planes. When a virtuous society demonstrates extraordinary artistic achievement and creativity, a prismatic fenghuang springs into being. Mantled in a rainbow of burning flames, the jaw-dropping plumage of these phoenixes is legendary. Prismatic fenghuangs are guardians of art and culture. They viciously defend communities against those who seek to destroy creative works, unleashing their prismatic flames upon foolish perpetrators. A society defended by a prismatic fenghuang is fortunate indeed. Such a guardian never willingly betrays or abandons those in its charge, so long as they continue to create works of culture and artistic merit. A prismatic fenghuang appears as a great herbivorous bird possessing a tremendously long tail. Its feathers are extraordinary: their iridescent sheen gives them a metallic appearance, with colors smoothly transitioning between all colors of the rainbow. Its demeanor is elegant and refined, inviting others to share in the warmth of its prismatic fire.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a prismatic fenghuang with an Intelligence (Religion) check.

PRISMATIC FENGHUANG LORE

DC	INFORMATION
14	Chances are if a prismatic fenghuang can see you, it can shoot you. The creature emits furious beams of energy that inflict a dizzying diversity of wounds. There is little you can do to protect yourself, short of keeping your head down and staying behind cover.
19	Attacking a prismatic fenghuang is going to hurt. The creature's magical fire retaliates against any who dare to strike it, even those who do so from a "safe" distance. Attacks from a prismatic fenghuang can leave a target wreathed in multicolored sparks which, while beautiful, serve only to make one an easier target for the phoenix.
25	The prismatic fenghuang is weak in melee; it's getting close that is the challenge. Once on the ground the creature is still dangerous, but many of its advantages are significantly diminished. When greatly threatened the creature can unleash a mighty blast of multicolored energy to devastating effect, though it can't do it often.

TACTICS

The fenghuang is an artillery creature, which means range is essential to it. Its maximum engagement range is 300 feet, which it should make good use of in conjunction with its flying speed. A flying artillery is a major problem for most parties, so the higher in the sky you keep the fenghuang, the more difficult the encounter is. Note that the

phoenix's Multiattack feature allows it to fire a single prismatic ray attack against *every* target of its choice in range, up to eight creatures. This makes the fenghuang devastating to large groups of creatures and is an excellent action to have the phoenix Ready if the characters are moving between cover well. A big weakness for this creature is solid cover. The fenghuang can't even attack most objects or structures, so provide at least a few objects for the characters to hide behind to balance the encounter. Keep in mind even ranged attacks aren't a great solution to the problem of a hard-to-reach phoenix, as its Prismatic Plumage feature can pile damage on quickly. Don't forget to mark targets with Glitterflame, whose effect is far stronger than it appears.

Easier Tactics — Keep the fenghuang no farther than 60 feet off the ground. Most ranged weapons can hit the creature without resorting to their long-range option. Note that any effect that would knock the



fenghuang prone will send it crashing to the ground, many of which have a limited range. The more cover you give the characters, the better; just remember that a character must be in total cover to not be targeted by the phoenix's attacks. You should use Kaleidoscopic Blast at least once, preferably halfway through the fight. When the fenghuang finally goes down, make sure its egg lands in an accessible location. Should the characters fail to destroy it, they will have to face a fresh (and irate) phoenix all over again.

Harder Tactics — Keep the fenghuang mobile and at high altitude. With a fly speed of 90 feet, it serves as a mobile sniper. Note that total cover can easily become partial cover with a little repositioning on the fenghuang's part. Use Keen Eye to ensure hits against ideal targets, which when combined with the prismatic damage variety proves difficult for the characters to manage. Use Arcane Shield to block any magical attempts to bring the phoenix down, though blocking an *eldritch blast* is probably worth it as well. Flying enemies are the fenghuang's most dangerous foe and should be its primary target. When gravely injured, position the fenghuang so that the egg doesn't fall far to the ground (avoiding falling damage) in an inaccessible place. This gives the creature the best chance of hatching a vengeful successor.

TALIEN'S NOTES

I've seen an elemental phoenix before, but I doubt it even holds a candle to the glorious fires of the heavenly phoenixes. These creatures are the epitome of dignity, always acting with unquestionable moral superiority. While I have yet to hear them utter a single word, the birds somehow bring out the best in people. I've met humble tradespeople and mighty heroes whose lives were completely changed by a single encounter with a heavenly phoenix, however brief. My own experiences have proved humbler. While I have not felt the need to adjust my character or chart a new course in my life, I found myself taking more time for the little things. Small kindnesses I once neglected became habit, to the benefit of friends and family. Perhaps that is the heavenly phoenix's greatest power: helping us to be better in whatever ways we can.

PRISMATIC FENGHUANG

Medium celestial, lawful good

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 220 (21d8 + 126)
Speed 10 ft., fly 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Con +12, Int +10, Wis +11
Skills Perception +11, Performance +19
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, poison, thunder
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages understands all languages but can't speak
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

TRAITS

Glitterflame. When the fenghuang deals prismatic damage to an enemy creature, it can choose to wreath the target in flashing, colored sparks. A creature so wreathed cannot be hidden or invisible, and the fenghuang has advantage on attack rolls against it. This effect lasts for 1 hour, until the target immerses itself in water, or until a creature takes an action to extinguish the sparks.

Keen Eye (1/Turn). When the fenghuang makes an attack, it can choose to gain a +10 bonus to hit on the roll. If the attack hits, the fenghuang scores a critical hit and the target is knocked unconscious until the start of the target's next turn.

Prismatic Plumage. When the fenghuang is hit with an attack from a creature it can see, it can choose to deal 14 (4d6) prismatic damage to that creature. Additionally, a creature grappling the fenghuang suffers this effect at the start of each of its turns.

Rebirth. When the fenghuang dies, its body transforms into a multicolored egg. The egg is a Small object with an AC of 16 and 100 hit points. The egg is surrounded in a cloud of multicolored fog in a 30-foot-radius sphere which heavily obscures the area. When a creature enters the area for first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must succeed on a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw or move to the nearest unoccupied space outside the area by the most direct route, and it cannot willingly reenter the area until the start of its next turn. A creature immune to the charmed condition has advantage on the saving throw against this effect. If the egg remains unbroken for 5 rounds, it hatches into an adult fenghuang with all of its "parent's" memories.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fenghuang either makes a single prismatic ray attack against each creature it can see (up to a maximum of eight attacks) or makes three prismatic ray attacks.

Peck. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 24 (4d10 + 2) piercing damage.

Prismatic Ray. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +13 to hit, range 300 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 23 (3d10 + 7) prismatic damage.

Kaleidoscopic Blast (Recharge 6). The fenghuang creates a burst of multicolored energy centered on a space it can see within 120 feet of it. Each creature within 30 feet of that space must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or take 55 (10d10) prismatic damage, or half as much on a success. On a failed save a creature's speed becomes 0 and it is incapacitated. An affected creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

REACTIONS

Arcane Shield. When the fenghuang is targeted by a spell or magical effect, it can take a reaction to be immune to that effect for its duration.



PLOT HOOKS

A Celebration of the Arts. A nomadic prismatic fenghuang journeys across the land. When it arrives at a new town, the locals hold a tremendous arts festival to honor the phoenix's presence. However, the kingdom is at war and needs its citizens focused on producing food, weapons, and military supplies. Some adventurers are sought to convince the fenghuang to temporarily halt its activities until the war is over.

An Unusual Patron. A traveling painter is accompanied by a fenghuang, ensuring the artist remains safe on treacherous journeys. The painter is prophesized to illustrate the greatest portrait of the age, making others keen to take the artist into their "custody."

Colors of the Wind. Eight prismatic fenghuangs simultaneously begin a migration as a flock. In their wake they leave some of the most extraordinary artists ever discovered, inspired to create by the flock's passing. As the flock moves into dangerous lands, many heroes ride out to ensure the safe passage of the fenghuangs and the perpetuity of this extraordinary event.

PRISMATIC DAMAGE

The fenghuang deals a special type of damage called prismatic damage. When the fenghuang would deal this damage, it rolls a d8 and deals a type of damage according to the result of the roll, which is determined by the following options. If you are running a prismatic fenghuang and want to cut down on the number of times you must roll to determine damage type, you may instead only roll on the table once on each turn the fenghuang deals prismatic damage, using the result for all instances of prismatic damage for the remainder of the turn.

1. **Red.** Fire damage.
2. **Orange.** Acid damage.
3. **Yellow.** Lightning damage.
4. **Green.** Poison damage.
5. **Blue.** Cold damage.
6. **Indigo.** Thunder damage.
7. **Violet.** Necrotic damage.
8. **Mysterious.** Force damage.

TREASURE

Prismatic fenghuangs collect fine art the way magpies collect shiny objects. Their nests are surrounded by ascetically placed works, each of which is perfectly preserved against the elements. Fenghuangs are quite limited by their size and strength, preferring paintings and other lightweight pieces to large sculptures. At any given time, at least one piece in the fenghuang's collection is transformed into the following magical item.

Artistic Masterpiece

Wondrous item, uncommon

This work of art takes the form of a sculpture, painting, or similarly significant piece that fills a 5-foot space and weighs between 5 and 1,000 pounds. When a creature sees the item, it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become transfixed by the work's artistic quality for 1 hour. A creature immune to the charmed condition has advantage on this saving throw. A creature so transfixed is incapacitated, has a speed of 0, and cannot willingly move away from the work for the duration.

ECOLOGY

Prismatic fenghuangs thrive alongside artistry and culture. A fenghuang is duty bound to the community that spawned it, a bond the phoenix only breaks if the society abandons artistic practices. To aid in their home's defense, prismatic fenghuangs proudly display themselves to others. This serves as both a warning to would-be thieves and plunderers as well as an opportunity for adulation from an adoring public. When the stewardship of the fenghuang is not required, it flies great distances in search of new wonders to behold. In the rare event a fenghuang fails to defend a society from destructive forces, it remains an ever-watchful sentinel over the ruins. Such phoenixes are neutral or sometimes even evil, embittered by their failure and vicious in the defense of what little remains of their beloved home.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The area within 5 miles of a prismatic fenghuang is enchanted with the creature's magic, which creates one or more of the following effects:

- Creatures in the area have advantage on Charisma (Performance) checks to create or perform works of art.
- When a creature finishes writing or creating a work of art, the object becomes immune to fire damage as well as bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.
- The area becomes bountiful with natural raw materials easily fashioned into artistic supplies: brushes, clay, colors for paint, and other materials.
- If the fenghuang dies or moves on, the effects other than the damage immunities granted to works of art fade after 1 day.

MOONFLAME SEEKER

Darkness is not always a friend to evil. On moonlit nights a silent predator stalks the skies, striking terror into the hearts of villains. The source of this deserved dread is the moonflame seeker, a celestial assassin feeding upon the souls of the sinister. The moonflame seeker is a gigantic, black-feathered owl awash in smoldering blue fire. Perfectly silent and exceedingly stealthy, the seeker prowls the night in search of villainy, even venturing to other worlds in pursuit of powerful (and deserving) quarry. Its luminous eyes are often the last thing evil sees before a grisly demise. The world may never know just how many dark calamities have been prevented by the deadly cunning of moonflame seekers, but it is likely too many to count.

The Moonflame Seeker

It's not easy to scare a demon, but should you try, speak of the fearsome moonflame seeker. All but the mightiest of evils turn tail and run rather than face the wrath of these celestials. The seekers prowl the night skies of countless worlds, hunting down evil. I theorize these creatures are a celestial evolutionary response to the pernicious and ever-changing nature of fiends, a nature that so far has proven highly effective. After witnessing a single seeker turn back an entire demonic incursion by assassinating its leader, I realized the devious cunning these phoenixes. There is no glory, honor, or compassion in their actions... only burning moonflame and the swift destruction of evil.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Lurker

Favors: Armor Class (High), Fighters, Perception (High), Rangers, Warlocks

Foils: Bards, Druids, Rogues, Shapechanging, Stealth



LORE

A character can learn the following information about a moonflame seeker with an Intelligence (Religion) check.

MOONFLAME SEEKER LORE

DC	INFORMATION
15	Moonflame seekers are expert trackers and assassins. If you are not evil or in the process of committing some atrocity, there is little to fear from these creatures. If you are the unfortunate target of a seeker's ire, there is no safe harbor. It will track you, it will stalk you, and it will kill you. That is, unless you kill it first.
21	The night is ally to the moonflame seeker. Should even a hair upon a target's head become lit by moonlight, the seeker can find it. Even on moonless nights, the flames of the phoenix cast lunar light upon all they burn. Those that escape a seeker's gaze can be easily tracked by its magic, even between planes of existence if necessary.
27	A moonflame seeker can make itself invisible, or so stealthy as to be imperceptible, through magic. When destroyed, these phoenixes transform into an egg, soon hatching into vengeful, fully grown offspring.

TACTICS

Because the moonflame seeker requires flight and stealth to be effective, running this creature can be tricky. Remember, for a creature to be hidden it must have total cover from, be obscured against, or be invisible to its target. These qualifications are difficult to meet soaring upon the open sky. However, while operating at night the seeker can use the natural darkness to obscure itself, as the range of most creatures' darkvision is only 120 feet. Additionally, make use of the seeker's *greater invisibility* and *pass without trace* spells to gain a powerful first strike against the characters. Once the seeker has struck a target, its Lunar Flame feature allows targets ignited to qualify for its Sneak Attack via the Moonlit Fury feature. This removes the need for the phoenix to continually hide or rely on allies to deal extra damage. Lurkers like to hit first and hit hard. The moonflame seeker is a cunning foe that gladly retreats from a battle that starts poorly, with every intention of tracking its prey down again through use of *hunter's mark* and *locate creature*.

Easier Tactics — A moonflame seeker fighting indoors is going to struggle. Mobility, flight, and stealth are its greatest strengths, so to make a fight easier for the characters, only allow one of these options to be a strong tactical choice for the phoenix. Keep the focus of the seeker on one target to avoid igniting everyone via Lunar Flame, though there is no stopping a bunch of foolhardy characters from engaging the creature in melee. At that point they have only themselves to blame.

MOONFLAME SEEKER

Large celestial, chaotic good

Armor Class 18
Hit Points 241 (23d10 + 115)
Speed 20 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	26 (+8)	21 (+5)	19 (+4)	22 (+6)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +11, Wis +12
Skills Perception +12, Stealth +20, Survival +12
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities fire, necrotic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened
Senses darkvision 1 mile, truesight 120 ft.
Languages understands all languages but can't speak
Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)

TRAITS

Cunning Action. The seeker can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Lunar Flame. When the seeker hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, is hit by a melee attack, or is touched by another creature within 5 feet of it, it can choose to force the target to attempt a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw, becoming cursed by moonflame on a failure. A creature so cursed becomes bathed in flames of moonlight, shedding dim moonlight in a 10-foot-radius sphere, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns, and instantly reverting to its true form if it is assuming the form or shape of another creature. Completely immersing the cursed creature in earth or stone ends the curse.

Moonlit Fury. Creatures illuminated by moonlight cannot be hidden from the seeker, and the seeker has advantage on attack rolls against such creatures.

Rebirth. When the seeker dies, its body transforms into an egg that sheds bright moonlight in a 30-foot radius. The egg is a Small object with an AC of 14 and 100 hit points. On each initiative count of 20 (losing initiative ties) the egg floats 60 feet into the air toward the sky by the most direct available route. If the egg survives for at least 5 rounds and is beneath an open sky, it hatches into an adult moonflame seeker with all of its "parent's" memories.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The seeker deals an extra 49 (14d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll or if the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the seeker that isn't incapacitated. The seeker cannot use this feature on an attack it makes with disadvantage.

Innate Spellcasting. The seeker's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). The seeker can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *dispel magic*, *hunter's mark*, *pass without trace*
1/day each: *greater invisibility*, *locate creature*, *planeshift*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The seeker makes three attacks: two with its claws and one with its wings.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (2d12 + 8) piercing damage.

Wings. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d6 + 9) radiant damage plus 10 (3d6) fire damage.

Harder Tactics — Surprise is the key to a deadly moonflame seeker encounter. Target the character with the lowest hit points, and stick with that target on subsequent turns. Note that incapacitated creatures automatically fail their Dexterity saving throws, guaranteeing ignition by Lunar Flame. A burning, downed character is a disaster for a party, as the damage from Lunar Flame forces continuous death saving throws. Alone, a moonflame seeker lacks many tools to permanently kill a powerful character, let alone a party of them. It should instead rely on continuous hit-and-run encounters to whittle the group down before closing in for the TPK.

PLOT HOOKS

Long Night. A rare astrological event has resulted in a night lasting an entire month, heralding a flock of more than a dozen moonflame seekers. Understandably terrified, evil creatures everywhere begin offering handsome rewards to any adventurers willing to play bodyguard until the danger has passed.

The Huntress. A mighty ranger rides a moonflame seeker into battle. With her successes mounting, the ranger seeks to challenge an ancient and powerful dragon that has been slumbering for centuries. Most folk have taken a very dim view of this plan, as while the dragon is indeed villainous, should the huntress fail the beast will likely inflict catastrophic damage far and wide.

Birdcage. A trio of ice devils has imprisoned a moonflame seeker within an enchanted glacier. The fiends are attempting to ransom the celestial, demanding 100 mortal souls to secure its release. What's worse, the devils won't barter with other celestials, demanding "deliciously soft" mortal representatives to broker a deal.

TREASURE

The feathers of a moonflame seeker are ideal for the fletching of bolts and arrows. Such feathers must be taken or given from a living moonflame seeker and lose their magic the instant the donating seeker is permanently destroyed. To fletch a missile with these feathers requires at least three feathers and a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check. On a failure, the feathers are destroyed.

Moonfire Missile

Weapon (arrow or bolt), very rare

Attacks made with a weapon using this ammunition create no sound and have infinite range.

ECOLOGY

Moonflame seekers are not natural beings. The celestials hail from star-flung heavenly realms from which they observe the lower planes. When a seeker spots a source of evil that only it can solve (or so it believes), it embarks upon a hunt until the target is no more. While the duration of these hunts is often short, some seekers have been pursuing elusive quarry for years. While seekers are not uncaring, few concerns are more significant than their missions. It is not unheard of for these phoenixes to pass over dying innocents in pursuit of their prey, even when they could easily intervene and save lives. When prowling the mortal realms, seekers always travel at night. They prefer to keep a low profile despite their magnificence, as local rumors about a phoenix may alert skittish prey.

CROWNED SUNWING

A great crested eagle with feathers of pure light, the crowned sunwing soars across the planes like a second sun. To behold one of these phoenixes is to stand in the presence of purity itself. Those worthy of gazing upon a crowned sunwing are transfixed by its glory, while those who turn away are cursed with crippling vulnerability as punishment for their cowardice. To oppose such a powerful celestial is to invoke calamity and be incinerated by cleansing fire. Many wayward souls have found renewed purpose after beholding a crowned sunwing, whose dignified silence imparts greater wisdom than a legion of moralizing philosophers.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a crowned sunwing with an Intelligence (Religion) check.

CROWNED SUNWING LORE

DC	INFORMATION
16	The crowned sunwing shines as brightly as the sun, and even attempting to look at it can prove extremely dangerous. The creature's mastery over light is unmatched, and those who are exposed to its radiance cannot escape its gaze.
21	Turning your gaze from the sunwing invites disaster. While you avoid the worst of its blinding radiance by doing so, the phoenix can punish you for your weakness with deadly power. The phoenix is endowed with supernatural grace and is consequently nearly immune to impairments and handicaps.
27	Like all phoenixes, a crowned sunwing is difficult to truly kill. When defeated, the creature reverts to an egglike state that emits overwhelming radiant energy. Unless destroyed in that form, the phoenix is soon reborn at full strength. At that point it's probably best to just cut your losses and run.

TACTICS

The crowned sunwing thrives in wide-open spaces and should never willingly fight in a space where it cannot fly and make full use of its area-of-effect and range abilities. The phoenix should be within direct line of sight of its enemies at all times, forcing them to contend with Glorious Light every turn. Any creature that fails the associated saving throw can see the phoenix just fine, but nothing else. This is a lot worse than it sounds, as many support spells and helpful effects require the ability to see your target. Make sure any healers or similar support characters check their abilities to see if they have this requirement. The phoenix

has more than enough movement to move, attack, and move again with impunity. Provoking an attack of opportunity is a cost always worth paying if it means the phoenix doesn't end up on the ground.

Easier Tactics — Keep the phoenix within 50 feet of the ground, and never move more than 50 feet in a single turn. This should keep it within range of the majority of ranged weapons and powerful spells. Refrain from using Sunstrike, and make sure there is lots of cover for the characters to hide behind to avoid the Glorious Light feature.

Harder Tactics — As soon as the sunwing gets below 100 hit points, use Sunstrike high in the air. Note that in this form the phoenix is effectively an object and well out of reach of most characters, so many attacks against it will be ineffective. It also maximizes the affected area of its Supernova feature, which will hopefully down anyone who is low on hit points. If everything goes well, the phoenix will be restored to life. At that point it's highly likely the characters have burned through their most powerful abilities and stand little chance of victory.

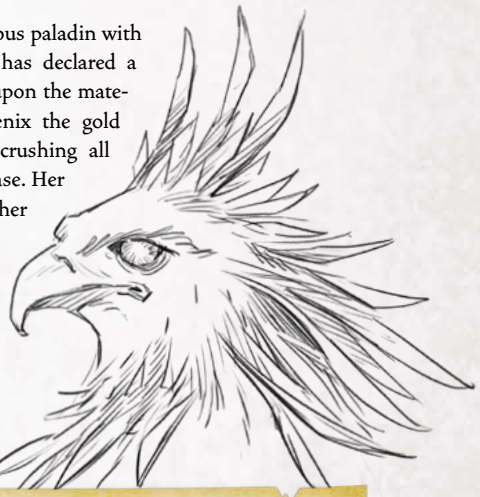


PLOT HOOKS

Shell Game. A crowned sunwing egg has made its way into the black market, with nations across the world seeking to possess it. It is believed that hatching the sunwing will endow leaders with divine authority. A vicious conflict ensues and assassinations, thefts, and political intrigue abound, all in an attempt to secure the priceless item.

Hope Springs Eternal. Overlooking a hermit kingdom of virtuous elves is the mountainous home of a crowned sunwing. Seven times the phoenix has been felled in defense of the innocents below, but its time on the mortal plane will soon come to an end. The sunwing seeks a replacement to take over its duties, preferring a member of its own kind, but any good creature of significant power may suffice.

The Gold Knight. A mysterious paladin with a crowned sunwing mount has declared a holy crusade against all evil upon the material plane. Astride the phoenix the gold knight is nigh unbeatable, crushing all opposition with staggering ease. Her ruthless success has even other virtuous creatures concerned, wondering just how far the knight is willing to go to accomplish her goals.



The Crowned Sunwing

I always thought the greatest of celestials were the angels, but now I am not so certain. Observing a crowned sunwing has tested my patience like nothing ever has. It combines the agonizing tedium of birdwatching with the danger that always comes from interacting with powerful outsiders. I was even forced to design a set of spectacles that allowed me to directly view the phoenix. The creature blazes like the sun, and only the worthy can safely behold the majesty of its form. While I'm fairly certain I am no villain, I can't be sure that such a creature holds my work in high esteem. All that remains is to call forth the crowned sunwing with summoning magic. I've asked my most virtuous companions, Sister Solaria and Elkus Dalgren, to vouch for my good nature. Hopefully that will be enough to endear the celestial toward nonviolent observation.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Skirmisher

Favors: Constitution (High), Range, Rangers, Sorcerers, Warlocks

Foils: Clerics, Paladins, Radiant (Damage), Rogues, Stealth

TREASURE

As the ultimate expression of natural virtue, a crowned sunwing has no need for material possessions. However, with a shake of its chest the phoenix can bequeath some of its down feathers, each of which is imbued with life-giving properties.

Sunwing Down

Wondrous item, very rare

This golden down feather sheds bright light for 30 feet and dim light for an additional 30 feet. As an action, you can touch the feather to the corpse of a slain creature that died within the last 1,000 years. The target is restored to life at its maximum hit points, its body is restored, and its alignment becomes chaotic good. A creature restored to life in this manner can attempt a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw, preventing its alignment from changing on a success. Once this feather has been used, the magic fades and it becomes an ordinary, beautiful feather.

ECOLOGY

As a powerful and rare native to the upper planes, a crowned sunwing almost never appears in mortal realms without great purpose. Only intense conjuration magic, the command of supremely powerful entities, or their own whims can compel these phoenixes to abandon their lofty perches. Crowned sunwings always lair at great altitudes, preferring maximum access to sun-filled skies. Those wishing to witness a crowned sunwing must either commit an act of great evil in its territory, or ready their mountain-climbing gear. The hunting cries of a sunwing, which have been described as the screech of an eagle with the resonating power of a lion's roar, echo for miles. Sunwings mate for life (an impressive commitment considering they are immortal) and can rear a small clutch of hatchlings every few centuries. Such nests must be exposed to sunlight for at least 12 hours each day or the eggs become infertile—and the parents irate at whatever force is responsible.

Crowned Sunwing

Huge celestial, chaotic good

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)
Hit Points 434 (28d12 + 252)
Speed 20 ft., fly 150 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	18 (+4)	29 (+9)	24 (+7)	30 (+10)	28 (+9)

Saving Throws Dex +12, Int +15, Wis +18
Skills Athletics +13, Insight +18, Intimidation +25, Perception +18, Persuasion +17
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities fire, radiant
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened
Senses sunsight (see traits) 1 mile, passive Perception 28
Languages understands all languages but can't speak
Challenge 25 (75,000 XP)

TRAITS

Glorious Light. When a creature that can see the sunwing starts its turn within 500 feet of it, the sunwing can force it to attempt a DC 25 Constitution saving throw if the sunwing isn't incapacitated. A creature failing this saving throw becomes blinded to anything that isn't the sunwing.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert or cover its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it becomes cursed for its unwillingness to behold the creature's holy majesty. This curse lasts until it next looks at the sunwing. While cursed in this manner, a creature is vulnerable to all damage dealt by the sunwing. If the creature looks at the sunwing in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the saving throw.

Heavenly Grace. The sunwing always has advantage on saving throws and ability checks and cannot have disadvantage on saving throws or ability checks.

Living Sun. The sunwing sheds sunlight in a 250-foot radius and dim light for an additional 250 feet.

Sunsight. The sunwing can perceive everything in sunlight within 1 mile of it, including hidden or invisible creatures.

Supernova. When the sunwing dies, its body becomes a miniature sun in the space it occupied. The sun is a Huge object with an AC of 20 and 200 hit points that floats in the air. On each initiative count of 20 (losing initiative ties), the sun emits a solar pulse in a 200-foot-radius sphere. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 25 Constitution saving throw or take 17 (5d6) fire damage and 17 (5d6) radiant damage, or half as much on a success. After 5 rounds, if unbroken, the sun vanishes in a flash of brilliant multicolored light, and the sunwing is restored to life at maximum hit points in the same space.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sunwing makes three attacks: two attacks with its wing (if it is not flying) or two attacks with its claws (if it is flying), and one attack with its beak.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (2d10 + 9) piercing damage plus 22 (4d10) radiant damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 21).

Sunstrike (1/Day). The sunwing moves up to double its speed. At the end of that movement, the sunwing dies and emits a column of holy fire in a 30-foot-radius, 1-mile-high cylinder centered on itself. Each creature in the area must attempt a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw, taking 70 (20d6) radiant damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much on a success. This effect deals double damage to evil creatures.

Wing. *Melee Spell Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d6 + 9) radiant damage plus 10 (3d6) fire damage.

Hellfire Lords

Power corrupts. While some believe this statement is metaphorical, it can also be very, very literal. Such is the case with the hellfire lords—fiends twisted into diabolical burning menaces by the corrupting influence of a powerfully evil force. Hellfire is brutal, twisted, and evil. Only those willing to risk everything for power would dare take up its flames, and of those aspirants only a few survive to become hellfire lords. A fiend empowered by hellfire is feared by all. The magical flames incinerate flesh, metal, and stone in equal measure before burning away the souls of their victims. For this reason, deaths by hellfire are legendarily agonizing, and killing with it is universally considered evil. Fiends "gifted" with hellfire smolder as if recently exposed to fire while their bodies take on elegant black markings reminiscent of dancing flames. Their voices roar like an open furnace, each syllable spoken in a sinister tone.

HELLFIRE LORD

Only fiends can become hellfire lords for reasons not yet understood. Demons, devils, rakshasa, and beyond all have potential to wield the flame, though it takes a truly exceptional specimen to do so successfully. When a fiend hungers for power on a level that eclipses the ambition of its peers and superiors, it may hear the whispers of hellfire call to it. The boons of hellfire are great but are not easily received. Should a fiend accept the gift, it must survive an agonizing 24 hours as the hellfire sets its very soul alight. Those that endure become hellfire lords and a formidable threat to all they consider enemies.

The Hellfire Lord

I appreciate diversity, but this is taking it too far. Each hellfire lord I have encountered was unique in terrible and dangerous ways. If you thought hellfire would be a slightly worse experience than the breath of a dragon, I'm afraid I'll have to correct you. There is nothing it will not burn; even magic and one's immortal soul are at risk. Despite my best (and considerable) efforts, I have failed to track down the source of hellfire. Normal fiends draw power from their home planes, but hellfire appears geographically agnostic. Whatever is responsible must be terrifically powerful and too cunning for even archfiends to detect. I've heard agents of Asmodeus have put out a considerable bounty for any useful information, which probably had something to do with the rumored "hellfire rebellion" sweeping the lower planes.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Elite

Favors: Bards, Clerics, Constitution (High), Paladins, Wisdom (High)

Foils: Abjuration, Fire (Protection from), Melee, Spells (Saving Throws), Warlocks

TALIEN'S NOTES

Just when you thought fiends couldn't get worse. What is most troubling about these hellfire lords is the lack of consistency when it comes to which fiends gain the power of hellfire. I've witnessed humble lemure and tyrannical balor wield this power, with the only connection between them being unusually impressive willpower. While wisdom dictated I observe the aforementioned balor from a considerable distance, I was able to converse with the power-mad lemure for some time about its newfound abilities. The creature spoke as if the foul flames were a sentient creature, testifying that the fire "offered itself" to the lemure in its darkest hour. I suspect a foul intelligence at work. Though what one could stand to gain from empowering seemingly random fiends remains a mystery.





LORE

A character can learn the following information about a hellfire lord with an Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

HELLFIRE LORD LORE

DC	INFORMATION
16	Wielders of vile fire that burns with supernatural fury, hellfire lords are rare and powerful fiends that should not be underestimated. Even the lowliest imp can be "blessed" with this profane power. Expect a painful fight against any fiend wielding hellfire, and don't be surprised when your safeguards against ordinary fire don't work.
21	Each hellfire lord wields its power differently. They can fashion hellfire into different forms, called atrocities, that have devastating impact on the battlefield. One can't know exactly what dark techniques a hellfire lord has mastered until battle is joined.
26	Hellfire lords cannot be controlled or enslaved like other fiends. Such an attempt is likely to end in disaster. While conventional defenses against hellfire are ineffective, magical healing and powerful warding spells can prove adequate countermeasures. The lord will still have many of the same weaknesses and shortcomings of its ordinary kin, just to a much lesser degree.

TACTICS

The tactics of each hellfire lord are predicated on two factors: the original fiend from which it is created and what atrocities you select for it. Don't pick a base fiend for arbitrary reasons. Synergy between the fiend's core statistics and its new hellfire powers is key to making a successful monster.

Once you have your fiend, you should pick atrocities that will help it do what it would ordinarily do, but this time with hellfire! Melee-focused fiends will enjoy atrocities like *hellfire smite* and *burning hate*. Spellcasting fiends want to leave their action options for spells and supplement their magic with hellfire. In such cases *agony brand*, *corrupting dictations*, and *enflamed mantle* are fantastic choices. If you don't expect your fiend to use many of its atrocities in combat, *profane empowerment* and *cataclysm* are great options. Any hellfire lord that can spend the majority of its Burning Power on *cataclysm* is sure to rock the world of any overconfident adventurers.

Easier Tactics — Don't let your fiend start combat with any of its atrocities active. Because these effects are new to characters, a wave of deadly hellfire from five different atrocities within the first round or two can be overwhelming. Give your characters time to learn and understand an atrocity before you throw another one into the mix. Make it clear that the reason defenses against fire aren't working is because hellfire is something special, but not something unstoppable. Hopefully the characters figure out how to protect themselves before being reduced to a smoking ruin.

Harder Tactics — When you build your hellfire lord, make sure to increase its Wisdom as much as possible. This will make for a brutally high save DC against its atrocities. Try to get the fiend's weapon attack bonuses high as well to best benefit from the Hellfire Mantle feature. If there are paladins in the party, watch as they gasp in horror when your fiend scores a critical hit and delivers a *hellfire smite* for 20d6 hellfire damage. Always take *consuming flames* to use on downed characters. This will kill characters instantly and give your hellfire lord more Burning Power to work with.

PLOT HOOKS

Flames of Freedom. After a century of servitude, a marilith frees herself from her wizard captor through a sudden blessing of hellfire. She now holds court within his keep, debating whether to return home and rule as a demon queen or continue conquering nearby humanoids in fits of burning vengeance.

Hellfire Rebellion. An archduke of hell gains the power of hellfire and formally declares a rebellion against Asmodeus. The lord of hell is loath to waste thousands of his most powerful subjects to crush the upstart and instead offers a handsome bounty to any who would be willing to assassinate the archduke. The archduke is prepared for such a plan and has an interesting counteroffer to any who may be willing to listen.

Reign of Fire. A hellfire lord has overthrown an abyssal layer and has begun marshalling thousands of demons. Those deemed worthy are uplifted by the gift of hellfire, while the unworthy are burned away. As countless fiends consider joining forces with the "Shogun of Slaughter" for greater glory, the forces of good debate whether to get involved before things get out of hand.

TREASURE

Hellfire lords carry nothing their ordinary counterparts wouldn't likely have. They consider hellfire to be the ultimate weapon and scoff at the notion of using almost anything else. However, when killed on its home plane a hellfire lord's heart can be removed by a creature of a good alignment, which is the only part of a fiend's body that can retain the power of hellfire after death. To remove the heart, a good-aligned creature must succeed on a DC 23 Wisdom (Medicine) check to surgically extract the organ without damaging it. Once removed the heart can be consumed by other fiends to gain the hellfire lord template without any of the risks that ordinarily come with attaining the power of hellfire. For obvious reasons such a heart is priceless to aspiring fiends, who will give almost anything to get their claws on one. Other hellfire lords can sense the presence of these hearts and are frightened of any creature that possesses one.

ECOLOGY

Hellfire lords can theoretically be found wherever fiends live, though their numbers are a fraction of a percent of most fiendish populations. However, all hellfire lords experience an urge to find a secret world unknown to planar cosmologists. They cannot explain what or where it is, only that they must find it and can only do so by conquering and exploring the lower planes. Hellfire lords almost never appear outside the lower planes, as summoning them for mortal purposes is catastrophically foolish.

Hellfire Lord Template

You can create a hellfire lord by taking the statistics of any fiend and making the following changes. An example creature to which this template has been applied, a hellfire marilith, can be found later in this chapter.

Ability Scores. The fiend's Wisdom score increases by 6, and it gains 10 ability points. Each ability point can be used to increase an ability score of its choice by 1. An ability score cannot be increased above 30 using this feature.

Challenge. The fiend's challenge rating increases by 8.

Traits. The creature gains the following traits.

- **Hellfire Shroud.** When the fiend deals fire damage, it can choose to instead deal hellfire damage. Additionally, the fiend is immune to hellfire damage. Finally, when the fiend hits with a weapon attack it deals an additional 7 (2d6) hellfire damage.
- **Hellfire Wielder.** The fiend is endowed with hellfire, which it can call forth to destroy its enemies. The fiend gains the ability to magically control hellfire and produce effects called atrocities. Atrocities are magical effects the fiend can create by expending points of Burning Power.

  When a fiend becomes a hellfire lord it gains a pool of Burning Power points equal to its Hit Dice maximum and can never have more Burning Power than its Hit Dice maximum. Additionally, it learns a number of atrocities equal to its Wisdom modifier. Use of an atrocity requires the listed action, Burning Power cost, and range restriction detailed in its description. Atrocities follow the general rules of spellcasting as detailed in the 5th Edition core rules, and they use Wisdom as the "spellcasting" ability and for spell attacks, though technically they are not spells. For the purposes of determining the strength of hellfire's magical effects, such effects are treated as though they were produced by spells of 8th level.
- **Servant of the Flame.** The fiend is immune to the charmed condition and cannot be forced to follow the commands of other creatures (such as those delivered via a *planar binding* spell).

Hit Dice. The fiend gains 16 additional Hit Dice and recalculates its hit point maximum using these Hit Dice.

Proficiency. The fiend's proficiency increases to match its adjusted challenge rating.

New Damage Type: Hellfire

Hellfire is a unique substance, equal parts fire, magic, and evil. This makes hellfire a new damage type, separate from other damage types such as fire or necrotic damage. This allows those that wield hellfire to burn those that would ordinarily be immune to fire damage, which is particularly useful when dealing with other fiends. Additionally, a creature damaged by hellfire cannot regain hit points through non-magical means for 24 hours. Finally, burning hellfire cannot be extinguished by non-magical means.

HELLFIRE LORD ATROCITIES

The list of known hellfire lord atrocities is presented here in alphabetical order. For information on Burning Power and how these atrocities function, see the Hellfire Wielder trait in the Hellfire Lord Template sidebar.

Agony Brand

Action: 1 bonus action
Range: 60 feet
Burning Power Cost: 3

Description
The fiend brands a creature it can see within range with a hellfire rune for 1 hour. When a creature so branded casts a spell, it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or take 4d8 hellfire damage.

Burning Hate

Action: 1 action
Range: Self
Burning Power Cost: 4

Description
The fiend's gaze becomes imbued with hellfire for 1 minute. When a creature starts its turn within 30 feet of the fiend and they can see each other, the fiend can force the creature to attempt a Wisdom saving throw, becoming cursed with the burning hate of hellfire for 1 minute on a failure. A creature so cursed views all creatures as enemies and hates the fiend's enemies most of all. It must spend every effort attempting to destroy the fiend's enemies on each of its turns unless there are no other enemies remaining. A creature that isn't surprised can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turns. If it does so, it can't see the fiend until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again and become vulnerable to damage dealt by the fiend for as long as it cannot see it and is within range of the effect. If it looks at the fiend in the meantime and is within range of the effect, it must immediately attempt the saving throw.

Cataclysm

Action: 1 action
Range: Self (120-foot-radius sphere)
Burning Power Cost: All

Description
The fiend erupts with hellfire, reducing everything around it to ash. Each creature in the area must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take 1d10 hellfire damage, plus an additional 1d10 hellfire damage for every point of Burning Power expended to create the atrocity. On a successful save an affected creature instead takes half damage.

Unattended objects and structures in the area take 1d10 hellfire damage, plus an additional 1d10 hellfire damage for every point of Burning Power expended to create the atrocity.

Consuming Flames

Action: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Burning Power Cost: 4

Description
The fiend conjures superhot hellfire to consume the body of an incapacitated creature it can see within range. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take hellfire damage equal to half its hit point maximum. If a creature is at 0 hit points when it is affected by the atrocity or if it is reduced to 0 hit points by the atrocity, it is slain instantly, and the fiend regains Burning Power equal to the slain creature's Hit Dice maximum.

Corrupting Dictations

Action: 1 bonus action
Range: Self
Burning Power Cost: 2

Description
The fiend layers its speech and personality with corruption for 10 minutes. For the duration of the atrocity, the fiend has a +10 bonus on Charisma ability checks and gains proficiency in Deception and Persuasion.

Crown of the Inferno

Action: 1 bonus action
Range: Self
Burning Power Cost: 7

Description
The fiend adorns itself with a crown of hellfire for 1 minute. While so crowned the fiend has advantage on attack rolls and cannot have disadvantage on attack rolls. Additionally, as a bonus action on each of its turns the fiend can expend 2 points of Burning Power to regain 4d12 hit points.

Enflamed Mantle

Action: 1 reaction, which the fiend takes when it takes damage
Range: Self
Burning Power Cost: 5

Description
A mantle of hellfire roars up around the fiend, protecting it from harm. The fiend reduces the damage it takes from the reaction trigger by 4d12, and until the start of its next turn deals 4d12 hellfire damage to each creature within 5 feet of it that hits it with a melee attack.

Eruption

Action: 1 action
Range: Self (300-foot line that is 5 feet wide)
Burning Power Cost: 5

Description
The fiend strikes the ground, causing it to erupt with hellfire. Creatures in the area must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 10d6 hellfire damage and be knocked prone. Additionally, spells and magical effects of 7th level or lower of the fiend's choice in the affected area immediately end.

Hellfire Blast

Action: 1 action
Range: 600 feet
Burning Power Cost: 2

Description
The fiend makes a ranged spell attack against up to four creatures it can see, lancing them with bolts of hellfire. On a hit, a target takes 4d10 hellfire damage, and the fiend can push or pull the target up to 30 feet in a straight line away from or toward it.

Hellfire Smite

Action: Special (see description)
Range: Special (see description)
Burning Power Cost: 1+

Description
Once per turn when the fiend hits with a weapon attack, it can choose to expend 1 Burning Power to have the attack deal an additional 1d6 hellfire damage. The fiend can expend additional Burning Power to increase the damage of this effect, up to its Wisdom modifier. For each additional Burning Power expended, the damage increases by 1d6.

Molten Infusion

Action: 1 action or in place of a single attack
Range: Touch
Burning Power Cost: 3

Description
The fiend makes a melee spell attack against a creature or object, injecting it with hellfire on a successful hit. A target so injected takes 8d8 hellfire damage at the start of each of its turns. An affected creature can attempt a Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

Hellfire Marilith

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor), 22 (profane empowerment)
Hit Points 313 (34d10 + 126)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	20 (+5)	24 (+7)	18 (+4)	24 (+7)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +13, Dex +12 (profane empowerment), Con +14, Int +11 (profane empowerment), Wis +14, Cha +12
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities hellfire, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 24 (62,000 XP)

Traits

Hellfire Shroud. When the marilith deals fire damage, it can choose to instead deal hellfire damage. Additionally, when the marilith hits with a weapon attack, it deals an additional 7 (2d6) hellfire damage.

Hellfire Wielder. The marilith is a wielder of hellfire. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 22, +14 to hit with spell attacks), and it has 34 points of Burning Power. The marilith knows the following hellfire atrocities: *agony brand*, *burning hate*, *cataclysm*, *enflamed mantle*, *hellfire smite*, *molten infusion*, *profane empowerment*.

Magic Resistance. The marilith has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The marilith's weapon attacks are magical.

Reactive. The marilith can take one reaction on every turn in a combat.

Actions

Multiattack. The marilith makes seven attacks: six with its longswords and one with its tail.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) hellfire damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) hellfire damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 22). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, the marilith can automatically hit the target with its tail attack, and the marilith can't make tail attacks against other targets.

Teleport. The marilith magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

Reactions

Parry. The marilith adds 5 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the marilith must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Profane Empowerment

Action: 1 action
Range: Self
Burning Power Cost: 6

Description
The fiend draws strength from the hellfire within it for 1 hour. For the duration of the atrocity, the fiend is proficient in two saving throws of its choice and has a +4 bonus to its AC. Additionally, when it succeeds on a saving throw against a magical effect and suffers an effect on a success, it instead suffers no effect.

FLAMIAC IMP

The lowly imp is the butt of many a cosmic joke. This sorry state of affairs extends to even the nefarious influence of hellfire, whose influence over the lowliest of fiends can take a dramatic and dangerous turn. For reasons best explained by "because they are imps", when hellfire successfully infuses with an imp a volatile fiend with delusions of grandeur may be born. Known as flamiac imps, or simply flamiacs, these overenthusiastic fiends have gone metaphorically and physically drunk off the power of hellfire. A catastrophic combination. Believing themselves to be nigh invincible and fit for conquest, these imps make for peculiar foes. Their tiny bodies ooze hellfire from every pore, while their voices are laced with cartoonish drama which the imps clearly believe makes them intimidating. Too dangerous to not be taken seriously, but too absurd to respect, flamiac imps are a testament to just how perverse the power of hellfire truly is.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a flamiac imp with an Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

FLAMIAC IMP LORE

DC	INFORMATION
11	When lowly imps are "blessed" with the catastrophic power of hellfire, a flamiac may be born. These tiny, irresponsible wielders of fell flame seek only to acquire power and burn all those who stand in their way. While comical in their demeanor, underestimating hellfire in any form has never been a winning strategy.
16	The hellfire of a flamiac possesses explosive properties. The imps can send enemies hurtling through the air with a single blast, reducing the battlefield to a burning ruin of body parts and scorched earth. Even their venom is imbued with hellfire, causing its victims to explode from the inside out.
20	While their capacity for mayhem is great, a flamiac can also be extremely sneaky. The creatures love to creep up on unsuspecting enemies, erupting with hellfire right in the middle of their unfortunate victims.

Flamiac Imp

I've always liked imps. Despite their fiendish nature their lot is to be the scrappy underdogs of devil society. A position I can empathize with. When I gaze upon the abomination that is the hellfire infused flamiac imps, I cannot help but feel a twinge of sympathy. Beneath all that bravado and misbegotten power is a insecure, frightened creature desperate to escape the prison fate has built for it. However, no amount of empathy on my end is enough to dissuade Sister Solaria from smiting the poor devil.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Controller

Favors: Armor Class (High), Barbarians, Fighters, Perception (High), Rangers

Foils: Bards, Mobility (Low), Strength (Low), Warlocks, Wizards

TACTICS

Flamiacs are simple but extremely dangerous enemies. Their designation as a controller is thanks to the explosive power of their hellfire damage. No matter the means by which a flamiac deals hellfire damage, it presents an opportunity to send PCs rocketing across the battlefield thanks to the Explosive Power trait. A humiliating experience for even the humblest bard. With significant range on its Hellfire bolts its best to keep the flamiac at range, sending any who approach flying backwards with little to show for their efforts. Do not underestimate the imp's Tiny size. This allows the creature to hide behind cover extremely easily and prevent angry PCs from returning fire. When approached, the flamiac should use its Burning Sting on the nearest enemy. A PC poisoned by this effect finds themselves unable to take any actions without risking hellfire damage (and potential explosions), granting the imp a chance to fly to an out of reach location.

Easier Tactics — Have the flamiac engage at a range of around 60 ft. Most characters will need to take at least a round to close that gap, especially with the imp putting the hurt on. Only use Burning Poison on a character with a good Constitution saving throw, as once that poison is in the system, its not going away easily. Only use Hellfire Surprise so that it hits two or less characters. It can be difficult for parties to recover from both its significant damage and being throw in different directions.

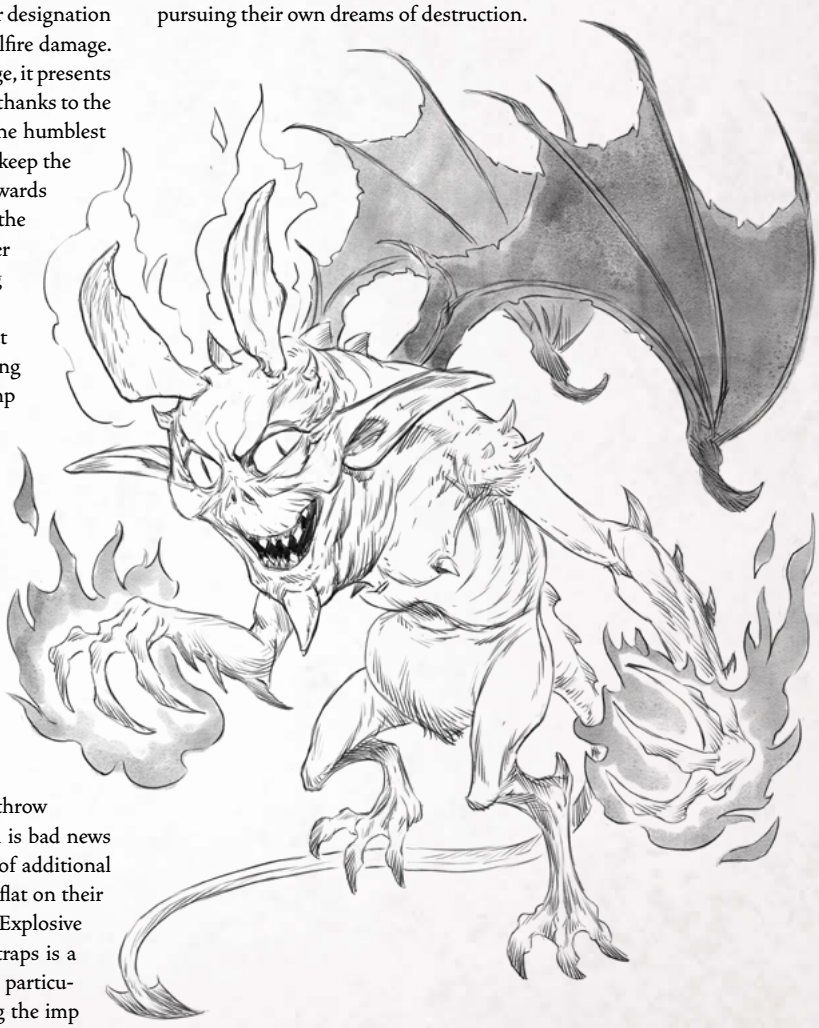
Harder Tactics — Take note of Explosive Power's ability to throw creatures in *any* direction. This includes straight up, which is bad news for the PCs! This interact adds insult to injury in the form of additional falling damage as a PC is launched straight up, only to fall flat on their face. Consider the terrain of the battlefield as well. Using Explosive Power to push PCs into difficult terrain, off cliffs, or into traps is a great way to increase a flamiac's difficulty. If you are feeling particularly devious use Hellfire Surprise to start combat, granting the imp surprise as it explodes right in the middle of the likely clustered PCs. If you've made your imp particularly clever, try to keep healers and support characters separated from teammates. A DC 19 Strength saving throw is one most clerics or bards won't be making any time soon.

PLOT HOOKS

Lord Boomongous, the Perpetually Cross. When a flamiac is in charge of a gang of lower fiends, only trouble can result. Such is the case with the self-styled "Lord Boomongous", whose band of fiendish vandals is burning a peaceful city to the ground, one block at a time until his demands of "all the money" are met.

Familiar Feelings. In an act of brutal revenge, an imp familiar has returned to the material plane as a flamiac and laid siege to its former master's wizard tower. While no novice, the wizard is ill equipped to handle the power of such a fearsome enemy. In return for aid the wizard is promising a spell of their own design, said to be capable of launching any enemy high into the air.

Bomb Squad. A quartet of flamiacs are magically bound to serve an anarchist cult bent on violently dismantling a nation's institutions, starting with public works. While under the anarchist's leadership the flamiacs are coordinated and difficult to take on, removing the imp's handlers could create an even more troublesome scenario as the creatures begin pursuing their own dreams of destruction.



TREASURE

Flamiacs are obsessed with treasure. Not because of its value, but because the creatures have learned to associate wealth with the power and prestige they desperately crave. The imps view themselves as deserving of loot, demanding tribute from any and all less powerful than them. Unfortunately for the confiscated objects a flamiac has no interest in its acquisitions beyond a passing glance. Gold, magical items, art; all of it goes in one gigantic pile typically affectionately referred to as the imp's "stuff". The more stuff a flamiac acquires, the happier it believes itself to be. This is wrong of course, but that doesn't stop flamiac lairs from being quite lucrative, provided one can get past the screeching, hellfire hurling homeowner.

Flamiac Imp

Tiny fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 155 (21d4 + 105)
Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	19 (+4)	21 (+5)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Con +9
Skills Perception +5, Intimidation +15, Stealth +8
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities fire, hellfire
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Infernal, plus one language the imp has invented
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

TRAITS

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the imp's darkvision.

Explosive Power. When the imp deals hellfire damage to a creature, it can choose to cause a concussive explosion. The target must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or be throw up to 20 ft. in a straight line in a direction of the imp's choice, landing prone.

Manic Enthusiasm. When the imp attempts an Intelligence or Wisdom saving throw it may instead attempt a Charisma saving throw (The saving throw DC remains the same).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The imp makes three attacks. The imp can forgo making two attacks in this manner to stead make a Burning Sting Attack.

Hellfire Bolt. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (4d6 + 7) hellfire damage. If the target is an unattended object or structure, it is set alight.

Burning Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* the target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. While so poisoned, when a creature takes an action, bonus action, or reaction, it takes 11 (2d10) hellfire damage.

Hellfire Surprise (Recharge 5 – 6). The imp turns invisible and takes the Hide and Dash actions. At the start of its next turn, the invisibility ends as the imp erupts in an explosion of hellfire in a 30 ft. radius sphere centered on it. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 44 (8d10) hellfire damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much on a success.

ECOLOGY

Powerful fiends view flamiacs as precocious upstarts (which is true) and rarely tolerate their presence. However, lesser fiends are quick to buy into the promise a flamiac represents: a shortcut to power and instant respect. This delusion delights a flamiac to no end. The imps will leverage every ounce of their power over lesser fiends in an attempt to imitate the powerful overseers they once feared. To mighty pit fiends and archdevils, this display as momentarily amusing at best and dangerously insulting at worst, leading many flamiacs to form their own societies with themselves on top. For reasons not well understood, flamiacs have no formal relationship with other hellfire creatures. Whether this is a peculiarity within the nature of imps or some other anomalous force remains to be seen. Few flamiacs live long to see their dreams fulfilled. Their schemes are always shortsighted, half baked and undermined by their own ambition.

HELLFIRE WYRM

The ambition of dragons takes many forms. When the sentient power of hellfire encountered a family of dragons exploring the hells, a fell pact was made, and the hellfire wyrms were born. While the burning hellfire could not bestow a non-fiend with all its dark gifts, the results were nonetheless formidable. Hellfire wyrms are fiendish dragons smoldering from every scale with roiling hellfire. The flame has mutated their every feature into a twisted mockery of the draconic visage, a fitting agent to spread the pain of hellfire to all corners of the universe. This power came at a terrific price, as every waking moment is wracked with horrendous pain from within the wyrm's corrupted body, a curse the species has embraced with disturbing glee.

The Hellfire Wyrm

Dragons never fail to surprise me, but rarely in a good way. Once again draconic ambition and greed has led some of the mightiest creatures in existence down a dark path. These hellfire wyrms have paid a dreadful price for their fell powers, becoming tormented agents of evil. I can't imagine this arrangement is what they agreed to when forging their fiendish pact with hellfire. Any force that can deceive an entire generation of dragons is one to be reckoned with, and I have scheduled a consultation with Sister Solaria about how best to counter this looming threat.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Lurker

Favors: Fighters, Perception (High), Range, Rangers, Rogues

Foils: Bards, Clerics, Healing, Spells (Duration), Wizards

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a hellfire wyrm with an Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

HELLFIRE WYRM LORE

DC	INFORMATION
17	The hellfire wyrm mixes the worst parts of fiend and dragon together into one loathsome whole. The creature emits an infernal heat which is harmful to almost everything that comes within reach. While it lacks the "gifts" found in other hellfire fiends, a hellfire wyrm more than makes up for this with draconic might.
22	Master manipulators and infiltrators, hellfire wyrms can assume the shapes of humanoids and fiends while retaining many of their formidable draconic advantages. These dragons peddle the false promises of hellfire to any they can manipulate and burn away those who dare refuse.
28	A hellfire wyrm is more of a subversive force when compared to other dragons, favoring strategy and stealth over raw physical power. Their roars can shatter magic, while their affinity for hellfire assures wounds it inflicts are difficult to recover from.

TACTICS

Avoid using the hellfire wyrm like a traditional dragon. The Change Shape action is hugely impactful in encounters, and, when coupled with the creature's extremely high Deception, it can easily make the characters believe they aren't even fighting a dragon. This makes for a thrilling gameplay moment when the dragon dramatically assumes its true form (preferably via its legendary actions), completely changing the dynamic of the fight. Note that Change Shape lets the dragon assume the shape of *any* fiend or humanoid, including powerful options such as balors, pit fiends, or even other hellfire creatures. Once the wyrm has assumed its true form, Hellfire Breath is your most powerful tool. The damage on this action is extreme, and when coupled with the inherently powerful traits of hellfire damage, it makes for a devastating opener to the creature's dragon phase. Should the dragon begin losing, use the Hide legendary action paired with Oppressive Heat to whittle characters down from a safe place while remaining hidden.

Easier Tactics — The characters should know what they are fighting, so only use Change Shape to have the dragon start the fight in a far weaker form. This gives the characters a chance to gain some early advantage before the wyrm's most powerful abilities come into play. Don't turn on Oppressive Heat until the third round, as four or more levels of exhaustion can completely cripple some characters. So long as you never use Hellfire Breath on more than two characters at a time, they stand a good chance of achieving a costly (but comfortable) victory.

Harder Tactics — The confrontation between the hellfire wyrm and the characters should be a well-orchestrated ambush. The wyrm should have established itself as a trusted ally or harmless creature, allowing it to strike with surprise. Remember that because the dragon can gain the many magical abilities of creatures whose form it assumes, its potential avenues of attack are numerous. Once the ruse is revealed, the dragon should focus its attacks on a single target, using its Deep Breath legendary action to recover its powerful Hellfire Breath. Should the tables turn against the wyrm, flee the battlefield and lay low for another opportunity to strike, preferably after the wyrm has recovered from its wounds.

PLOT HOOKS

Infernal Teachings. The head of a religious order is a hellfire wyrm in disguise, convincing thousands of followers to worship a false deity known as the "darkened flame." Thankfully, some celestials have discovered the ruse but require proof to expose the dragon.

Egg Heist. A kleptomaniacal hellfire wyrm has stolen the eggs of dozens of dragons and whisked them away to hell. The angry parents include dragons of all colors and breeds, all of which seek the return of their clutches. However, brute force is an ill-advised solution, so the dragons are seeking daring adventurers to steal the eggs back.



Long Con. An archduke of hell is revealed to have been a hellfire wyrm in disguise. How long this ruse has been going on none can say, but during the last century the dragon has been secretly diverting resources to a fiendish demiplane with a hellfire sun. The devils are looking to lead an expedition into the strange realm and will pay handsomely for powerful heroes willing to work alongside fiends.

TREASURE

While they retain their draconic affinity for treasure, hellfire wyrms inevitably burn and corrupt all they encounter. Their great power allows them to amass tremendously valuable treasure, much of it stolen from its original owners. The hoard of a hellfire wyrm is not spared from the dragon's corrupting influence, so the entire collection is cursed. Any creature that attempts to remove a piece of the treasure must first succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or become cursed themselves. While so cursed the creature perceives every creature it encounters to be aflame with hellfire, their bodies melting like candles. While technically harmless, this curse is extremely disturbing and has been known to drive lesser creatures to madness.

ECOLOGY

While extremely unwelcome almost everywhere they go, hellfire wyrms have a talent for blending in. Their talents for deception and disguise allow a hellfire wyrm to be found almost anywhere, though they are fond of places where their power and influence can be applied toward nefarious schemes. Curiously, hellfire wyrms appear to be shockingly selfless (at least, for dragons), working toward the enigmatic goal of proliferating the influence of hellfire across the cosmos. The creatures have even been observed conversing with themselves, carrying on half a conversation with an entity no other beings can see. Hellfire wyrms hold a particular animosity against other dragons, risking decades-long plans just for a chance to spite their uncorrupted kin.

Hellfire Wyrm

Huge dragon, lawful evil

Armor Class 18
Hit Points 594 (44d12 + 308)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	26 (+8)	24 (+7)	23 (+6)	19 (+4)	28 (+9)

Saving Throws Str +13, Con +15, Wis +12, Cha +17
Skills Deception +25, Insight +12, Intimidation +17, Perception +12, Stealth +16
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities fire, hellfire
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 22
Languages Common, Draconic, Infernal
Challenge 25 (75,000 XP)

TRAITS

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). When the wyrm fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Oppressive Heat. As a bonus action on each of its turns, the wyrm can choose to emit overwhelming heat in a 120-foot radius or end the effect. Creatures in the affected area take 18 (4d8) hellfire damage and creatures within 30 feet of the wyrm when they take this damage must succeed on a DC 25 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion. Additionally, nonmagical unattended objects and structures in the affected area immediately catch fire, taking 18 (4d8) hellfire damage at the end of each of the wyrm's turns.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wyrm makes three attacks, one with its bite and two with its claws. It can forgo making a bite attack in this manner to instead use its Hellfire Breath or Infernal Roar.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 21 (2d12 + 8) piercing damage plus 44 (8d10) hellfire damage. If the attack scores a critical hit and the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or be cursed. While so cursed, the creature is vulnerable to hellfire damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d6 + 8) slashing damage.

Change Shape. The wyrm magically polymorphs into a humanoid or fiend with a challenge rating no higher than its own, or back into its true form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (wyrm's choice).

In a new form, the wyrm retains its alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, ability to speak, proficiencies, Legendary Resistance, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of its new form, except any class features or legendary actions of that form.

Hellfire Breath (Recharge 5–6). The wyrm exhales hellfire in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw, taking 130 (20d12) hellfire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Infernal Roar. The wyrm emits a mighty roar that can be heard up to 5 miles away. When it does so, the wyrm makes a Charisma check. Each spell effect within 120 feet of the wyrm is dispelled if the result of the wyrm's ability check is greater than or equal to 10 + the spell's level.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The wyrm can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The wyrm regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Claw. The wyrm makes a claw attack.

Bite (Costs 2 Actions). The wyrm makes a bite attack.

Change Shape (Costs 2 Actions). The wyrm uses its Change Shape action.

Deep Breath (Costs 3 Actions). The wyrm recharges its Hellfire Breath.

KEEPER OF THE FLAME

Physical manifestations of pure hellfire, the aptly named "keepers of the flame," wish only to bring the realms to a burning pit of misery and torment. The physical form of a keeper of the flame resembles an archetypical fiend with a crown of horns, inverted wings, and formidable claws. This unremarkable appearance stands in stark contrast with the apocalyptic power the keeper wields. The fiend is the perfect meld of flesh and flame. Its every pore smokes with noxious fumes, while flames flicker and spark with its every action. While other fiends may wield the might of hellfire, only the keepers can truly be called its master.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a keeper of the flame with an Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

KEEPER OF THE FLAME LORE

DC	INFORMATION
18	Corruption and destruction made manifest, a keeper of the flame is a walking apocalypse. Its flames inflict horrific devastation on a level that would embarrass lesser hellfire lords and terrify any rational mind. Their power can bring entire planes to ruin, melting stone, metal, and flesh in equal measure.
23	Keepers of the flame are a nigh-infinite wellspring of hellfire. They can gather its power in dangerous, unstable amounts, unleashing titanic acts of destruction few can hope to survive. These fiends can even corrupt others of their kind with but a thought, bringing the burning power of the hells wherever they go.
29	Taking a keeper of the flame head on is suicide. The creature deals out far more punishment than any but the mightiest of beings could take, but it understands little else. Cunning tricks and convoluted strategies that keep you out of the line of fire will serve you far better than raw power. Beware its Hellfire Core, which is known to obliterate entire cities in a single blast.

TACTICS

A keeper of the flame turns any battlefield into a burning pit of destruction. Use the fiend's Pyrokinesis feature to set everything on fire. Don't forget this can turn other fire damage effects into hellfire, including those produced by enemies. Nothing matters to the keeper beyond the destruction of its enemies, so don't hold back. Use Meltdown on characters that cannot fly, Cataclysm on those that can, and Eruption on grouped targets. Should any melee characters get close to the keeper, put them in their place with a couple Hellfire Blasts that push them away. Should things get hairy, use Hellfire Core to end the conflict. The damage on this feature is absurd, made even more troubling by its ability to get around most forms of cover and prevent magical healing. Don't forget to use Soul Burn to finish off downed characters. It's worth leaving the keeper in closer ranges to make use of this reaction.

Easier Tactics — Give the characters a huge battlefield to spread out and have the keeper focus more on its attacks than Eruption, Meltdown, or Cataclysm. Let melee characters close the gap and get a few rounds in on the keeper. If they start doing too well you can use Meltdown on the keeper's position, but only if the characters look ready for it. Burn through legendary actions with Claw, leaving room for failed saves due to lack of resources for Mythic Resistance.

Harder Tactics — Start combat with the Hellfire Core already formed, unleashing the effect on the second round of combat. Letting it cook for an additional 4d20 damage isn't worth the risk of handicapping the effect by losing control of the orb. Note the incredible range on the keeper's many abilities. Most characters won't be able to close this gap, and those that do should be swiftly repelled with Hellfire Blast. In the event that isn't good enough, use Teleport and the keeper's flying speed to stay at range. Provoking an attack of opportunity is totally worth it. Remember that because the keeper is immune to hellfire damage, it can comfortably affect itself with many of its abilities. Have the keeper seek cover in burning structures or terrain, drawing the characters into dangerous and unfavorable positioning.

PLOT HOOKS

A Generous Gift. A keeper of the flame offers the ruler of a vast kingdom the gift of hellfire, claiming it has the power to grant the flame to non-fiends. The foolish ruler gladly accepts and is transformed into a fiendish mockery of the sovereign's former self. The keeper then blackmails the realm, saying it will only retract the gift if something of equivalent value is offered in exchange.

Redemption. A keeper of the flame is redeemed by holy power and transformed into a celestial. In place of the foul hellfire, the creature now wields a mysterious new force known as soulfire. Many begin seeking out the celestial, hoping to gain this virtuous power, while other hellfire lords eagerly seek the celestial's destruction.

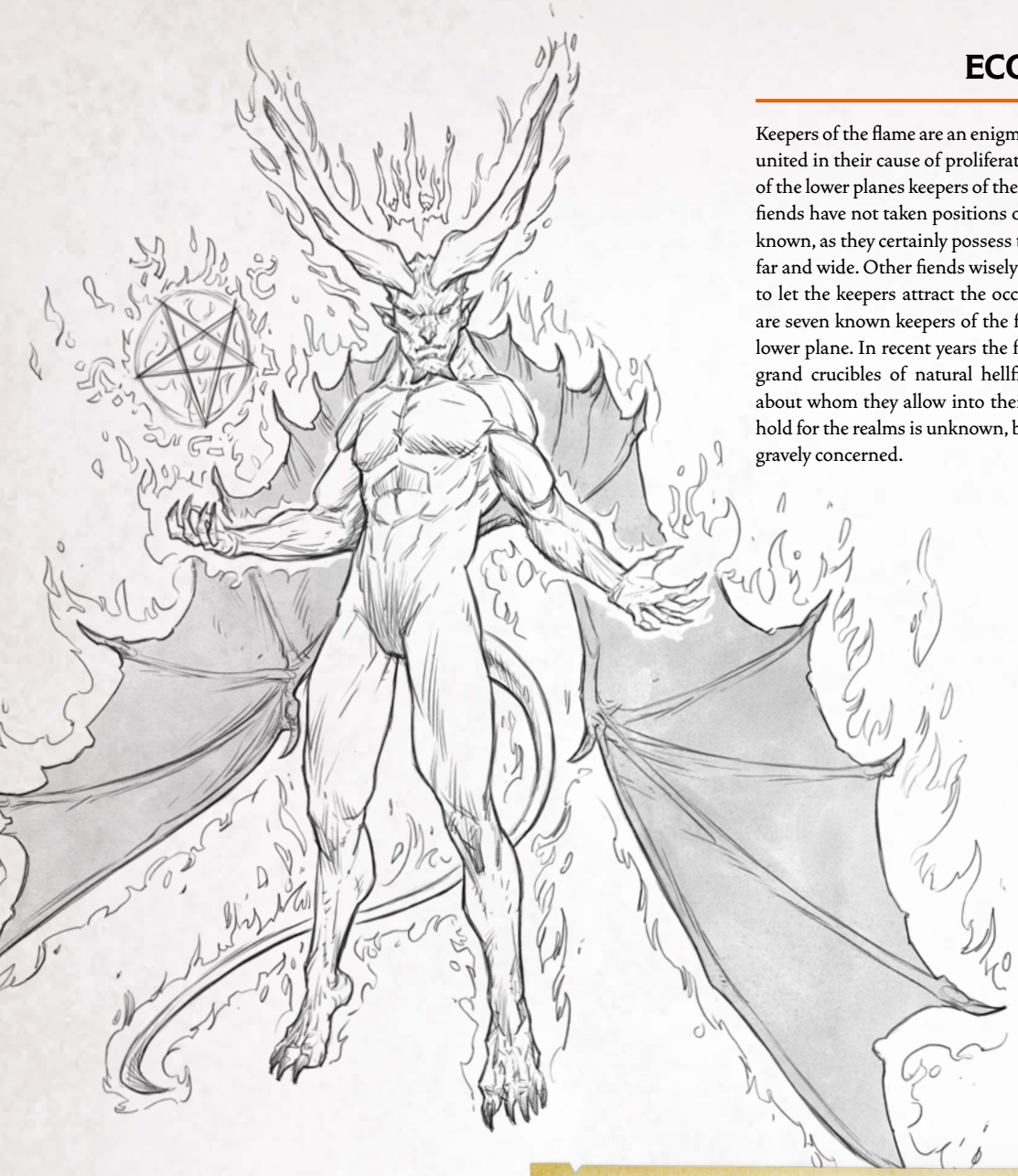
Job Offer. A job notice appears in the hells, offering ten willing fiends the power of hellfire in exchange for assistance in a raid on the heavens. Rarely is the gift of hellfire so openly and freely distributed, so many suspect foul play, especially when the ad states the team is organizing on the material plane.

TREASURE

The keeper's greatest treasure is its mastery over hellfire. Where other fiends must struggle and risk their lives to attain its power, keepers can bestow the title of hellfire lord freely and safely. By spending 24 hours of strenuous activity channeling hellfire into a willing fiend, a keeper of the flame can transform the target into a hellfire lord without risking its destruction. Many fiends willingly pay any price to gain such a boon, and even the occasional mortal has been known to barter for the boon to be imparted to fiendish servants.

ECOLOGY

Keepers of the flame are an enigma. They hail from no single plane yet are united in their cause of proliferating hellfire. In the deepest, darkest pits of the lower planes keepers of the flame lurk, waiting. Why such powerful fiends have not taken positions of prominence among their peers is unknown, as they certainly possess the strength to make their influence felt far and wide. Other fiends wisely don't question this status quo, content to let the keepers attract the occasional specimen to their cause. There are seven known keepers of the flame, each of which occupies a specific lower plane. In recent years the fiends have been observed constructing grand crucibles of natural hellfire, while growing far more defensive about whom they allow into their territory. What fell plans the keepers hold for the realms is unknown, but it's enough to have even other fiends gravely concerned.





The Keeper of the Flame

What came first, the keeper or the flame? Are these fiends the progenitors of the foul hellfire, or merely its finest instruments? Archmagister King is of the opinion that these are but powerful players in a grand fiendish scheme, but nothing I've discovered suggests there is a force above the keepers beyond hellfire itself. The next logical step in my research is to consult with archfiends and get their perspective, but I'll have to collect a new batch of interns before such a dangerous prospect.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Artillery

Favors: Hit Points (High), Range (Long), Rangers, Warlocks, Wizards

Foils: Clerics, Druids, Fire (Protection from), Healing, Paladins

Keeper of the Flame

Huge fiend, neutral evil

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)
Hit Points 900 (72d12 + 432)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	15 (+2)	23 (+6)	21 (+5)	25 (+7)	30 (+10)

Saving Throws Str +19, Con +15, Wis +16, Cha +19
Skills Intimidation +19, Perception +16, Religion +14
Damage Resistances cold, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities fire, hellfire, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 26
Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal
Challenge 29 (135,000 XP)

Traits

Critical Flames. When a creature fails a saving throw against the keeper by 10 or more and takes hellfire damage on a failure, it instead takes double that damage.

Mythic Resistance. When the keeper fails a saving throw, it can expend an unexpended use of one of its legendary actions to succeed instead.

Pyrokinesis. The keeper can control the flames of both ordinary fire and hellfire with its mind in a 120-foot radius centered on it. The keeper can use this control to cause the following effects (no action required):

- Change fire damage dealt in the affected area to hellfire damage
- Magically extinguish any burning objects, creatures, or structures
- When the keeper deals hellfire damage to an object, structure, or creature, it can choose to set the target alight, causing it to take 14 (4d6) hellfire damage at the start of each of the keeper's turns. This fire can only be extinguished by holy water, a *dispel magic* spell, or a similar effect.

Actions

Multiattack. The keeper makes three attacks. The keeper can forgo making two of these attacks to instead use Cataclysm, Eruption, or Meltdown.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 32 (4d10 + 10) slashing damage.

Hellfire Blast. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +19 to hit, range 120/300 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 24 (4d6 + 10) hellfire damage, and the keeper can choose to push or pull the target up to 30 feet toward or away from it in a straight line.

Cataclysm. The keeper causes hellfire to erupt from the ground in a 15-foot-radius cylinder that is 120 feet tall, centered on a point it can see within 300 feet of it. Creatures in the affected area must attempt a DC 27 Constitution saving throw, taking 65 (10d12) hellfire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Eruption. The keeper strikes the ground, causing it to erupt with hellfire in a 300-foot line that is 15 feet wide. Creatures in the area must succeed on a DC 27 Dexterity saving throw or take 70 (20d6) hellfire damage and be knocked unconscious until the start of its next turn. Additionally, spells and magical effects of 7th level or lower of the keeper's choice in the affected area immediately end.

Hellfire Core (1/Short or Long Rest). The keeper gathers excessive quantities of hellfire in a concentrated orb, which it holds in a free hand for up to 1 minute. At the start of each of its turns, the keeper can gather more power into the orb (no action required), increasing the orb's strength. As an action, the keeper can fire the orb at a space it can see within 1 mile, which then explodes in a 300-foot-radius sphere. Creatures in the affected area must attempt a DC 27 Dexterity saving throw, taking 210 (20d20) hellfire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. This damage is increased by 42 (4d20) for each time the keeper gathered additional power into the orb over the course of its duration. Additionally, total cover from nonmagical sources provides no protection from the blast. If the keeper becomes incapacitated or is forced to drop the orb, this effect instead occurs immediately centered on the keeper, but instead deals half damage.

Meltdown. The keeper transforms a 30-foot cube of ground into molten lava. Creatures in the affected area with a speed greater than 0 an use a reaction to attempt a DC 27 Dexterity saving throw, moving to the edge of the area on a success. The lava is completely liquid and is considered difficult terrain to creatures with a swimming speed, and it costs quadruple movement to move through for creatures without a swimming speed. A creature that enters the affected area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must attempt a DC 27 Constitution saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. A creature fully immersed in the lava instead takes 90 (20d8) fire damage, or half as much on a success.

Reactions

Soul Burn. When the keeper reduces a creature it can see within 300 feet of it to 0 hit points with hellfire damage, it can use a reaction to burn away that creature's soul, killing it instantly. A creature so slain cannot be returned to life by any means other than divine intervention, *true resurrection*, or *wish*.

Legendary Actions

The keeper can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The keeper regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Strike. The keeper makes a single attack.

Teleport (Costs 2 Actions). The keeper magically teleports to an unoccupied space it can see within 30 feet of it.

Volcanic Activity (Costs 2 Actions). The keeper uses its Cataclsym, Eruption, or Meltdown action.

Empowerment (Costs 3 Actions). Until the end of its next turn, the DC of saving throws imposed by the keeper increases by 10.

Inevitables

Some believe law and justice to be social constructs, but they are wrong. There are laws inherent to the universe—sacred and essential decrees ensuring the perpetuity of existence. But a law is meaningless unless enforced, and it falls to the race of constructs known as inevitables to punish transgressors against natural order. It is not known who made the first inevitable, nor how these living machines are forged. The creatures have been spotted on nearly every plane of existence, though their home world (if one indeed exists), has yet to be divined. Each inevitable is custom built for its task: to hunt and punish violators of a specific natural law. Their mechanical designs are extraordinary, a flawless harmony of magic and engineering that only a brilliant mind could conceive. When deployed these creatures are nigh unstoppable. Unwavering in its task and frightfully powerful, an inevitable does everything in its power to uphold the law it was built to protect, short of violating said law or those enforced by more powerful members of its kind.

LIBERUT

Words carry power. When a paladin swears a sacred oath, a magical contract is forged; when a creature receives its truename, the universe takes notice. If the significance of such words is not respected, a liberut may be dispatched to restore order. The clockwork construction of these inevitables is an ornate brass, their every plate and curve etched with symbols of magical power. The creature's head is a mess of complex machinery. Floating where its forehead should be is an illusory eye swiveling ceaselessly in search of targets. Its mouth is an intricate printing machine from which a constant stream of parchment churns. This script is inscribed with whatever the inevitable wishes to communicate, wrapping about its body like paper robes.

The Liberut

Finally, something that respects words on a level comparable to my own. Perhaps my less-literate companions will finally appreciate the power words hold, but I'm not putting any money on Masako understanding anything beyond the language of violence. The unusual design of the liberut begs many questions. Where does the functionality end and the artistry begin? Clearly their creator has a taste for aesthetics, but the inevitable's design is so contrary to any other magical constructs I can't help but wonder if even the smallest detail is essential to its construction. Discovering the source of these mysterious creatures remains one of my highest priorities and would be a triumph of my scholarly career.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Controller

Favors: Bards, Hit Points (High), Specific Spells (*counterspell*), Warlocks, Wizards

Foils: Armor Class (High), Barriers, Monks, Rangers, Rogues

TALIEN'S NOTES

As a student of law and order, I respect what inevitables stand for. It's somewhat comforting to know that beneath all the chaos and madness of this universe, there is a bastion of order holding it all together. As a living extension of that order, inevitables are mighty by necessity. Many a wizard toying with reality has met an untimely end at the hands of an inevitable, and many more would do well to heed these tales as a warning against reckless experimentation with magic. I suspect even the gods are mindful of the most powerful of inevitables, though I have yet to score an interview to confirm my suspicions. That would at least partially explain the tenuous balance of the average divine order, though it's doubtful I'll ever find out for sure.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a liberut with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

LIBERUT LORE

DC	INFORMATION
14	Liberuts are sentient constructs sent to punish oathbreakers and those who break mystical contracts. If the inevitable isn't looking for you there is little to fear, as its powerful magic ensures the innocent do not suffer much collateral damage. A liberut's magic is mighty, allowing it to track down even the most cunning targets.
19	Just because you aren't a liberut's target doesn't mean you can't become one. Stand in the construct's way or attempt to foil its actions, and you will be considered an accessory to whatever crime has been committed. Against powerful foes the liberut can unleash mighty magical words that can stun or kill foes instantly.
25	While liberuts are extremely cunning, their power comes more from knowledge than raw strength. With their useful spells these inevitables can gather information about their targets, understanding their every strength and weakness. They are notorious for striking at the worst possible moment, just when their quarry is at its most vulnerable.

TACTICS

Liberuts have many abilities that serve little purpose in combat but help them find an ideal time to strike. Spells like *detect thoughts*, *eyebite*, *knock*, *locate creature*, *passwall*, *unseen servant*, and more help the liberut enter combat with every advantage. An ideal confrontation involves the liberut appearing at the worst possible moment for the characters, usually via *dimension door*, and attacking without warning. Because of the creature's Inevitable trait, the liberut cares little for its target's allies, at least at first. Should said allies start making its task unreasonably difficult, such as by healing its quarry or getting in the way, the inevitable attacks them as well. Note that the Inevitable feature doesn't stop an ally from creating obstacles, supporting its teammate's attacks, or other forms of assistance, only harming the inevitable (and vice versa). This interaction may prove strange for the characters at first, and if they seem frustrated at their inability to harm the liberut feel free to have it include all characters as its quarry after a round or two of combat.

Easier Tactics — The liberut should consider all characters its quarry and accessories to the crime for which it was dispatched. Have the inevitable attack immediately after the characters finish a short rest, ensuring its appearance is untimely, but not overly so. Remember, what makes the liberut and other inevitables fun is they are hunting the characters, who should feel outplayed on some level in order to get caught. If you are feeling particularly generous, let the characters know the inevitable is coming long before it shows up.

Harder Tactics — Right before the characters begin a long rest, the inevitable should *dimension door* into combat. Open up with *eyebite* on a creature that could easily interfere with the liberut's goals, such as a healer, then focus all efforts on the primary target. Use the Word of Law feature on target's hit by Enervating Blast, particularly the *power word stun* or *power word kill* options. If the liberut manages to take down its primary target, it should grab the body and return to its home plane via *planeshift* as quickly as possible. Since the inevitable home plane is a mystery, this makes resurrecting the victim extremely difficult.

PLOT HOOKS

The Ledger of Oaths. An artifact belonging to the inevitables—The *Ledger of Oaths*—is stolen. The strange book contains the exact criteria by which the liberuts determine who is deserving of punishment, along with an unknown appeals system that offers redemption. A team of four liberuts is dispatched to recover the artifact, which is sought by criminal enterprises far and wide for unscrupulous reasons.

LIBERUT

Medium construct (inevitable), any lawful

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 180 (19d8 + 95)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	17 (+3)	22 (+6)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +10, Wis +11
Skills History +11, Insight +10, Perception +14
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 24
Languages understands all languages but can't speak
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

TRAITS

Axiomatic Form. The liberut's body is imbued with the divine power of natural law. It cannot be compelled, forced, or tricked into acting in a manner contrary to its nature, cannot be magically teleported, banished, or moved against its will, and is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Inevitable. The liberut is charged with bringing creatures that violate magical contracts, renege on sacred oaths, or manipulate truenames to justice. When the liberut is harmed by a creature that does not meet these criteria, it can choose to be immune to any harmful effects produced by the creature. For as long as the liberut is immune to a creature in this manner, it in turn cannot harm the creature in any way. If the liberut chooses to harm or be harmed by the creature, it can never again use this feature against that creature.

Spellcasting[1]. The liberut is a 15th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). The liberut has the following spells prepared, which it can cast without the need for verbal components.

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *mage hand*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *feather fall*, *shield*, *unseen servant*
2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *hold person*, *knock*, *phantasmal force*
3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *fly*, *slow*
4th level (3 slots): *dimension door*, *locate creature*, *private sanctum*
5th level (2 slots): *geas*, *passwall*
6th level (1 slot): *eyebite*, *mass suggestion*
7th level (1 slot): *planeshift*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The liberut makes two attacks or makes one attack and casts a spell.

Enervating Blast. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 35 (10d6) necrotic damage, and the target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage dealt. This reduction lasts until the liberut is destroyed or until the target benefits from a *greater restoration* or *heal* spell.

Unerring Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* Automatic hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 slashing damage plus 20 force damage. If the target would have resistance or immunity to damage dealt by this attack, it instead does not.

Word of Law (1/Short or Long Rest). The liberut casts *divine word*, *power word stun*, or *power word kill*.

[1] Some spells presented here can be found in the official 5th Edition supplement, *XGE*.





The Unbreakable Vow. An ancient agreement between devils and angels threatens to break beneath the stress of an ever-escalating interplanar conflict. Liberuts are dispatched to both sides to ensure the vow is honored while the terms can be renegotiated, which requires unbiased arbitration by a mortal embassy. Perhaps some heroes are up to the task?

Sins of the Father. A liberut approaches the characters, indicating they must honor a primeval contract to serve a red dragon, now ancient, in his task of conquering a kingdom. Failure to honor the request is unwise, but perhaps the dragon would be willing to release them from the contract? For the right price of course.

TREASURE

Liberuts shatter into scrap upon their deaths, only valuable to collectors or researchers. However, in rare cases the script printed from a liberut's mouth remains intact, containing a detailed record of nearly everything the inevitable has "said" within the last 100 years. This information can be extraordinarily valuable, detailing profane contracts, holy oaths, and other pacts, along with the names of those who have taken them. These scripts are incredibly valuable to the right people, ideal for blackmail and extortion, as the words of a liberut are among the most trustworthy ever put to paper.



ECOLOGY

As artificial beings, inevitables have no ecology to speak of outside their home plane. When on a mission, a liberut avoids other creatures to better keep its quarry in the dark. The sight of a sentient, clockwork being is enough to get any town talking, making the creature's job even more difficult. Once it has been assigned, a liberut is completely single-minded in its task. It associates with other creatures only as a last resort, often in search of allies to aid against a particularly elusive target. While far from personable, liberuts are the most communicative of their kind. They ply the mortal world for information with an insatiable curiosity, seeking to understand the creatures they are created to police.

POTERUT

Magic is a powerful force. Its wielders can reshape reality, and in doing so cause catastrophic damage to the universe. Of the inevitables it is the poteruts who are charged with preventing such a cataclysm. These constructs seek and destroy any powerful spellcaster who dares usurp the laws of magic, violently punishing them for such hubris. When not grinding foolhardy wizards to paste, a poterut is a beacon of refinement and artistry. Its geometric body is fashioned from cobalt-blue metal and shaped like a narrow, inverted pyramid from which extend similarly geometric limbs. A poterut's appendages are held together by magical force, with only the slightest glimpse of machinery visible between the gaps. The arms end in sharp points capable of piercing through spells and magical barriers, and the entire contraption floats weightlessly through the air.

The Poterut

What's wrong with a little experimental magic? Okay, I'll admit there are a few wizards out there who could use a good talking to, but that doesn't mean this level of oversight is needed. Magic is meant to be manipulated and explored for the betterment of all. No single-minded machine is going to tell me what I can and cannot do with my magic. I'm beginning to appreciate why inevitables are so disliked. Who's to say what is over the line when it comes to spellcasting? Certainly not the poteruts. At least they haven't met Archmagister King yet. That could only end badly.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Brute

Favors: Barbarians, Fighters, Melee, Rogues, Spells (Attacks)

Foils: Armor Class (High), Bards, Sorcerers, Spells, Wizards

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a poterut with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

POTERUT LORE

DC	INFORMATION
15	Poteruts are literal magic-killing machines. They punch through spells with frightening ease and feed off of magical energy. Once one has tracked you down, it is almost impossible to escape. They can teleport across vast distances, appearing within striking distance of their quarry.
20	The curse of poterut can cripple a powerful spellcaster and can't be easily removed. This often the least of your problems, as a poterut never fails to land a blow, often to devastating effect. It can even launch a volley of magic missiles that pummel targets to dust.
26	While poteruts are strong, they are also simple. Their specialized attacks against spellcasters are not nearly as effective against mighty warriors. If a poterut is after your wizard friend, do everything in your power to provoke it, then show it the power of good, old-fashioned steel.

TACTICS

Poteruts refuse to play to a spellcaster's strength, literally punching through magical defenses with relentless zeal. Once the inevitable has seen its target, escape is nearly impossible thanks to Dimensional Shift, which allows the poterut to appear on almost any plane regardless of distance. Use Arcane Censure as quickly as possible on the poterut's primary target. This curse is a massive pain (literally) for spellcasters and is a great incentive for them to face the inevitable head on rather than flee. Spellshatter is the poterut's most formidable feature, allowing it to shatter multiple magical defenses in a single turn. These magical effects need not be tangible or even visible to the poterut, only within reach of its attacks. Spellcasters will likely be surprised and frustrated by this technique, but that is the point. Use Ethereal Bolt to strike targets behind cover and let loose potent Magic Missile Barrage attacks to down multiple low-health characters simultaneously.

Easier Tactics — The more time the party has to prepare for the poterut's appearance, the better they fare. While the inevitable can travel anywhere with Dimensional Shift, its other modes of movement are quite modest. Give the party a large battlefield on which to move around, with lots of nonmagical cover for squishy wizards to hide behind. Any combat with an inevitable gets easier if more party members qualify as targets via the Inevitable feature, so throw the martial characters a bone and let them tackle the poterut head on.

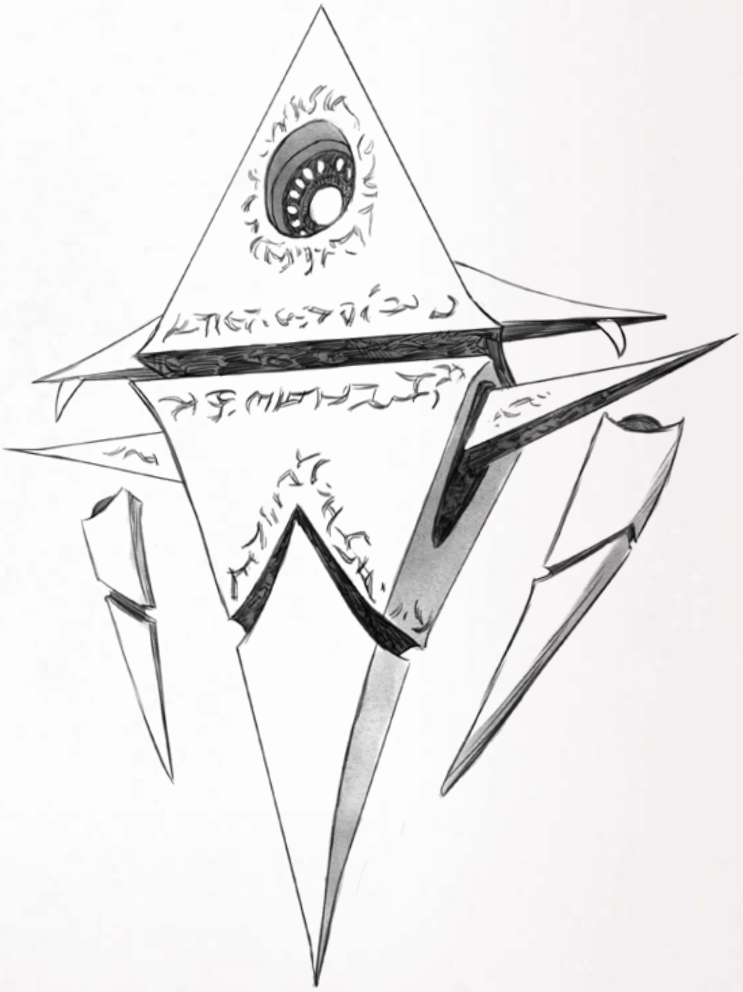
Harder Tactics — Use Magic Missile Barrage every turn in conjunction with Ethereal Bolts from the poterut's Multiattack feature. If all that firepower goes toward one target, it is almost guaranteed to go down quickly. Once the primary target has been dispatched, the poterut should ensure it will not return to life anytime soon by killing the remaining characters. It should deliberately interact with magical affects that allow for saving throws, regaining hit points through this interaction with Antimagic Core. Clever use of this feature allows the poterut to make the average spellcaster an unwitting ally.

PLOT HOOKS

Fixer-Upper. A critically damaged poterut is unearthed at an archeological site and transported to a museum. The inevitable is barely alive after 1,000 years buried beneath the earth and is in desperate need of repair. The museum is loath to lose the jewel of their collection, which has drawn scholars and researchers from across the realms. However, the poterut is a sentient creature, and the ethical issues surrounding the situation are prompting vigorous debate.

School's Out. An unusually aggressive poterut is attempting to exterminate an entire college of bards known as the College of Entropy. While the organization is far from reputable, most consider this judgement to be excessive, even for an inevitable.

Refugee. A prominent and well-loved wizard finds asylum in a mighty kingdom. The wizard is on the run from a trio of relentless poteruts, but even their mechanical might is no match for the kingdom's formidable resources. To settle the matter, the king orders the wizard to be put to trial and calls for heroes across the land to gather evidence on the matter.



TREASURE

When a poterut is destroyed, occasionally a few of its more durable components survive. While any functional piece of an inevitable is worth a fortune, it is the poterut's *antimagic core* that is priceless. This unusual device is of great use to adventurers.

Antimagic Core

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

This 6-inch-diameter sphere is composed of countless interlocking mechanisms that click and whirl. While you are holding the sphere, you have advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects. Additionally, when you succeed on a saving throw against a spell or magical effect from an enemy creature, you gain 4d10 temporary hit points. These temporary hit points last until you finish a short or long rest.

ECOLOGY

Despite their occupation, poteruts do not hate magic. When left to their own devices, these inevitables gather in places of arcane power, seeking to further their understanding of magic and those who wield it. Lacking any concept of personal space or social graces, poteruts are quite an intrusive presence wherever they appear. They closely examine whatever interests them, often at the expense of everything around them. Their nigh invulnerability can make this interaction startlingly troublesome, as poteruts have been known to punch through walls or wade through lava to investigate some new magical curiosity. A poterut never lingers in one place for long. Through unknown means the creatures receive new directives and depart, only returning if they formed a productive (if a bit strange) relationship with those they were observing.

POTERUT

Medium construct, any lawful

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 325 (31d8 + 186)
Speed 40 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	11 (+0)	22 (+6)	19 (+4)	24 (+7)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +11, Int+9, Wis +12
Skills Arcana +14, Perception +12
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 120 ft., truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 22
Languages understands all languages but can't speak
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

TRAITS

Antimagic Core. When the poterut succeeds on a saving throw against a spell or magical effect, it suffers no effect on a success and regains 22 (4d10) hit points.

Axiomatic Form. The poterut's body is imbued with the divine power of natural law. It cannot be compelled, forced, or tricked into acting in a manner contrary to its nature, cannot be magically teleported, banished, or moved against its will, and is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Inevitable. The poterut is charged with bringing creatures that pervert, flaunt, or threaten the laws of magic to justice. When the poterut is harmed by a creature that does not meet these criteria, it can choose to be immune to any harmful effects produced by the creature. For as long as the poterut is immune to a creature in this manner, it in turn cannot harm the creature in any way. If the poterut chooses to harm or be harmed by the creature, it can never again use this feature against that creature.

Magic Resistance. The poterut has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

Spellshatter. When the poterut would make an attack, it can forgo making that attack to attempt to destroy a spell effect within reach. To do so, the poterut rolls as though it were making a melee weapon attack. If the result of the attack roll is equal to or greater than 10 + the target's spell level, the spell immediately ends.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The poterut makes three attacks or makes one attack and uses Arcane Censure, Dimensional Shift, or Magic Missile Barrage.

Ethereal Bolt. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +12 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 33 (4d12 + 7) radiant damage. Nonmagical objects and structures cannot provide cover against this attack.

Unerring Pierce. *Melee Weapon Attack:* Automatic hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (#d# + #) piercing damage plus 25 (#d# + #) force damage. If the target would have resistance or immunity to damage dealt by this attack, it instead does not.

Arcane Censure (1/Short or Long Rest). The poterut forces a creature it can see within 120 feet of it to attempt a DC 20 Charisma saving throw, becoming cursed with antimagic on a failure. While so cursed, whenever the creature casts a spell, it takes 14 (4d6) necrotic damage. This curse cannot be removed until the poterut is destroyed.

Dimensional Shift. The poterut magically teleports to an unoccupied space within 30 feet of a creature it has seen within the last 24 hours. If there is no unoccupied space within 30 feet of the target, the effect fails.

Magic Missile Barrage. The poterut launches twenty glowing darts of magical force, each of which hits a creature of the poterut's choice within 300 feet of it. A dart deals 3 (1d4 + 1) force damage to its target, and each dart strikes simultaneously.

The Mortemut

A flower is not beautiful because it lasts forever. I am pleased to see the universe acting against those who seek to unnaturally prolong their lifespans. Too often creatures take this pursuit to unhealthy degrees, with little regard for the consequences outside themselves. What I wouldn't give to see the look on a lich's face as a mortemut shatters its illusion of an immortal existence.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Controller

Favors: Barbarians, Fighters, Range (Long), Strength (High), Warlocks

Foils: Monks, Rangers, Resurrection, Rogues, Stealth

BEHIND THE CURTAIN – WHAT DOES "HARMFUL" MEAN?

Each of the creatures in this section possess a very powerful trait, aptly titled Inevitable, that makes them immune to attacks and effects that would harm them. When considering effects such as *fireball* or the swing of an axe, its fairly obvious as to how this trait is applied. However, what about more nebulous effects? Putting an inevitable in a *forcecage* or impeding its movement don't technically damage the creature, but they aren't exactly benevolent either. Much of what a creature considers harmful is based on its circumstances and personality, but to help a DM determine what is appropriate, this sidebar provides an assessment of the "harmful" keyword.

In 5th Edition, a "harmful" effect can be defined as something *acting* upon a creature that deals damage, forces a saving throw, or otherwise causes an interaction the target would, if given the choice and of sound mind, choose to have not happen. This includes effects that undo the actions of the creature (such as moving it away from its goals), but not obstructing its path or putting obstacles in its way. For example, a *wall of stone* spell placed in an inevitable's path is not harmful. However, some effects of certain features may be harmful, while others are not. For example, a *wall of fire* obstructs a creature's vision, which is not harmful (though it can enable those that would attempt to be harmful). However, it also damages any who attempt to move through it, which is the effect an inevitable would be become immune to, rather than the entire spell.

MORTEMUT

Death is a fate few mortals manage to escape. Those who triumph over its gnarled clutches are fools to think themselves safe, for among the inevitables there exists the mortemuts: grim enforcers ensuring no mortal defies death for long. Mortemuts appear as massive, mechanical sarcophagi held aloft by tremendous telekinetic power. The top of these limbless creatures is crowned with three ruby eyes, granting mortemuts supremely acute senses. The quarry of a mortemut demands both great power and unique tools, giving even the most arrogant lich just cause to fear these inevitables. Once a mortemut has pounded its target into telekinetic submission, it opens its chest cavity to reveal an all-consuming oblivion and the promise of final death.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a mortemut with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

MORTEMUT LORE

DC	INFORMATION
16	While mortemuts are machines, their power is psionic in nature. They are masters of telekinetic combat, throwing all but the strongest creatures about the battlefield like rag dolls. The upper limits of this telekinesis is impressive, with legends of mortemuts lifting entire buildings in pursuit of their quarry.
21	Mortemuts are the ultimate killers and have specialized tools to ensure their targets cannot return to life. If you are gravely injured and one starts getting close to you, run! If a mortemut manages to kill you with the oblivion contained within its chest, there is no coming back.
27	Mortemuts have extremely acute senses that can detect almost anything that gets near it. However, they are big and slow, so keep a considerable distance to maintain the upper hand. While its telekinetic power can impede most attacks, precise or overwhelming strikes can punch through its defenses for critical damage.

TACTICS

Psionic powers, especially telekinesis, can make for a very strange fight. While it's tempting to just bludgeon characters into oblivion using Telekinetic Thrust, Telekinetic Grip can really steal the show. Use it to lift extremely heavy objects and maneuver them into ideal positions. The mortemut can place massive walls about the battlefield, tear off sections of buildings, and even control vehicles in this manner at an extreme range. Don't discount the usefulness of Natural Telekinesis either. The feature can be used to open or close doors or pick up items. With it the mortemut can manipulate potentially hundreds of small objects at a time, which can prove extremely disorienting in the right circumstances. Against spellcasters, *feeblemind* and *power word stun* are ideal offensive tools. As the mortemut does not use components for these effects, most characters will not be able to *counterspell* their castings. Don't waste Final Death until the would-be targets are likely to fail their saving throws. If that means the mortemut needs to beat up some other characters to remove helpful spell effects on its primary target, so be it.

Easier Tactics — Let the characters see the mortemut before rolling for initiative. Even a single round to ready their defenses makes a big difference, especially if they know where the enemy is coming from. Keep the mortemut close to the ground as a consideration for melee characters, and never paralyze more than a single character at a time with Telekinetic Grip. As with the other inevitables, consider all characters an accessory to the crime the inevitable seeks to punish, giving the entire party a lot of latitude about how they want to approach the fight.

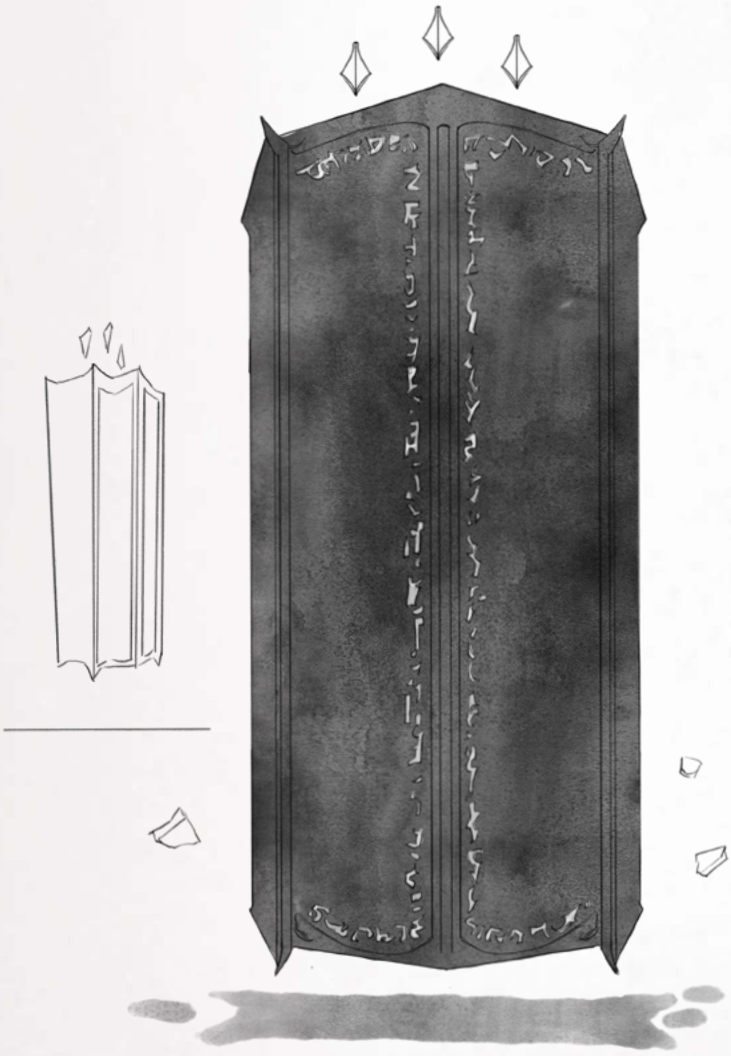
Harder Tactics — The mortemut excels at keeping enemies at a distance and should do so. Only when the inevitable is ready to use Final Death should it bother to close the gap, spending most of its turns pummeling and paralyzing problematic heroes. Thankfully characters with high Strength struggle with flying enemies without support, so keep the mortemut in the air. Note that with a hover speed, it won't be knocked to the ground easily, likely necessitating some form of flight on the characters' part.

PLOT HOOKS

Curse in Disguise. A beloved paladin is made immortal by a virtuous deity, a just reward for services rendered. Unfortunately, the act attracted the unrelenting attention of a mortemut. The paladin is forced to make a difficult choice: accept the inevitable's judgement, or fight, preferably with the help of some powerful allies.

Beyond Death's Door. A creature thought put to rest by mortemuts has returned from oblivion to once again walk among the living. How this was accomplished is unknown, but the inevitables are offering an extraordinary reward to any who can illuminate the process. In the meantime, an elite team of both a mortemut and poterut are dispatched to correct the "issue."

Mistaken Identity. In a rare lapse of judgement, a mortemut accidently obliterates the wrong target and immediately shuts down. The dormant machine is arrested and held within a magical prison, but when an inevitable envoy appears and demands the mortemut's release, the situation threatens to escalate.



TREASURE

Mortemuts share all inevitables' remarkable design, most of which rarely survives violent destruction. However, the ruby eyes of the mortemut can be used to fabricate a spell of extraordinary power: *True Telekinesis*. To produce this spell from the mortemut's eyes, a creature must first succeed on a DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) ability check, destroying the eyes on a failure. On a success, ruby eyes endowed with magical knowledge are manufactured. The first spellcaster that can cast spells of 9th level using a class spellcasting feature to touch one of these eyes learns the following spell.

New Spell – True Telekinesis

This spell is a class spell for sorcerers and wizards.

True Telekinesis

9th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 300 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

Your mind overflows with telekinetic power, allowing you to manipulate creatures and objects by thought alone. When you use your action to cast this spell and do so each round for the duration, you can telekinetically manipulate any number of creatures or objects within range, causing one of the following effects to each of them. An unwilling target can attempt a Strength saving throw to prevent the effect. The maximum weight of a single target you manipulate is 50,000 pounds.

- **Telekinetic Thrust.** The target takes 8d6 bludgeoning damage is thrown 30 feet in a straight line in a direction of your choice.
- **Telekinetic Grip.** The target is restrained for the spell's duration. While the target is so restrained, if you affect it with this effect again, you can choose to move it up to 30 feet and suspend the target in the air. At the end of each of its turns, the target can attempt a Strength saving throw to end the effect.
- **Telekinetic Maneuver.** The target is pushed up to 60 feet along a path of your choice.

ECOLOGY

Mortemuts are built with terrible purpose and have ingrained themselves within the cultural zeitgeist of many peoples. Any culture with a healthy respect for death has just cause to honor these creatures. However, immortality is a dream openly sought by many, instilling a powerful hatred of mortemuts and their hypocritical, mechanical longevity. Mortemuts don't seem to care (or are incapable of caring) about the impact their role has on mortal creatures, terrifying almost all they encounter. While it is unlikely a mortemut will punish creatures for entertaining the fantasy of immortality, the consequences for accidently provoking one of these inevitables are too extreme to risk.

MORTEMUT

Huge construct, lawful neutral

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 364 (27d12 + 189)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	8 (−1)	24 (+7)	27 (+8)	21 (+5)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +13, Int +14, Wis +11
Skills Perception +11, Religion +14
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned, stunned, unconscious
Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages understands all languages but can't speak
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

TRAITS

Axiomatic Form. The mortemut's body is imbued with the divine power of natural law. It cannot be compelled, forced, or tricked into acting in a manner contrary to its nature, cannot be magically teleported, banished, or moved against its will, and is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Inevitable. The mortemut is charged with bringing those that would cheat death toward their deserved fate. When the mortemut is harmed by a creature that does not meet these criteria, it can choose to be immune to any harmful effects produced by the creature. For as long as the mortemut is immune to a creature in this manner, it in turn cannot harm the creature in any way. If the mortemut chooses to harm or be harmed by the creature, it can never again use this feature against that creature.

Natural Telekinesis. The mortemut has no limbs, instead manipulating and interacting with its environment using its telekinesis. While it is not incapacitated, the mortemut can exert fine motor control over any number of objects or creatures up to 300 feet away from it using this feature, as though it were doing so with ordinary limbs, using its Intelligence score in lieu of its Strength score to determine the weight capacity of the interaction for each affected target. When the mortemut interacts with a target in this manner on each of its turns, it can also move it up to 30 feet (provided the mortemut is "strong" enough to do so). This feature cannot be used to harm or move particularly heavy targets, instead requiring the use of its Telekinetic Thrust or Telekinetic Grip actions.

Strength of Mind. When the mortemut would attempt a Strength saving throw, it may instead attempt an Intelligence saving throw.

Telekinetic Barrier. When the mortemut is hit with a weapon by a creature it can see, it can choose to protect itself telekinetically to reduce the force of the blow. If the final result does not exceed the moretemut's AC by 3 or more, the mortemut takes half damage from the attack.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The mortemut's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 22, +14 to hit with spell attacks). The mortemut can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *planeshift*
1/day each: *feeblemind*, *power word stun*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mortemut uses its telekinetic thrust or telekinetic grip up to a combined total of three times.

Telekinetic Grip. The mortemut telekinetically grasps a creature or object it can see within 300 feet of it that weighs less than 50,000 pounds. If the target is a creature, it can attempt a DC 22 Strength saving throw to avoid being grasped. A target so grasped is restrained, lifted into the air, and moved up to 30 feet to unoccupied space of the mortemut's choice. If the mortemut uses this feature against a creature already affected by it, it may instead move it up to 60 feet. At the end of each of its turns, an affected creature can attempt a DC 22 Strength saving throw, ending the effect on a success. This effect ends early if the mortemut is incapacitated or slain.

Telekinetic Thrust. A creature the mortemut is aware of within 300 feet of it must attempt a DC 22 Strength saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Additionally, on a failed save the mortemut can throw the target up to 30 feet in a straight line, causing it to land prone.

Final Death (Recharge 5–6). The mortemut opens its chest cavity, exposing creatures within 5 feet of it to the utter oblivion of death. Creatures of the mortemut's choice that have 30 hit points or fewer in the affected area must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw or die instantly. Affected creatures at 0 hit points cannot succeed on this saving throw. A creature slain in this manner cannot return to life by any known means unless the mortemut is destroyed.

XELTEMPUT

If time is a river, then xeltemputs are its navigators. These rare inevitables ensure those that sail time's treacherous waters do not threaten its delicate balance. When a wayward wizard, mischievous deity, or powerful artifact disrupts the timestream, the xeltemputs are called to action. Whoever built xeltemputs spared no expense, as each is a mechanical marvel of arcane science. Each is artistically unique, but all have a dexterous body composed of mithral plates protecting bizarre arcane machinery within. This armor enables the creature's formidable speed, which when combined with its magical blades and ruthless efficiency, ensure few escape a xeltemput's wrath. The head of these creatures contains a precious hourglass whose purpose remains unknown, though the fact they all seem to be counting down regardless of the xeltemput has caused significant scholarly concern.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a xeltemput with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

XELTEMPUT LORE

DC	INFORMATION
17	Come face to face with a xeltemput inevitable and you will learn just how powerful a weapon time can be. Not only does the creature move through time at an accelerated speed, it can call upon versions of itself from alternate timelines to aid in battle.
22	A xeltemput's body is constantly returning to the point in time where it was first constructed, allowing it to recover from almost any damage. The only surefire way to put the creature down for good is to obliterate its body entirely or permanently alter its composition.
28	The xeltemput's most fearsome skill is its ability to rapidly age nearly any creature with a powerful curse. Unless you can live to be 10,000 years old, you better kill the inevitable fast. It's the only way to break the curse.

The Xeltemput

I've always wondered if alternative timelines exist. Could you imagine what I could accomplish by collaborating with myself across all those different realities? I suspect the potential of such a prospect is precisely why xeltemputs are made. It's a shame, but the laws of time are ones I'm inclined to respect. As my friend Elkus is fond of saying: "Time makes dust of us all. Even the gods."

– Talien Vos Karven

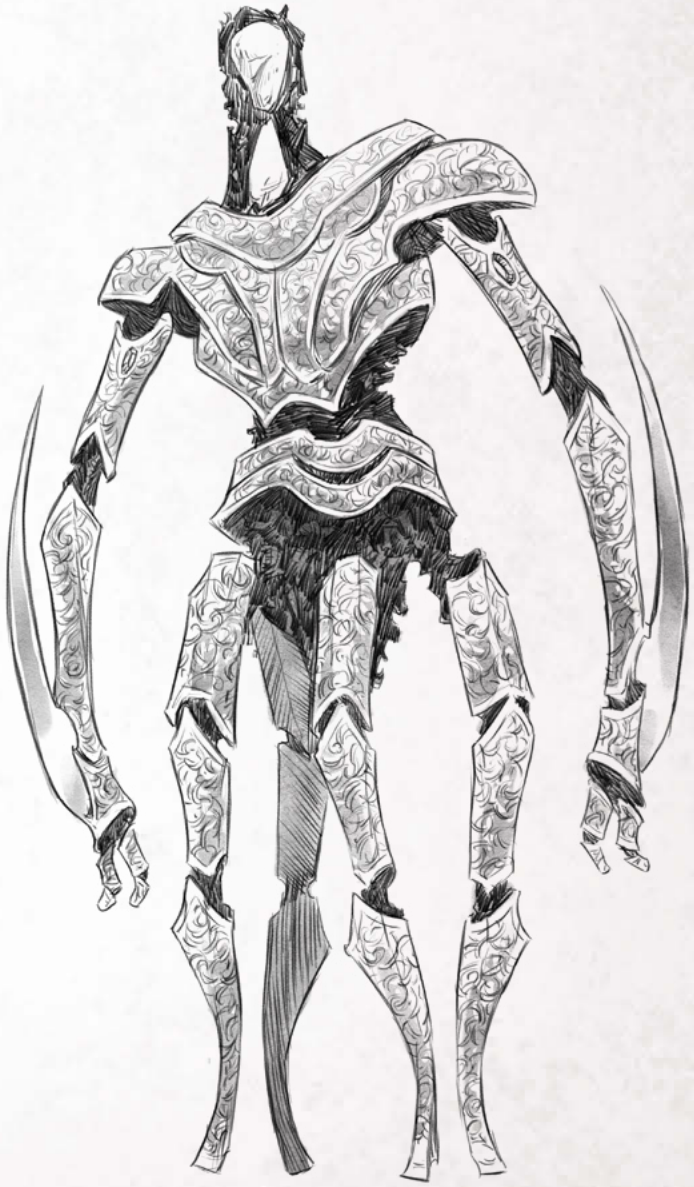
Classification: Skirmisher

Favors: Mobility (High), Monks, Range (Long), Rogues, Warlocks

Foils: Clerics, Cover, Druids, Hit Points (High), Paladins

TACTICS

As a skirmisher, the xeltemput is all about hit-and-run tactics. The creature often uses the Dash action, and with its formidable speed it can close the gap on most targets. In the rare event it can't get into melee, the xeltemput's Temporal Echoes feature allows it to strike at any target within 120 feet of it. Note that because the xeltemput can forgo making two attacks to instead take one other action, this includes the Dash or Disengage actions as well. Have the creature dart about the battlefield, covering vast distances that foil slower characters like fighters and paladins. Should characters prove adept at managing the xeltemput's speed, use Slow Time to put on the brakes. A large battlefield favors the xeltemput, especially if you add cover to it. The Times Up feature is by far the xeltemput's most powerful for a variety of reasons. It can kill almost any character easily, particularly if the party is taking a long time to beat the inevitable. What is worse, if the effect kills a character, dying to old age is almost impossible to recover from. Even spells like *true resurrection* do not reverse the effects of aging.



Easier Tactics — Never use Times Up. That ability is extremely powerful and requires considerable skill and luck to counter, making it unfair against unprepared parties. Focus on the creature's other, still formidable, abilities. Because of the Temporal Echoes feature, it's easy to nullify the xeltemput's Inevitable trait by attacking all the characters at the start of their turns. Remember that because the Unerring Blade attack cannot miss, Temporal Echoes is a near guarantee every character takes 35 damage from the inevitable every turn. That is a lot to keep up with, requiring the characters kill the xeltemput as quickly as possible. Don't make that harder than it already is by keeping the xeltemput out of range or behind cover between turns.

Harder Tactics — Open combat with Times Up and start putting the hurt on as many characters as possible. Allies of the primary target can significantly mitigate the effects of the curse when left to their own devices, so keep the pressure on the whole party. Hit and run is the name of the game, especially with Temporal Echoes and Slow Time. Force the party to move through areas of Slow Time, and drag the fight out as much as possible to make full use of Rapid Repair. It will take a *disintegrate* or similarly powerful effect to bring a xeltemput down for good, so don't give the characters the opportunity.

PLOT HOOKS

Dark Days Ahead. Several next-generation xeltemputs travel back in time to destroy others of their kind. The only possible explanation is that the actions of xeltemputs inevitably violate the very laws they were designed to protect. Can this dark fate be undone, or perhaps are the futuristic inevitables just as flawed as their historic counterparts?

XELTEMPUT

Medium construct, any lawful

Armor Class 18
Hit Points 388 (37d8 + 222)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	26 (+8)	23 (+6)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Con +13, Int +11, Wis +11, Cha +15
Skills History +18, Perception +11
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 120 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages understands all languages but can't speak
Challenge 21 (33,000 XP)

TRAITS

Axiomatic Form. The xeltemput's body is imbued with the divine power of natural law. It cannot be compelled, forced, or tricked into acting in a manner contrary to its nature, cannot be magically teleported, banished, or moved against its will, and is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form. Furthermore, the xeltemput is immune to the effects of time-related magic or effects, such as *time stop*, acting normally through these effects.

Inevitable. The xeltemput is charged with punishing creatures that alter, travel through, or manipulate time. When the xeltemput is harmed by a creature that does not meet these criteria, it can choose to be immune to any harmful effects produced by the creature. For as long as the xeltemput is immune to a creature in this manner, it in turn cannot harm the creature in any way. If the xeltemput chooses to harm or be harmed by the creature, it can never again use this feature against that creature.

Rapid Repair. The xeltemput's body is anchored in time in a state of flawless integrity. At the start of each of its turns, it regains 20 hit points as it attempts to return to that state. If the xeltemput petrified, this trait is suppressed. The xeltemput dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and this trait is suppressed, or if its body is completely destroyed.

Temporal Echoes. The xeltemput emits an aura of temporal uncertainty in a 120-foot-radius sphere, allowing it to strike from alternate timelines. When a creature within the area starts its turn and the xeltemput is aware of it, the xeltemput can choose to instantly magically teleport to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the creature and make a single attack against it, then magically teleport back to its original space.

Time Travel (1/Long Rest). By spending 1 hour of strenuous activity, the xeltemput can magically transport itself forward or backward through time, up to 100 years in either direction. In lieu of traveling forward or backward in time with this feature, the xeltemput can instead travel to an alternate timeline.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The xeltemput takes the Dash action and makes three attacks. The xeltemput can forgo making two of these attacks to instead use one other action.

Unerring Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* Automatic hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 15 slashing damage plus 20 force damage. If the target would have resistance or immunity to damage dealt by this attack, it instead does not.

Fast Forward. The xeltemput chooses a spell or magical effect with a duration greater than instantaneous that it is aware of within 120 feet of it. The chosen spell or effect ends at the start of the xeltemput's next turn.

Slow Time. The xeltemput creates an area of slow time in a 20-foot cube centered on a point it can see within 60 feet of it. Creatures other than the xeltemput in the area have their speeds halved and cannot take bonus actions or reactions. This area lasts until the xeltemput finishes a short or long rest.

Time's Up (Recharge 5–6). The xeltemput forces a creature it can see within 120 feet of it to succeed on a DC 23 Charisma saving throw or be afflicted with a temporal curse. A creature so cursed must succeed on a death saving throw at the start of each of its turns. If the creature fails three total death saving throws while affected by this ability (including those failed through other means), it instantly magically ages 10,000 years. The curse can only be removed if the xeltemput is destroyed.

Timekeeper. A xeltemput begins following the characters, silently observing. When approached the construct flees, only to inevitably return and continue its watch. So far, the creature has proved nonviolent, but the nature of its purpose suggests an unavoidable confrontation.

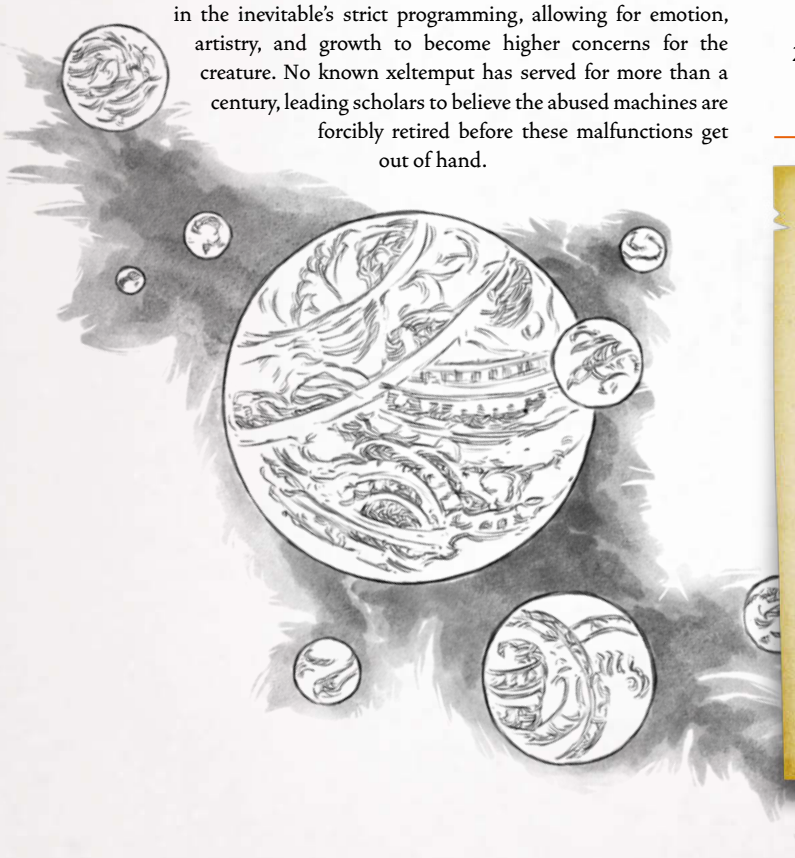
The Fugitive. A time traveler is on the run from a xeltemput and has come to the characters for help. The traveler claims to be their direct descendent and declares that the characters are destined to become heroes of epic proportions, starting with the defeat of the xeltemput.

TREASURE

A xeltemput cannot be destroyed unless its body is brought to irrecoverable ruin. However, the temporal energies that power the creature become unleashed upon its destruction, forming an unstable portal through time. This portal is a circular aperture 20 feet in diameter, which lasts for 1 minute. When a creature touches the portal while envisioning a point in time up to 100 years in the future or past, the portal attunes to that point, allowing any who pass through it to travel to that exact moment. The portal has no exit and is a one-way trip for any daring enough to pass through.

ECOLOGY

Xeltemputs experience time differently than most creatures. When the creatures rest, their dreams are of moments in the past, future, or of alternate timelines. These visions help the inevitables navigate the complex currents of the timestream, allowing them to appear without warning and surprise their quarry. Time travel appears stressful at the best of times, and many long-serving xeltemputs have developed quirks and strange behaviors as a result of constant, mind-shattering exposure to temporal energies. These unusual ticks are the result of breakdowns in the inevitable's strict programming, allowing for emotion, artistry, and growth to become higher concerns for the creature. No known xeltemput has served for more than a century, leading scholars to believe the abused machines are forcibly retired before these malfunctions get out of hand.



CAELUT

Existence is durable, but not indestructible. Though threats to reality are rare, they do exist. When such a force rears its formidable head, the mighty caelut inevitables rise to oppose it. Like an astronomical orrery given life, a caelut is a construct wrought by incalculable magical forces. Its body is composed of numerous orbiting metallic spheres centered around a magical illusion depicting a mysterious plane that defies identification. The entire array is saturated with overwhelming magic, empowering the construct to bring reality-shattering threats to heel. Though most inhabitants will never know it, the caeluts are responsible for the continued existence of countless planes.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a caelut with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

CAELUT LORE

DC	INFORMATION
18	A caelut unleashes the fury of the cosmos at terrific range. They can call down icy comets, strike with the burning power of stars, and immolate the land with the burning fury of suns. Legends say they can even reformat matter itself, shaping the world toward their violent purposes.
23	Caeluts are extremely durable, resisting damage from blade or bow in equal measure. Energies such as fire, lightning, or cold fare even worse. This allows the construct to sit within a maelstrom of death that is deadly to all but itself.
29	A little-known fact about caeluts is their control over space. They can not only prevent but also divert magical teleportation, often into extremely convenient spaces. While their abilities are powerful, caeluts are slow, relying on magical teleportation and a few powerful maneuvers to achieve victory.

The Caelut

The great irony of these inevitables is that they must become the monsters they seek to destroy. When I witnessed a caelut do battle, I saw not salvation, but another form of the apocalypse. The price of victory can be too high, and some battles should never be fought. Surely there are better ways of solving the universe's problems than constantly matching force with force. As a druid, Ionia naturally agreed with my theories, but admittedly who am I to argue with the power behind these terrifying constructs?

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Artillery

Favors: Force (Damage), Range (Long), Sorcerers, Warlocks, Wizards

Foils: Barbarians, Fighters, Melee, Rangers, Rogues, Weapons (Attacks)

TACTICS

While the caelut only has a few actions it can perform, how those actions are used is vital. Many of its abilities need to "cook" before becoming useful, such as Cometfall and Big Bang. Use these abilities early, then follow up on subsequent rounds with Shunt to move characters into catastrophically bad positions. Shunt can also be used to keep melee characters away from the caelut or place them directly in voids created by Wormhole. Of all the caelut's abilities, Wormhole can be the most dangerous. A character banished by this effect is usually beyond the help of friends and can die quickly thanks to suffocation. Don't neglect the caelut's ability to easily damage objects and structures. This can be an awesome tool for removing cover or generating difficult terrain. Reduce buildings to rubble with the characters inside for maximum effect.

Easier Tactics — Never use Wormhole more than once. The caelut can hit a lot of targets simultaneously, especially if the characters are too close together, so make sure the players understand this before the fight starts. Don't purposefully spread them out too much, as they will need to stay together to support each other through the caelut's damage. Let them get away from effects like Big Bang and Cometfall if they are paying attention, as that kind of strategic play should be rewarded.

CAELUT

Gargantuan construct, any lawful

Armor Class 23 (natural armor)
Hit Points 727 (41d20 + 297)
Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	14 (+2)	24 (+7)	20 (+5)	29 (+9)	8 (−1)

Saving Throws Str +17, Con +15, Int +13, Wis +17
Skills Arcana +21, Insight +17, Perception +17
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Damage Immunities cold, fire, lightning, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 27
Languages understands all languages but can't speak
Challenge 25 (75,000 XP)

TRAITS

Axiomatic Form. The caelut's body is imbued with the divine power of natural law. It cannot be compelled, forced, or tricked into acting in a manner contrary to its nature, cannot be magically teleported, banished, or moved against its will, and is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Inevitable. The caelut is charged with defeating creatures that threaten entire planes of existence. When the caelut is harmed by a creature that does not meet these criteria, it can choose to be immune to any harmful effects produced by the creature. For as long as the caelut is immune to a creature in this manner, it in turn cannot harm the creature in any way. If the caelut chooses to harm or be harmed by the creature, it can never again use this feature against that creature.

Cosmic Control. The caelut manipulates matter and space within a 120-foot-radius sphere centered on it. When a creature in the affected area magically teleports, the caelut immediately becomes aware of the creature and can choose to divert the destination of the teleport to an unoccupied space of its choice within the affected area.

Teleportation. As a bonus action on each of its turns, the caelut can magically teleport to an unoccupied space it within 120 feet of it. Instead of teleporting in this manner, the caelut can cast the spell planeshift, only targeting itself.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The caelut uses two different actions.

Shooting Stars. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +17 to hit, range 300 ft., each creature of the caelut's choice within range. *Hit:* 35 (10d6) radiant damage.

Big Bang. The caelut generates a miniature sun in an unoccupied space it can see within 120 feet of it. The sun is a 5-foot-diameter sphere that lasts for 1 minute. At the start of each of its turns, the caelut can choose to detonate the sun in a massive 60-foot-radius explosion. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 25 Constitution saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) fire damage and 55 (10d10) radiant damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Unattended objects and structures in the affected area take 100 fire damage and 100 radiant damage.

Cometfall (Recharge 5–6). The caelut calls down four comets from the heavens to strike different spaces of its choice within 1 mile, none of which can be within 60 feet of each other. When the caelut uses this action, it chooses how long the comets take to land, up to a maximum of 1 minute. When a comet lands, each creature within 30 feet of it must attempt a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) bludgeoning damage and 36 (8d8) cold damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. For each round the comet fell, this damage increases by 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage and 9 (2d8) cold damage.

Planarforming (1/Short or Long Rest). The caelut magically creates a mundane object or structure out of raw planar material within 300 feet of it that fits within a 100-foot cube of space. The object or structure can be fashioned out of any combination of mundane solid materials found on a plane the caelut has visited, and no part of the construction can include a space occupied by a creature. The object or structure typically has an AC of 15 and 300 hit points, though more durable or weaker constructions are possible depending on the caelut responsible.

Shunt. An enemy creature the caelut can see within 120 feet of it must succeed on a DC 25 Charisma saving throw or be magically teleported to an unoccupied space of the caelut's choice within 60 feet of it.

Wormhole. The caelut conjures a wormhole in an unoccupied space it can see within 120 feet of it which lasts for 1 minute. When an enemy creature starts its turn within 20 feet of the wormhole, it must succeed on a DC 25 Strength saving throw or be drawn into the singularity and banished into outer space. Once the wormhole has banished a creature in such a manner, it vanishes. A creature so banished cannot breathe or hold its breath and immediately begins to suffocate. The affected creature can attempt a DC 25 Charisma saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect and reappearing in the nearest unoccupied space from where it was banished on a success.

Harder Tactics — Keeping characters apart is the caelut's greatest strength. Keep effects like Big Bang and Cometfall close to the caelut to punish melee characters who dare get within range, using Shunt to keep them away from their support network. A caelut with enough advanced notice of the conflict can even use Planarforming to generate an ideal battlefield full of frustrating obstacles. An alternative use of that feature involves building a massive obstacles around lone characters (such as a dome of adamantine around the barbarian) that can take them out of the fight. Wormhole is ideal for characters who favor ranged attacks, particularly low-Charisma characters who are unlikely to escape the deadly trap.

PLOT HOOKS

Beyond the Stars. A mysterious creature from the stars crashes to earth, with a caelut in hot pursuit. The alien claims the inevitable is unjustly seeking its destruction for a crime it did not commit. Will the people of the material plane grant asylum to the refugee and challenge the mighty caelut? Only time will tell.

Hour of Devastation. A climactic battle between a demon lord and a caelut is destined to take place on an abyssal plane. Ordinarily no one would care, but should the plane collapse under the strain of the conflict, the repercussions could be felt across the cosmos.

Rebuilt. The apocalypse is on its way, and the only hope is an ancient and damaged caelut whose body has been scattered across the planes. Finding the caelut's many parts is only half the problem, as assembling the inevitable requires legendary skill.

TREASURE

The body of a caelut is a nexus of cosmic energy. When the creature is destroyed, this energy may seek a new vessel to inhabit. If a nearby creature is willing, it may choose to accept this dangerous boon. To do so it must be within 15 feet of the caelut when it is defeated and attempt a DC 25 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw the creature explodes and is slain. On a success, the creature is endowed with cosmic power, granting it the following benefits for 1 month.

- Flying speed of 30 feet (hover)
- Immunity to stunned and unconscious conditions
- When the creature scores a critical hit, it may roll all of the attack's damage dice three times, instead of twice
- Spell save DC increases by 2

ECOLOGY

Caeluts are rarely deployed, with each appearance heralding titanic conflict and great upheaval. The creatures are rightly feared as living weapons. Entire nations will abandon their home should a caelut bring its conflict to their doorstep. Utterly dispassionate, these inevitables care nothing for collateral damage, to the point where it can feel like trading one catastrophe for another. When not engaged in conflict, caeluts have been known to dance recreationally. This behavior sees the inevitable use its unusual body in graceful, flowing patterns that appear like an artistic interpretation of the movements of stellar bodies. This mysterious performance is said to be wondrous to behold, in stark contrast with the mayhem and destruction the inevitable typically wreaks.

DEUSUT

When a deity dies, the universe is thrown out of balance. Should this death be sudden or herald from an unexpected source, the repercussions can prove catastrophic. It is the deusuts who protect against such threats, heading off beings that pose legitimate threats to the gods. Understandably, these inevitables are extraordinarily rare and beg the question as to what kind of creature possesses the skill to manufacture such a being. Each deusut is a living machine composed of a fluidic, golden metal, constantly bending and twisting into ornate shapes. Hidden amid this mercurial metal is a spherical, gem-studded machine that is a deusut's true body. These inevitables are genius in design, their creator correctly assuming any threat great enough to endanger the gods would be impossible to predict. Their fluidic design allows deusuts to magically mimic the greatest strengths of their enemies, turning overwhelming strength into a creature's greatest weakness.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a deusut with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

DEUSUT LORE

DC	INFORMATION
19	Machines built to protect the gods, deusuts ensure only worthy forces can challenge the divine order. It is said these inevitables are able to mimic the shape and strength of any threat, turning a creature's greatest weapon against itself.
24	Deusuts spontaneously generate metallic fluid that surrounds its body. This strange material gives the construct both its shapechanging powers and a layer of protection around its vulnerable core, a mechanical sphere floating within the mass of ever-shifting metal.
30	A deusut is endowed with divine power that overwhelms all but the strongest wills. They possess no weaknesses and have never been defeated in recorded history. To challenge one is the ultimate test of one's skill, resolve, and raw power. You would have to be crazy to even try.

TACTICS

A deusut is an unstoppable foe. Every attack is overwhelming in strength, while its legendary durability repels all but the most powerful attacks. Note that with Divine Construction the deusut gains 100 temporary hit points *each turn*. The characters won't even have the privilege of damaging the inevitable until those are out of the way. This task gets doubly difficult as the deusut unleashes overwhelming firepower with its Destructive Blast action and Unerring Smite attack. The creature's most fearsome ability is its Perfect Mimicry trait, which allows the deusut to give as good as it gets. With this trait the creature can cast a wizard's *meteor swarm* spell, smite like a paladin wielding a *holy avenger*, or unleash a breath weapon like a dragon. The characters have to not only contend with the strengths of this awesome creature, but their own might turned against them. Should all this still not prove enough to defeat the party, use Divine Wrath. This feature cuts even the mightiest barbarian down to size and is almost guaranteed to cause a TPK.

Easier Tactics — Be kind about what the deusut transforms into with its Perfect Mimicry, avoiding spellcasters or characters in possession of powerful weapons. Never use Divine Wrath more than once, and spread the damage evenly between characters. Unerring Smite can hit extremely hard, so make sure to only target characters with good Constitution saving throw bonuses or lots of hit points. If you use *wish*, don't heal the deusut. Keep the creature on the offensive even if doing so is a poor tactical choice. No matter the difficulty of the encounter, the characters need to keep the pressure up or risk losing the battle of attrition as the inevitable keeps regaining temporary hit points.

Harder Tactics — This will likely be the greatest battle the characters have ever faced. Don't hold back. Open with Divine Wrath and Perfect Mimicry, picking a powerful spellcaster for the deusut to turn into. From there, use a 9th-level spell on the next turn in conjunction with Unerring Smite or Destructive Blast. Should the characters employ high-impact effects like *wish*, *true polymorph*, or powerful magic items, counter with the deusut's own *wish*. Note that the deusut's *dispel magic* spells are cast at 9th level, so don't waste the *wish* on anything that could be handled by those instead. If the characters are aided by or transform into a powerful creature, immediately match it with the deusut and counter to full effect. Remember the deusut only takes on the shape of those it mimics, keeping all its traits and properties.

PLOT HOOKS

Fired. A deusut is relieved of its post and cast down from the empyreal realms. The construct crash-lands on the material plane and appears to be inert. Whether the creature can (or should) be reactivated is a controversial topic, but many unsavory individuals are willing to risk everything to potentially enlist the purposeless inevitable.

Divine Destiny. A queen is revealed to be a direct descendant of a deity and has gained a deusut bodyguard to ensure her future ascension to godhood. The presence of such a powerful tool in the queen's arsenal has gone to her head, as she commands the construct to perform many ill-conceived acts in her name. It's only a matter of time before things get out of hand.

The Deusut

The very notion that deities have a use for impartial, elite bodyguards carries staggering implications. Of all the creatures I have discovered, these deusuts may be the most mysterious. Quite understandable in my opinion, as what god would want its followers to know it cannot protect itself? I asked Elkus if he had heard of these creatures and got a two-hour lecture for my trouble. Apparently telling a cleric his deity requires the protection of a highly advanced machine is blasphemy. Let's see how much his piety is worth when I acquire proof!

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Elite

Favors: Barbarians, Druids, Fighters, Hit Points (High), Weapons (Attacks)

Foils: Clerics, Damage (High), Paladins, Spells (High Level), Wizards

Godkiller. A deusut malfunctions and slays a deity, causing chaos across the universe. All inevitables are recalled to their home world in an attempt to correct the flaw that led to the catastrophe. As the gods prepare to destroy the plane in vengeance, a voice echoes across the realms, begging for heroes to come clear the good name of the inevitable race.

TREASURE

Deusuts are powered by divine energy drawn from the gods but have far greater liberty to use it. When a deusut is defeated and its mechanical core remains relatively intact, the divine power within remains. A creature holding this core can spend 1 hour of strenuous activity exerting its will over the object, reshaping matter and energy to its will. At the end of the duration, the core becomes a magic item of the creature's choice that has existed at one point in history, including an artifact or similarly significant item. Additionally, while the item's creator lives, this item can only be attuned to the creator.

ECOLOGY

Deusuts have almost no presence in the annals of history. The threats they face are often beyond mortal conception or are so cataclysmic that no witnesses survive to record the details. These inevitables are the pinnacle of magical artifice, capable of channeling divine power and comprehending the vast, complex web of intrigue that surrounds most deific pantheons. Should a deusut ever appear in the mortal realms, it is only because it can better perform its duties of safeguarding the divine order while among mortals. For such an event to occur, things must be dire indeed, as most deities are quite capable of protecting themselves. It is secret or new knowledge that brings a deusut down from the empyreal planes, weapons the inevitable and its masters do not know or understand beyond their capacity to destabilize the universe.



Deusut

Small construct (shapechanger), any lawful

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)
Hit Points 885 (77d6 + 616)
Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	24 (+7)	27 (+8)	19 (+4)	30 (+10)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +16, Int +13, Wis +19
Skills Perception +19, Religion +22
Damage Resistances cold, fire, radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 29
Languages understands all languages but can't speak
Challenge 30 (155,000 XP)

Traits

Axiomatic Form. The deusut's body is imbued with the divine power of natural law. It cannot be compelled, forced, or tricked into acting in a manner contrary to its nature, cannot be magically teleported, banished, or moved against its will, and is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Divine Construction. The deusut's body is mostly fluid, allowing it to squeeze through spaces up to 1 feet in diameter. Additionally, at the start of each of its turns, the deusut can produce additional metallic fluid, granting it 100 temporary hit points. These temporary hit points last until the deusut finishes a short or long rest.

Inevitable. The deusut is charged with defeating creatures that threaten to majorly disrupt the divine order of the gods. When the deusut is harmed by a creature that does not meet these criteria, it can choose to be immune to any harmful effects produced by the creature. For as long as the deusut is immune to a creature in this manner, it in turn cannot harm the creature in any way. If the deusut chooses to harm or be harmed by the creature, it can never again use this feature against that creature.

Mythic Resistance. When the deusut fails a saving throw, it can expend an unexpended use of one of its legendary actions to succeed instead.

Overwhelming Power. If a creature would be immune to damage dealt by the deusut, it instead has resistance to that damage.

Perfect Mimicry. As a bonus action on each of its turns, the deusut can assume the size and shape of a creature it can see within 300 feet of it. While in the shape of the creature, when the deusut uses its Multiattack action, it can forgo using one of the actions it could take with that feature to instead make a single attack or cast a spell that the creature whose form it has assumed is also capable of at that time (using the deusut's spell attack bonus and spell save DC when applicable). The deusut can apply any benefits to the action that the creature it is mimicking is also capable of (such as a rogue's Sneak Attack feature or the Eldritch Invocation benefits to a warlock's eldritch blast), including those gained through magical weapons and equipment.

Innate Spellcasting. The deusut's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 27, +19 to hit with spell attacks). The deusut can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will (9th level): *dimension door*, *dispel magic*, *planeshift*
1/day: *imprisonment*
1/year: *wish*

Actions

Multiattack. The deusut makes three Unerring Smite attacks. It may forgo two of these attacks to instead use its Destructive Blast action.

Unerring Smite. *Melee Spell Attack:* Automatic hit, reach 40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 37 (5d10 + 10) slashing damage and 27 (5d10) radiant or necrotic damage (deusut's choice). If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 27 Constitution saving throw or instead be critically hit by the attack.

Destructive Blast. The deusut emits a blast of destructive energy from its body. The deusut chooses the shape of the blast from the following options: a 120-foot-long, 5-foot-wide line, a 60-foot cone, or a 30-foot-radius sphere. Creatures in the affected area must attempt a DC 27 Dexterity saving throw, taking 100 force damage on a failure, or 50 force damage on a success. Unattended objects and structures in the affected area take 200 force damage.

Divine Wrath (Recharge 6). The deusut draws on divine power to smite any creatures of its choice within 300 feet of it. Affected creatures must succeed on a DC 27 Wisdom saving throw or be incapacitated by divine power and fall prone. A creature can choose to end the effect at any time by begging for forgiveness. A creature that does so has its hit point maximum permanently reduced to half its current maximum. Only a *wish* or act of divine intervention can remove this reduction.

Legendary Actions

The deusut can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The deusut regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Cast a Spell. The deusut casts a spell it can cast at will.

Unerring Smite. The deusut uses its Unerring Smite attack.

Destructive Blast (Costs 2 Actions). The deusut uses its Destructive Blast action.

Divine Blessing (Costs 3 Actions). The deusut recharges its Divine Wrath action.

Leviathans

The deep is home to many natural horrors unknown to the surface world. The greatest and most fearsome among them are the dreaded leviathans—beasts of titanic size and terrific strength. Such creatures are ancient, born from a primordial era when the laws of nature were mere guidelines. While time has not been kind to the leviathans, a few have endured to menace the world. Living fossils, leviathans erupt from the depths to dominate ecosystems and lay waste to any who oppose them. They are raw, primal fury incarnate. A single leviathan is a menace of incalculable proportions, consuming entire civilizations to satisfy its hunger. To those who respect nature's brutality and savagery, there is no finer creature in existence.

DREADMAW

An unrivaled apex predator, the stealthy dreadmaw is an all-consuming terror. Appearing as a gigantic shark sporting a sailfish's fin and a maw bristling with thousands of saw-like teeth, the dreadmaw is aptly named. Its skin is a mercurial blue, which allows the creature to stealthily approach its prey despite its great size. A dreadmaw takes a bite out of everything it encounters. The creature's formidable jaws are capable of splitting entire ships in two or swallowing a whale whole, along with anything else unlucky enough to be smaller than the dreadmaw. Entire navies have vanished down the gullet of a hungry dreadmaw, whose rapid metabolism ensures it will be back on the hunt within a matter of days.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a dreadmaw with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

DREADMAW LORE

DC	INFORMATION
11	Dreadmaws are like sharks, but worse in every possible way, especially in regard to size. The massive creatures can swallow nearly anything that dares to swim in front of them. Thankfully, dreadmaws are completely water-locked, so staying out of the ocean is your best bet for survival.
16	Because of their size, a dreadmaw can take a horrific amount of punishment before dying. However, its head is certainly its most vulnerable point. Do enough damage to its face, and the creature may just retreat. Beware: such a strategy often necessitates getting uncomfortably close to its deadly jaws.
22	Getting swallowed by a dreadmaw is highly likely in almost any confrontation. The creatures are surprisingly stealthy despite their size and will eat almost anything before it has a chance to react. With enough determination and violence, you could cut your way out of a dreadmaw. A wise course of action, for the creature's stomach can digest prey with startling efficiency.

The Dreadmaw

I've been told sharks have an undeserved reputation. Maybe true, but I doubt that's the case with the dreadmaw. Just when I thought I'd seen it all, I witnessed one of these creatures consume the better half of a zaratan in a single afternoon. Coupled with the creature's unnatural aggressiveness and accelerated metabolism, the dreadmaw proves itself to be a menace to everything it encounters. I've heard tell of evil druidic circles interested in harnessing dreadmaws for nefarious purposes. I can only hope they are malicious rumors, as a malevolent intelligence guiding the hunger of a dreadmaw would be formidable indeed.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Lurker

Favors: Barbarians, Hit Points (High), Paladins, Rangers, Swimming Speed

Foils: Bards, Mobility (Low), Monks, Rogues, Stealth

TACTICS

Dreadmaws are not intelligent creatures, but they are cunning. When on the hunt, a dreadmaw almost always uses its Deep Blue Camouflage to hide in the water, revealing itself once it comes within biting distance. The creature can track wounded prey across incredible distances, which it crosses using its formidable speed. Note that the dreadmaw's tail section moves first, allowing the dreadmaw to come within range of its prey, preferably under the benefits of Powerful Charge. Then it's the head's turn, which should use its Chomp on the meatiest prey. An alternative strategy is to start with the dreadmaw's mouth open, then use the tail's speed to attempt to swallow everything in the dreadmaw's path. In the event its prey is aboard a vessel, the dreadmaw uses its Ram and Fluke attacks to quickly scuttle the ship. It won't hesitate to swallow entire sections of the vessel to get at its prey, so don't worry about being precise.

Easier Tactics — Don't have the dreadmaw start combat hidden; instead, approach directly and at great speed. It should be easy for the party to see the dreadmaw approach, giving them a chance to prepare for the fight of their lives. Avoid swallowing more than a single character at a time, as it can be an overly challenging circumstance for inexperienced parties to navigate.

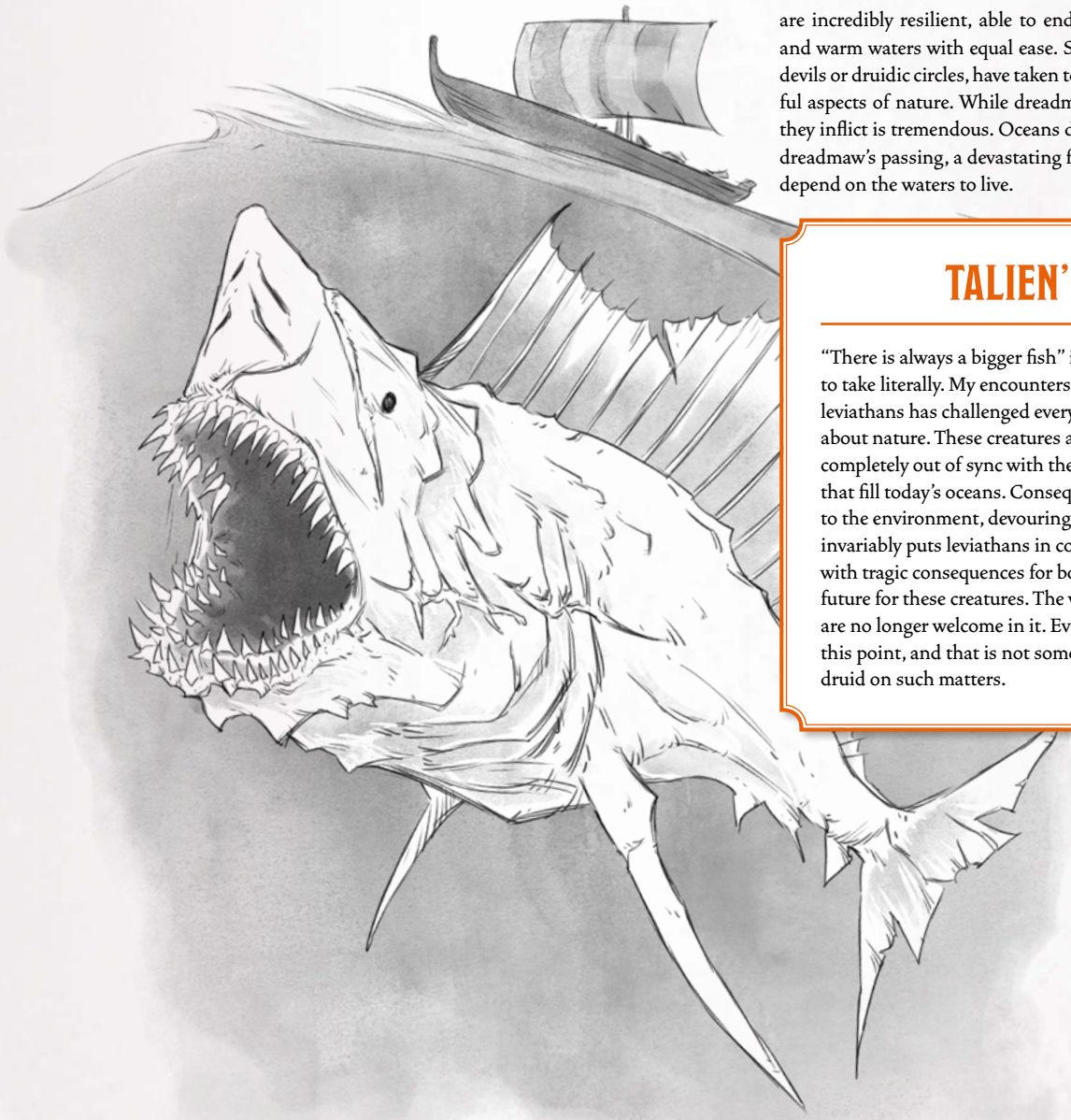
Harder Tactics — The dreadmaw should attempt to swallow as many creatures as possible early in the fight. Immediately target characters who escape from its body with a Chomp attack, especially targets with low hit points. What happens when a creature is torn in half by this attack is ultimately up to the DM, but for a harder fight you are encouraged to make it as devastating as possible. Note that the dreadmaw can regain a lot of hit points from digesting prey, so take time to swallow low-health NPCs, minions, or other creatures to keep a steady flow of healing coming the dreadmaw's way.

PLOT HOOKS

Rise of the Sea Devils. A dreadmaw has been enslaved by a clan of sea devils, who claim it to be an avatar of their shark-like god. The amphibious beings have turned the unfortunate creature into a mobile weapons platform, leading an army of shark-riding sea devils against all nearby civilizations that dare oppose them.

A Druid's Gift. A druid has cast the spell *awaken* on a dreadmaw, gifting it with sentience. The creature now struggles to live ethically, unable to satisfy its dietary needs without devastating its environment. Unless a solution can be found, the creature will choose to starve to death rather than bring the oceans to ruin.

Deadliest Catch. Fishermen from far and wide gather to hook the ultimate catch—an adult dreadmaw feasting on pods of whales. A hundred vessels set out to claim the prize of unrivaled bragging rights and a lifetime supply of lobster from a dozen grateful fishing communities.



TREASURE

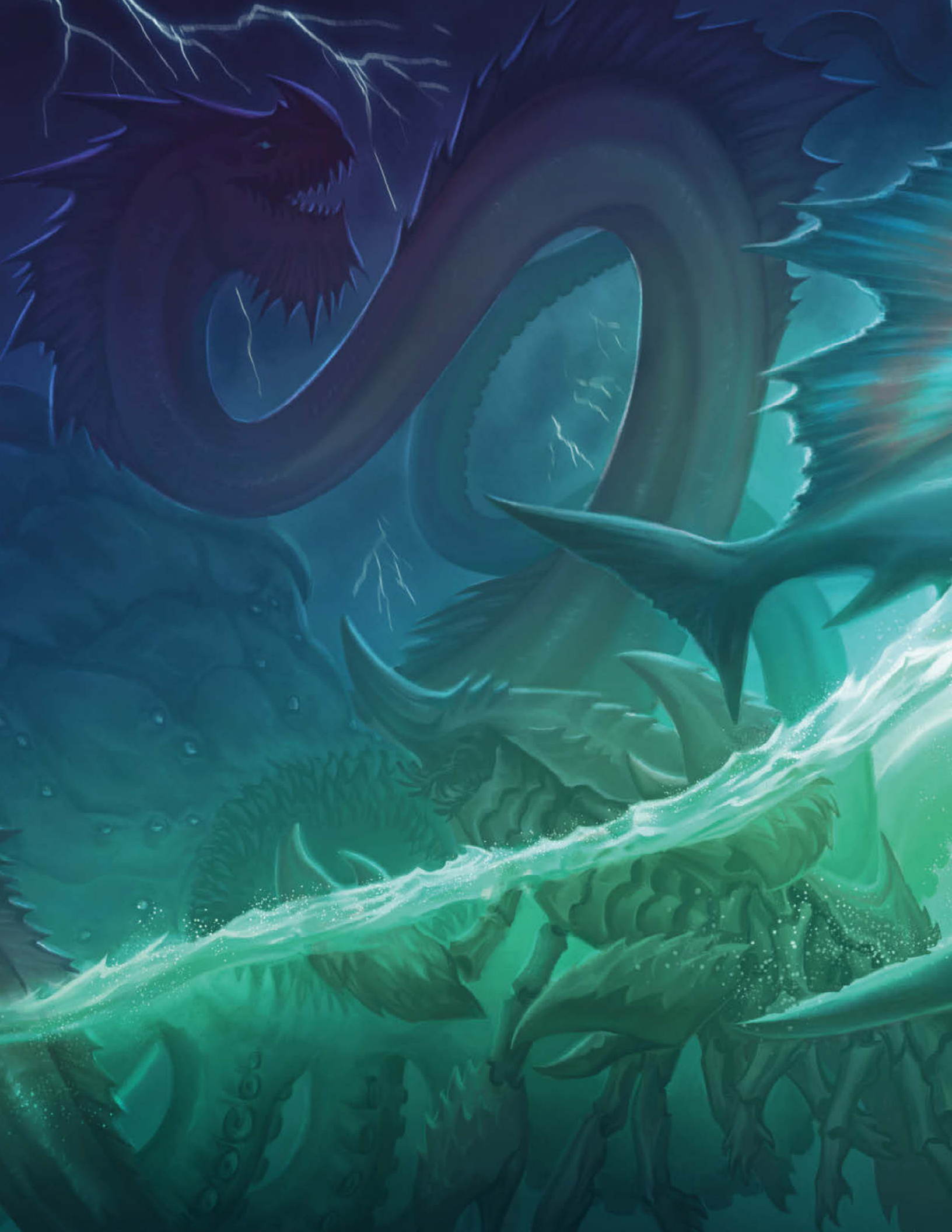
Dreadmaws are not discriminate about what they eat, so a tremendous amount of nondigestible matter ends up in their stomachs. Only metals are able to endure the creature's potent digestive acids for extended periods of time, filling a dreadmaw's guts with all manner of treasure. Most adult dreadmaws contain a small fortunes worth of wealth and often a few magical items. The quality and quantity of these items is determined by the DM, but the method of retrieving them is always a disgusting, bloody affair that ends with everyone covered in fish guts.

ECOLOGY

In ancient times dreadmaws ruled the seas with countless other leviathans, hunting in oceans overburdened with hearty prey. This is no longer the case. To a dreadmaw most oceans are like barren deserts, lacking the necessary nutrients to sustain its existence. The creatures are always on the hunt and cover tremendous distances in search of a meal. They are incredibly resilient, able to endure crushing depths, freezing cold, and warm waters with equal ease. Some cultures, such as groups of sea devils or druidic circles, have taken to worshipping dreadmaws as powerful aspects of nature. While dreadmaws have no morality, the suffering they inflict is tremendous. Oceans devoid of life are often the result of a dreadmaw's passing, a devastating fate for humanoid communities who depend on the waters to live.

TALIEN'S NOTES

"There is always a bigger fish" is a saying I never thought to take literally. My encounters with the aptly named leviathans has challenged every assumption I ever had about nature. These creatures are relics of a bygone era, completely out of sync with the modern ecological niches that fill today's oceans. Consequently, they are devastating to the environment, devouring everything in their path. This invariably puts leviathans in conflict with civilized races, with tragic consequences for both parties. Sadly, I can see no future for these creatures. The world has changed, and they are no longer welcome in it. Even Ionia agrees with me on this point, and that is not something you hear often from a druid on such matters.





Dreadmaw

Titanic beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points special
Speed special

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	6 (−2)	16 (+3)	4 (−3)	16 (+3)	3 (−4)

Saving Throws Str +12, Con +8, Wis +8
Skills Perception +8, Stealth +8
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages —
Challenge 12 (10,000 XP)

Traits

Blood in the Water. Flesh-and-blood creatures that don't have all their hit points that are completely submerged in a body of water that contains the dreadmaw alert it to their presence. The dreadmaw can smell such creatures at a distance of up to 10 miles, and such creatures cannot be hidden from the dreadmaw.

Deep Blue Camouflage. The dreadmaw is lightly obscured while fully submerged in water.

Titanic Creature. The dreadmaw is a titanic creature, encompassing a 25-foot-wide, 105-foot-long, 25-foot-high space. It is so large that combat involves dividing its body up into various sections, each of which has a fixed initiative count on which it acts (losing initiative ties), detailed in its description. Each section is considered a unique creature for purpose of targeting (in case an effect or attack would include multiple targets), and effects that include an area may affect multiple sections of the dreadmaw if the area is large enough. Each section has its own hit points and actions but shares the dreadmaw's other statistics (such as damage resistances, saving throws, etc.). When a section is reduced to 0 hit points it becomes incapacitated until it regains hit points or the dreadmaw is slain, which causes all sections to die along with the dreadmaw. If a section has a speed, the dreadmaw can move up to that section's speed during its turn. Creatures can enter and occupy the same space as the dreadmaw, which is considered difficult terrain, and the dreadmaw cannot make opportunity attacks. Additionally, the dreadmaw is immune to effects that would forcibly move, banish, or magically teleport it or any of its parts.

Tail

Hit Points 108 (8d20 + 24)
Initiative Count 15
Speed 0 ft., swim 60 ft.

Traits

Position. The tail of the dreadmaw is a cube approximately 65 feet long, 15 feet wide, and 15 feet high and is attached to its body section.

Enduring Predator. Unless incapacitated, the tail's speed cannot be reduced below 30 feet.

Powerful Charge. If the tail moves at least 60 feet on its turn, the dreadmaw gains advantage on attack rolls until the start of the tail's next turn.

Actions

Fluke. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 60 ft., any number of targets within a 15-foot cube within range. *Hit:* 26 (3d12 + 7) bludgeoning damage. If the target is an object or structure, this attack deals double damage.

Mighty Dash. The tail triples its swimming speed until the end of its turn.

Body

Hit Points 121 (9d20 + 27)
Initiative Count 5

Traits

Position. The body of the dreadmaw is a cube approximately 25 feet long, 25 feet wide, and 25 feet high and connects the creature's tail and head sections.

Predator's Cunning. When the body takes the Hide action, each section of the dreadmaw gains the benefits of that Hide action.

Unfathomable Hunger. A creature swallowed by the dreadmaw comes to rest in its stomach inside its body section. A swallowed creature is blinded, has total cover against attacks and effects outside the dreadmaw, and takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by this damage is slain and digested by the body, which immediately regains 21 (6d6) hit points.

If the body takes 30 or more damage in a single round from creatures it has swallowed, a hole opens in its body through which swallowed creatures can escape. At the end of the body's next turn, muscular action closes this hole.

Actions

Lightning Metabolism. The body loses 11 (2d10) hit points and another section of the dreadmaw gains 22 (4d10) hit points, up to its hit point maximum.

Terrifying Might. The dreadmaw gathers its strength, gaining a +5 bonus to Strength and Constitution saving throws and ability checks until the end of the body's next turn.

Head

Hit Points 135 (10d20 + 30)
Initiative Count 10

Traits

Position. The head of the dreadmaw is a cube approximately 15 feet long, 20 feet wide, and 20 feet high and is attached to its body section.

Bastion of the Mind. Effects that would attempt to influence the dreadmaw's mind (such as psychic damage, the stunned and unconscious conditions, or effects that force an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw) can only affect this section (all others are immune). If this section is charmed, deafened, frightened, incapacitated, stunned, or unconscious, all others are as well.

Cavernous Maw. At the start of each of the head's turns, the dreadmaw can decide whether its mouth is open or closed. If the mouth is open and the head comes within 5 feet of a creature that can fit inside its dimensions, that creature must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or be swallowed by the dreadmaw. A creature so swallowed takes 11 (2d10) slashing damage from teeth in the dreadmaw's gullet.

Vulnerability. If this section is reduced to 0 hit points, the dreadmaw is slain.

Actions

Chomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 59 (8d12 + 7) piercing damage. If this damage reduces a creature to 0 hit points, it is torn in half.

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., each target within 5 feet of the head. *Hit:* Each creature must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn. Each object or structure takes 40 bludgeoning damage.

The Kharactan

Rarely do the rugged lifestyle of an adventurer and gourmet cuisine intersect, but such is the case with the fearsome Kharactan. These magnificent beasts are as dangerous as they are delicious. Haloa demonstrated a surprising aptitude for cooking after our battle with a Kharactan, despite his typically rugged, minimalist tastes. His recipe served the meat piping hot, dripping in an herbaceous, buttery blend with a dash of dwarven fire sauce. A meal fit for any king! However, only experienced hunters should confront a Kharactan lest catastrophe ensue. The beasts are more than just giant crabs. They have evolved to battle both each other and other horrors of the deep and clearly have few competitors. Underestimate them at your peril.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Brute

Favors: Druids, Evocation, Flight, Sorcerers, Wizards

Foils: Armor Class (High), Attacks, Barbarians, Paladins, Warlocks

KHARACTAN

From the darkest depths of the ocean hail the dreaded kharactans, horrific crustaceans of staggering size and even more staggering strength. The shell of these beasts is thicker than a fortress wall, scarred and damaged from titanic undersea battles. When forced to the surface, kharactans are a terror to behold. The beasts are low slung but still tower over most creatures at a height of 70 feet. The powerful legs of the kharactan allow it to move, climb, and even leap with surprising speed, all the while supporting the prodigious weight of the kharactan's enormous body. The general shape of the kharactan is a mixture of crab and lobster. Its body possesses a terrific mass of mandibles and eyes, bubbling with acid to dissolve any prey foolish enough to get within reach of the beast's monstrous claws. The left claw of the kharactan is enormous, capable of splitting a ship in twain with its powerful pincers. The right claw is a curious biological weapon capable of snapping shut at terrific speeds to unleash thunderous shockwaves. The entire ensemble is devastating to any who dare face a kharactan's insatiable hunger and natural aggression, requiring considerable resources or heroic adventurers to safely dispatch.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a kharactan with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

KHARACTAN LORE

DC	INFORMATION
13	The ocean is home to many leviathans, including the gigantic crustacean known as the kharactan. These creatures are part crab, part lobster, and all mean. Their oversized left claw can snap you in half with little effort, while the right claw can snap shut to create massive explosions.
18	The shell of a kharactan is one of the best armors to be found in all of nature. Most attacks have no chance of piercing its bulk, but once compromised the soft flesh of the creature is left extremely vulnerable. Try not to damage this meat too much! It's worth a fortune and exceedingly delicious.
24	When angered, kharactans can emit bubbles of acid to soften their prey for consumption. Cracking the shell of these creatures requires some serious firepower, best focused on its central body. Hit this area hard enough, and the entire leviathan will fall, saving you a lot of blood and sweat that would be spent dealing with its claws and legs.

TACTICS

While they are leviathans, kharactans cannot swim. Note the legs' reasonable walking speed, a small climbing speed, and the creature's ability to leap great distances. Movement from a kharactan is hugely impactful, as the legs' Trample trait can do lots of damage to characters who stand too close together. The Hard Shell of the leviathan is by far its strongest trait. An AC of 24 foils most attacks, but keep in mind this advantage vanishes if a section takes too much damage. Use Defensive Posture if the kharactan's body section loses its Hard Shell benefit— if that section

falls, the entire beast is defeated. The kharactan is as aggressive as it is stupid, attacking anything that comes within reach with little regard for tactics or cunning. Use Thunderous Snap on the right claw section to deal with ranged characters, and slaughter anyone who dares approach for melee combat using the left claw's deadly Pinch attack combined with its Oversized trait.

Easier Tactics — The kharactan isn't smart enough to seek favorable terrain for a battlefield. Provide the characters with a large, open space for them to utilize. Ideally, they will figure out that a giant crab will have a much harder time tearing them in half in such an environment. Only use the left claw's Pinch attack on targets who can take a hit. Don't use the Tear action, as all it takes is one bad roll to instantly kill a character. Have the kharactan wade into battle with no regard for its personal safety, moving through harmful effects such as *wall of fire* without a care.

Harder Tactics — Combining Leap with its respectable speed, use the kharactan's Trample feature to put a lot of hurt on any characters the beast can reach. A character knocked prone is the perfect target for the kharactan's attacks thanks to the advantage, which is especially deadly given the expanded critical range on the left claw section. Use Defensive Posture from the legs as often as possible. Resistance to damage is almost always worth the trade for disadvantage on attacks. The one exception to this is if there is a prime target to grapple with the left claw. This sets up a brutal Tear action when the right claw's turn comes around.

PLOT HOOKS

War of the Waves. A coastal city is under assault by a tyrannical empire of sea elves. The metropolis has held its own against the elves for generations, but the tides turn when the attackers unleash their latest weapon—a kharactan outfitted for war, with dozens of elves mounted upon its carapace.

Royal Gift. A curious kharactan has taken up residence on a deserted island. Atop its back is a massive shell from another fearsome leviathan, which the kharactan uses as a home. A tribe of nearby islanders seek to slay the beast and claim its shell, which will be fashioned into a throne for their leader.

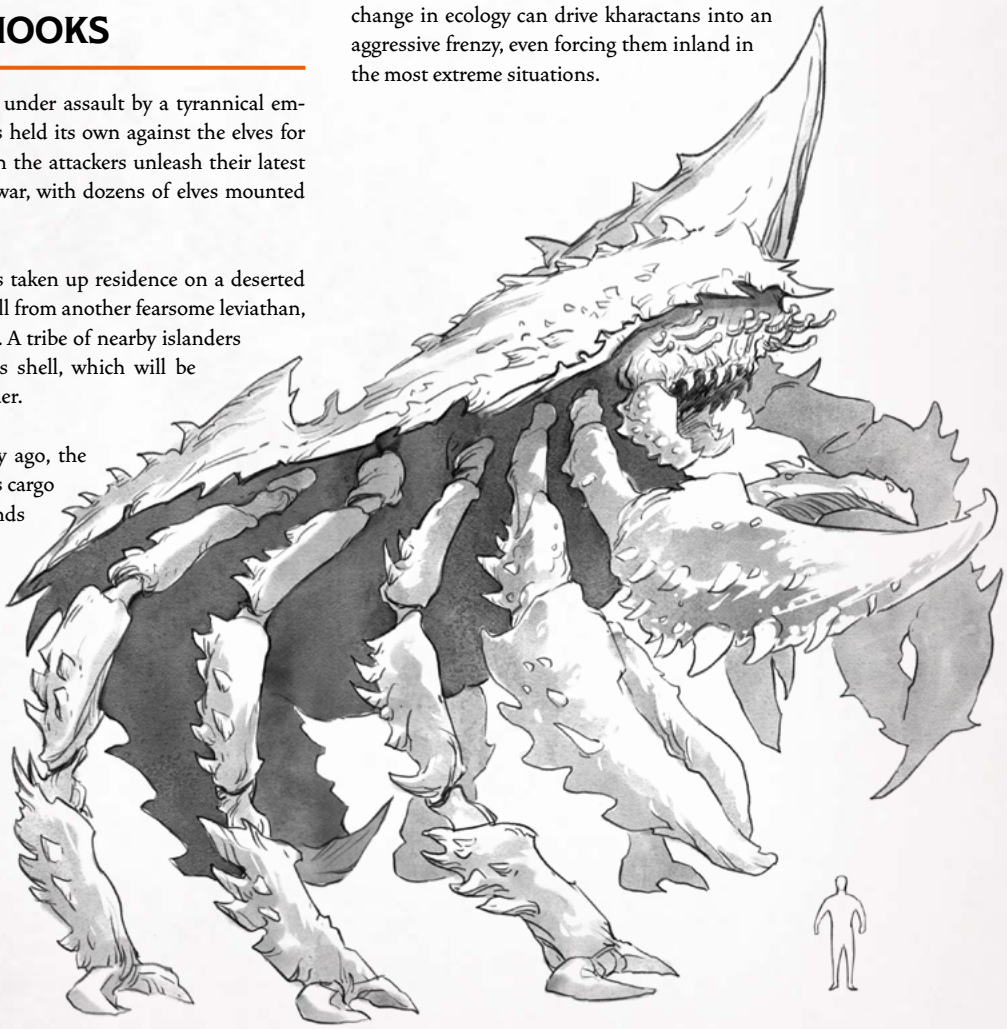
Wreck of the Ladies Lie. A century ago, the Ladies Lie, a trade ship famous for its cargo of unique gems, was sunk with all hands lost. Now the location is revealed, discovered by merfolk, and shared via rumor and trade through the sea. Unfortunately, the mostly intact vessel is now home to a belligerent kharactan which refuses to leave its comfy home.

TREASURE

While too unintelligent to understand the value of material wealth, kharactans nonetheless like shiny objects. The creatures have a strange habit of placing items upon their shells, many of which become lodged there due to the creature's movements. The true value of a kharactan is its succulent meat. There is no debate among expert chefs that the flesh of these leviathans is without peer among seafood, especially when fresh. Whiles it's nigh impossible to avoid spoiling some meat while killing the creature, a typical kharactan corpse is worth 100,000 gp to the right chef. Transporting such a quantity is no small feat, best arranged in advance to ensure the best possible value.

ECOLOGY

Kharactans take nearly two centuries to reach full maturity, predating on everything they can find as they grow. The creatures start their lives in the depths of the ocean, making their way to shallower waters as they age. Adult kharactans typically lair off rocky coasts, preferably within large caves that accommodate their bulk. This brings the creatures into frequent contact with humanoids and other sentients. So long as the kharactan's territory is respected, these encounters are rarely deadly. The creatures enjoy the shelter of their homes, and their approach is easily spotted. However, natural disasters or a rapid change in ecology can drive kharactans into an aggressive frenzy, even forcing them inland in the most extreme situations.



Kharactan

Titanic beast, unaligned

Armor Class 24 (natural armor), 5 with Hard Shell trait
Hit Points special
Speed special

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	1 (−5)	21 (+5)	3 (−4)	17 (+3)	4 (−3)

Saving Throws Con +11, Wis +9, Cha +3
Skills Perception +9
Damage Immunities acid
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages —
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Traits

Hard Shell. Each of the kharactan's sections is covered in a thick shell which is nigh impossible to penetrate. If a section is reduced to half its hit point maximum (rounded down), the shell of that section is catastrophically damaged and unable to protect the vulnerable flesh of the kharactan, reducing the AC of that section to 5 until the kharactan finishes a long rest.

Titanic Creature. The kharactan is a titanic creature, encompassing a 120-foot-wide, 65-foot-long, 70-foot-high space. It is so large that combat involves dividing its body up into various sections, each of which has a fixed initiative count on which it acts (losing initiative ties), detailed in its description. Each section is considered a unique creature for purpose of targeting (in case an effect or attack would include multiple targets), and effects that include an area may affect multiple sections of the kharactan if the area is large enough. Each section has its own hit points and actions but shares the kharactan's other statistics (such as damage resistances, saving throws, etc.). When a section is reduced to 0 hit points it becomes incapacitated until it regains hit points or the kharactan is slain, which causes all sections to die along with the kharactan. If a section has a speed, the kharactan can move up to that section's speed during its turn. Creatures can enter and occupy the same space as the kharactan, which is considered difficult terrain, and the kharactan cannot make opportunity attacks. Additionally, the kharactan is immune to effects that would forcibly move, banish, or magically teleport it or any of its parts.

Legs

Hit Points 170 (11d20 + 55)
Initiative Count 20
Speed 60 ft., climb 30 ft.

Traits

Position. The legs of the kharactan are a cube approximately 40 feet long, 120 feet wide, and 50 feet high and is attached to its body section.

Trample. When the legs of the kharactan spend movement to move into another creature's space for the first time on a turn, it can choose to trample that creature. A creature so trampled must succeed on a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. A successful save halves the damage and prevents being knocked prone.

Actions

Defensive Posture. The legs take the Dodge action. While it is benefiting from that action, the entire kharactan has resistance to damage other than psychic damage but has disadvantage on all attack rolls.

Leap. The kharactan jumps horizontally 120 feet.

Body

Hit Points 330 (21d20 + 110)
Initiative Count 10

Traits

Position. The body of the kharactan is a cube approximately 30 feet long, 70 feet wide, and 20 feet high and connects its head, legs, and claw sections.

Bastion of the Mind. Effects that would attempt to influence the kharactan's mind (such as psychic damage, the stunned and unconscious conditions, or effects that force an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw) can only affect this section (all others are immune). If this section is charmed, deafened, frightened, incapacitated, stunned, or unconscious, all others are as well.

Vulnerability. If this section is reduced to 0 hit points, the kharactan is slain.

Actions

Mandibles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 55 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 21 (4d6 + 7) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) acid damage.

Bubbling Fury. The kharactan generates bubbles of caustic acid in a 40-foot cube originating from its body section. The bubbles completely fill the area, lightly obscure anything within them, and last for 1 minute or until they are exposed to fire or a strong wind. When a creature enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it takes 28 (8d6) acid damage.

Lightning Metabolism. The body loses 22 (4d10) hit points and another section of the kharactan gains 44 (8d10) hit points, up to its hit point maximum.

Left Claw

Hit Points 217 (14d20 + 70)
Initiative Count 15

Traits

Position. The left claw of the kharactan is a cube approximately 65 feet long, 20 feet wide, and 20 feet high and is positioned to the left of its body section.

Oversized. The left claw of the kharactan is grotesquely oversized. This grants the left claw advantage on Strength ability checks and allows it to score critical hits on targets smaller than the kharactan on weapon attack rolls of 16–20.

Actions

Pinch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 65 ft., one target. *Hit:* 34 (6d8 + 7) piercing damage. If the target is a Gargantuan or smaller creature or object, the kharactan may grapple it (escape DC 22). Until the grapple ends the target is restrained and the kharactan can't use this attack against another target.

Right Claw

Hit Points 186 (12d20 + 60)
Initiative Count 5

Traits

Position. The right claw of the kharactan is a cube approximately 45 feet long, 20 feet wide, and 20 feet high and is positioned to the right of its body section.

Actions

Pinch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 45 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (4d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Tear. If the kharactan is grappling a creature with its left claw, it can force that creature to attempt a DC 22 Constitution saving throw as the kharactan attempts to tear it in half. On a failed saving throw, the target takes slashing damage equal to half its hit point maximum, or a half as much on a success. If this damage reduces a target to 0 hit points, it is torn in half, killing it instantly unless its anatomy would allow it to survive such a wound.

Thunderous Snap (Recharge 5–6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, range 300 ft., each target in a 30-foot-radius sphere. *Hit:* 55 (10d10) thunder damage. If a target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the start of its next turn.

BENTHILOCT

While many vile threats lurk within the blacken depths of the ocean, few are more terrifying than the voracious benthiloct. From the sea's darkest corners these leviathans creep forth, dragging entire fleets below the waves in a single night. Those few who have looked upon a benthiloct speak of a titanic, squid-like body covered in leathery flesh and dozens of eyes. At one end of this massive form is an array of fins which gift the beast with terrific swiftness, while at the other is a circular maw full of thousands of teeth. This deadly aperture is ringed with five arms over a hundred feet long each, flexing with unstoppable muscle. With these appendages the benthiloct can drag anything into its scything maw, shredding flesh and wood with equal efficacy. Benthilocts are rare, and rarer still are survivors of their attacks, leaving much to be learned about these mysterious beasts.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a benthiloct with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

BENTHILOCT LORE

DC	INFORMATION
14	Many tentacled horrors lurk in the ocean, but the benthiloct is by the far the worst. Its arms are massive, capable of ensnaring entire ships with a single tentacle. Once it has grasped its prey, the benthiloct drags the victims to its maw, which easily shreds anything that comes near.
19	A benthiloct sprays a paralytic oil on its prey that leaves most creatures helpless before the leviathan. Each of the creature's arms acts independently of the creature, as though it possessed a mind of its own. This allows the benthiloct to handle multiple foes simultaneously, so don't expect it to ignore you for long.
25	The arms of a benthiloct are easily regenerated, even when completely severed. Your best hope is to go for the main body with everything you've got. The creature will see you coming thanks to its advanced senses, so have a plan to avoid the tentacles that will attempt to foil your every move.

TACTICS

A battle with a benthiloct is all about its arms. Unless you are running a particularly strange encounter, odds are the battle will be fought at sea. With the impressive length of its tentacles, the body of the creature can safely lurk below the water line, dragging whatever its arms can grab into range of its Scything Maw. The damage potential of this trait is massive, and the benthiloct should do everything in its power to maximize this potential. Note that each of the creature's five arms has its own turn. With the incredible difficulty of breaking the monster's grapple, creatures grabbed by these arms are in deep trouble. Only magical teleportation or effects like *freedom of movement* are a reliable countermeasure. Make sure to use Writhing Grip to move targets, and consider using multiple arms to attack the same target and quickly move it into range of Scything Maw. If the characters take the fight below the waterline, use Paralytic Oil Cloud to fill them with regret. Remember that paralyzed creatures are easily critically hit, especially given the benthiloct's incredible size.

Easier Tactics — Keep the benthiloct's body close to the surface, granting the characters clear line of sight on what they need to focus on to win. Concentrate on grappling a few characters at a time, and if you are feeling extra generous don't move them closer to the benthiloct with Writing Tentacles. Keeps the characters close together to maximize their ability to help each other, as escaping the leviathan's group unaided is nigh impossible. Don't use Paralytic Oil Cloud on more than one target, and only do so at the very end of the fight.

Harder Tactics — Open with Paralytic Oil Cloud on the first turn, and keep the body of the creature well concealed beneath the water. Note that because the tentacles can reach up to 120 feet, the benthiloct can be outside of darkvision range, making fights at night particularly deadly. The creature's 300-foot blindsight means it doesn't mind being obscured, nor does the benthiloct care about what happens to its tentacles. It can always grow more.

PLOT HOOKS

Clash of the Titans. Two benthilocts are vying for territory, tearing each other's arms off in terrific clashes. The arms have attracted all manner of scavengers and predators feasting upon the remains. It's the perfect time to study ocean ecology, so long as you stay well out of the warring leviathans' way.

Kraken Queen. A mysterious druid calling herself the Kraken Queen lays claim to a popular shipping lane, demanding a tithe from every passing vessel to pay for "conservation efforts." The queen's proclamation is backed up by a trained benthiloct, which seeks any vessel that dares defy Her Majesty's orders.

Icy Incarceration. The clan of arctic dwarves has discovered an ancient benthiloct imprisoned within an icy glacier. A powerful necromancer commissions the dwarves to excavate the corpse, a prospect that carries grave implications for the necromancer's enemies. These nemeses are eager to put a stop to the scheme and will pay handsomely for aid in their endeavor.

TREASURE

Benthilocts have no lairs, traveling the oceans far and wide in search of food. While the number of vessels they sink in a lifetime is significant, there is no one location the remains of their victims can be found. However, within each benthiloct is a sack of paralytic fluid whose properties are highly prized among alchemists. When properly synthesized by a skilled alchemist, requiring a successful DC 23 Intelligence (Alchemist's Supplies) check and 1 week of strenuous activity, a powerful magical potion can be brewed known as the *draught of living death*.

Draught of Living Death

Potion, legendary

When you drink this potion, you become permanently paralyzed. A creature attempting to remove this effect must first succeed on a DC 23 Wisdom (Medicine) check as a part of the attempt, or the attempt fails.

The Benthiloct

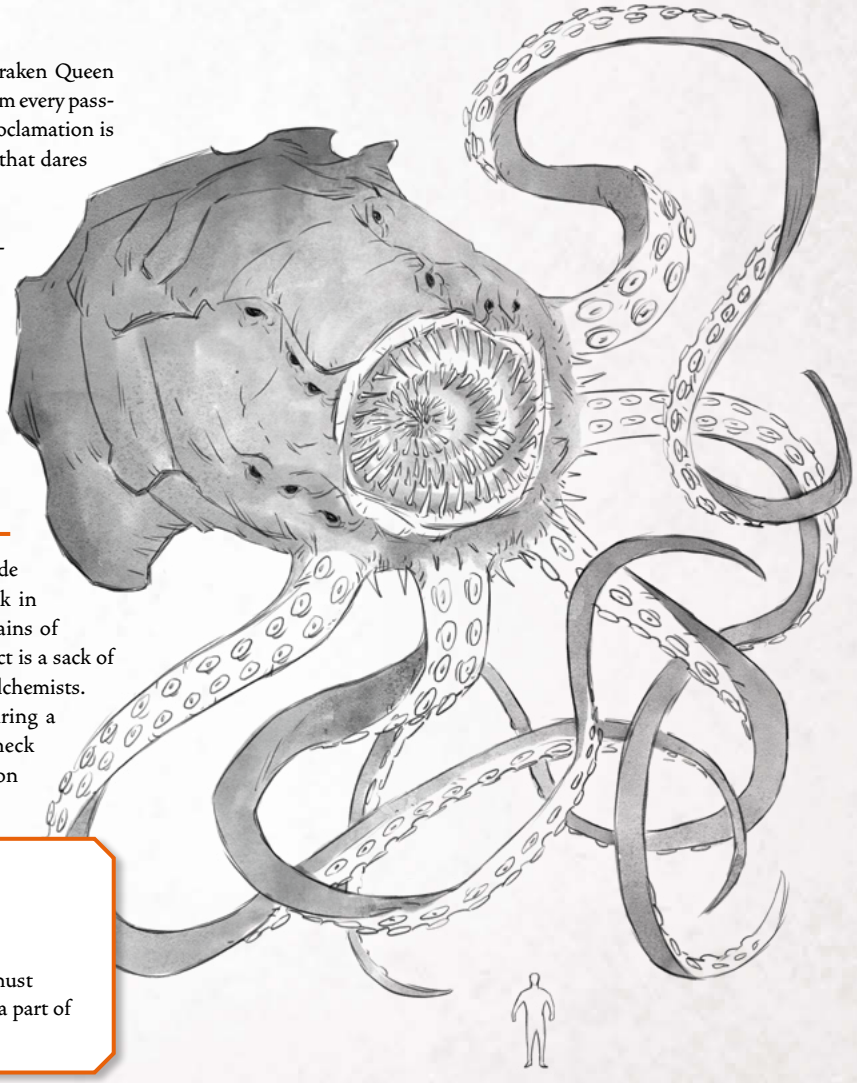
I used to think a kraken was the pinnacle of undersea monstrosities. Now I'm not so sure. The benthiloct is certainly a powerful beast, but it is no more than an animal—a huge, hungry animal with a voracious appetite. Tracking down such a beast has proven difficult. They rarely hunt, and when they do there is nothing left to provide evidence of their passing. I can understand why many seafaring cultures possess rituals and superstitions about the ocean. The benthiloct alone is likely responsible for many of them, and in the face of such an unstoppable, unknowable terror, any comfort—no matter how small—is better than none.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Controller

Favors: Fighters, Range (Long), Sorcerers, Specific Spells (*freedom of movement*), Warlocks

Foils: Barbarians, Paladins, Rogues, Stealth, Strength (High)



ECOLOGY

A benthiloct spends the overwhelming majority of its existence on the bottom of the ocean. What the creatures do down there none can see, but one thing is clear: they ascend to brighter waters to feed. Their devastating attacks rarely leave survivors, meaning much knowledge about benthilocts is mere conjecture based on indirect information. Aquatic sentient species often know more of these leviathans' ecology, revering these beasts for their strength and savagery (from a safe distance). Benthilocts avoid predating on other undersea creatures unless desperate. Whether this is a deliberate act or purely a coincidental evolutionary instinct, none can say.

Benthiloct

Titanic beast, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points special
Speed special

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	12 (+1)	22 (+6)	6 (−2)	27 (+8)	2 (−4)

Saving Throws Str +16, Dex +8, Wis +15
Skills Athletics +16, Perception +22
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses blindsight 300 ft., passive Perception 32
Languages —
Challenge 23 (10,000 XP)

TRAITS

Arms of the Deep. The benthiloct has five arm sections, each of which possesses the same statistics and actions as the single arm section. Each arm acts on a different initiative count—15, 12, 8, 5, and 2 (losing initiative ties).

Titanic Creature. The benthiloct is a titanic creature, encompassing an 80-foot-wide, 200-feet-long, 60-foot-high space. It is so large that combat involves dividing its body up into various sections, each of which has a fixed initiative count on which it acts (losing initiative ties), detailed in its description. Each section is considered a unique creature for purpose of targeting (in case an effect or attack would include multiple targets), and effects that include an area may affect multiple sections of the benthiloct if the area is large enough. Each section has its own hit points and actions but shares the benthiloct's other statistics (such as damage resistances, saving throws, etc.). When a section is reduced to 0 hit points it becomes incapacitated until it regains hit points or the benthiloct is slain, which causes all sections to die along with the benthiloct. If a section has a speed, the benthiloct can move up to that section's speed during its turn. Creatures can enter and occupy the same space as the benthiloct, which is considered difficult terrain, and the benthiloct cannot make opportunity attacks. Additionally, the benthiloct is immune to effects that would forcibly move, banish, or magically teleport it or any of its parts.

Arm

Hit Points 165 (10d20 + 60)
Initiative Count 15, 12, 8, 5, or 2 (see Arms of the Deep trait)

TRAITS

Position. Each arm of the benthiloct is a cube approximately 140 feet long, 5 feet wide, and 5 feet high and is attached to its body section.

Writhing Grip. When the arm successfully grapples a target or hits a target it is grappling, it may move the target up to 60 feet to an unoccupied space within reach of the arm or toward the mouth of the benthiloct (see the Scything Maw trait).

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (6d6 + 9) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Gargantuan or smaller and is upon or within water, the benthiloct may grapple it (escape DC 24) or force it to attempt a DC 24 Strength saving throw. On a failure, the target is thrown 60 feet in a straight line away from the benthiloct.

Body

Hit Points 676 (41d20 + 246)
Initiative Count 10
Speed 10 ft., 120 ft. swim

TRAITS

Position. The body of the benthiloct is a cube approximately 60 feet long, 80 feet wide, and 60 feet high and is attached to its arms sections.

Bastion of the Mind. Effects that would attempt to influence the benthiloct's mind (such as psychic damage, the stunned and unconscious conditions, or effects that force an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw) can only affect this section (all others are immune). If this section is charmed, deafened, frightened, incapacitated, stunned, or unconscious, all others are as well.

Scything Maw. The maw of the benthiloct is filled with thousands of razor-sharp teeth. Any creature that comes within 5 feet of the benthiloct's maw for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there is automatically attacked by the benthiloct with a Bite attack (no action required).

Vulnerability. If this section is reduced to 0 hit points, the benthiloct is slain.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 36 (5d10 + 9) piercing damage.

Regenerate. The benthiloct regenerates one of its slain or severed arm sections, restoring it to its hit point maximum.

Paralytic Oil Cloud (1/Short or Long Rest). The benthiloct projects a cone of oil in a 120-foot cone. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 24 Dexterity saving throw, becoming paralyzed for 1 minute on a failure, or restrained for 1 minute on a success. A restrained creature can use an action to remove the oil, as can another creature within 5 feet of a creature paralyzed or restrained by the oil.

CHARYDRA

Sea serpent. Wavewyrm. Landbreaker. These titles and many more belong to the noble and dangerous species of leviathan known as the charydra. Ancient beyond measure and catastrophically strong, charydras resemble a great green serpent over 500 feet long. The head of a charydra is a mixture of eel, dragon, and snake, its predatorial eyes glowing green in the darkness of the sea. Along its back are three fins extending the entire length of its body. The beast dominates the seas, overpowering all waves, tides, and currents with its bulk. Thankfully, the existence of most creatures is beneath the notice of a charydra, which predates only on those large enough to be worth the effort. This benevolence toward lesser creatures should be respected. Charydras have been known to sink obnoxious vessels with a single strike from their tails, as a horse would swat a fly.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a charydra with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

CHARYDRA LORE

DC	INFORMATION
17	Charydras are sea serpents of unfathomable size. A single blow from their massive tails or bite from their maws is enough to destroy a warship, let alone an adventurer. Thankfully, charydras are not aggressive toward most creatures. Just make sure you're not a whale and you should be fine.
22	The only way to slay a charydra is to chop off its head. Considering its neck is thicker than the average dragon, this is no easy feat. The creature's body regenerates at a frightful pace, meaning you must act swiftly to remove its head once the beast is down.
28	When threatened, a charydra can generate a gigantic whirlpool that will suck you to the bottom of the ocean. Its raw strength can overpower most magics, shaking it free of spells or effects that would even alter its mind.

The Charydra

Danger and beauty are two aspects often shared in nature. To look upon such a fearsome beast as a charydra is to know your place in the world. You are but one part of this grand ecosystem, endlessly complex and wondrous, and the charydra allows you to exist in its world. Should these beasts desire to sink the world's navies, flood our cities, and slaughter all who oppose them, I have no doubt they would succeed. In times like these I look to Ionia and her druidic ways. She is at peace with this truth, and I suspect many more like it.

— Talien Vos Karven



Classification: Brute

Favors: Damage (High), Range (Long), Rangers, Rogues, Warlocks

Foils: Barbarians, Melee, Paladins, Strength (High), Wizards

TACTICS

A charydra is a brutal opponent that always deals horrific amounts of damage. The creature cannot die unless its head is severed, leaving some parties with no choice but to retreat should they lack the resources to finish the charydra off. Note that the 200 hit points of damage required for severing the head *must* occur before the head's Regeneration trait kicks in, otherwise the characters must start from scratch. Managing the sheer size of the charydra is a challenge in and of itself. At more than 500 feet long, it can take the average character several turns to even get in range of its head, let alone damage it. Note the charydra's impressive swimming speed of 300 feet. This can be used to keep the beast's head well out of range, which is hardly inconvenient for the charydra thanks to Thunderous Roar. Use the body's Adrenaline Rush action to keep attacking with whatever section the characters are closest to, and don't be afraid to send them packing with a solid hit from Tsunami. Remember, the charydra is an animal, so unless grievously injured it doesn't seek a fight beyond securing its own immediate safety.

Easier Tactics — A charydra always hits hard, so any easy encounter with it should be managed cautiously. One lucky hit from a Bite attack could kill even a strong wizard instantly. The charydra shouldn't even try to fight back until the second or third round, preferring instead to flee from the annoying pests pecking at its body. Once things get serious, give the characters every chance to retreat should things go badly for them. A good hit with Tsunami may be enough to cause them to think twice about attacking the charydra, which is pretty easy to find should they wish to make a second attempt.

Harder Tactics — Unless there are no characters in the water, the charydra should use its Whirlpool (Step 1), Whirlpool (Step 2), and Whirlpool (Step 3) on the first round. Any characters who are dragged beneath the waves are priority targets for the charydra, with most characters being far too isolated for their teammates to provide aid. This leviathan is a simple creature. It and slaps to devastating effect, and its Constrict actions allows it to instantly kill a target. This effect is almost guaranteed to work against anything thanks to the epic Athletics bonus the beast possesses, and it's deadly when combined with Adrenaline Rush.

PLOT HOOKS

The Pearl Blade of Athilos. Embedded in the hide of a legendary charydra is an even more legendary blade: the *Pearl Blade of Athilos*. This magical weapon is sentient and has been influencing the charydra into attacking vessels. The blade hopes to be reclaimed by heroes seeking to end the attacks, who will then continue the blade's quest to raise an ancient civilization from beneath the seas.

The Doom Serpent. An enraged charydra is en route to a merfolk civilization which accidently destroyed its nest while constructing an outpost. The merfolk are desperate for a solution that involves neither losing their homes nor killing the great beast, which has already suffered enough. Time is short, as the beast will likely arrive within a week.

Wave Rider. A tribe of seafaring barbarians has a most unusual ritual—mounting and riding charydras that are strangely populous in their waters. The tribe offers this ritual as a test to those who would call themselves brave, challenging those far and wide to see if they have what it takes to ride such a formidable beast.

TREASURE

As oceanic nomads, charydras understandably have little in the way of cash, but in fact carry something far more valuable. Within each charydra's gut is a single pearl—an accretion of valuable minerals the creature ingests over its lifetime. The older the charydra, the larger the pearl, with some recorded at over 5 feet in diameter in particularly ancient specimens. Unfortunately, removing the pearl is nigh impossible without killing the charydra...not that there are many eager to try. A charydra pearl is priceless to any humanoid, but it is a subject of obsession for true dragons. Dragons are transfixed by these opalescent spheres and do almost anything to get one, regardless of alignment, personality, or goals. Why this interaction occurs is unknown, but those seeking to bargain with dragons always get what they want when using a charydra pearl as leverage.



ECOLOGY

Wherever there are deep waters full of large aquatic prey, charydras can be found. Thanks to their benevolent nature, these beasts are seen as good omens and signs of a healthy ecosystem. While you will never convince a sane sailor to go near a charydra, this is often as much a respectful sentiment as it is a fearful one. Only a legendary fool would provoke a charydra, though every now and again a group of starry-eyed adventurers mistake the beast's peaceful nature for weakness and attempt to make their names. This rarely ends well for the adventurers, as even those lucky enough to survive will likely face the wrath of angry locals that take a dim view of those who provoke a titanic sea serpent capable of leveling their livelihoods in an instant.

CHARYDRA

Titanic beast, unaligned

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points special
Speed special

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	17 (+3)	28 (+9)	4 (−3)	18 (+4)	4 (−3)

Saving Throws Dex +11, Con +17, Wis +12
Skills Athletics +26, Perception +12
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 22
Languages —
Challenge 27 (105,000 XP)

TRAITS

Ferocious Might. When the charydra attempts a saving throw other than a Strength saving throw against an effect that would cause it be incapacitated on a failure, it may instead attempt a Strength saving throw against that effect (the DC remains the same).

Regeneration. Each section of the charydra regains 30 hit points at the start of each of their turns. The charydra only dies if its head section is destroyed or separated from its body.

Siege Monster. The charydra deals double damage to objects and structures with its weapon attacks.

Titanic Creature. The charydra is a titanic creature, encompassing a 30-foot-wide, 500-foot-long, 30-foot-high space. It is so large that combat involves dividing its body up into various sections, each of which has a fixed initiative count on which it acts (losing initiative ties), detailed in its description. Each section is considered a unique creature for purpose of targeting (in case an effect or attack would include multiple targets), and effects that include an area may affect multiple sections of the charydra if the area is large enough. Each section has its own hit points and actions but shares the charydra's other statistics (such as damage resistances, saving throws, etc.). When a section is reduced to 0 hit points it becomes incapacitated until it regains hit points or the charydra is slain, which causes all sections to die along with the charydra. If a section has a speed, the charydra can move up to that section's speed during its turn. Creatures can enter and occupy the same space as the charydra, which is considered difficult terrain, and the charydra cannot make opportunity attacks. Additionally, the charydra is immune to effects that would forcibly move, banish, or magically teleport it or any of its parts.

Tail

Hit Points 526 (27d20 + 243)
Initiative Count 15
Speed 30 ft., swim 300 ft.

TRAITS

Position. The tail of the charydra is a cube approximately 300 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 30 feet high and is is attached to its body section.

Winding Coils. The charydra can grapple up to ten creatures or objects of Gargantuan size or smaller at a time with its Constrict action.

ACTIONS

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target is grappled and restrained (escape DC 34). If the tail uses this action again against a target it is restraining in this manner, it instead makes a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics). If the target is an object or fails the save, the charydra deals damage to it equal to the object's or creature's maximum hit points.

Tail Slap. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 300 ft., any number of targets within a 30-foot cube within range. *Hit:* 62 (8d12 + 10) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 26 Constitution saving throw or be knocked unconscious until the start of its next turn.

Tsunami. If the charydra is swimming, it can sweep its tail to create a gigantic wave of water within 300 feet of it. The wave is 300 feet high, 500 feet long, and 60 feet thick and moves 100 feet away from the charydra in a straight line at the end of each of the tail's turns. When the wave appears and at the start of each of the tail's turns, each Gargantuan or smaller creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 26 Strength saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) bludgeoning damage and being pushed ahead of the wave and restrained on a failed saving throw. A successful saving throw halves the damage and prevents the restrained condition. After the wave travels 500 feet, the effect ends. Objects and structures that come into contact with the wave for the first time on a turn take 100 bludgeoning damage.

A creature within or in contact with the wave can move through it by swimming, though the area is considered difficult terrain.

Whirlpool (Step 1). If the charydra is swimming, it begins to spin in circles, forming the beginnings of a titanic whirlpool. For the whirlpool to take effect, the charydra must perform its Whirlpool (Step 2) action using its head section and its Whirlpool (Step 3) action using its body section all within the same round.

Head

Hit Points 565 (29d20 + 261)
Initiative Count 10

TRAITS

Position. The head of the charydra is a cube approximately 40 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 30 feet high and is attached to its body section.

Bastion of the Mind. Effects that would attempt to influence the charydra's mind (such as psychic damage, the stunned and unconscious conditions, or effects that force an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw) can only affect this section (all others are immune). If this section is charmed, deafened, frightened, incapacitated, stunned, or unconscious, all others are as well.

Vulnerability. If the head is reduced to 0 hit points it becomes vulnerable to being severed. If the head takes 200 damage while at 0 hit points before it next regains hit points, it becomes severed and the charydra is slain (see its Regeneration trait).

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 101 (14d12 + 10) piercing damage.

Thunderous Roar (Recharge 5–6). The charydra unleashes a deafening roar in a 300-foot cone. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 26 Constitution saving throw, taking 165 (30d10) thunder damage and becoming permanently deafened on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a success.

Whirlpool (Step 2). The charydra continues to spin in circles, continuing the generation of a titanic whirlpool. For the whirlpool to take effect, the charydra must perform its Whirlpool (Step 1) action using its tail section and its Whirlpool (Step 3) action using its body section all within the same round.

Body

Hit Points 546 (28d20 + 252)
Initiative Count 5

TRAITS

Position. The body of the charydra is a cube approximately 160 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 30 feet high and connects the creature's tail and head sections.

ACTIONS

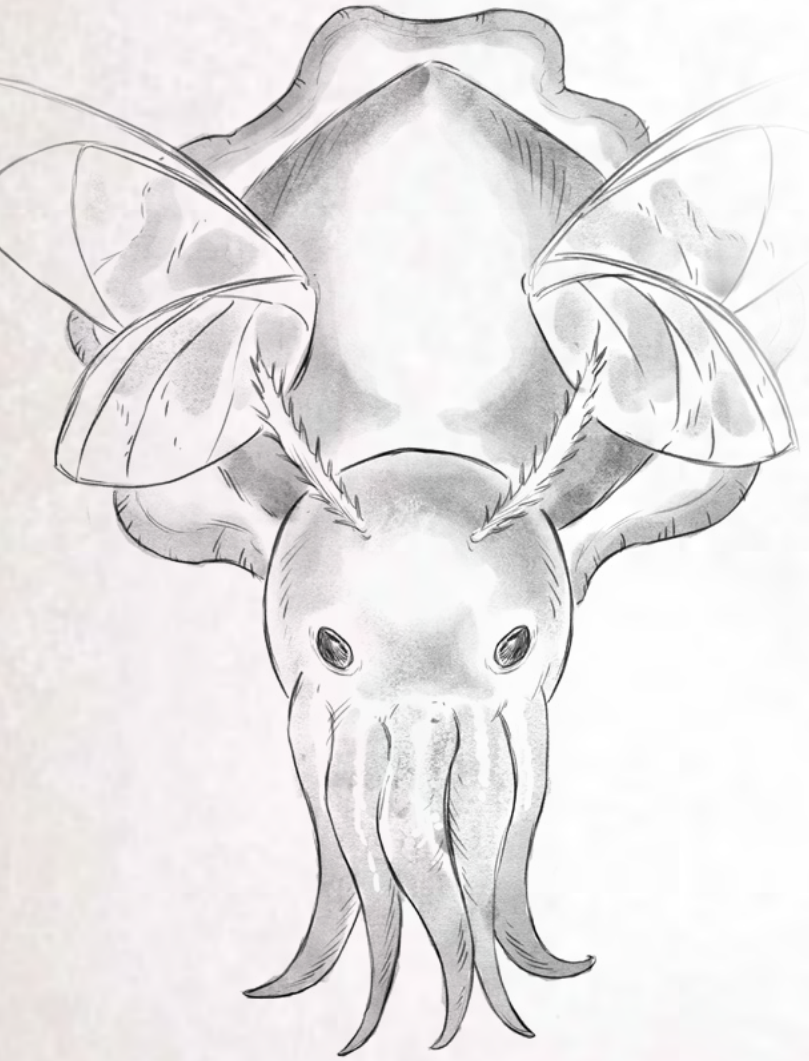
Adrenaline Rush. Another section of the charydra may immediately use one of its actions.

Whirlpool (Step 3). The charydra completes its creation of a titanic whirlpool, provided the charydra performed its Whirlpool (Step 2) and Whirlpool (Step 1) actions this round and is still swimming. The whirlpool is a 500-foot-radius cylinder that extends up to 1 mile underwater. Unattended objects and structures within the affected area are dragged to the bottom of the whirlpool at a rate of 500 feet per round and are destroyed. The whirlpool lasts for 1 minute and is considered difficult terrain. When a Gargantuan or smaller creature in the affected area starts its turn, it takes 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage and must succeed on a DC 26 Strength saving throw or be restrained and dragged 500 feet underwater.

Living Dreams

Most dreams are harmless. And, if we're being honest, most dreams are useless. But this isn't always so. They're about the experiences and desires of the dreamer, they are short lived, and they're rarely remembered. But there are some places and some dreams which aren't so fleeting.

In the Realm of Dreams, there is sometimes a dream with such a powerful will to exist that it transcends its dreamer's psychic reality and persists in its own right. Some of these sentient dreams are ripped from the Realm of Dreams by those who would seek to control them, or they cross over to the material plane where the barrier between planes is thinnest. They are beings of pure and often overwhelmingly terrifying thought. In some respects, they only exist in relation to those who perceive them—no dream appears alike to any two creatures—but their goals are their own and are often as confusing as they are deadly. These willful dreams can offer immense power and vital knowledge, or they can rob creatures of their abilities and individuality.



PROPHETIC REVERIE

The true form of a prophetic reverie, according to the few who have actually seen one, is like a perfectly translucent cuttlefish with mothlike, gossamer wings and glimmering antennae with fine hairs which glow in every color. It is scarcely the size of a coin. While strange, a prophetic reverie is also universally renowned as adorable. However, most who encounter one notice it not for its diminutive size or beauty, but rather for it being the most interesting, desirable, and knowledgeable being they have ever seen. Most who behold a prophetic reverie mistake it for whatever being they care for the most, which by all accounts, appears to please the creature. Its true form emits no sound other than the sounds it psychically projects. It has been reported to smell of the first flower to bloom in spring, a beloved child's hair, or a fresh breakfast after coming home from a harrowing adventure.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a prophetic reverie with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

PROPHETIC REVERIE LORE

DC	INFORMATION
11	A prophetic reverie is a special creature who blesses only the most deserving with its presence. It envelops those lucky souls with ecstatic joy and knows secrets of immense power, believed to be gained through visions of the future.
16	A prophetic reverie is a creature of immense psychic power which empathically links with other creatures. Its only wish, it appears, is to help solve the problems of those who encounter it by glimpsing through the Realm of Dreams to find and communicate the information they need and to offer them a place of respite. The power it requires to do this, unfortunately, comes from consuming the force of personality of the people it wishes to help. A prophetic reverie will always offer this comfort willingly, and it doesn't want to harm anyone, but if the comforted have more thirst for knowledge than desire to maintain their sense of self, it may cause their ecstatic demise in just a few seconds if they are unable to break free.
22	Prophetic reveries are weak but difficult to find due to their size. Asking a prophetic reverie to loosen its hold is likely the most effective way of ending its attack, though many who survive an encounter with one are consumed with regret for not staying longer in the presence of such warmth and joy.

The Prophetic Reverie

Prophetic reveries naturally manifest in the Realm of Dreams on a regular basis closest to points where sleepers are having pleasant dreams, for instance, on the closest point to people sleeping on hallowed ground. They occasionally manifest on the material plane near people trying to solve a crucially important problem that they have been concentrating on for an extended period—wizards researching new spells, artificers seeking to complete a great and perplexing work, or heroes with a great quest they are unsure of how to complete, among others, may find themselves visited by a reverie. Once in the material plane, they can be stuck for some time, and they may inadvertently hurt those who come too close or ask too much.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Controller

Favors: Bards, Clerics, Paladins, Specific Spells (*greater restoration*), Wisdom (High)

Foils: Barbarians, Charisma (Low), Druids, Fighters, Range

TACTICS

The prophetic reverie greets a creature and asks it how it can help, then it provides any assistance it can. The performance of magic, divination about the path to riches, or a euphoric trip all require the reverie to feed upon the psyches of other creatures. Before beginning the process, the reverie asks to create an empathic link and clarifies that it can provide information to the level the seeker wishes, and it explains that the seeker may ask to stop at any time.

A reverie never takes offense, but it does defend itself. Thanks to its Diminutive feature, the creature can avoid most attacks by fleeing, using its action to Dash and Disengage as necessary. The creature's primary method of attack is its Empathic Link feature, which it can use to slowly pummel characters into submission. A reverie never fights to the death unless it has an incredibly good cause. It's not equipped for battle, but allies are another matter. The creature can easily attract a hoard of sycophants desperate for its emotional highs, ready to throw themselves toward whatever cause the reverie deems worthy.

Easier Tactics — When battle is joined, the reverie's primary objective is fleeing the battle as quickly as possible. It should use its Empathic Link only as a tool of escape, leaving the party to sort out the mess of their damaged egos as soon as it gets out of range. The reverie should attempt to seek shelter inside a space into which the characters cannot fit, blasting them with Psionic Burst every time they get close.

Harder Tactics — Place the prophetic reverie in an area where it has ample opportunity for cover: a termite mound, a cave system, or even underwater. Focus on incapacitating targets with Empathic Link, using the Contentment option from Emotional Flood to hamper their countermeasures. If your players are wary, and they probably will be, play up how lovely and adorable the reverie is and how much it really doesn't



want to fight them. If the players don't believe it is benevolent, they deserve to feel a bit bad about killing something so helpful. The true battle when players encounter a prophetic reverie is within themselves—how much do their characters trust it? Trust warrants great rewards.

PLOT HOOKS

Drowning Dreamers. Campers at a popular lake keep going missing. One recovered victim says something or someone at the bottom of the lake whispered to them that it would give them everything they've ever wanted.

Sweet Dreams. A group of wizards trying to write an important spell is seeking help to complete the summoning ritual for a prophetic reverie. The wizard promises rewards, including the best night's sleep anyone has ever had.

Dream Signs. A missing person long presumed dead has reappeared in a village with no signs of aging, asking everyone to participate in a visit with a benevolent alien being who stole the long-missing person in the night. Apparently, the alien wishes to speak to the leader of the area and bring all people good tidings.

TREASURE

Information is treasure to prophetic reveries. They have an uncanny knack for knowing where to find powerful magical objects of great significance, and they can reward those for whom they hold particular affection with useful knowledge. This effect works similarly to a *locate object* spell, except the reverie can locate any object it has heard of, which can be up to 100 miles away, and anything blocking the path between the reverie and the object does not prevent the effect.

Prophetic Reverie

Tiny aberration, chaotic good

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 73 (21d4 + 21)
Speed 5 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (−1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +6, Cha +12
Skills Perception +6
Damage Resistances acid, bludgeoning, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, piercing, slashing, thunder
Damage Vulnerabilities psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 30 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages all
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

TRAITS

Diminutive. The reverie is extremely small, typically occupying a 1-inch space. The reverie gains total cover against creatures at least 30 feet away from it.

Empathic Link. At the start of each of its turns, the reverie can attempt to empathically link with creatures of its choice that it can see within 60 feet of it, gaining knowledge of that creature's emotions and desires. An unwilling creature must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or become linked to the reverie for as long as it remains within 120 feet of the reverie or until the reverie chooses to sever the link (no action required).

A creature so linked must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw at the end of each of its turns or suffer debilitating damage to its personality. When a creature so damaged attempts an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check using Charisma and rolls a 16 or higher, it instead rolls a 15.

Each subsequent time a creature fails this saving throw, the damage to its personality becomes more severe. On a second failed save, if an affected creature rolls an 11 or higher as described, it instead rolls a 10. On a third failed save, if it rolls a 6 or higher as described, it instead rolls a 5. On a fourth failure, a creature's Charisma becomes 1 and it becomes permanently incapacitated. All of these effects immediately end if an affected creature gains the benefits of a *heal* or *greater restoration* spell.

Subjective Appearance. The reverie's appearance is unique for each creature that perceives it, taking on the shape of a creature the viewer respects the most. Each time a creature sees the reverie for the first time in 24 hours, it must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the reverie. While charmed in this manner, a creature does everything in its power to protect the reverie, as if the reverie were a part of itself.

ACTIONS

Psionic Burst. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +12 to hit, range 60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 35 (10d6) psychic damage.

Emotional Flood. Each creature linked via the reverie's Empathic Link feature experiences one of the following emotions, which causes the following effects until the start of the reverie's next turn.

Euphoria. The creature's speed is 0 and it has advantage on saving throws.

- **Focus.** The creature has advantage on attack rolls and deals double damage on successful melee weapon attacks.
- **Contentment.** When the creature misses an attack roll or fails a saving throw or ability check, it falls prone and immediately ends its turn.
- **Affection.** The creature becomes attracted to an object or creature of the reverie's choice within 120 feet of it. While the creature is farther than 5 feet from the target of its affection, it has disadvantage on attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks.

Prophesize. The reverie receives visions of the future concerning a creature to which it is linked via its Empathic Link feature. The reverie rolls a d20 and the DM records the result. Whenever the creature about which the reverie received the visions rolls a d20, the DM can choose to substitute the result with the result of the prophecy, which cannot be used again. Once a creature has been affected by this feature, it cannot be affected again until the d20 result is used.

ECOLOGY

A prophetic reverie tends to stay close to where it manifests, which is typically already a place of great beauty in an area that is at least semi-regularly inhabited. It may sometimes choose to follow specific people or creatures around, especially baby animals and humanoids, to whom it enjoys whispering the true secrets of creation. When threatened it has been known to seek refuge inside the ear of someone who has not detected it, where—in its never-ending quest to be helpful—it whispers helpful but tragically unsolicited advice to its host. This sometimes results in the host's madness, but more than a few of the greatest rulers, thinkers, and inventors in history are hosts who somehow learned to listen.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region around a prophetic reverie is augmented by its magic, which creates one or more of the following effects within the area:

- It's easier to focus and learn new skills in this area. Downtime activities may be completed twice as quickly.
- All food grows twice as quickly, and all food foraged from the area or left in the area for at least 24 hours gains the benefit of the *goodberry* spell. This effect remains in place for 1d6 days even when the food is taken out of the area.
- Everyone who sleeps in the area has the best dreams they've ever had. When creatures expend Hit Dice during short rest, they receive maximum healing from each Hit Die expended.

If the reverie is slain, these effects fade immediately.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

All the creatures in this set have character-building and roleplaying applications. DMs are certainly free to craft an encounter in any manner they see fit, but it may be far more impactful to ask players what would be truest for their characters individually. Whom does your character most love? Where does your character most love to be? Whom do they most fear? These questions don't have to lead to sexual or traumatic themes, but it is possible that they will. As such, it's important to discuss how to uphold everyone's collective fun. Let your group know there are about to be chances to talk about what makes their characters tick, but there are also chances to introduce elements which could make people uncomfortable (or simply be less fun) if not handled with care. If you have not already discussed it, this is a good time to check in with how your group wants to include sexual or traumatic content and ultimately decide what kinds of themes you wish to exemplify in your campaign. Clear, open communication is the best safety tool, but there are others your group may wish to employ which are freely available online.

– Emma Lambert

SHAME EIDOLON

Only those who have gazed upon a shame eidolon in its true form understand disgrace. It is a dream which projects a psychic image of the creature the viewer most respects who will, inevitably, find the viewer wanting. A shame eidolon itself looks like pathetic attempt at life that by all accounts should not exist. It is an assemblage of limbs, a tongue, and eyes attached to a withering, sagging torso, all of which constantly undulate and reform, and all the color of a dingy, hopeless, wintery-grey day. It has comically large, swollen feet and grotesquely ingrown nails which it tries desperately to hide—but it is hopelessly unable to, given how much bigger they are than the rest of its body. Its mouth is tortured into a toothy grimace which shows a nauseating mixture of fear and contempt. Its eyes are empty holes of unfulfilled desire which reveal its unending envy of those with more useful and pleasing forms. It smells like old food, it whimpers like a spoiled child, and it fears nothing more than to be revealed.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a shame eidolon with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

SHAME EIDOLON LORE

DC	INFORMATION
12	A shame eidolon takes the form of a respected figure and proceeds to humiliate anyone who crosses its path. It is often a guardian in the Realm of Dreams or is occasionally summoned or made manifest in the material plane. It may manifest next to the skeletons in the bedroom closets of the most detestable aristocrats and wizards, or under the beds of particularly awkward preteens.
17	The shame eidolon is a powerful being that uses awkwardness and embarrassment as a weapon. While it is capable of inflicting moderate damage, its true power is in rattling its opponents to the point of intractable incapacitation.
23	Shame eidolons are weak to psychic attacks but can cause equally damaging psionic feedback in those who harm them. Be careful about what types of shame the eidolon forces you to experience. None of them are good, but each is bad in its own special way.

TACTICS

A shame eidolon appears as the person the viewer most respects, potentially intimidating the characters on sight with its Subjective Appearance trait. Empathic Link is the eidolon's strongest weapon, so use that to inflict specific types of shame on the party. The Bewilderment option is ideal for those with proficiency in Wisdom saving throws, allowing the eidolon to better harm them. The Impotence option is perfect for damage-dealing characters, making it a perfect punishment for pesky rogues. The Guilt option works well against tanks, as even barbarians can taste the sting of a tragic mistake from one's past. Lastly, the Embarrassment option works best on characters that need to move, especially melee characters like monks. Don't neglect your Gut Punch or Psionic Strike actions. Those can add injury to insult to great effect.

Easier Tactics — Don't use Gut Punch until the fight is nearly over, and don't optimize the Empathic Link's emotion options. A good default is the Embarrassment option, as many characters have a good fallback option for if they cannot make melee attacks. Only use Visions of Shame once or twice, and make sure the eidolon's primary goal in the fight is to feed on the characters' shame, not kill them.

Harder Tactics — The eidolon has no need to be in melee, so make good use of that flying speed. Use Gut Punch on characters below half their hit point maximum, ensuring a catastrophic blow that puts the party on the defensive. Use the Guilt emotion option on Empathic Link at the start of the fight, switching to other options as the encounter continues. Getting that early damage is essential to downing characters.

PLOT HOOKS

Shame, Shame, Shame. A high priest believes he has been speaking to Lathander himself and that he is to proclaim Lathander's new message: everyone is doing a terrible job and should all be ashamed of themselves. Lower members of his church have enlisted the party to get to the bottom of this behavior while saving their high priest's life.

The Sting of Rejection. A gnomish wizard school hopeful made a warlock pact with a shame eidolon after getting rejected from his top choice. He is now hiding out in the cellars of the dorms and making all the first-year wizards flee in humiliation and exhaustion.

Yes, My Disgrace. A noble seeks assistance to summon a shame eidolon to guard her family's shameful secrets. She requires participants in a ritual where the heroes must reveal their biggest failures and regrets in a strange bought of "mutually assured humiliation."

TREASURE

Battling a shame eidolon is a challenging emotional experience. Those who emerge victorious have been afforded a chance to reflect on their most shameful and difficult moments in life. Creatures that take 8 hours of strenuous activity to reflect on these experiences may choose to remove a flaw from their personal characteristics, having grown enough that the flaw no longer influences their behavior.

ECOLOGY

Shame eidolons manifest most often on the material plane near dreamers with shameful secrets or those who are processing humiliating events. Thus, they most often manifest nearby adolescent children, clerics, paladins, or similarly virtuous beings. They are attracted to places

SHAME EIDOLON

Medium aberration, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 212 (25d8 + 100)
Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (−1)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Int +7, Wis +10
Skills Deception +12, Intimidation +12, Perception +10
Damage Resistances acid, bludgeoning, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, piercing, slashing, thunder
Damage Vulnerabilities psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages all
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

TRAITS

Empathic Link. At the start of each of its turns, the eidolon can attempt to empathically link with creatures of its choice that it can see within 120 feet of it, gaining knowledge of that creature's emotions and deepest, darkest shame. An unwilling creature must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or become linked to the eidolon for as long as it remains within 240 feet of the eidolon or until the eidolon chooses to sever the link (no action required).

A creature so linked must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw at the end of each of its turns or suffer debilitating damage to its ego, causing one of the following effects (chosen by the eidolon) until the end of its next turn.

- **Bewilderment.** The creature loses proficiency in two saving throws and two ability checks of its choice.
- **Inadequacy.** The creature deals half damage.
- **Guilt.** The creature takes psychic damage equal to any damage it deals to other creatures.
- **Embarrassment.** The creature's speed is 0 and it cannot willingly leave its space by any means.

Subjective Appearance. The eidolon's appearance is unique for each creature that perceives it, taking on the shape of a creature the viewer respects the most. When a creature sees the reverie for the first time in 24 hours, it must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be intimidated by the eidolon. While intimidated in this manner, moving toward the eidolon costs double movement.

ACTIONS

Psionic Strike. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +12 to hit, range 30 ft., each creature of the eidolon's choice within range. *Hit:* 22 (4d10) psychic damage.

Gut Punch (Recharge 5–6). The eidolon delivers a psychological gut punch to a creature it can see within 120 feet of it. The target must attempt a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw, taking psychic damage equal to its hit point maximum on a failure, or half as much on a success. If this effect would reduce a creature to 0 hit points, it instead reduces it to 1 hit point.

Visions of Shame. A creature the eidolon can see within 60 feet of it must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or experience visions of its most shameful experiences from its past for 1 minute. An affected creature has its senses reduced to 10 feet, perceiving the events of its shameful past beyond that radius in the form of vivid hallucinations. At the end of each of its turns, an affected creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success.

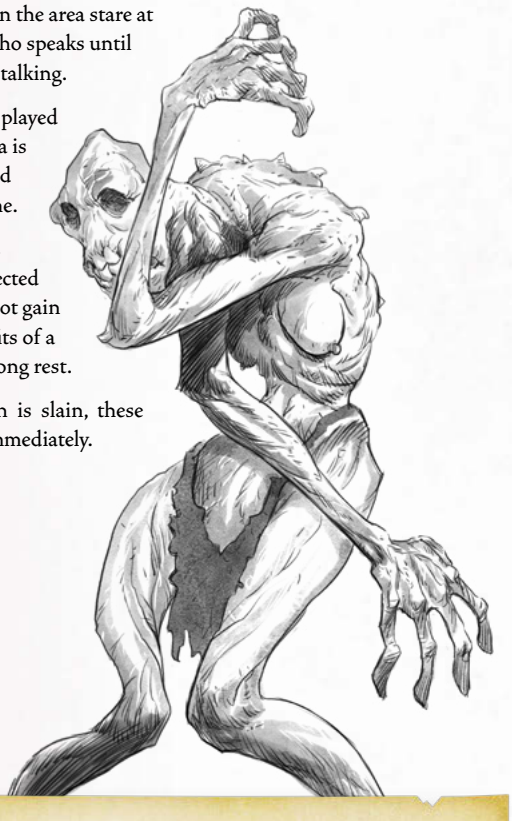
where their subjective form is most likely to make sense or places where people most frequently feel shame: schools, performance halls, religious institutions, doctor's offices, as well as the homes of lovers and parents with particularly high expectations. The presence of a shame eidolon is keenly felt. While the creature rarely kills, the deep discomfort experienced by its victims is enough to drive anyone to violence.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region within a quarter mile a shame eidolon is augmented by its magic, which creates one or more of the following effects within the area:

- Animals in the area stare at anyone who speaks until they stop talking.
- All music played in the area is off key and out of tune.
- Creatures in the affected area cannot gain the benefits of a short or long rest.

If the eidolon is slain, these effects fade immediately.



The Shame Eidolon

I have lived my life without regret, but not without indignity. Throughout my adventures I have been subjected to countless humiliations, none of which I would care to repeat. You can imagine my frustrations when an encounter with a shame eidolon not only forced me to relive these experiences, but all of them at once! Thankfully, my companions couldn't bear witness to the hallucinations, but I'm fairly certain they got the gist. I caught Zau-Hek snickering behind my back more than once in the following weeks, and she is not known for her humor.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Controller

Favors: Bards, Clerics, Psychic (Damage), Rangers, Wisdom (High)

Foils: Damage (High), Paladins, Rogues, Sight, Warlocks

WORST NIGHTMARE

Only the strongest minds can gaze upon a worst nightmare and recall anything beyond sheer terror. These creatures are the mind's visual manifestation of fear itself, and therefore they have no form beyond the subjective, terrified reality of each individual that beholds them. A nightmare's form may flicker in and out of existence and is often indistinguishable from the cacophony of disaster it controls in its wake. To most, it is a massive and slavering beast whose every joint and ripple is designed to bring about doom. To others, it may be a vicious teacher from childhood, a concept, a loved one wronged, or anything in between. All those who have lived to see it know one thing with certainty: they were not prepared for the psychological damage it did to them.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a worst nightmare with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

WORST NIGHTMARE LORE

DC	INFORMATION
14	A nightmare can reach into your mind and drain your sanity. This process starts a vicious cycle: as your will grows weaker, so too does your ability to resist the nightmare, allowing it to shatter your mind further until nothing remains.
19	Daring to look at a worst nightmare is to invite terror. Its powerful psychic attacks are particularly effective against those who are frightened of it—which is unfortunately most creatures.
25	The wounds inflicted by a worst nightmare are not of a physical nature, inflicting a magical malaise upon the mind. This mysterious affliction can only be alleviated by extraordinarily powerful magic, well beyond all but the mightiest of spellcasters.

TACTICS

A worst nightmare has many horrifying abilities, most of which can lay waste to a party. As with its lesser brethren, its Empathic Link feature is its deadliest. This powerful effect has a humongous range, a ferociously high save DC, and a catastrophic consequence for failure. Note that because the worst nightmare forces a lot of Wisdom saving throws, the penalties of failing an Empathic Link save can be extremely severe. Remember that thanks to the nightmare's lair actions, creatures can still be frightened of it even if they would ordinarily be immune, but they gain advantage on saves against the nightmare for their trouble. Use Dread Scream to scatter and disorient the party, following up with Right behind You and some Psionic Reaving attacks to finish off isolated characters.

Easier Tactics — Don't use Dread Scream until the fight is nearly over, and only establish an Empathic Link with up to two characters at a time. The players don't need to know you are pulling punches—they will be too busy trying not to lose their characters. The nightmare's primary goal

(at least until it is badly injured) is to terrify the party, reveling in their fear and impotence before that which they dread most.

Harder Tactics — Have the nightmare strike with surprise thanks to its high Stealth, unleashing Dread Scream on the first turn. Place isolated characters in areas of darkness, filling the battlefield with clouds of shadow through which only the nightmare can see. Let the nightmare remain hidden for most of the fight, letting Empathic Link wear the party down. Once their Wisdom is sufficiently penalized, move in to finish them off in a patient and deliberate manner.

PLOT HOOKS

Sleeping Like a Baby. A worst nightmare with a penchant for terrorizing children is menacing a city. The creature uses the screams of the young to lure their parents into reckless action, leaving dozens of orphans through the city. Something must be done.

Unsleeping Beauty. A dwarven queen has been unable to sleep for some time. She spends her days atop a great mattress in the upper chamber of her inverted, underground tower. A beast was recently found deep in the dwarven mines and has been locked up in the dungeon levels of the tower. The queen claims that she can see its pinprick eyes when she closes hers.

Stay Puffed. A confectioner's shop and the family home above it appear to be on fire, but for some reason, the house does not burn. The family escaped, but the youngest child, Ray, can only say, "I tried to think of something that would never harm me." A sweet and gooey foam has begun to ooze out of the windows, doors, and roof.

TREASURE

While battling a worst nightmare is traumatic for most, defeating one is a tremendous personal victory for all involved. Creatures directly involved in the downfall of a worst nightmare gain immunity to the frightened condition for 1 year—a fitting reward for those who managed to face their worst fears and emerge triumphant.

The Worst Nightmare

I have no wish to provide my enemies with knowledge of my worst fears. Should you encounter the foul creatures known as "worst nightmares," know this: If you think you are ready, you are not. If you think you have known terror, think again. An encounter with such a creature is indescribable, each agonizing moment uniquely fashioned to inflict all-encompassing fear.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Lurker

Favors: Bards, Paladins, Psychic (Protection from), Wisdom (High), Wizards

Foils: Barbarians, Fear (Protection from), Fighters, Rangers, Weapons (Damage), Wisdom (Low)

ECOLOGY

It is exceedingly rare for a nightmare to manifest in the real world, and when it does it is often so destructive that it must be dealt with swiftly and decisively. However, they are occasionally summoned as guardians by the most powerful of liches, aberrations, and chaotic-evil gods. The most philosophic of wizards ponder whether nightmares truly exist when there is no creature to give them fearsome form, or if no one has had the presence of mind to figure out.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The area within 1 mile of a worst nightmare is augmented by its magic, which creates one or more of the following effects within the area:

- If a creature would be immune to the frightened condition, it does not have immunity and instead has advantage on saving throws against the nightmare and the frightened condition.
- When a creature finishes a short or long rest, it suffers one level of exhaustion.
- Animals within the area howl wildly at the perpetually full moon all night, including animals that would not normally howl.

If the nightmare is slain, these effects fade after 12 hours.



Worst Nightmare

Huge aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16
Hit Points 425 (37d12 + 185)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	27 (+8)

Saving Throws Dex +14, Con +13, Int +11
Skills Insight +13, Intimidation +15, Perception +13, Stealth +14
Damage Resistances acid, bludgeoning, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, piercing, slashing, thunder
Damage Vulnerabilities psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages all
Challenge 25 (75,000 XP)

Traits

Empathic Link. At the start of each of its turns, the nightmare can attempt to empathically link with creatures of its choice that it can see within 120 feet of it, gaining knowledge of that creature's emotions and fears. An unwilling creature must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw or become linked to the nightmare for as long as it remains within 1 mile of the nightmare or until the eidolon chooses to sever the link (no action required).

A creature so linked must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw at the end of each of its turns or suffer debilitating damage to its sanity. When a creature so damaged attempts an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check using Wisdom and rolls a 16 or higher, it instead rolls a 15.

Each subsequent time a creature fails this saving throw, the damage to its personality becomes more severe. On a second failed save, if an affected creature rolls an 11 or higher as described, it instead rolls a 10. On a third failed save, if it rolls a 6 or higher as described, it instead rolls a 5. On a fourth failure, a creature's Wisdom becomes 1, it becomes permanently incapacitated. Any of these effects immediately end if an affected creature gains the benefits of a *wish* spell.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). When the nightmare fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Right Behind You. As a bonus action on each of its turns, the nightmare can magically teleport to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of a creature to which it is empathically linked via its Empathic Link feature. When the nightmare appears in this manner, the linked creature must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw or drop anything it's holding and immediately use its reaction to move as far as it can from the nightmare using its full movement by the safest possible route.

Subjective Appearance. The nightmare's appearance is unique for each creature that perceives it, taking on the shape of a creature the viewer fears most. When a creature sees the nightmare for the first time in 24 hours, it must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw or be permanently frightened by the nightmare.

Actions

Multiattack. The nightmare makes three Psionic Reaving attacks, each of which must be against a different target. The nightmare can forgo making two of these attacks to instead take the Darkness action.

Psionic Reaving. *Melee Spell Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 40 (5d12 + 8) psychic damage. If the target is frightened of the nightmare, it is vulnerable to damage dealt by this attack.

Darkness. The nightmare casts the spell *darkness* without the need for concentration or any components.

Dread Scream (Recharge 5–6). The nightmare emits a terrorizing scream, which can be heard in a 120-foot-radius sphere centered on the nightmare. Each enemy creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw or panic until the end of its next turn. A panicking creature drops whatever it is holding and must do everything in its power on each of its turns to move away from the nightmare by the most expedient and efficient means available. A creature that fails this saving throw with a roll of 1 instantly dies of fright.

Legendary Actions

The nightmare can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The nightmare regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Hide. The nightmare takes the Hide action.

Psionic Reaving. The nightmare uses its Psionic Reaving action.

Dread Scream (Costs 3 Actions). The nightmare uses its Dread Scream action.

Mycelial Groves

Adventurers who hail from or have travelled through deep forests or subterranean realms are likely familiar with the various ambulatory, intelligent mushroom creatures that live there. Sentient fungi-folk are usually peaceful and live in close-knit communities. Many have forms of communal telepathy or empathy which when twisted is a terrible thing. Whether attacked during a time of shared consciousness or manipulated by some fiend or aberration, what was once a community of empathetic individuals becomes a screaming hivemind of hunger known as a mycelial grove. The grove releases wave after wave of spores until the terrain itself is connected to its being. Then it waits until something falls into its midst and, like dozens of carnivorous plants acting as one, it turns on its prey.

Mycelial groves are unusual for high-tier adventures not only because there are few high-level plants but also because they do not have an agenda or malice. They are just a particularly dangerous carnivorous plant that needs decaying organic material to survive. They can be dropped in as a random encounter as part of a landscape without any connection to the larger plot of your adventure or utilized as a natural defense for another enemy. Mycelial groves can be used to give a sense of danger to exploration that isn't always present at higher tiers. They also provide an opportunity to use a strategy that high-level parties often forget they can employ—they can just leave. Mycelial groves are either slow moving or completely immobile. They physically cannot pursue a party and have no interest in doing so.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

My day job is to worry about the health of forest ecosystems, so in a lot of ways fungi are my coworkers. Most of the time I'm very fond of them, with their fascinating variety and ability to liven up an otherwise boring winter species survey when everything else is dead, hibernating, or migrating south. But, like anyone you share stressful working conditions with, you sometimes wonder if they're secretly a serial killer and, if so, what kind of serial killer they might be. (It's not just me, right?)

Anyone who works in the woods knows to tell people that fungi are serious business. People trying to forage accidentally poison themselves all the time. Wanted shrooms for a good time and ended up with death caps? Too bad buddy, the woods don't care. For creatures so much smaller than us, the potential ways fungi can kill you are vast—infecting people's brains so they climb high enough to spread spores upon death, rotting them from the inside, or using their still-living flesh as a breeding ground? Nature is the horror game we wish we could write, and the scariest thing of all is that it really isn't personal.

– Orla ní Dhúill

TALIEN'S NOTES

A complex and tragic set of creatures, the mycelial groves are dangerous but without malice. The circumstances of their creation stripped them of most complex thought beyond hunting instincts. They are a rare occurrence and there is still much to learn about how mycelial groves are formed. Some evidence suggests interference from demonic forces of rot and decay, but this could be coincidence. The location of the grove seems to be the main determinant in what manner of mycelial grove it becomes, but I have yet to discern the relationship between age and just how far their underground mycelial root networks extend. There is also the crucial question of whether a grove is a single mutated creature or a swarm of creatures operating as one. The answer, like so much about fungi, is somewhere in between and variable on circumstance.

DEADWOOD HOLLOW

While most fungi-folk rarely come to the surface world, one kind of mycelial grove can be found in the deep forests. Perhaps the journey to the surface is what led the usually peaceful mycelial beings into the dangers that create a deadwood hollow. In the darkest parts of old woodland, with thick moss and rotting deadwood piled high in the undergrowth, you might be so unfortunate as to have found yourself stumbling into a hollow. In the center of the grove lies an enormous tree covered in brown and purple fungal growth. Atop the trunk the fungus rings the tree like a crown, over the hint of a face in the holes and knots of bark. By the time you see the roots and branches move, it is already far too late.

LORE

A character can learn the following about a deadwood hollow with an Intelligence (History), Intelligence (Nature), or Wisdom (Survival) check.

DEADWOOD HOLLOW LORE

DC	INFORMATION
11	Deadwood hollows are sentient fungal colonies that come from underground and can release a variety of toxic spores. They are typically peaceful when left alone, but the creature's territory is far larger than it appears thanks to an expansive network of underground roots.
16	Mycelial groves are corrupted swarms of fungal creatures acting as a hivemind, and deadwood hollows are the surface-dwelling version of them. They can attack with animated thralls known as deadwood servants and view all organic matter as a source of food.
22	Deadwood hollows are slow, with no natural vulnerabilities other than sunlight. Their presence is difficult to discern until the fungus strikes, so watch for the many signs you are closing on its position.

TACTICS

A deadwood hollow does not need to actively hunt. It instead lies dormant in its part of the forest, like all carnivorous plants, until a creature makes the mistake of wandering in and disturbing it. The deadwood hollow remains concealed for as long as possible, undisguisable from its surroundings, until its prey is in the center of the grove. With the 120 feet of underground mycelial root network providing it tremorsense, it is nearly impossible to sneak up on or surprise a deadwood hollow. The root network also provides the deadwood hollow with a surprise round on any creatures that can be surprised. Deadwood servants roll their own initiative and attack different targets in an attempt grapple as many characters as possible.

Easier Tactics — The element of surprise is the deadwood hollow's usual ally as it feeds off beasts of the forest. It releases its Awakening Spores to create a deadwood servant to protect it and make a melee branch attack on one of the party. The hollow should alternate between making deadwood servants and releasing its Rotting Spores until all three deadwood servants have been made. The hollow should then focus its melee attacks on a single party member so that all others will have disadvantage.

Harder Tactics — The deadwood hollow senses the party coming for at least 120 feet, so it should release its Awakening Spores in advance and create at least one deadwood servant. The DM can decide how much of a threat the party appears to present to the grove. Once the party is in position the deadwood hollow ambushes them with the deadwood servants and a branch attack, and it releases its Rotting Spores. It should attempt to focus its melee attacks on poisoned characters so that they still have disadvantage in attacking back. The deadwood servants also instinctively attack creatures affected by the poison so that the deadwood hollow's melee attacks on those creatures are made with advantage. The deadwood hollow should attempt to use its lair actions as early as possible to try to keep its prey from escaping.

PLOT HOOKS

A Hunter's Famine. Local villages around the forest have reported a staggering shortage of game and cannot find the predator responsible. The villages are at risk of starving now, and with winter just weeks away, heroes are sought to track down whatever is responsible.

Herbalists' Paradise. The party receive a tip that a remote area of mountainous forest is particularly rich in herbalism ingredients. Unfortunately, the tip comes from a mischievous hag that seeks a confrontation between her pawns and a deadwood grove. No matter who loses, the hag wins, as she has a mighty need for some quality entertainment.

A Fungus Among Us. An ancient deadwood grove has been carefully tended by diligent wood elves for centuries. The elves have mastered coexistence with the creature, though guests in their community are not welcome for fear of provoking the mycelial grove. When a rampaging forest fire threatens the community, the elves turn to outsiders in hopes of saving the grove.



TREASURE

The deadwood servants created by the hollow can be harvested for valuable materials, even while alive, and the spores from the hollow itself can also be collected. Doing so requires a successful Intelligence (Nature) check to recognize the ingredients, understand their properties, and harvest them. The DC of this check and the benefits of its results follow. The entire process requires 1 hour of strenuous activity per material, something a deadwood hollow rarely tolerates peacefully.

DEADWOOD HOLLOW ROTTING SPORES

DC	HARVEST
13	Four pouches of powdered rotting spores can be harvested from the deadwood hollow, which are worth 15 gp per pouch.
18	The powdered spores are a primary ingredient in a fluid know as liquid blight, which must be contained within a glass bottle or become inert. As an action, you can splash the bottle on a creature within 5 feet of you or throw it up to 20 feet, shattering it on impact. In either case, you must make a ranged weapon attack as part of the action, using the bottle as an improvised weapon. On a successful hit, the target takes 8d10 necrotic damage. It does not effect constructs or undead, but it deals maximum damage to plant creatures. The bottle also instantly rots any Huge or smaller plant it hits that is not a creature.
24	The creature who succeeds on this check knows how to make liquid blight. Doing so takes 1 hour of strenuous activity and requires a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Alchemist's Supplies) check, consuming a single pouch of spores in the process.

DEADWOOD SERVANT SAP

DC	HARVEST
15	One vial of sap can be tapped from each deadwood servant. The sap is a valuable ingredient related to concoctions that affect wakefulness or energy and is worth 2,000 gp per vial.
20	When consumed, a vial of sap from a deadwood servant can be used to magically grant a plant or animal sentience for 1 day and can be applied to a Huge or smaller beast or plant. The beast or plant must have an Intelligence of 3 or lower. It then gains an Intelligence of 10 and the ability to speak one language (chosen by the DM). If the potion is given to a plant, it gains the ability to move its limbs, roots, vines, creepers, and so forth, and it gains senses like a humanoid.
24	A creature that succeeds on this check knows how refine the sap into a drinkable elixir. Doing so requires 1 hour of strenuous activity, one vial of sap, and a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Alchemist's Supplies) check. A creature that consumes the sap when prepared in this manner gains all the benefits explained earlier in the table, but it is also charmed for 30 days by the creature who brewed the potion. Additionally, the sentience-inducing effects of the potion become permanent.

The Deadwood Hollow

When I first encountered a deadwood hollow, I thought to have stumbled across a particularly aggressive treant with an infectious disease. As fire proved an ineffective solution and the plants of the forest began to rise up around me, I realized the situation was far more dire. A hasty retreat and careful observation from a safe distance seemed prudent—a practice I am quite proficient in. Among the forest floor I discovered additional data gleaned from days of observation. The creature, while clearly powerful, was merely territorial, and the ground nearby was saturated with thin, white fungal threads. This huge, root-like network gives the deadwood hollow heightened senses of its surroundings, a trait I have yet to observe in other fungal specimens found on my journeys.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Brute

Favors: Armor Class (High), Clerics, Fighters, Saving Throws (High), Wizards

Foils: Conditions (Incapacitated), Paladins, Rangers, Rogues, Stealth



ECOLOGY

Nearly all fungi enjoy dark, damp conditions, and the deadwood hollow is no exception. No friend to sunlight, they are found in the darkest parts of the forests. Fungus, whether sentient or not, holds a unique place in the natural world. It bridges the divide between plant and beast in a manner that many may find unsettling. It is the nature of chroniclers to classify creatures and beings, but it is the nature of fungi to resist such classification. Like the proverbial iceberg, much of these creatures is concealed beneath the surface. Deadwood hollows have underground mycelial, thread-like root systems that reach at least 120 feet, giving them an eerie awareness of their environment.

Detritivores, while not sentient, play a vital part in a forest ecosystem. They help maintain soil and plant health, and in turn, other creatures eat them. The complexity of their communication is not well understood. Deadwood hollows, however, are a creation of magic, not nature. Their hunger has no natural limits, and over time they can cause damage to a forest through overconsumption. Consider their place in this ecosystem when considering how much a character can learn about the a deadwood grove in advance. For example, spells like *commune with nature* allow the caster to ask three questions of the surrounding environment. As plants, deadwood hollows are part of the natural environment and don't immediately stand out. They are only remarkable as the center of a radius where other animals rarely go.

Deadwood Servant

Medium plant, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 112 (15d8 + 45)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (−1)	16 (+3)	4 (−3)	6 (−2)	6 (−2)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +2, Con +6
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, frightened
Senses blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8
Languages —
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

TRAITS

False Appearance. While the deadwood servant remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from the forest undergrowth.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The deadwood servant makes two slam attacks, or one slam attack and one constrict attack, both of which must be against the same target.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the target is also restrained, and the deadwood servant cannot constrict another target.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Deadwood Hollow

Huge swarm of Medium plants, neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 175 (14d12 + 84)
Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	1 (−5)	23 (+6)	5 (−3)	18 (+4)	1 (−5)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +11
Skills Animal Handling +7, Insight +9, Perception +9
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Sylvan
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

TRAITS

Buried Body. The ground around the deadwood hollow in a 120-foot radius is saturated with its roots. When the hollow starts each of its turns, it can choose to affect each creature of its choice in the area with one of the following options.

- **Poison Puff.** The creature takes 7 (2d6) poison damage.
- **Trip Root.** The creature must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.
- **Stink Blast.** The creature must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or drop what it's holding as it vomits profusely.

False Appearance. While the deadwood hollow remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from the rest of the forest.

Sun Sickness. While completely immersed in sunlight, the deadwood hollow has disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The deadwood hollow makes a branch attack and uses either its Awakening Spores or its Rotting Spores.

Branch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (3d4) necrotic damage.

Awakening Spores (3/Day). The deadwood hollow releases spores into one Medium plant it can see within 120 feet of it. At the start of the deadwood's next turn the plant rises as a deadwood servant. The deadwood servant stays animated for 1d4 + 1 days before collapsing into ruin.

Rotting Spores (Recharge 5–6). The deadwood hollow ejects spores within a 30-foot radius centered on it. Non-plant creatures in the affected area must attempt a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) necrotic damage and becoming poisoned for 1 minute on a failure, or taking half as much damage on a success. At the start of each of its turns, a creature so poisoned takes 22 (5d8) necrotic damage. The poisoned target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 the deadwood hollow can choose to cause one of the following lair actions. Once the grove has used a lair action option, it must finish a short rest before it can use that option again:

- The earth shakes within a 30-foot radius of the deadwood hollow, throwing dirt and rock up into the air. Enemy creatures in a 30-foot radius centered on a point in the lair must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 19 (3d12) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. A successful save halved the damage and prevents the prone condition.
- The dirt around the grove in a 60-foot radius transforms into sticky mud for 1 minute, becoming difficult terrain. Additionally, Medium or smaller creatures in the affected area must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or sink into the mud and become restrained for as long as they remain in the area. An affected creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

GLOWING GARDEN

The glowing garden is a beautiful and dangerous mycelial grove that unravels the minds of its prey with an array of alarming defenses. Where the deadwood hollow is defined by its low profile, the glowing garden is difficult to miss if you know what to look for. Bioluminescent plants and fungi are a staple of underground ecosystems, so to the untrained eye a glowing garden might not stand out as particularly dangerous. The web-like pattern of the clusters of fungi, the faint humming in the air as you enter the grove, and the smell of death all tell an experienced explorer that there is more than meets the eye.



The Glowing Garden

A glowing garden is an undoubtably beautiful sight. Bioluminescence is one of nature's most wondrous phenomena, but it is rarely a signal of benign intent. I have often witnessed this display in highly poisonous plants or sea creatures. There are deep-sea predators that use the flashing lights of their bioluminescence in a similar way to the glowing garden. Its effect on my unfortunate intern Osbul was most efficient, blinding and nearly incapacitating him completely before those snaking, white threads got hold...

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Lurker

Favors: Flight, Range (Long), Rangers, Rogues, Warlocks

Foils: Barbarians, Clerics, Conditions (Incapacitated), Monks, Perception (Low)

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a glowing garden with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

GLOWING GARDEN LORE

DC	INFORMATION
14	The hallucinatory spores of glowing gardens are psychedelic in the extreme. Those exposed can barely perceive reality and can be tricked by the fungus into assaulting their friends or inanimate objects. Watch your feet when walking near a garden's territory. Its roots can sense your presence long before you see it.
19	Glowing gardens feature in the superstitions of travelers throughout various underground lands and cultures. It is thought that they can drive you mad or trick you away from the paths and down some deep dark hole, never to return.
25	Exposure to a glowing garden risks a psychic assault on all fronts. You won't see where the attacks are coming from, and you'll struggle to keep your senses, let alone find the creature. The only chance you have at survival is to locate and target the main body.

TACTICS

Like the other groves, the mycelial threads that make up the body of the glowing garden are naturally camouflaged beneath the ground, and it is difficult to pinpoint where the center of its network lies even after it begins attacking. The grove's Buried Body feature allows it to inflict a wide variety of harmful effects, each more frustrating than the last. Those that prove resilient to these interactions are perfect targets for the Grove of Hallucinations. Using this on a powerful character allows the grove to not only severely limit that character, but even use the unfortunate target as weapon against its allies.

Easier Tactics — The glowing garden will first try to blind as many of its enemies as possible to put them at a disadvantage. Use Thrall Spores first, and then target enemies resisting the spores with Mycelial Threads attacks in order to impose disadvantage on subsequent saving throws.

Harder Tactics — The glowing garden activates the Grove of Hallucinations in the first round, using its Buried Body feature to inflict as much mayhem as possible. Make sure the grove's body is far away from the action. With any luck, the characters won't even be able to find and target the grove before it's too late. Should the heroes close the distance, stop attacking and use False Appearance. Even with good perception, the party won't be able to find what attacked them, with the grove resuming the assault as soon as they leave its immediate area.

PLOT HOOKS

Lights in the Dark. The party find a young drow girl while they are traveling through an underground trade road. She is shaking and terrified and speaks little Common. She manages to make clear that she was with her family and traders when everyone was killed and she ran. She repeats in Common, "Lights in the dark, lights in the dark."

An Artificer's Favor. A deep gnome artificer needs a favor—the artificer wants to hire the party to gather ingredients from a mycelial grove, and the gnome agrees to split the profits and offers to provide the characters with special filtration suits to protect them from the grove. The suits are rickety, but they work—most of the time.

Lost Boys. Three young elves wandered underground and into the clutches of a glowing garden. Thankfully the lads managed to isolate themselves on a small island in a nearby underground lake, but they cannot escape. Time grows short as the parents seek desperately for any willing to save their children.

TREASURE

Glowing gardens can be harvested for valuable materials, even while alive. Doing so requires a successful Intelligence (Nature) check to recognize the ingredients, understand their properties, and harvest them. The DC of this check and the benefits of its results follow. Each process requires 1 hour of strenuous activity per material, something a glowing garden rarely tolerates peacefully.

GLOWING GARDEN

Gargantuan swarm of Medium plants, neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 232 (15d20 + 75)
Speed 0 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	9 (−1)	21 (+5)	11 (+0)	22 (+6)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +10, Cha +5
Skills Insight +8, Perception +8
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages —
Challenge 15 (5,000 XP)

TRAITS

Bioluminescence. The glowing garden sheds bright light in a 60-foot radius, and dim light for 60 feet beyond that.

Buried Body. The ground around the glowing garden in a 120-foot radius is saturated with its roots. When the garden starts each of its turns, it can choose to affect each creature of its choice in the area with one of the following options.

- **Mind Shock.** The creature takes 9 (2d8) psychic damage.
- **Terrorize.** The creature must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened until the end of its next turn.
- **Daze.** The creature must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be unable to take bonus actions or reactions until the end of its next turn.

Deep Roots. The garden's roots extend underground, anchoring it to both the ground and the plane upon which it resides. While it is alive the garden cannot be moved from its space by physical or magical means.

False Appearance. While the glowing garden remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a cavern of glowing fungus.

Grove of Hallucinations (1/Day). At the start of each of its turns the glowing garden can choose to create an area of vivid hallucinations in a 120-foot-radius sphere centered on it, which lasts for 1 minute. Creatures of the garden's choice in the affected area have their vision reduced to 5 feet and are blind beyond that radius. Additionally, all creatures of the garden's choice in the affected area are hidden by sights, smells, and sounds of the illusion, requiring a passive Perception or Search check result of 19 to reveal their presence.

Additionally, as a bonus action the garden can produce a hallucinatory sound beyond the senses of an affected creature, centered on a space within 120 feet of it. All affected creatures within 15 feet of that space must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or use their reaction to make a weapon attack against anything in that space.

ACTIONS

Mycelial Threads. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 120 ft., one creature on the ground. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) slashing damage plus 19 (3d8 + 6) poison damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). While so grappled, a creature has disadvantage on saving throws and ability checks against the grove. A thread grappling a creature is an object that can be severed (AC 12, 15 hit points) to free the grappled creature.

Thrall Spores (Recharge 5–6). The glowing garden ejects spores in a 15-foot radius centered on a point it can see within 120 feet of it. Creatures within the radius must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be infected by the spores. A creature so infected is charmed by the garden. On a failed saving throw, the creature is charmed by the glowing garden and compelled to defend it from attack for 1 minute. After 1 minute the creature cannot be re-infected for 24 hours.

Bioluminescent Sap

The harvester must spend 1 hour of strenuous activity attempting a DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) check, collecting the sap on a successful check or spilling the sap on itself and taking 27 (5d10) acid damage on a failed check. The sap is a valuable ingredient used by enchanters and artificers and is worth 45 gp per vial, with a typical harvest yielding twenty vials of the sap. As an action a creature can smear a vial of the sap on an object or creature within reach, causing it to emit dim light in a 15-foot radius for 1 hour.

Glowing Garden Thrall Spores

The harvester must spend 1 hour of strenuous activity attempting a DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check, collecting the spores on a success or accidently inhaling them on a failure. A creature that inhales the spores in this manner is charmed for 1 minute by the first creature to touch it within 24 hours. A successful harvest produces five pouches of powdered thrall spores, which are worth 1,000 gp per pouch.

As an action you can burst a pouch on a creature within 5 feet of you or throw it up to 20 feet, bursting it on impact. In either case, you must make a ranged weapon attack as a part of the action, using the pouch as an improvised weapon. On a successful hit, the target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by you until the end of its next turn. While charmed in this way the target cannot take bonus actions or reactions.

Glowing Garden Hallucination Spores

The harvester must spend 1 hour of strenuous activity attempting a DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check, collecting the spores on a success or accidently inhaling them on a failure. A creature that inhales the spores in this manner is incapacitated for 1 minute or until it is harmed. A successful harvest produces ten pouches of powdered hallucination spores, which are worth 300 gp per pouch.

As an action you can burst a pouch on a creature within 5 feet of you or throw it up to 20 feet, bursting it on impact. In either case, you must make a ranged weapon attack as a part of the action, using the pouch as an improvised weapon. On a successful hit, the target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be incapacitated until the end of its next turn. This effect ends early if an affected creature is harmed.

ECOLOGY

Glowing gardens most commonly develop below water sources or in damp limestone caverns. The calcareous dripping that forms the stalagmites and stalactites that are so iconic of underground realms also provide the damp conditions that mycelial groves enjoy. These caverns are also natural watering holes and passageways for all manner of underground creatures that might find themselves drawn unexpectedly to the light.

Buried just below the surface of the earth is the network pale mycelial roots that connect all the individual mushroom caps in the grove. These thin, fleshy fibers are numerous and reach a great distance. It is possible that the density and complexity of the fibers could give a date as to how old a glowing garden is, but they are too rare and too dangerous for enough study to have been carried out to say for sure.

DRIDER GRAVEYARD

Many lands and cultures have tales of beasts who can feel when their death is coming. These doomed creatures make a final journey to a special place, a fitting grave to conclude their lives. The tales tell of secret valleys or beaches with the bones of these creatures from thousands of years of morbid pilgrimages piled upon each other. Such legends may have been inspired by drider graveyards: mycelial groves that form parasitic relationships with creatures unlucky enough to wander too close. These violet, subterranean, fungal colonies are so named for the frequency with which they victimize driders. The more sufferers these malevolent mycelial groves claim, the larger and more horrific they grow. The smell of decay in their caverns is overwhelming and the silence as complete as death.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a drider graveyard with an Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

DRIDER GRAVEYARD LORE

DC	INFORMATION
15	Drider graveyards are a superstition throughout subterranean cultures, known for collecting vast quantities of fungal-infested corpses. Even approaching one is exceedingly dangerous, for the fungal groves are far more sinister and alert than they appear.
20	Drider graveyards are corrupted swarms of sentient fungi that can release spores that animate the dead, befuddle the mind, and even poison the earth. The graves are stationary, but their roots extend out in every direction, granting them alarming reach and control over their territories.
26	The ground around a drider graveyard is actually a part of the creature, allowing it to strike at any who dare approach. Most specimens are guarded by the reanimated corpses of previous victims, the most common of which are the eponymous driders.

The Drider Graveyard

One has to wonder what draws driders to these places. I have observed dozens of bodies on top of layer after layer of drow-spider hybrid bones but have never witnessed a drider arriving in the graveyard grove. What's more curious is this mycelial grove can make use of the corpses of a wide variety of creatures, not just driders. Whatever the reason, it is best to leave these groves well alone. Once one has taken root, it's not going anywhere, so put up lots of signs and keep clear, and you can leave each other in peace.

– Talien Vos Karven



Classification: Elite

Favors: Damage (Area of Effect), Druids, Flight, Sorcerers, Wizards

Foils: Clerics, Fighters, Healing, Rangers, Weapons (Damage)

TACTICS

Drider graveyards have many potent abilities at their disposal, but their greatest strength is their ability to animate and puppeteer the corpses of their victims. The strength of these minions is up to you, but between two to four driders is thematically appropriate. Adding additional minions obviously increases the difficulty of an encounter with a drider graveyard, which can include any former humanoids or monstrosities. The graveyard has many tools by which it can assault invaders, most of which do not harm any of its minions. Remember, the graveyard cannot move, so it must rely on the great range of its Deep Roots options and Mycelial Threads attacks. Remember that with tremorsense the graveyard can easily "see" anything on the ground, though is not nearly intelligent enough to make use of complex tactics. The graveyard should use its more powerful abilities, such as Poisoned Earth and Pacifying Spores, in response to characters either injuring it or proving resilient to its attacks.

Easier Tactics — Have the graveyard be fought in an open space, providing line of sight to the grove with little difficulty. This allows the party to get to the root of the problem rather than slogging through minions. Reduce the number of drider corpses animated by the grove in favor of far weaker options like orcs and other humanoids. Avoid using the Contaminate option on the Buried Body trait on characters with low hit points, and only use Poisoned Earth once if ever.

Harder Tactics — Give the graveyard a complex arena in which to fight and make it subterranean if possible, including lots of corners, cover, and other obstacles the party must navigate to reach their target. Fill this area with a menagerie of reanimated corpses—the more diverse the better. Use the Contaminate option of Buried Body as often as possible, following up with Pacifying Spores against troublesome characters. Remember, the party needs to be on the ground to be vulnerable to many of the graveyard's effects, so do whatever you can do to keep them earthbound.

PLOT HOOKS

Follow the Driders. A drunk deep gnome is getting laughed at in a tavern for an audacious tale. She claims to have seen driders walk right by her, without attacking, on the surface! No one in the tavern believes her, but something about the gnome's story rings true.

Lost Dwarven Caravan. A duergar chieftain approaches the party for aid after an entire caravan of his traders disappears on their way to another settlement. A pair of drider graveyards are responsible, having infested the trade route due to lack of proper maintenance. The duergar will pay handsomely for the graveyards' removal, particularly if his supplies can be recovered.

Family Heirloom. An ancient and magically powerful drow heirloom belonging to a noble house is reported to be within a particularly venerable drider graveyard, still attached to the remains of the drider that stole it. The graveyard has amassed a veritable army of corpses, some of which include fearsome and rare monsters that would make an experienced adventuring party balk, with or without a graveyard. The heirloom's value and magical power makes it an ideal prize for any treasure-hungry characters looking to land a big score.

TREASURE

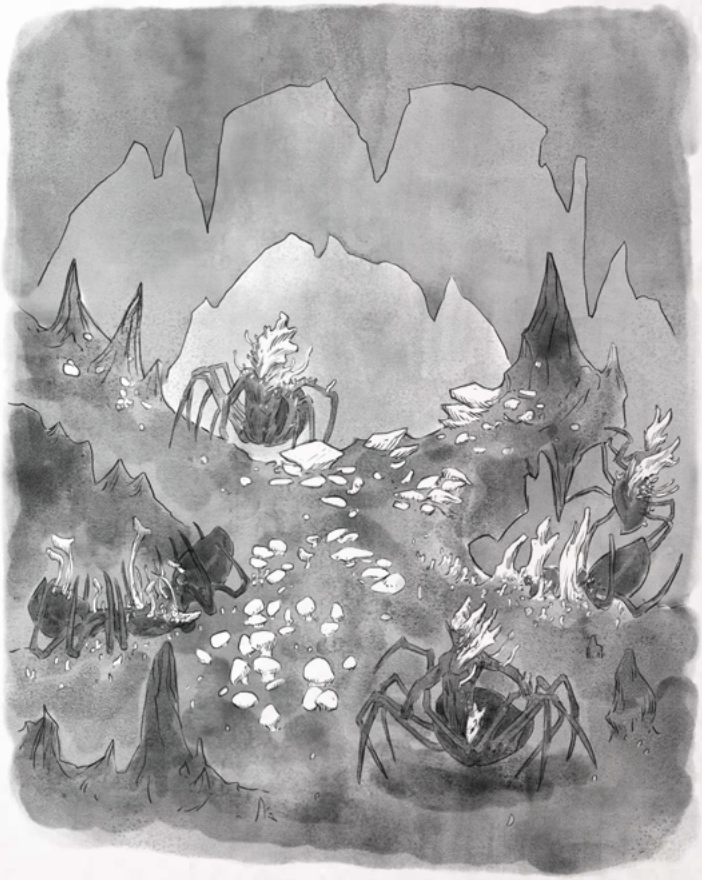
Drider graveyards can be harvested for valuable materials, even while alive. Doing so requires a successful Intelligence (Nature) check to recognize the ingredients, understand their properties, and harvest them. The DC of this check and the benefits of its results follow. The entire process requires 1 hour of strenuous activity per material, something a drider graveyard rarely tolerates peacefully.

Drider Graveyard Pacifying Spores

The harvester must spend 1 hour of strenuous activity attempting a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check, collecting the spores on a success or accidently inhaling them on a failure. A creature that inhales the spores must succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw or be dazed for 24 hours. A creature so dazed cannot speak and cannot take bonus actions or reactions.

A successful harvest produces fifteen pouches of powdered pacifying spores, each of which is worth 500 gp to a collector of alchemical materials.

As an action you can burst a pouch on a creature within 5 feet of you or throw it up to 20 feet, bursting it on impact. In either case, you must make a ranged weapon attack as a part of the action, using the pouch as an improvised weapon. On a successful hit, the target must succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw or be dazed until the end of its next turn. A creature so dazed cannot speak and cannot take bonus actions or reactions.



ECOLOGY

Beyond folklore there is little evidence for noble beasts walking to their own graves. Were it even true, driders are not natural creatures and are therefore something apart of a typical cycle of life and death. There are documented cases of fungi becoming parasites and forcing hosts to walk to specific environments. It is believed these mycelial groves employ a similar practice, but since a symptomatic drider has never been observed, it is impossible to know for sure. Most who approach a drider graveyard are suitable hosts for its spores, with the creature's name being derived from its most frequent victims. Wherever there is darkness and death these groves flourish, requiring a steady supply of protein to survive. A sure sign of a nearby drider graveyard is a terrific stench, a disgusting combination of mold and decaying flesh.

Drider Graveyard

Gargantuan swarm of Small plants, neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 301 (19d20 + 102)
Speed 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (−1)	23 (+6)	4 (−3)	17 (+3)	1 (−5)

Saving Throws Con +12, Int +3, Wis +9
Skills Nature +9, Perception +9
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses tremorsense 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages —
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

TRAITS

Buried Body. The ground around the graveyard in a 120-foot radius is saturated with its roots. When the graveyard starts each of its turns, it can choose to affect each creature of its choice in the area with one of the following options.

- **Contaminate.** The creature cannot regain hit points until the end of its next turn.
- **Darkness.** Any sources of light (including magical ones) on the affected creature are extinguished.
- **Rot.** The creature must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or become vulnerable to poison and necrotic damage until the end of its next turn.

Deep Roots. The graveyard's roots extend underground, anchoring it to both the ground and the plane upon which it resides. While it is alive the graveyard cannot be moved from its space by physical or magical means.

False Appearance. While the graveyard remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a heap of dead driders and cave fungi.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the graveyard fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The drider graveyard makes two Mycelial Threads attacks. It can replace one of these attacks with either its Animating Spores of Pacifying Spores action.

Mycelial Threads. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) slashing damage plus 13 (3d8) poison damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 20). While so grappled, a creature has disadvantage on saving throws and ability checks against the graveyard. A thread grappling a creature is an object that can be severed (AC 15, 30 hit points) to free the grappled creature.

Animating Spores (Recharge 5–6). The drider graveyard targets the corpse of a humanoid or monstrosity within 120 feet of it and infests it with spores. At the start of the graveyard's next turn the corpse rises as a spore servant at its hit point maximum, which possesses the same statistics as the host creature except for the following changes.

- The creature's type is plant.
- The creature is immune to the blinded, charmed, and frightened conditions.
- The creature gains blindsight up to 30 feet (blind beyond this radius).
- The creature is friendly toward the graveyard and defends it to the best of its ability. If the creature is ever more than 1 mile away from the graveyard, it collapses into dust.

Pacifying Spores. The drider graveyard ejects spores in a 30-foot cube centered on a point it can see within 120 feet of it. Non-plant creatures within the affected area must attempt a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw. On a failure, a creature is dazed for 1 minute. While so dazed, a creature cannot take bonus actions or reactions and cannot speak. At the end of each of its turns, a creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success.

Poisoned Earth (Recharge 5–6). The drider graveyard poisons the ground in a 60-foot radius centered on it. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or take 33 (6d10) necrotic damage and become poisoned. A creature so poisoned takes an additional 16 (3d10) necrotic damage at the beginning of each of its turns. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The drider graveyard can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The graveyard regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Mycelial Threads. The graveyard makes a Mycelial Threads attack.

Blight (Costs 2 Actions). A creature the graveyard can see within 60 feet of it must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or take 36 (8d8) necrotic damage, or half as much on a success.

Recharge (3 Actions). The graveyard recharges its Poisoned Earth action.

Neko Yokai

Cats are found throughout the realms, always a part of everyday life within countless cultures. However, what happens when small pets merge with primordial, elemental energies? The answer is yokai, strange beings of a mischievous and deadly nature. Beyond a random influence of primordial energy, it is unknown how these yokai are created. Neko yokai are gifted with supernatural powers that defy explanation, afflicting or aiding those they encounter on a whim. The older these creatures become, the more terrifying the power they possess, wielded by the mercurial personalities of ferocious felines.

TALIEN'S NOTES

I fear that Clef has become quite jealous as I have studied the supernatural powers that the neko yokai possess. The power of luck, inferno, and necromancy makes these creatures such a fascinating study. While I would never replace Clef, it did occur to me that a maneki neko could certainly help get me out of a tight pinch. While spending time with the maneki neko was rather enjoyable, the threat of death by fire, undeath, and repeated death by fire before ultimately being eaten didn't strike me as great. What leads one neko yokai to benevolence and another to such cruel sadism is something that needs to be further studied. While I ruminate on these facts, I must get some more catnip and console Clef, who still seems to be angry after I considered setting him on fire to see if he could become a neko yokai.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

The neko yokai are derived from myths surrounding cats in medieval Japan. Rumor spawned around cats for several coincidences that seemed to be bad luck. Fish oil was the primary oil used for burning in lamps, something that cats loved. Many a cat was blamed for knocking over a lamp or standing on its hind legs to lick the oil. In the cases where the lamp was lit, it led to largescale fires due to towns being constructed primarily of wood and paper. As myth around these creatures spread, the stories grew ever more fantastical. The ability to kill and replace its owner, creating fires, and even controlling the dead led many to fear cats. However, the supernatural powers that many believed neko to hold also protected them from attack, as it was believed to cause bad luck to kill one. The process of bobbing the tail came around as a countermeasure to prevent the transformation into a yokai. These creatures come from a place of myth and supernatural power—playing up this aspect and having an unknown or unexplained nature will help play into the mythos around these fantastic critters.

— Paul Wright

MANEKI NEKO

The maneki neko is a feline spirit of good luck and virtue. Each specimen is covered in golden, metallic fur, with a medallion hung by a red ribbon around their necks. Their paws are oversized, and a neko's mewing is always accompanied by the tinkling of bells. Those who befriend a maneki neko find themselves blessed with spontaneous good fortune and general prosperity, while those who snub the feline find their fortunes wither and encounter bad luck at every turn.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a maneki neko with an Intelligence (History) ability check.

MANEKI NEKO LORE

DC	INFORMATION
13	Even the poorest beggar has found great fortune when befriending a maneki neko. Those who take care and show admiration for these supernatural creatures find incredible luck and fortune in all they hope to achieve.
18	The maneki neko is able to reliably save against a wide variety of spells and effects as it manipulates luck in its favor. When the maneki neko chooses to attack, its claws impart bad fortune on all who seek to harm it.
24	When facing a maneki neko, it is important to remember that it plays a cat-and-mouse game with those whom it fights. It seeks not to destroy but to test or distract those whom it wishes to help or hinder. It is not particularly lethal by itself, but rather gathers powerful allies and grants them favor while impeding enemies.

TACTICS

The maneki neko is not a violent creature, instead focusing on supporting its allies with a myriad of probability-warping abilities. The most powerful of these is Fortune's Tribute, which dramatically improves an ally's chances at succeeding on anything with advantage and cripples enemies with disadvantage. Play around with this mechanic as much as possible, as the maneki requires the characters have disadvantage to survive. Allied creatures that can easily gain advantage on attacks, saving throws, or ability checks should love this feature, so pair the maneki with allies accordingly. Should things get difficult for the maneki, use Phantom Step to reposition it to a safe place. This combined with a decent climbing speed should prove quite troublesome for many parties. Use Scratch on anyone who dares get close, with the subsequent curse negating what little advantage the characters can gain against the maneki.



Easier Tactics — Don't use Tricky Gift to debilitate characters; instead, grant its benefits exclusively to allies. If you are particularly kind you can impose disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws rather than attacks. This leaves the party with one clear path to victory against the maneki: simply deal as much damage as possible. Rather than attacking and imposing disadvantage on creatures, use Glittering Glamour to simply stall characters. Keep the maneki's minion entourage modest, and the party should have a good chance of winning.

Harder Tactics — Grant the maneki a nice mix of ranged and melee allies. The aura of Fortune's Tribute is more than large enough to accommodate a vast and diverse force. From there, use Glittering Glamour on the first turn to get everyone's attention, then have the maneki engage in hit-and-run tactics. Phantom Step is key to this strategy, allowing the maneki to move in to hit, move to cover, then magically teleport to a new position. Should the creature get caught in a bad situation it can always bail itself out with Incredible Luck.

PLOT HOOKS

Pawsible Deniability. A crime lord is running amok. His goons can't be caught, his schemes are unstoppable, and the guards are constantly foiled. The only clue to the crime lord's continued success is the strange cat frequently seen in his company.

Mithral Lined. Wealth is flowing freely from a major dwarven city. It seems they found a vast mithral mine. Its location is a closely guarded secret, but rumors suggest that this city had recently been going bankrupt. The truth is a maneki neko has turned the fortunes of the city after receiving several gifts. What the city offered or what the maneki neko asked in return is unknown.

The Maneki Neko

I came across a strange cat wearing a large coin around its neck. To my surprise it spoke and knew of my mission. It asked to travel with me for a time, promising a rather unclear reward. Unsure though I was, the risk was worth the chance to see the neko in action. Never have I experienced such good fortune. During the neko's stay I discovered seven new species, unearthed four historical relics, and won every hand of cards I played. Clef wasn't happy about the arrangement, so despite the good luck I was quite thankful when the neko departed.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Leader

Favors: Attacks (Multiple), Damage (High), Fighters, Sorcerers, Warlocks

Foils: Advantage, Barbarians, Critical Hits, Paladins, Rogues



Cloistered Claws. A monastery known for its wine has had a bountiful harvest. A king seeks adventurers to climb to the top of the mountain where the monastery resides. A test of luck must be held before any of the wine leaves the monastery. Finding a friend who can tip the scales is in one's best interest.

MANEKI NEKO

Small fiend, chaotic good

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 119 (25d6 + 32)
Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (−2)	18 (+4)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Cha +9
Skills Acrobatics +8, Insight +11
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Sylvan
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

TRAITS

Fortune's Tribute. The neko emits an aura of fortune within a 30-foot radius. When a creature in the area rolls with advantage or disadvantage on an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check, it rolls three dice instead of two and chooses the appropriate value from among the results.

Phantom Step. If the neko ends its turn and cannot be seen by any creatures, it can choose to magically teleport to an unoccupied space it can see within 60 feet of it.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The neko makes two attacks. The neko can forgo making one of these attacks to instead use its Tricky Gift action.

Scratch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or be cursed with misfortune for 1 minute. When a creature so cursed rolls a 20 on a d20, it instead rolls a 1. At the end of each of its turns an affected creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success.

Glittering Glamour (5–6). The neko glows with a bright light out to a range of 30 feet. Enemy creatures in the affected area must succeed on a DC 17 Charisma saving throw or be cursed to obsess over the neko for 1 hour. A creature so obsessed with the neko can only perceive the neko with its senses (blinded toward all other creatures) and must move toward the neko with its speed on each of its turns.

Tricky Gift. The neko grants a mischievous gift to a creature it can see within 60 feet of it. When it does so, the neko chooses attack rolls, saving throws, or ability checks to be the nature of the gift. Until the start of its next turn, the target has advantage or disadvantage (neko's choice) on the type of roll the neko chose as the nature of the gift.

REACTIONS

Incredible Luck. As a reaction when the neko fails a saving throw or ability check, it can choose to succeed instead.

TREASURE

Killing a maneki neko yields only the gold coin worn around its neck. While most of these coins lose their power upon the neko's death, a few manage to cling to their magic. Such coins can be worn around one's neck like a choker as a *lucky cat coin*.

Lucky Cat Coin

Wondrous item (very rare), requires attunement

This gold coin can be looped around a ribbon or thread and worn like a choker. When you roll a natural 1 on an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check while wearing the coin, you instead roll a 20.

ECOLOGY

The maneki neko thrives on attention and companionship. They can be found wherever there is laughter, community, and good food. A neko loves making deals with those it encounters, seeking out good and strong companions who need its help most. The creatures delight in bringing a smile to those to whom fate has been cruel and have been known to uplift entire generations of folk whom they deem deserving. Neko often appear as simple house cats seeking someone to feed and shelter them—a test to determine whether those it seeks to befriend are pure of heart. The wise put these to good use so that even when the whims of the maneki neko lead it elsewhere, they can build on the foundation left by the neko's good fortune.



BAKENEKO

Lurking in the shadows of civilized society, a bakeneko lives only to reduce the lives of others to a smoldering ruin. The bakeneko most often resembles a large black cat with gleaming ruby eyes, resembling a simple—if not slightly odd—housecat. That is, until they rise up on their hind legs and walk around as bipedal felines. The fur of a bakeneko is encrusted with ashes of those consumed by fire. This disgusting practice is made all the more horrific by the fact that bakeneko are often responsible for these fires, as the creatures are wanton arsonists. Their voices are raspy, full of cruelty and disdain for the lives of others.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a bakeneko with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

BAKENEKO LORE

DC	INFORMATION
14	The bakeneko is a fearsome, two-tailed, magical, fire-wielding cat. It is unknown whether it controls or creates—or both—such vast infernos that are said to be the downfall of many a city. It can be difficult to track in the fires as it appears to vanish within them.
19	The bakeneko wields potent magic that afflicts its victims with potent toxins and burning flames. The fires created by a bakeneko never fail to ignite their targets, so virulent and hot are the flames.
25	The bakeneko can control all open flames around itself, spreading them about with cruel glee. Its magic can create lingering blazes that stubbornly refuse to be extinguished. The only solution to a bakeneko fire is complete immersion in water, so keep a big bucket handy!

The Bakeneko

I still have not figured out why the bakeneko enjoy starting fires, but the cruelty in their intent is unmistakable. The creatures have proven to be aggressive and hostile at every turn, at least until plied with several offerings of fish. In one such encounter a bakeneko agreed to answer a single question, so I naturally asked how it controlled and spread its flames. With a glance, the nearby lamp ignited, and the flames jumped to me in an instant. I fled from the house, my beard and eyebrows severely singed beyond repair. Lesson learned.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Lurker

Favors: Barbarians, Fire (Protection from), Perception (High), Rangers, Rogues

Foils: Druids, Hit Points (Low), Poison (Damage), Sorcerers, Warlocks

TACTICS

Starting the fight off with a *wall of fire* gives the bakeneko a large-scale fire with which to utilize its Pyrokinesis trait. The creature should then move into the wall's space and use the Hide action, thanks to the total cover provided by its Firebred trait. This strategy of casting a spell then hiding is essential to a bakeneko's survival, as its defenses are not significant. The biggest advantages for the bakeneko are densely packed environments full of objects to burn. This allows it to fill the combat area with fire, setting characters alight and inflicting maximum carnage. Use powerful spells like *firestorm* and *cloudkill* to spread the pain around, putting special attention on characters that have yet to catch fire.

Easier Tactics — Keep a clear battlefield with few objects or structures for the bakeneko to ignite, and add a nearby body of water as an added bonus. Start by igniting the characters with the most hit points first, providing the party a chance to figure out what will happen when they take fire damage from their enemy without extreme consequences. Only cast *firestorm* once the battle is nearly over, giving a grand finale to a climactic (but manageable) battle.

Harder Tactics — The bakeneko should start the fight with a *firestorm* spell designed to inflict maximum carnage and light everything on fire. You may even grant the creature surprise should the characters not be expecting to face a pyromaniac demon cat. Extensive use of Pyrokinesis can cut off the party's escape multiple times and provides cover for the bakeneko. Should things get dicey for the creature, cast *cloudkill* and hide the bakeneko within it. The poison damage should rapidly heal the creature while dealing significant damage to any looking to get into melee.

PLOT HOOKS

Particular Arson. A series of unexplained fires have appeared in a nearby town, all of which have been extremely difficult to contain and put out. Curiously, the fires have been focused on upper-class residences, leaving the more impoverished sections of the city untouched...for now.

Feline Friend. A young girl has befriended a bakeneko, which incinerates the girl's enemies along with their families. In fear, the locals have capitulated to the girl's every demand, proclaiming her queen of the town. The already absurd situation gets even worse when the girl begins asking for tribute from nearby villages.

Catastrophe. A large number of cats appeared in the capital city a few weeks before the city was ravaged by fire. Now a second major city has seen an influx of similar felines. The truth is a cabal of five bakeneko has been on a stealthy rampage and is already preparing to put the metropolis to the torch.

TREASURE

The magical nature of a bakeneko's fires imparts strange properties to the remains of those it consumes. The ashes of a creature slain by bakeneko fire can be gathered and used as a material component for spells. When a creature casts a spell that deals fire damage, it can use 1 pound of this ash as a material component, consuming the ash in the process. A creature that takes fire damage from the spell catches fire, taking 2d10 fire damage at the start of each of its turns until the flames are extinguished. Extinguishing the flames requires total immersion in water or a creature within reach using an action to pat out the flames.

BAKENEKO

Medium fiend, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 187 (25d8 + 75)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +7, Cha +11
Skills Deception +8, Perception +7, Stealth +10
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Infernal
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

TRAITS

Firebred. The bakeneko is heavily obscured while within 5 feet of a space, creature, or object that is on fire.

Innate Spellcasting. The bakeneko's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material or somatic components:

At will: *firebolt*, *poison spray*
5/day: *cloudkill*, *fireball*, *fire shield*, *wall of fire*
1/day: *firestorm*

Pyrokinesis. The bakeneko can magically control flames it can see within a 120-foot radius, granting it the following benefits.

- When the bakeneko deals fire damage to a creature or object, it can choose to ignite it. Anything ignited in this manner takes 5 (2d4) fire damage at the end of each of the bakeneko's turns. Anything ignited in this manner can only be extinguished by being completely immersed in water.
- As a bonus action on each of its turns, the bakeneko can spread flames from a creature or object that has caught fire. This effect fills each 5-foot square on the ground within 5 feet of the target with fire, dealing 11 (2d10) fire damage to each creature and object in the affected area. When a creature ends its turn in an affected area or moves into a space on fire in this manner for the first time on a turn, it takes 11 (2d10) fire damage.

Toxicology. Whenever the bakeneko is subjected to poison damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the poison damage dealt.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The bakeneko makes one attack and casts two spells, at least one of which must be a spell it can cast at will. The bakeneko can forgo making one of these attacks to instead take the Hide action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 38 (6d10 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or take 22 (5d8) poison damage, and the bakeneko magically regains hit points equal to the poison damage dealt.

ECOLOGY

Bakeneko instinctively gravitate to heavily populated areas. The profusion of flammable material and lives to ruin is just too tempting to pass up. They can befriend some humanoids and be quite benevolent toward them if treated well, but such a relationship can turn sour at any moment. The easy access to food and shelter combined with a lack of predators means that bakeneko that lie low can live for years—even decades—without ever being discouraged. Should they be angered or need to feel, know that citywide fires and devastation follow.

NEKOMATA

If bakeneko are small, mischievous housecats, their evil, larger counterparts are the nekomata. Possessing the appearance of a leopard-like cat with a distended jaw, the nekomata's true nature is easily revealed by its actions or its strangely humanlike purple eyes. These yokai revel in death and destruction, which they visit upon innocents in horrific volumes. They are known to eat humanoids, after which they can take on the appearance of the creatures they devour and replace them with few ever realizing the difference. The taste of flesh drives the nekomata ever onward, searching for new flavors seasoned by cultural diversity and differing lifestyles.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a nekomata with an Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

NEKOMATA LORE

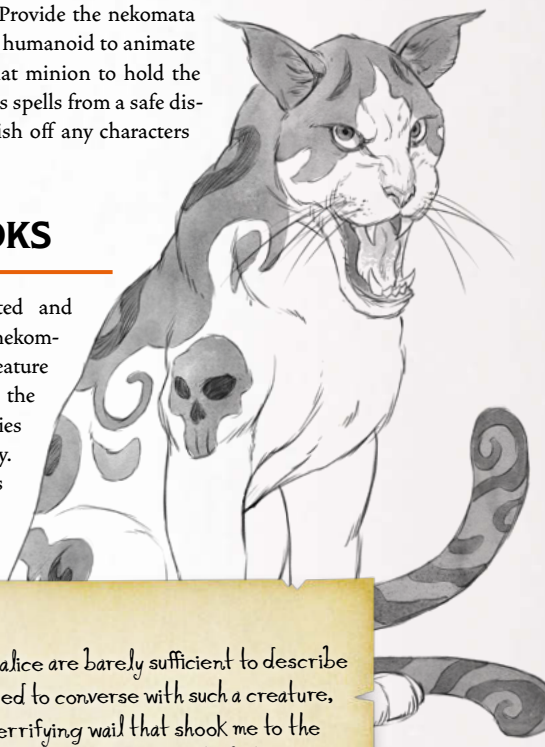
DC	INFORMATION
16	Demon beasts from the mountains, nekomata come at night, feed on the innocent, and vanish into the darkness. If they are hunted, they can even burn entire cities to the ground in retribution. Unlike other neko yokai, there is nothing cute about these beasts—they seek only to eat and destroy.
21	A nekomata's most devastating attack is a terrifying cry that renders those of weak will unconscious. The true terror comes when one's fallen friends are brought back to life under the control of the nekomata, which controls their minds with the skill of a master puppeteer.
27	Preventing or taking precautions against the nekomata's wail is the first defense against its most terrifying ability. Preventing multiple allies from changing sides limits the number of allies the nekomata can bring to bear. Beware the ignition inflicted by the fire of the nekomata, as it burns savagely. The bite of the nekomata drains life from the target and sustains the fiend, making damage from these creatures even more dangerous.

TACTICS

The nekomata should open every fight with a Feral Wail, dropping as many unprepared targets as possible. It should immediately follow up with one of its single-use spells, such as *meteor swarm* or *whirlwind*, to kick the party when they're down. Concentration is a precious resource to a nekomata, so use it wisely. It can either focus on powerful spells like *earthquake* or seize control of a slain character with Soul Subjugation. Be mindful of the creature's Soultaker feature, which can prove extremely dangerous to those heroes with few hit points. The nekomata's attacks hit hard and should be used to focus characters down to below 10 hit points (the threshold for Soultaker). Remember this feature can apply to any damage dealt by the nekomata, including those from spells and other effects. Use Devour on the corpses of party members to prevent a clutch *revivify* and ensure a challenging encounter.

Easier Tactics — Don't use Feral Wail until well into the encounter, and keep the nekomata in the thick of the fight. The creature likely won't be able to keep up concentration while getting wailed on by everyone, limiting the effectiveness of some of its most powerful features. Keep a corpse or two handy for the nekomata to Devour, but otherwise grant the creature no other environmental advantages. Never cast *meteor swarm*. All it takes is one bad roll on a save to potentially instantly kill a character.

Harder Tactics — The nekomata has four powerful spells in its arsenal, so use them. Remember that *earthquake* can produce fissures at the DM's discretion, so do that. Provide the nekomata with the corpse of a powerful humanoid to animate via Soul Subjugation. Use that minion to hold the line while the nekomata slings spells from a safe distance, closing the gap to polish off any characters vulnerable to Soultaker.



PLOT HOOKS

Fire and Fury. A mistreated and abused cat has returned as a nekomata to seek vengeance. The creature has seen fit to travel across the continent, burning entire cities to the ground along the way. It won't stop until all humans are dead.

The Nekomata

Concentrated evil and malice are barely sufficient to describe the nekomata. When I tried to converse with such a creature, its only response was a terrifying wail that shook me to the core. Clef told me I should beware the nekomata, but my curiosity got the best of me. To this day I remain unsure as to how long I remained within the creature's thrall and to what end. I only remember faint images and sounds—fire, the screaming of children, and its voice, echoing with sinister laughter at my suffering.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Elite

Favors: Barbarians, Damage (High), Hit Points (High), Paladins, Rogues

Foils: Bards, Clerics, Concentration, Constitution (Low), Resurrection, Wizards

Bring Out Your Dead. The corpses of slain heroes have been spotted moving about the land searching for something. Puppeteering these scouts is a nekomata seeking a magical artifact buried somewhere in the populated lowlands. Attempts to destroy the undead only result in another returning the next night, along with a violent response by the nekomata.

Conflagrations and Catnip. A mountain settlement is seeking incredibly large shipments of catnip, saying their home will be burned if they don't do so. What type of beast needs a mountain of catnip?

TREASURE

The guts of a nekomata contain the indigestible remains of countless victims, which the creature slowly converts into mysterious gems through an unknown biological process. Nekomata gems appear as jet-black spheres polished to an impossible sheen. Cutting such a gem requires a successful DC 22 Dexterity (Jeweler's Tools) check, spoiling the gem on a failure. On a success, a typical nekomata gem is worth a princely sum of more than 10,000 gp, with bidders often willing to go far higher to claim the rare jewels.

ECOLOGY

The nekomata are most at home in the wilds. Rural areas and mountains provide the easiest targets to take one or two people and leave. The nekomata does not revel in direct confrontation, preferring to attack and direct from the shadows. The charm the creature wields can also be quite deadly. There are a few nekomata who hide in larger cities, taking control of powerful political structures and using them for their whims. These nekomata are no less sadistic in their pleasures but mask it behind lies and blackmail to get their way.

NEKOMATA

Medium fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 19
Hit Points 285 (30d8 + 150)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	28 (+9)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	25 (+7)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +16, Int +11, Wis +14
Skills Deception +12, Insight +14, Perception +14
Damage Immunities fire, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 24
Languages Common, Infernal
Challenge 23 (50,000 XP)

TRAITS

Innate Spellcasting[1]. The nekomata's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 22, +14 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material or somatic components:
At will: *blight*, *contagion*, *insect plague*
1/day each: *earthquake*, *meteor swarm*, *tsunami*, *whirlwind*

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). When the nekomata fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Soultaker. When the nekomata deals damage to a creature with 10 hit points or fewer, it can choose to force the creature to attempt a DC 22 Constitution saving throw, causing the creature to die instantly on a failure.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The nekomata makes four attacks: one bite attack, one tail attack, and two claw attacks. The nekomata can forgo making two of these attacks to instead cast a spell.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 48 (6d12 + 9) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, range 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 20 (2d10 + 9) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 26 (4d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Devour. The nekomata consumes the corpse of a humanoid creature within 5 feet of it, magically regaining 55 (10d10) hit points.

Feral Wail (Recharge 6). All creatures within 120 feet of the nekomata that can hear it must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or fall unconscious until the start of the nekomata's next turn.

Soul Subjugation. The nekomata seizes control of the corpse of humanoid that it can see within 120 feet of it, animating it like a puppet for as long as the nekomata concentrates (as if concentrating on a spell). The creature rises from death at its hit point maximum, is undead, and is immune to poison and psychic damage for the duration of the effect. When the effect ends the creature "dies" instantly, returning to its state as a corpse.

As a bonus action on each of its turns the nekomata can control the target's body like a puppet, forcing it to immediately take an action of its choice that it would ordinarily be able to take on its turn. If the nekomata does not have a clear idea of what the creature is capable of (such as whether it can cast specific spells), it cannot force it to take any actions associated with those capabilities.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The nekomata can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The nekomata regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Strike. The nekomata makes a claw attack or casts a spell it can cast at will.

Bite (Costs 2 Actions). The nekomata makes a bite attack.

Devour (Costs 2 Actions). The nekomata uses its Devour action.

Gather Strength (Costs 3 Actions). The nekomata recharges its Feral Wail action.

[1] Some of the spells presented here can be found in the official 5E sourcebook, *XGE*.

Orchid Dragons

There are countless types of dragons: ferocious chromatics, noble metallics, mercurial gems, and many more, but one family stands apart for their bizarre nature. Known as orchid dragons, these reclusive creatures are as rare as they are deadly. Each member of the species is a curious mix of plant and dragon, emitting deadly pheromones that can ravage the mind and body. Many a veteran dragonslayer has been completely baffled by their peculiar abilities. The dragons are notoriously aggressive, even toward other dragons, viewing themselves as highly evolved, apex predators. Only three types of orchid dragon have been discovered: the elusive lily, manipulative rose, and pernicious lotus. Like the flowers from which the dragons earn their names, an orchid dragon begins its life in a humble shape, slowly "blooming" into its fantastical plumage with age. The oldest of orchid dragons are astonishingly beautiful creatures, with their scales prized for both their majesty and durability.

LILY DRAGONS

As elegant and dignified as the flowers sharing their namesake, lily dragons are agents of peace and life free from the oppressive power of violence. Their serpentine bodies begin life an unassuming green, transitioning as they age to immaculate white. Like others of their kind, these orchid dragons are adorned in petal-like, highly expressive scales that grow in pronunciation over the dragon's lifespan. The oldest lily dragons produce formidable displays by "blooming" these scales, unleashing invisible, becalming pheromones in the process. Above all else lily dragons seek peace. They are graceful and kind to all they encounter, regretfully turning to violence as a last resort. One can always find a fast friend in a lily dragon, provided you observe a pacifist ideology in its presence.

The Lily Dragon

Finally, a creature that just wants to get along. These lily dragons seek nonviolent, exclusive lifestyles apart from creatures they find distasteful (which is most creatures). This seemingly benevolent disposition is motivated by selfishness. To a lily dragon, its comfortable lifestyle is more important than everyone else's. This libertarian streak may be nonviolent, but it has an unfortunate habit of provoking other creatures who don't fancy living near an arrogant and egocentric dragon. Any overtures toward peace serve only to further its aims of living in opulent exclusion, often to the detriment of others in the area. However, peace sought for any reason is still better than what the average dragon is offering. If one is willing to placate a lily dragon's extraordinary vanity, I imagine it would make for a pretty decent neighbor.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Elite

Favors: Barbarians, Constitution (High), Fighters, Mobility (High), Rangers

Foils: Paladins, Perception, Rogues, Spells (Offensive), Warlocks

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a lily dragon with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

LILY DRAGON LORE

DC	INFORMATION
11	Lily dragons are devious creatures that prefer to be left alone. They will give you every chance to surrender or retreat, turning your own aggression into your worst enemy. Don't mistake this penchant for peace for compassion. They would gladly watch you die horribly if it meant they wouldn't have to wake from a nap.
16	Like a leaf on the wind, lily dragons dexterously dance through the air. They keep opponents at a safe distance, forcing them into risky scenarios in pursuit of the elusive dragon. The dragon's pheromones induce a peaceful euphoria when inhaled, preventing even the most aggressive creatures from engaging the dragon directly. The older the lily dragon, the greater the range of these pheromones, so you may not even realize you are in the presence of an ancient specimen until it's too late.
22	While the lily dragon's explosive pollen breath is dangerous, the hallucinogenic properties of its alternate breath can be even worse. In addition to a bout of horrific hallucinations, unfortunate victims will be rendered incapable of perceiving their surroundings. The older a lily dragon gets, the more adept its skills at evasion and trickery. The oldest among them can convince even the most fearsome of creatures into dropping their guard.

TALIEN'S NOTES

Dragons are a strange but predictable lot. You can always count on a red dragon to be a murderous monster and a brass dragon to never shut up. But orchid dragons? They are the exception. Their highly specialized abilities are dangerous to all manner of living creatures. Thankfully, by means of the undead spirit of my late intern I was able to catalogue several orchid dragon behaviors. I believe each species to be a product of powerful druidic magic and an extended draconic bloodline, which would explain their "natural" weaponry. Like a flower in spring the dragons grow into dazzling displays of color. However, where flowers form symbiotic relationships with the creatures their beauty attracts, orchid dragons seek only to prey upon those who dare underestimate them for their elegance.

TACTICS

Lily dragons prefer not to kill. It is not mercy that drives this impulse, but rather a profound personal distaste. To these creatures the act of killing is as disgusting as a clogged city sewer and to be avoided at all costs. However, lily dragons are far from harmless. When faced with deadly threats, these dragons seek to make the cost of victory so high as to be not worth the effort. Key to this strategy are its Tranquility Pheromones feature, which forces victims into a nonviolent state. With some foes rendered impotent, a dragon can happily finish off any obstinate resistance. Using its Wind Dash action to dart around the battlefield, a lily dragon can easily position itself for optimal breath weapon attacks. Against foes who prove resilient to its Tranquility Pheromones, the dragon favors its Blast Pollen. Against those who are tranquilized but still troublesome, Psychedelic Gas is the optimal choice. Remember, a lily dragon is happy to maim. It will bite, claw, and batter creatures into retreating, pursuing fleeing creatures, if only to laugh and mock their failure. Note that younger lily dragons possess the Sneaky trait to help them avoid combat, while the formidable older specimens are more open to direct confrontation due to their legendary status.

Easier Tactics — Don't start the fight with the dragon in "bloom" for its Tranquility Pheromones, and be kind when choosing targets for breath weapons. The dragon should fight defensively, constantly retreating and avoiding confrontation. Only when seriously wounded should the dragon become more aggressive, focusing its bite and claws on single targets that come close. Younger lily dragons should make use of their Sneaky trait to avoid or disengage from fights, while older specimens can afford to wade into melee when necessary.







Harder Tactics — The dragon should be in "bloom" as soon as the characters come within range. For younger dragons this strategy can prove quite troublesome if it is hidden. Older dragons should aim to keep the characters at a reasonable range without making it too easy to leave the affected area and catch a breath. Wind Dash should be used to keep the dragon aloft, behind cover, and out of reach. Use it often to keep the dragon benefitting from the Dodge action as much as possible. If the dragon is legendary, its legendary action uses should fund the Deep Breath action, flooding the battlefield in blast pollen. Ideally a character should have to wade through an ocean of explosive hazards to get a clear shot at the dragon, only to have the creature reposition to another inaccessible location within the round.

PLOT HOOKS

Garden Guardian. A young lily dragon has claimed a beautiful public garden as its home, driving away all visitors. While the dragon has yet to harm anyone, denying access to the community garden has earned the dragon a considerable bounty. City officials worry that any violent solution will destroy the precious botanical displays, defeating the point of evicting the dragon in the first place.

Passive Aggressive. Two adult lily dragons are vying for territory over a frosty mountain meadow. In lieu of direct confrontation, the two dragons have taken to driving aggressive creatures into each other's borders, with a local village caught in the middle. Frustrated with its failure to dislodge its rival, one lily dragon has harassed a tribe of frost giants into the meadow, spelling doom for all who live there.

White as Snow. An ancient lily dragon has established a domain of immaculate beauty. The creature aggressively deters anything that fails to meet its exquisite standards from entering the territory. A community of likeminded creatures has flocked to the dragon's "perfect" land, much to the chagrin of those who have been turned away. A particularly wounded red dragon had pledged to burn the domain to the ground, with public opinion very much in her favor.

Lily Dragon Wyrmling

Small dragon, chaotic good

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 78 (12d6 + 36)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +5, Int +3, Cha +4
Skills Acrobatics +8, Insight +6, Perception +6, Persuasion +6, Stealth +8
Damage Immunities poison, radiant
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

TRAITS

Sneaky. The dragon can use a bonus action to take the Hide action.

Tranquility Pheromones. The dragon can use a bonus action to flare its scales and "bloom," emitting a cloud of invisible pheromones in a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on it. The bloom ends after 1 hour or when the dragon uses a bonus action to end the bloom early, after which it must finish a long rest before it can bloom again.

While in bloom, when a creature in the affected area starts each of its turns, the dragon can force the creature to attempt a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, overcoming the creature with feelings of peace and tranquility for 8 hours on a failure. A creature so overcome cannot knowingly harm or affect other creatures without their explicit consent. If the affected creature takes damage from an enemy creature, it may immediately repeat the saving throw to end the effect.

Unless surprised, a creature with the anatomy to cover its means of breathing can do so to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't smell and must hold its breath until the start of its next turn. If the creature attempts to breathe in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the saving throw.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail. The dragon can forgo making a bite attack in this manner to use either its Breath Weapon or Wind Dash action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) radiant damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Breath Weapon (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

- **Psychedelic Gas.** The dragon breathes hallucinogenic gas in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. A creature so poisoned has its senses reduced to 10 feet and is blind beyond that radius, with everything outside the area becoming a part of a vivid psychedelic hallucination. At the end of each of its turns, an affected creature can repeat the saving throw to end the effect.
- **Blast Pollen.** The dragon exhales pollen in a 30-foot cone, which fills the area with explosive pollen for 1 minute, and the area becomes partially obscured. When a creature enters a space in the area for the first time on a turn, it takes 5 (2d4) radiant and 5 (2d4) fire damage. A strong wind disperses the pollen.

Wind Dash. The dragon uses the Dash and Dodge actions. Additionally, until the start of the dragon's next turn when a creature comes within 5 feet of the dragon for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be thrown 30 feet in a straight line away from the dragon, landing prone.

TREASURE

The presence of a lily dragon has a remarkable influence on flora, causing the appearance of the imaginatively named and gorgeous "dragon lilies." These magical flowers possess astonishing, peace-inducing properties when presented to others in a bouquet or floral arrangement. Dragon lilies cannot grow outside of a lily dragon's territory, and their magic fades 24 hours after they have been picked.

Dragon Lilies

Wondrous item, common

These freshly picked flowers possess an ethereal and immaculate beauty. As an action, a creature can present the lilies as a gesture of peace and friendship to another creature that can see the flowers and is not an enemy. When this occurs, the creature presenting the lilies gains a +10 bonus to Charisma ability checks against the target creature for 1 hour. Once the lilies have been presented in this manner, their magic fades, becoming ordinary (but quite beautiful) flowers.

ECOLOGY

Conflict is anathema to a lily dragon. The creatures desire only to accumulate wealth and live as they choose. Rarely are the needs of lesser creatures considered, as lily dragons firmly believe their nonviolence to be an extremely generous gift to any neighbors. Those who fail to appreciate this perceived benevolence can find themselves harassed out of the dragon's territory in short order, their lives made unlivable by mischievous pranks and constant interference by the dragon. Lily dragons value organic beauty above all other treasure. They cultivate vast gardens, raise rare plants, and collect art in vast quantities, all of which are arranged with immaculate aesthetic taste. Creatures that don't antagonize the lily dragon are welcome in its home, and many peace-loving creatures have found the dragon's arrogance to be a reasonable price to pay for a life of tranquility.

Young Lily Dragon

Medium dragon, chaotic good

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 178 (21d8 + 84)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	21 (+5)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Con +7, Int +5, Cha +7
Skills Acrobatics +13, Insight +9, Perception +9, Persuasion +11, Stealth +13
Damage Immunities poison, radiant
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

TRAITS

Sneaky. The dragon can use a bonus action to take the Hide action.

Tranquility Pheromones. The dragon can use a bonus action to flare its scales and "bloom," emitting a cloud of invisible pheromones in a 60-foot-radius sphere centered on it. The bloom ends after 1 hour or when the dragon uses a bonus action to end the bloom early, after which it must finish a long rest before it can bloom again.

While in bloom, when a creature in the affected area starts each of its turns, the dragon can force it to attempt a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw, overcoming the creature with feelings of peace and tranquility for 8 hours on a failure. A creature so overcome cannot knowingly harm or affect other creatures without their explicit consent. If the affected creature takes damage from an enemy creature, it may immediately repeat the saving throw to end the effect.

Unless surprised, a creature with the anatomy to cover its means of breathing can do so to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't smell and must hold its breath until the start of its next turn. If the creature attempts to breathe in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the saving throw.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail. The dragon can forgo making a bite attack in this manner to use either its Breath Weapon or Wind Dash action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) radiant damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., each target in a 10-foot cube within range. *Hit:* 12 (1d12 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Breath Weapon (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

- **Psychedelic Gas.** The dragon breathes hallucinogenic gas in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. A creature so poisoned has its senses reduced to 10 feet and is blind beyond that radius, with everything outside the area becoming a part of a vivid psychedelic hallucination. At the end of each of its turns, an affected creature can repeat the saving throw to end the effect.
- **Blast Pollen.** The dragon exhales pollen in a 30-foot cone, which fills the area with explosive pollen for 1 minute, and the area becomes partially obscured. When a creature enters a space in the area for the first time on a turn, it takes 7 (2d6) radiant and 7 (2d6) fire damage. A strong wind disperses the pollen.

Wind Dash. The dragon uses the Dash and Dodge actions. Additionally, until the start of the dragon's next turn when a creature comes within 5 feet of the dragon for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be thrown 30 feet in a straight line away from the dragon, landing prone.

A LILY DRAGON'S LAIR

Comfort is a lily dragon's top concern when picking a place to live. The dragons prefer secluded forests, benevolent cultural centers, and tranquil lakes when founding a lair. They prefer open-air spaces atop mountains or towers to bask in the sunlight they so love.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the dragon takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects. The dragon can't cause the same effect two rounds in a row:

- A creature of the dragon's choice becomes allergic to its pheromones for 1 minute. A creature so allergic has disadvantage on saving throws against the dragon's Tranquility Pheromones feature.

ADULT LILY DRAGON

Large dragon, chaotic good

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 241 (23d10 + 115)
Speed 30 ft., fly 90 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	23 (+6)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	24 (+7)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +11, Con +10, Int +6, Cha +11
Skills Acrobatics +16, Insight +11, Perception +11, Persuasion +15
Damage Immunities poison, radiant
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

TRAITS

Primal Resistance (3/dDay). When the dragon fails a saving throw or is hit by a weapon attack, it can choose to either succeed on the saving throw or cause the attack to miss.

Tranquility Pheromones. The dragon can use a bonus action to flare its scales and "bloom," emitting a cloud of invisible pheromones in a 90-foot-radius sphere centered on it. The bloom ends after 1 hour or when the dragon uses a bonus action to end the bloom early, after which it must finish a long rest before it can bloom again.

While in bloom, when a creature in the affected area starts each of its turns, the dragon can force it to attempt a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw, overcoming the creature with feelings of peace and tranquility for 8 hours on a failure. A creature so overcome cannot knowingly harm or affect other creatures without their explicit consent. If the affected creature takes damage from an enemy creature, it may immediately repeat the saving throw to end the effect.

Unless surprised, a creature with the anatomy to cover its means of breathing can do so to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't smell and must hold its breath until the start of its next turn. If the creature attempts to breathe in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the saving throw.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail. The dragon can forgo making a bite attack in this manner to use either its Breath Weapon or Wind Dash action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 11 (2d10) radiant damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., each target in a 15-foot cube within range. *Hit:* 19 (2d12 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Breath Weapon (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

- **Psychedelic Gas.** The dragon breathes hallucinogenic gas in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. A creature so poisoned has its senses reduced to 10 feet and is blind beyond that radius, with everything outside the area becoming a part of a vivid psychedelic hallucination. At the end of each of its turns, an affected creature can repeat the saving throw to end the effect.
- **Blast Pollen.** The dragon exhales pollen in a 60-foot cone, which fills the area with explosive pollen for 1 minute, and the area becomes partially obscured. When a creature enters a space in the area for the first time on a turn, it takes 9 (2d8) radiant and 9 (2d8) fire damage. A strong wind disperses the pollen.

Wind Dash. The dragon uses the Dash and Dodge actions. Additionally, until the start of the dragon's next turn when a creature comes within 5 feet of the dragon for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be thrown 30 feet in a straight line away from the dragon, landing prone.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Tail. The dragon makes a tail attack.

Wind Dash (Costs 2 Actions). The dragon uses its Wind Dash action and moves up to its speed.

Deep Breath (Costs 3 Actions). The dragon recharges its breath weapon.

- Fickle winds aid the dragon in combat against up to five creatures of the dragon's choice that it can see. Affected creatures suffer disadvantage on ranged weapon attacks and have their flying speed (if any) halved until the next initiative count of 20.
- Sparkling lights of color appears in a 10-foot cube within an area within the lair of the dragon's choice, which last until the next initiative count of 20. A creature that starts its turn in the affected area must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or spend its entire turn trying to catch the lights within the area and cannot willingly leave the area by any means. A creature immune to the charmed condition is immune to this effect.

Ancient Lily Dragon

Huge dragon, chaotic good

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 264 (23d12 + 115)
Speed 40 ft., fly 120 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	24 (+7)	22 (+6)	14 (+2)	26 (+8)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +14, Con +13, Int +9, Cha +12
Skills Acrobatics +21, Insight +15, Perception +15, Persuasion +19
Damage Immunities poison, radiant
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 25
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 23 (32,500 XP)

Traits

Primal Resistance (3/Day). When the dragon fails a saving throw or is hit by a weapon attack, it can choose to either succeed on the saving throw or cause the attack to miss.

Tranquility Pheromones. The dragon can use a bonus action to flare its scales and "bloom," emitting a cloud of invisible pheromones in a 120-foot-radius sphere centered on it. The bloom ends after 1 hour or when the dragon uses a bonus action to end the bloom early, after which it must finish a long rest before it can bloom again.

While in bloom, when a creature in the affected area starts each of its turns, the dragon can force it to attempt a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw, overcoming the creature with feelings of peace and tranquility for 8 hours on a failure. A creature so overcome cannot knowingly harm or affect other creatures without their explicit consent. If the affected creature takes damage from an enemy creature, it may immediately repeat the saving throw to end the effect.

Unless surprised, a creature with the anatomy to cover its means of breathing can do so to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't smell and must hold its breath until the start of its next turn. If the creature attempts to breathe in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the saving throw.

Words of Peace. The dragon can use a bonus action to attempt a Charisma (Persuasion) check against a creature that can both hear it and shares a language with it, contested by the target's Wisdom (Insight). On a success, the target is affected by the *command* spell (spell save DC 23), though this effect is nonmagical in nature. The dragon may not use this feature to cause a target to act in a manner that would cause immediate or direct harm to itself.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail. The dragon can forgo making a bite attack in this manner to use either its Breath Weapon or Wind Dash action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (3d10 + 7) piercing damage plus 16 (3d10) radiant damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 25 ft., each target in a 15-foot cube within range. *Hit:* 33 (4d12 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Breath Weapon (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

- **Psychedelic Gas.** The dragon breathes hallucinogenic gas in a 90-foot cone. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. A creature so poisoned has its senses reduced to 10 feet and is blind beyond that radius, with everything outside the area becoming a part of a vivid psychedelic hallucination. At the end of each of its turns, an affected creature can repeat the saving throw to end the effect.
- **Blast Pollen.** The dragon exhales pollen in a 90-foot cone, which fills the area with explosive pollen for 1 minute, and the area becomes partially obscured. When a creature enters a space in the area for the first time on a turn, it takes 13 (3d8) radiant and 13 (3d8) fire damage. A strong wind disperses the pollen.

Wind Dash. The dragon uses the Dash and Dodge actions. Additionally, until the start of the dragon's next turn when a creature comes within 10 feet of the dragon for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must succeed on a DC 23 Strength saving throw or be thrown 30 feet in a straight line away from the dragon, landing prone.

Legendary Actions

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Tail. The dragon makes a tail attack.

Primal Infusion (Costs 2 Actions). The dragon regains a use of its Primal Resistance feature.

Wind Dash (Costs 2 Actions). The dragon uses its Wind Dash action and moves up to its speed.

Deep Breath (Costs 3 Actions). The dragon recharges its breath weapon.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region containing a legendary lily dragon's lair is augmented by the dragon's magic, which creates one or more of the following effects within the area:

- The sun shines for 8 hours minimum every day, and weather (even when magically produced) can never block sunlight from shining on the dragon.
- By spending 1 hour of strenuous activity in direct contact with a plant, the dragon can shape the form of its target into any desirable configuration, grow it up to twice its natural size, cause it to bloom, or cause it to bear fruit.
- The air within the region is sweet and pleasant, smelling of honey, flowers, and rain.

If the dragon dies, these effects fade after 1d10 days.

ROSE DRAGONS

Every rose has its teeth and claws. Rose dragons are flamboyant creatures that emit pheromones designed to induce overwhelming emotions in their victims. Many a fool has leapt happily into a rose dragon's hungry jaws or fallen to their knees in despair before its majesty, their minds ravaged by a potent hormonal cocktail emitted from countless glands hidden beneath its petal-like scales. Rose dragons start their lives lacking the crimson adornments of their parents. As they age, many of the dragon's scales grow to resemble the petals of a flower, their colors shifting to brilliant red hues. While the beauty of a rose dragon is undeniable, the creature's temperaments are prickly at best and vicious at worse. When behaving aggressively (which is most of the time), a rose dragon flares its scales toward its enemies like a peacock, distracting them from the true threat from the invisible pheromones washing over the battlefield.

The Rose Dragon

I'm allergic to pollen. That alone should tell you how much I did not enjoy researching orchid dragons, especially the rose dragon. My typical uncontrollable sneezing was accompanied with feelings of crushing despair, irresistible lust, and blinding anger. A breathing apparatus is recommended when encountering these creatures, or a significant talent for holding your breath. Even when conversing with rose dragons, they will likely expose you to their pheromones just to see what you'll do, so little is their regard for the will of others. Once you get past their literal air of menace, you'll find them to be surprisingly shy dragons, unaccustomed to the verbosity of other creatures.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Elite

Favors: Mobility (High), Monks, Rangers, Rogues, Wisdom (High)

Foils: Bards, Constitution (Low), Fighters, Paladins

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a rose dragon with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

ROSE DRAGON LORE

DC	INFORMATION
12	Younger rose dragons emphasize stealth and guile over direct confrontation. As they age, these dragons can produce more potent pheromone cocktails that induce overpowering emotions in those who inhale them. When encountering a rose dragon, keep your distance or be ready to hold your breath.
17	The breath of a rose dragon can be either burning pollen or a virulent poison. The pollen can saturate the ground upon which it lands, burning all who enter it. Meanwhile, the venom can strip away defenses both magical and natural, leaving one vulnerable the dragon's many other abilities.
23	While their pheromonal powers are impressive, rose dragons rely heavily on their use to gain an advantage in battle. Keeping your distance is essential to stay one step ahead of the dragon, with larger specimens affecting huge areas with their pheromones. They are also slow (for dragons) and graceless fliers.

TACTICS

A rose dragon can only use its Emotion Pheromones feature for up to 1 hour each day, so rarely is the creature encountered with this effect in play. However, because the effects of the feature are invisible, the dragon openly approaches characters while in "bloom" in a nonthreatening manner, hoping to catch them by surprise. Like those of most dragons, the rose dragon's breath weapon is best used against groups of enemies. Typically, the rose dragon opens with its Flame Pollen, followed by Chloral Venom once recharged. Chloral Venom should be used against creatures that have proven resistant to the dragon's attacks and abilities or have raised magical defenses which confer similar benefits. The dragon prioritizes creatures that have been subjected to its pheromones or creatures it can easily down. Unlike other dragons, a rose dragon prefers to keep close to the ground, keeping as many foes in range of its Emotion Pheromones feature as possible.

Easier Tactics — Use the Anger effect of the Emotion Pheromones. While it's inconvenient to have to constantly attack the dragon, it's hardly a worthless exercise. If you get the chance to use Chloral Venom, don't hit more than two characters. The rose dragon lacks the ability to dish out tons of direct damage unless it uses its Claw legendary action, so keep attacks dispersed between different characters rather than focus fire.

Harder Tactics — Have the dragon approach the characters in a nonthreatening manner. Unless they know about the Emotional Pheromones feature, the characters can be taken by surprise. This surprise is huge, since it prevents characters from holding their breath. A particularly sinister ploy is having the dragon use its Flame Pollen breath in combination with the Lust emotion to pull characters into the affected areas for considerable fire damage. Use Threat Display early to help the dragon stay alive over the course of the fight.

PLOT HOOKS

Roses Are Red, Blood Is Redder. An assassin has partnered with a rose dragon for a steady supply of rage-inducing pheromones. After a messy killing in which an entire banquet hall was poisoned into slaughtering each other in a mindless rage, a bounty is put out on both the assassin and the dragon—dead or alive.

The Crimson Wing. A red dragon/rose dragon couple calling themselves the Crimson Wing have laid claim to a vast swath of territory inside a populated nation. The pair are proving particularly difficult to defeat, having trained to synchronize their abilities with the skill of veteran battle masters.

Season of Love. A rose dragon is on the prowl for a partner, journeying far and wide across the land. Unfortunately for everyone in its path, the creature doesn't discriminate much about what it eats along the way. Forcing the dragon into a confrontation has proven difficult, so an alternative strategy is suggested—help it find a suitable partner.

TREASURE

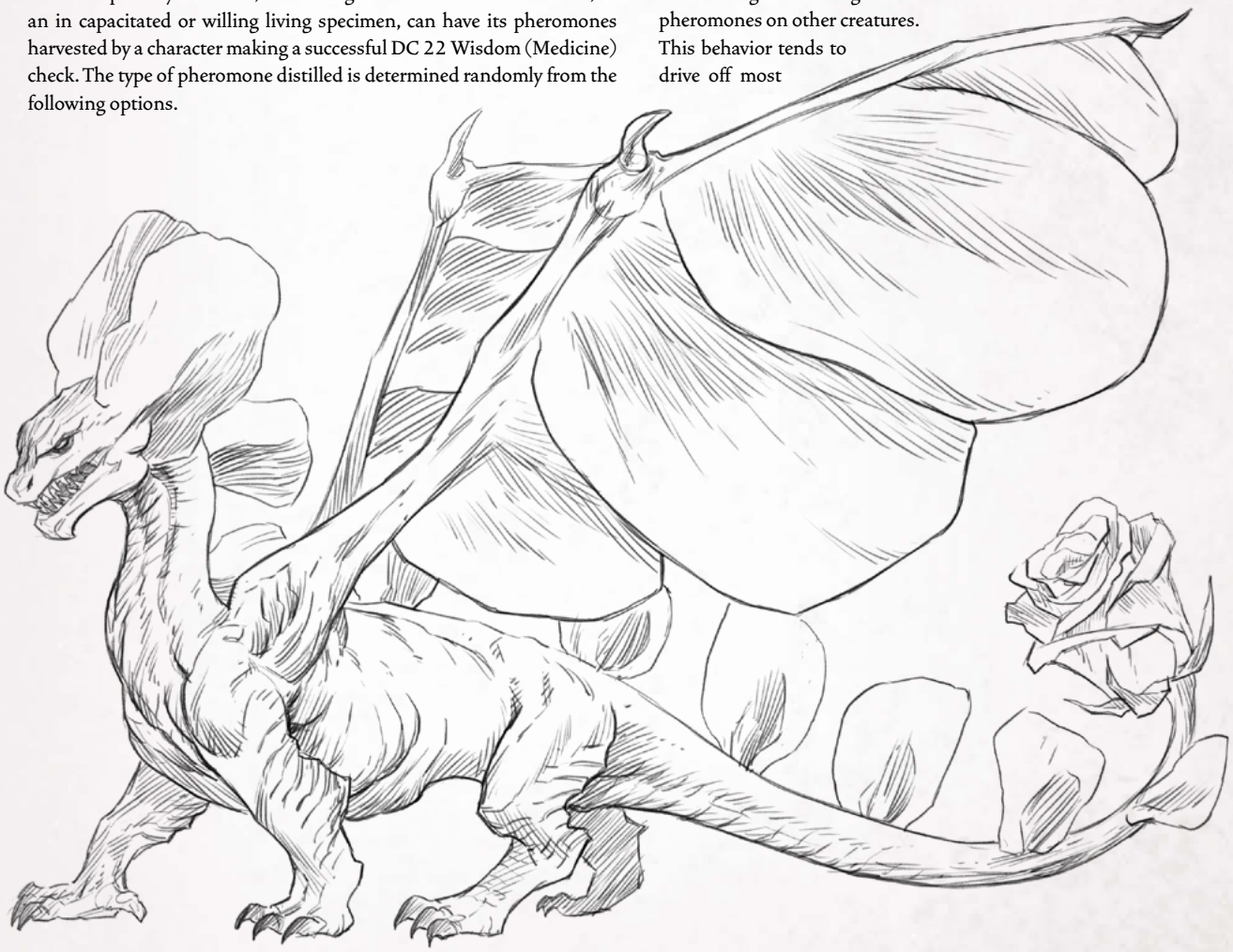
Rose dragon pheromones are potent and difficult to collect reliably. Without the biology of the dragon to keep them fresh, the pheromones lose their potency. However, a rose dragon slain within the last hour, or an in capacitated or willing living specimen, can have its pheromones harvested by a character making a successful DC 22 Wisdom (Medicine) check. The type of pheromone distilled is determined randomly from the following options.

Rose Dragon Pheromones (Inhaled). A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw or be stricken with overpowering emotions, chosen from the following options. The type of emotion is chosen randomly upon the poison's creation.

- **Affection.** The affected creature must move toward the nearest creature it finds attractive at every available opportunity by the most efficient and direct means available to it. If the creature is within 5 feet of its target, it cannot willingly move away from it
- **Anger.** The affected creature cannot concentrate on spells or other features. Additionally, if the creature does not attack another creature by the end of each of its turns, it takes 14 (4d6) psychic damage.
- **Despair.** The affected creature has its speed halved, and it cannot take bonus actions or reactions.

ECOLOGY

All orchid dragons prefer lush biomes, and rose dragons possess a particular affinity for tropical areas. No matter where they reside, the dragons make an impression, quickly assuming the role of apex predator. Older specimens don't make pointless efforts to conceal themselves, while younger members are able to hide among the greenery until they are strong enough to dominate their territory. Rose dragons take particular delight in seeing the effects of their pheromones on other creatures. This behavior tends to drive off most



sentient life other than plants and other beings that have no need to breathe. Humanoids and non-dragons are rarely worth a rose dragon's time, particularly if they do not taste good. They violently challenge other dragons to establish dominance—unless they've lost such a contest previously, at which point they avoid them entirely.

A ROSE DRAGON'S LAIR

With a preference for wide-open spaces, rose dragons typically lair atop hills and small mountains. As slow flyers, they enjoy being close to sources of food and entertainment. The centerpiece of such a lair is a large basking spot for the dragon to comfortably lay about, surrounded by small treasures and other entertaining knickknacks. The dragon's full hoard is typically buried beneath this basking spot, preferably underneath a hefty slab of stone. The dragon lures plant creatures to its lair to defend the place in its absence, and it is likely to form alliances with particularly powerful specimens (though never those more powerful than itself).

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the dragon takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects. The dragon can't cause the same effect two rounds in a row:

- A creature of the dragon's choice becomes allergic to its pheromones for 1 minute. A creature so allergic has disadvantage on saving throws against the dragon's Emotion Pheromones feature.

ROSE DRAGON WYRMLING

Medium dragon, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 93 (11d8 + 44)
Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +6, Int +4, Wis +5, Cha +7
Skills Deception +10, Insight +5, Nature +4, Perception +5
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

TRAITS

Emotion Pheromones. As a bonus action the dragon can flare its scales and "bloom," emitting a cloud of invisible pheromones in a 60-foot-radius sphere centered on it. The bloom ends after 1 hour or when the dragon uses a bonus action to end the bloom early, after which it must finish a long rest before it can bloom again.

While in bloom, when a creature in the affected area starts each of its turns, the dragon can force it to attempt a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, causing the creature to suffer a bout of extreme emotional intensity for 1 minute on a failure. A creature that fails this saving throw by 10 or more instead experiences the emotional intensity for 1 hour. The dragon decides what type of emotion affects the creature, chosen from the following options. Once a creature has been affected by an emotion option, it cannot be affected by that emotion option again for 24 hours.

- **Affection.** The affected creature must move toward the dragon at every available opportunity by the most efficient and direct means available to it. If the creature is within 5 feet of the dragon, it cannot willingly move away from it.
- **Anger.** The affected creature cannot concentrate on spells or other features. Additionally, if the creature does not attack another creature by the end of each of its turns, it takes 7 (2d6) psychic damage.
- **Despair.** The affected creature's speed is halved, and it cannot take bonus actions or reactions.

Unless surprised, a creature with the anatomy to cover its means of breathing can do so to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't smell and must hold its breath until the start of its next turn, when it can attempt to avoid the effect again. If the creature attempts to breathe in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the save.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws. The dragon can forgo making a bite attack in this manner to use either its Breath Weapon or Threat Display action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) poison damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) fire damage.

Breath Weapon (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

- **Chloral Venom.** The dragon spews poison in a 60-foot line. Each creature in the line must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be coated in a sticky venom. A creature so coated cannot regain hit points and is vulnerable to all damage. As an action a creature so coated can scrape off the venom to end the effect. Fully immersing the affected creature in water also removes the venom.
- **Flame Pollen.** The dragon exhales incendiary pollen in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the area must attempt a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Additionally, any ground in the affected area becomes saturated with incendiary pollen for 1 minute. A creature that enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 5 (1d10) fire damage.

Threat Display. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 60 feet of it and can see it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become intimidated by the dragon for 1 minute. A creature so intimidated has disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws against the dragon. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Threat Display for the next 24 hours.

- A burst of healing pollen appears in a 10-foot cube in the lair which lasts until the next initiative count of 20. When a creature in that area breathes for the first time in a round, it magically regains 21 (6d6) hit points.
- Winds blow the scent of creatures within 1 mile of the lair to the dragon. For 1 hour the dragon has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) and Wisdom (Survival) checks to detect and track creatures it smells in this manner. Additionally, when it takes this lair action the dragon may immediately take a reaction to take the Search action.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region containing a legendary rose dragon's lair is augmented by the dragon's magic, which creates one or more of the following effects within the area:

- Bloodstains on creatures, objects, and structures never fade and cannot be removed for as long as they remain within the area, unless the dragon allows it.
- When a creature in the affected area is angry, hopeless, or lustful, it gains advantage on Charisma ability checks.
- The season in the region is always autumn, and the trees within the affected area mysteriously never run out of leaves to drop.

If the dragon dies these effects fade after 1d10 days.

YOUNG ROSE DRAGON

Large dragon, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 189 (18d10 + 90)
Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +7, Int +6, Wis +7, Cha +9
Skills Deception +13, Insight +7, Nature +6, Perception +7
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

TRAITS

Emotion Pheromones. As a bonus action the dragon can flare its scales and "bloom," emitting a cloud of invisible pheromones in a 90-foot-radius sphere centered on it. The bloom ends after 1 hour or when the dragon uses a bonus action to end the bloom early, after which it must finish a long rest before it can bloom again.

While in bloom, when a creature in the affected area starts each of its turns, the dragon can force it to attempt a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw, suffering a bout of extreme emotional intensity for 1 minute on a failure. A creature that fails this saving throw by 10 or more instead experiences the emotional intensity for 1 hour. The dragon decides what type of emotion affects the creature, chosen from the following options. Once a creature has been affected by an emotion option, it cannot be affected by that emotion option again for 24 hours.

- **Affection.** The affected creature must move toward the dragon at every available opportunity by the most efficient and direct means available to it. If the creature is within 5 feet of the dragon, it cannot willingly move away from it.
- **Anger.** The affected creature cannot concentrate on spells or other features. Additionally, if the creature does not attack another creature by the end of each of its turns, it takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage.
- **Despair.** The affected creature's speed is halved, and it cannot take bonus actions or reactions.

Unless surprised, a creature with the anatomy to cover its means of breathing can do so to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't smell and must hold its breath until the start of its next turn, when it can attempt to avoid the effect again. If the creature attempts to breathe in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the save.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws. The dragon can forgo making a bite attack in this manner to use either its Breath Weapon or Threat Display action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) poison damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) fire damage.

Breath Weapon (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

- **Chloral Venom.** The dragon spews poison in a 90-foot line. Each creature in the line must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or be coated in a sticky venom. A creature so coated cannot regain hit points and is vulnerable to all damage. As an action a creature so coated can scrape off the venom to end the effect. Fully immersing the affected creature in water also removes the venom.
- **Flame Pollen.** The dragon exhales incendiary pollen in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in the area must attempt a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 44 (8d10) fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Additionally, any ground in the affected area becomes saturated with incendiary pollen for 1 minute. A creature that enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 11 (2d10) fire damage.

Threat Display. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of it and can see it must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become intimidated by the dragon for 1 minute. A creature so intimidated has disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws against the dragon. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Threat Display for the next 24 hours.

Adult Rose Dragon

Huge dragon, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 213 (22d12 + 70)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	21 (+5)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Str +11, Int +9, Wis +11, Cha +13
Skills Deception +19, Insight +11, Nature +9, Perception +11
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Traits

Emotion Pheromones. As a bonus action the dragon can flare its scales and "bloom," emitting a cloud of invisible pheromones in a 120-foot-radius sphere centered on it. The bloom ends after 1 hour or when the dragon uses a bonus action to end the bloom early, after which it must finish a long rest before it can bloom again.

While in bloom, when a creature in the affected area starts each of its turns, the dragon can force it to attempt a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw, suffering a bout of extreme emotional intensity for 1 minute on a failure. A creature that fails this saving throw by 10 or more instead experiences the emotional intensity for 1 hour. The dragon decides what type of emotion affects the creature, chosen from the following options. Once a creature has been affected by an emotion option, it cannot be affected by that emotion option again for 24 hours.

- **Affection.** The affected creature must move toward the dragon at every available opportunity by the most efficient and direct means available to it. If the creature is within 5 feet of the dragon, it cannot willingly move away from it.
- **Anger.** The affected creature cannot concentrate on spells or other features. Additionally, if the creature does not attack another creature by the end of each of its turns, it takes 14 (4d6) psychic damage.
- **Despair.** The affected creature's speed is halved, and it cannot take bonus actions or reactions.

Unless surprised, a creature with the anatomy to cover its means of breathing can do so to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't smell and must hold its breath until the start of its next turn, when it can attempt to avoid the effect again. If the creature attempts to breathe in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the save.

Primal Resistance (3/Day). When the dragon fails a saving throw or is hit by a weapon attack, it can choose to either succeed on the saving throw or cause the attack to miss.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws. The dragon can forgo making a bite attack in this manner to use either its Breath Weapon or Threat Display action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d10 + 5) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) poison damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8 + 5) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) fire damage.

Breath Weapon (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

- **Chloral Venom.** The dragon spews poison in a 120-foot line. Each creature in the line must succeed on a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw or be coated in a sticky venom. A creature so coated cannot regain hit points and is vulnerable to all damage. As an action a creature so coated can scrape off the venom to end the effect. Fully immersing the affected creature in water also removes the venom.
- **Flame Pollen.** The dragon exhales incendiary pollen in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in the area must attempt a DC 21 Constitution saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Additionally, any ground in the affected area becomes saturated with incendiary pollen for 1 minute. A creature that enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 11 (2d10) fire damage.

Threat Display. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of it and can see it must succeed on a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw or become intimidated by the dragon for 1 minute. A creature so intimidated has disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws against the dragon. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Threat Display for the next 24 hours.

Legendary Actions

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Claw. The dragon makes a claw attack.

Flutter. The dragon moves up to its speed without provoking attacks of opportunity.

Threat Display (Costs 2 Actions). The dragon uses its Threat Display action.

Deep Breath (Costs 3 Actions). The dragon recharges its breath weapon.

Ancient Rose Dragon

Gargantuan dragon, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)
Hit Points 595 (34d20 + 238)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	16 (+3)	24 (+7)	18 (+4)	23 (+6)	28 (+9)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +15, Wis +14, Cha +17
Skills Deception +24, Insight +14, Nature +12, Perception +14
Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 24
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 25 (75,000 XP)

Traits

Emotion Pheromones. The dragon can use a bonus action to flare its scales and "bloom," emitting a cloud of invisible pheromones in a 300-foot-radius sphere centered on it. The bloom ends after 1 hour or when the dragon uses a bonus action to end the bloom early, after which it must finish a long rest before it can bloom again.

While in bloom, when a creature in the affected area starts each of its turns, the dragon can force it to attempt a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw, suffering a bout of extreme emotional intensity for 1 minute on a failure. A creature that fails this saving throw by 10 or more instead experiences the emotional intensity for 1 hour. The dragon decides what type of emotion affects the creature, chosen from the following options. Once a creature has been affected by an emotion option, it cannot be affected by that emotion option again for 24 hours.

- **Affection.** The affected creature must move toward the dragon at every available opportunity by the most efficient and direct means available to it. If the creature is within 5 feet of the dragon, it cannot willingly move away from it.
- **Anger.** The affected creature cannot concentrate on spells or other features. Additionally, if the creature does not attack another creature by the end of each of its turns, it takes 21 (6d6) psychic damage.
- **Despair.** The affected creature's speed is halved, and it cannot take bonus actions or reactions.

Unless surprised, a creature with the anatomy to cover its means of breathing can do so to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't smell and must hold its breath until the start of its next turn, when it can attempt to avoid the effect again. If the creature attempts to breathe in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the save.

Primal Resistance (3/Day). When the dragon fails a saving throw or is hit by a weapon attack, it can choose to either succeed on the saving throw or cause the attack to miss.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws. The dragon can forgo making a bite attack in this manner to use either its Breath Weapon or Threat Display action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 22 (4d10) poison damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 24 (4d8 + 6) slashing damage plus 9 (2d8) fire damage.

Breath Weapon (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

- **Chloral Venom.** The dragon spews poison in a 300-foot line. Each creature in the line must succeed on a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw or be coated in a sticky venom. A creature so coated cannot regain hit points and is vulnerable to all damage. As an action a creature so coated can scrape off the venom to end the effect. Fully immersing the affected creature in water also removes the venom.
- **Flame Pollen.** The dragon exhales incendiary pollen in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in the area must attempt a DC 21 Constitution saving throw, taking 88 (16d10) fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Additionally, any ground in the affected area becomes saturated with incendiary pollen for 1 minute. A creature that enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there takes 22 (4d10) fire damage.

Threat Display. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of it and can see it must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or become intimidated by the dragon for 1 minute. A creature so intimidated has disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws against the dragon. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Threat Display for the next 24 hours.

Legendary Actions

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Claw. The dragon makes a claw attack.

Flutter. The dragon moves up to its speed without provoking attacks of opportunity.

Threat Display (Costs 2 Actions). The dragon uses its Threat Display action.

Deep Breath (Costs 3 Actions). The dragon recharges its breath weapon.

LOTUS DRAGONS

In nature, dangerous creatures use bright colorations to communicate deadly potential. The lotus dragons have taken this practice of aposematism to extremes; their resplendent scales are a beautiful threat to any and all who cross their path. The most sinister and deadly of the orchid dragons, lotus dragons are among the most powerful of known true dragons. Their scales are a luscious purple, which can "bloom" to unleash the dragon's toxic pheromones in an elegant display. At the tail of the dragon is a flower-like configuration of specialized scales in the shape of a lotus flower, from which the dragon draws its name. Lotus dragons are poorly understood due to their extreme rarity, with much remaining to be discovered about their nature and biology. Few creatures can survive in their presence, and fewer still are little more than a tasty morsel in the dragon's eyes.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a lotus dragon with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

LOTUS DRAGON LORE

DC	INFORMATION
16	Lotus dragons possess toxic pheromones that can reduce living creatures to lifeless husks in mere moments. This effect is far more virulent than any poison, but worry not—the dragon also possesses an acid breath, a poisonous tail, and many more horrors upon which adventurers can meet their end. Approach with extreme caution.
22	A lotus dragon can lure creatures toward it, often forcing victims to wade through an ocean of toxic pheromones. It can also unleash a cloud of virulent allergens that can further weaken a creature's protections against the dragon. No matter your defenses, these dragons pack enough punch to always pose a serious threat.
28	The oldest of lotus dragons are nearly unstoppable. Their acid breath melts everything in its path, while their poisons overcome the most stalwart of defenses. Regardless of age, the dragon's pheromones sap the vitality from its victims, turning even the beefiest barbarian into a fragile fleshling—easy prey for the dragon's teeth and claws.

TACTICS

Combat with a lotus dragon can turn deadly at any moment. Toxic Pheromones can not only slay a creature by reducing its hit point maximum to 0, it can make the victim easily killed by a lucky critical hit from the dragon. Keep this in mind when running a lotus dragon, which is almost always in bloom before battle is even joined. Should characters prove adept at handling the Toxic Pheromones feature, use the dragon's Extreme Allergens breath to force the Hacking Cough effect. Note that the Dribbling Sneezes effect is strong against spellcasters, while the Watery Eyes is ideal for granting the dragon advantage on attacks against a target. Younger dragons should remain airborne and out of reach, using their Alluring Presence to force adventurers into staying within range of their Toxic Pheromones. Older dragons are fearless, entering the fray to savage characters with teeth and claws. The dragon's Tail attack deals a *ton* of poison damage and should be used strategically against targets likely to be susceptible to its effects. Legendary lotus dragons have access to a formidable array of lair actions and legendary actions, the most notable of which is Deep Breath, which can be used to keep the battlefield awash in acid and allergens.

Easier Tactics — Don't have the dragon's Toxic Pheromones in "bloom" before combat starts. Only use Alluring Presence when characters try to flee, so as to provide them with as much autonomy as possible. Be mindful about downing characters. Remember that if a character is reduced to 0 hit points, it can no longer hold its breath, becoming extremely vulnerable to the dragon's Toxic Pheromones. Younger lotus dragons should flee the battlefield when severely hurt, while older ones should be more cautious, keeping their strongest abilities in reserve until the characters prove troublesome.

Harder Tactics — Open with Extreme Allergen's Hacking Cough option. This ensures at least a few characters suffer the full effects of the Toxic Pheromones. Whichever character suffers the most from this interaction should be the focus of the dragon's attacks, as it will be easily downed and killed. Flight is one of the dragon's greatest strengths, so don't forget to use that flying speed liberally. It's worth provoking attacks of opportunity to get out of reach of melee foes. The dragon's Acidic Mist breath weapon option should always hit at least two creatures. Note that Acidic Mist can destroy objects, exposing seemingly shielded characters in total cover to its caustic damage.

The Lotus Dragon

The beauty of the lotus dragon is a legend that has proven frustratingly difficult to substantiate, but I can proudly confirm these elusive dragons live up to the hype. Unfortunately, the same can also be said for their malicious and predatory nature, much to the misfortune of my latest assistant from the College of Lore. Watching poor Samantha succumb in moments to the noxious pheromones of a lotus dragon provided me with priceless data, allowing my companions and me to vanquish the creature. I have since had the dragon taxidermized to preserve its beauty, and the corpse is one of the most valuable pieces in my collection. If the dragon's relatives ever end up reading this entry, please note I am more than willing to return the remains upon request. I promise you they have been treated with the utmost respect.

— Talien Vos Karven



Classification: Elite

Favors: Barbarians, Constitution (High), Fighters, Poison (Immunity), Sorcerers

Foils: Bards, Rogues, Spells (Verbal), Stealth, Wizards

PLOT HOOKS

Botanical Bungle. In a misguided attempt to prove a close biological relationship between orchid dragons and plants, a wizard has kidnapped a lotus dragon wyrmling and is holding it for study. Understandably irate, the wyrmling's parents cut a swath of destruction to the wizard's tower. One particularly large town is unable to evacuate ahead of the rampaging dragons, and the wizard refuses to part with the wyrmling until "all scientific inquiries concerning the specimen have been satisfied."

Night among the Lotus. Every evening a dozen lotus dragon wyrmlings hunt within the peaceful farmlands of a noble kingdom. So far, the dragons have avoided humanoids, but many fear a deadly confrontation is inevitable. The dragons' taste for sheep and cattle isn't helping, but the benevolent rulers are hesitant to violently punish "children," even evil ones.

Queen of Blossoms. An ancient lotus dragon has usurped the fey Summer Court, declaring herself the Queen of Blossoms. The former subjects are too terrified to oppose the queen's tyranny, which has transformed the once elegant and noble court into a society of vanity and cruelty. Thankfully some fey are not too proud to seek help from others, even mortal heroes.

TREASURE

The bodies of lotus dragons are saturated with powerful magic, most particularly their pheromone glands. These glands can be harvested by a creature with a successful DC 27 Wisdom (Survival) check. Once harvested, the glands can be dried, powdered, and inhaled to extraordinary effect. A creature that inhales the powdered pheromone glands of a lotus dragon experiences a deadly seizure for 1 minute, becoming incapacitated for the duration. At the start of each its turns, an affected creature must attempt a DC 23 Constitution saving throw. A creature failing three or more of these saving throws over the duration is slain instantly. A creature that survives this seizure adds the following spell to its class spells or spells known (when applicable) and can prepare the spell as if it had recorded the spell in a spellbook (when applicable).

ECOLOGY

Lotus dragons are nocturnal, preferring realms with just enough daylight hours to get in a good sunning session between long naps and midnight hunts. Temperate rainforests full of color and life are the dragon's favorite. When not acquiring treasure or defending its territory, a lotus dragon spends its days preening and polishing its magnificent scales. Their vanity is legendary, giving even the most imperious red dragon a run for its money. A single scratch or chip in its flowery scales is enough to send a lotus dragon into a rage, and it takes out its anger on the first creature to cross its path. Woe betide any foolish enough to deface a dragon or its territory, regardless of intention. Lotus dragons are cruel and always ensure their enemies suffer horribly for even the slightest transgressions.

A LOTUS DRAGON'S LAIR

Lotus dragons have an affinity for the organic, preferring to make their lairs in or around living (or once-living) things. Titanic hollowed-out trees, moss-covered canopies, and other dark, secluded places are ideal.



New Spell – Curse of the Black Lotus

This spell is a class spell for clerics, druids, warlocks, and wizards.

Curse of the Black Lotus

9th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (a lotus flower)
Duration: Permanent

You touch a creature within reach, afflicting it with a malevolent curse that can only be removed by an effect that removes curses and persists through effects that would suppress the effects of magic (such as an *antimagic field*). The curse marks the target with a magical tattoo of a black lotus flower where you touch it. As an action on each of your turns, so long as you and the cursed creature are on the same plane of existence, you can activate the magic of the curse and force the target to attempt a Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount of your choice, to a maximum reduction of 100 hit points. On a success, the target instead has it hit point maximum reduced by 10d6. A creature whose hit point maximum is reduced to 0 in this manner is slain instantly. This reduction lasts until the curse is removed.

Lotus dragons prefer to bury their hoards, often in unassuming or inaccessible locations. An ideal lair is one where the dragon has a good place to hide its treasure, cover behind which to retreat when threatened, and a close source of water for sustenance.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the dragon takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects. The dragon can't cause the same effect two rounds in a row:

- A creature of the dragon's choice becomes allergic to its pheromones for 1 minute. A creature so allergic has disadvantage on saving throws against the dragon's Toxic Pheromones feature.
- The dragon forces each creature of its choice that it is aware of within the lair to attempt a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, becoming ensnared by its own shadow and restrained for 1 minute on a failure. An affected creature may attempt this saving throw again at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If an affected creature is immersed completely in darkness, the effect ends.

LOTUS DRAGON WYRMLING

Small dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 97 (13d8 + 39)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +8, Con +6, Int +4
Skills Intimidation +5, Nature +4, Perception +7, Stealth +11
Damage Immunities acid, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

TRAITS

Toxic Pheromones. The dragon can use a bonus action to flare its scales and "bloom," emitting a cloud of invisible pheromones in a 60-foot-radius sphere centered on it. The bloom ends after 1 hour or when the dragon uses a bonus action to end the bloom early, after which it must finish a long rest before it can bloom again.

While in bloom, when a creature in the affected area starts each of its turns the dragon can force it to attempt a DC 15 Constitution saving throw as it is exposed to noxious poisons, causing the creature to lose 11 (2d10) hit points on a failure, or half as much on a success. The creature's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the hit points lost, and a creature reduced to 0 hit points by this effect is slain instantly. This effect ends if an affected creature gains the benefits of a *heal* or *restoration* spell or is not exposed to the dragon's Toxic Pheromone feature for 1 hour.

Unless surprised, a creature with the anatomy to cover its means of breathing can do so to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't smell and must hold its breath until the start of its next turn, when it can attempt to avoid the effect again. If the creature attempts to breathe in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the save.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws. The dragon can forgo making a bite attack in this manner to use its Alluring Presence action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. While so poisoned, the creature takes 7 (2d6) poison damage at the start of each of its turns.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Alluring Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of it and can see it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become attracted to the dragon for 1 minute. A creature immune to the charmed condition has advantage on this saving throw. A creature so attracted cannot willingly move away from the dragon, nor can it move or act in a manner that would prevent it from seeing the dragon. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Alluring Presence for the next 24 hours.

Breath Weapon (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

- **Acidic Mist.** The dragon exhales a blast of acidic mist in a 60-foot line. When this occurs each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) acid damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Unattended objects and structures in the affected area take double damage from this effect, and if they are reduced to 0 hit points, they are melted into irrecoverable ruin.
- **Extreme Allergens.** The dragon exhales a cloud of highly irritating allergens in a 15-foot cone, which fills the affected area for 1 minute. When a flesh-and-blood creature in the affected area starts each of its turns, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer an extreme allergic reaction until the start of its next turn, suffering one of the following effects of the dragon's choice.
- **Dribbling Sneezes.** The creature begins sneezing uncontrollably, becomes unable to concentrate on spells or magical effects, and cannot communicate verbally.
- **Hacking Cough.** The creature begins coughing profusely. It cannot consume or drink anything and if holding its breath must either take a breath or begin suffocating (creature's choice).
- **Watery Eyes.** The creature's eyes fill with tears. The range of its vision is reduced to 5 feet, and it is blind beyond that radius.

Additionally, the area becomes heavily obscured for the duration. A strong wind can disperse the allergens and end the effect.

- Magical dew appears on the dragon or a creature of its choice in the lair that it can see. Spells and magical effects of the dragon's choice of 6th level or lower affecting the target immediately end.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region containing a legendary lotus dragon's lair is augmented by the dragon's magic, which creates one or more of the following effects within the area:

- The air in the region always smells fragrant, with traditionally noxious odors instead smelling overwhelmingly lovely (any effects caused by noxious or unpleasant smells remain unchanged).
- Colors in the affected area slowly shift between hues.
- Corpses and bodies of slain creatures in the affected area do not rot for as long as they remain within the region.

If the dragon dies, these effects fade after 1d10 days.

YOUNG LOTUS DRAGON

Medium dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 250 (21d10 + 135)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +8, Dex +10, Con +8, Int +6
Skills Intimidation +7, Nature +6, Perception +9, Stealth +14
Damage Immunities acid, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

TRAITS

Toxic Pheromones. The dragon can use a bonus action to flare its scales and "bloom," emitting a cloud of invisible pheromones in a 90-foot-radius sphere centered on it. The bloom ends after 1 hour or when the dragon uses a bonus action to end the bloom early, after which it must finish a long rest before it can bloom again.

While in bloom, when a creature in the affected area starts each of its turns the dragon can force it to attempt a DC 17 Constitution saving throw as it is exposed to noxious poisons, losing 38 (7d10) hit points on a failure, or half as much on a success. An affected creature's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the hit points lost, and a creature reduced to 0 hit points by this effect is slain instantly. This effect ends if an affected creature gains the benefits of a *heal* or *restoration* spell or is not exposed to the dragon's Toxic Pheromone feature for 1 hour.

Unless surprised, a creature with the anatomy to cover its means of breathing can do so to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't smell and must hold its breath until the start of its next turn, when it can attempt to avoid the effect again. If the creature attempts to breathe in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the save.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon makes four attacks: one with its bite, two with its claws, and one with its tail. The dragon can forgo making a bite attack in this manner to use its Alluring Presence action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. While so poisoned, the creature takes 7 (2d6) poison damage at the start of each of its turns.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 44 (6d12 + 5) poison damage.

Alluring Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of it and can see it must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become attracted to the dragon for 1 minute. A creature immune to the charmed condition has advantage on this saving throw. A creature so attracted cannot willingly move away from the dragon, nor can it move or act in a manner that would prevent it from seeing the dragon. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Alluring Presence for the next 24 hours.

Breath Weapon (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

- **Acidic Mist.** The dragon exhales a blast of acidic mist in a 90-foot line. When this occurs each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 58 (13d8) acid damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Unattended objects and structures in the affected area take double damage from this effect, and if they are reduced to 0 hit points, they are melted into irrecoverable ruin.
- **Extreme Allergens.** The dragon exhales a cloud of highly irritating allergens in a 30-foot cone, which fills the affected area for 1 minute. When a flesh-and-blood creature in the affected area starts each of its turns, it must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or suffer an extreme allergic reaction until the start of its next turn, suffering one of the following effects of the dragon's choice.
  - **Dribbling Sneezes.** The creature begins sneezing uncontrollably, becomes unable to concentrate on spells or magical effects, and cannot communicate verbally.
  - **Hacking Cough.** The creature begins coughing profusely. It cannot consume or drink anything and if holding its breath must either take a breath or begin suffocating (creature's choice).
  - **Watery Eyes.** The creature's eyes fill with tears. The range of its vision is reduced to 5 feet, and it is blind beyond that radius.

Additionally, the area becomes heavily obscured for the duration. A strong wind can disperse the allergens and end the effect.

Adult Lotus Dragon

Huge dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)
Hit Points 310 (27d12 + 135)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	24 (+7)	21 (+5)	17 (+3)	26 (+8)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +11, Dex +13, Con +11, Int +9
Skills Intimidation +10, Nature +9, Perception +14, Stealth +19
Damage Immunities acid, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 24
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)

Traits

Primal Resistance (3/Day). When the dragon fails a saving throw or is hit by a weapon attack, it can choose to either succeed on the saving throw or cause the attack to miss.

Toxic Pheromones. The dragon can use a bonus action to flare its scales and "bloom," emitting a cloud of invisible pheromones in a 120-foot-radius sphere centered on it. The bloom ends after 1 hour or when the dragon uses a bonus action to end the bloom early, after which it must finish a long rest before it can bloom again.

While in bloom, when a creature in the affected area starts each of its turns the dragon can force it to attempt a DC 22 Constitution saving throw as it is exposed to noxious poisons, causing a creature to lose 38 (7d10) hit points on a failure, or half as much on a success. An affected creature's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the hit points lost, and a creature reduced to 0 hit points by this effect is slain instantly. This effect ends if an affected creature gains the benefits of a *heal* or *restoration* spell or is not exposed to the dragon's Toxic Pheromone feature for 1 hour.

Unless surprised, a creature with the anatomy to cover its means of breathing can do so to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't smell and must hold its breath until the start of its next turn, when it can attempt to avoid the effect again. If the creature attempts to breathe in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the save.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon makes four attacks: one with its bite, two with its claws, and one with its tail. The dragon can forgo making a bite attack in this manner to use its Alluring Presence action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (3d10 + 7) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. While so poisoned, the creature takes 14 (4d6) poison damage at the start of each of its turns.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d8 + 7) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 60 (8d12 + 8) poison damage.

Alluring Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of it and can see it must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or become attracted to the dragon for 1 minute. A creature immune to the charmed condition has advantage on this saving throw. A creature so attracted cannot willingly move away from the dragon, nor can it move or act in a manner that would prevent it from seeing the dragon. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Alluring Presence for the next 24 hours.

Breath Weapon (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

- **Acidic Mist.** The dragon exhales a blast of acidic mist in a 120-foot line. When this occurs, each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw, taking take 72 (16d8) acid damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Unattended objects and structures in the affected area take double damage from this effect, and if they are reduced to 0 hit points, they are melted into irrecoverable ruin.
- **Extreme Allergens.** The dragon exhales a cloud of highly irritating allergens in a 60-foot cone, which fills the affected area for 1 minute. When a flesh-and-blood creature in the affected area starts each of its turns, it must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw or suffer an extreme allergic reaction until the start of its next turn, suffering one of the following effects of the dragon's choice.
  - **Dribbling Sneezes.** The creature begins sneezing uncontrollably, becomes unable to concentrate on spells or magical effects, and cannot communicate verbally.
  - **Hacking Cough.** The creature begins coughing profusely. It cannot consume or drink anything and if holding its breath must either take a breath or begin suffocating (creature's choice).
  - **Watery Eyes.** The creature's eyes fill with tears. The range of its vision is reduced to 5 feet, and it is blind beyond that radius.

Additionally, the area becomes heavily obscured for the duration. A strong wind can disperse the allergens and end the effect.

Legendary Actions

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Claw. The dragon makes a claw attack.

Tail (Costs 2 Actions). The dragon makes a tail attack.

Deep Breath (Costs 3 Actions). The dragon recharges its breath weapon.

Ancient Lotus Dragon

Gargantuan dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 23 (natural armor)
Hit Points 665 (38d20 + 266)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	28 (+9)	24 (+7)	19 (+4)	30 (+10)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Str, +14, Dex +17, Con +15, Int +12
Skills Intimidation +13, Nature +12, Perception +18, Stealth +25
Damage Immunities acid, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 28
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 27 (105,000 XP)

Traits

Noxious Aura. Creatures within 120 feet of the dragon cannot be immune to the poisoned condition or poison damage. An affected creature that would be immune to the poisoned condition instead has advantage on saving throws against poisons and becoming poisoned. An affected creature immune to poison damage instead has resistance.

Primal Resistance (3/Day). When the dragon fails a saving throw or is hit by a weapon attack, it can choose to either succeed on the saving throw or cause the attack to miss.

Toxic Pheromones. The dragon can use a bonus action to flare its scales and "bloom," emitting a cloud of invisible pheromones in a 300-foot-radius sphere centered on it. The bloom ends after 1 hour or when the dragon uses a bonus action to end the bloom early, after which it must finish a long rest before it can bloom again.

While in bloom, when a creature in the affected area starts each of its turns the dragon can force it to attempt a DC 26 Constitution saving throw as it is exposed to noxious poisons, causing the creature to lose 55 (10d10) hit points on a failure, or half as much on a success. An affected creature's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the hit points lost, and a creature reduced to 0 hit points by this effect is slain instantly. This effect ends if an affected creature gains the benefits of a *heal* or *restoration* spell or is not exposed to the dragon's Toxic Pheromone feature for 1 hour.

Unless surprised, a creature with the anatomy to cover its means of breathing can do so to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't smell and must hold its breath until the start of its next turn, when it can attempt to avoid the effect again. If the creature attempts to breathe in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the save.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon makes four attacks: one with its bite, two with its claws, and one with its tail. The dragon can forgo making a bite attack in this manner to use its Alluring Presence action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 31 (4d10 + 9) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 26 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. While so poisoned, the creature takes 21 (6d6) poison damage at the start of each of its turns.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 27 (4d8 + 9) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 20 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 74 (10d12 + 9) poison damage.

Alluring Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of it and can see it must succeed on a DC 26 Wisdom saving throw or become attracted to the dragon for 1 minute. A creature immune to the charmed condition has advantage on this saving throw. A creature so attracted cannot willingly move away from the dragon, nor can it move or act in a manner that would prevent it from seeing the dragon. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Alluring Presence for the next 24 hours.

Breath Weapon (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

- **Acidic Mist.** The dragon exhales a blast of acidic mist in a 300-foot line. When this occurs each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 26 Dexterity saving throw, taking 90 (20d8) acid damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Unattended objects and structures in the affected area take double damage from this effect, and if they are reduced to 0 hit points, they are melted into irrecoverable ruin.
- **Extreme Allergens.** The dragon exhales a cloud of highly irritating allergens in a 90-foot cone, which fills the affected area for 1 minute. When a flesh-and-blood creature in the affected area starts each of its turns, it must succeed on a DC 26 Constitution saving throw or suffer an extreme allergic reaction until the start of its next turn, suffering one of the following effects of the dragon's choice.
  - **Dribbling Sneezes.** The creature begins sneezing uncontrollably, becomes unable to concentrate on spells or magical effects, and cannot communicate verbally.
  - **Hacking Cough.** The creature begins coughing profusely. It cannot consume or drink anything and if holding its breath must either take a breath or begin suffocating (creature's choice).
  - **Watery Eyes.** The creature's eyes fill with tears. The range of its vision is reduced to 5 feet, and it is blind beyond that radius.

Additionally, the area becomes heavily obscured for the duration. A strong wind can disperse the allergens and end the effect.

Legendary Actions

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Claw. The dragon makes a claw attack.

Tail (Costs 2 Actions). The dragon makes a tail attack.

Deep Breath (Costs 3 Actions). The dragon recharges its breath weapon.

Prime Evils

Some believe evil is a matter of perspective. What is good and virtuous to one can be depraved and vile to another. Unfortunately for the philosophically inclined, this is wrong. While mortals have the capacity for moral relativism, there are those that are pure evil given form. Called prime evils, these fiends have room in their hearts for nothing but pure malevolence. Spite, corruption, and death are their trade, dealt evenly to all they encounter. Other fiends have great cause to fear these entities, as prime evils view such creatures as impure expressions of evil, tainted by the pitiful forces of chaos, law, and even good. It is unknown where prime evils hail from. Some say they spawn from the darkest pits of hell, while others believe they are a twisted evolution of powerful fiends. All that is certain is that prime evils are as powerful as they are evil and should be opposed at every opportunity.

VIVICTIX

Fiends are no stranger to violence, but even they fear the deadly arts of the fearsome vivictix. These prime evils embody the horror of violence in all aspects. Like a gleeful surgeon these fiends rend the flesh of all they deem deserving (which is most beings), inflicting gruesome injuries that reduce the mightiest of creatures to a bloody ruin. When it deigns to be seen, a vivictix is revealed to be a distended humanoid, its black skin glistening with fresh blood. The creature's arms are grotesquely long, ending in lengthy, blade-like claws that move with otherworldly precision. The creature's head is a mouth of pointed teeth forever locked in a smile, while the remainder of its face is obscured by a chitinous shell. Vivictixes have only been witnessed speaking to those they are about to kill, whispering sarcastic condolences to their victims as a final insult to their existence.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a vivictix with an Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

VIVICTIX LORE

DC	INFORMATION
15	A fiendish boogeyman from your worst nightmares, a vivictix strikes from the shadows with claws like surgical blades. It cuts through flesh with supernatural ease, inflicting horrific wounds that are beyond the skill of most healers to treat.
20	Chances are you won't spot a vivictix until it's too late. They can climb over most surfaces and appear behind you without warning. Only stalwart heroes can suffer a vivictix's blows and not come out a bloody ruin, and even then, it's unwise to rely on anything other than potent magical healing.
26	While a vivictix is fast and dangerous, it is not durable. End the fiend before it overwhelms you and treat your wounds later. If you can shapeshift, all the better, as the vivictix must study its target's anatomy to maximize its killing potential.




JASON STRUTZ
STRUTZART

TACTICS

There are few viable defenses against a vivictix's attacks. The damage it deals on a hit with Eviscerate is brutal, especially if the target fails the Constitution save. Against beefier characters, use the vivictix's Mutilate action to blind, cripple, or otherwise hamper their effectiveness. Save those characters for last while the fiend chops up the character's allies, particularly after it's had a chance to buff its next attack with Surgical Precision. The fiend's speed combined with its legendary actions make a vivictix extremely mobile, allowing it to sprint right past the front line. Should a spellcaster attempt to hide within magical protections, use the Stalk legendary action to close the gap. Use Mortal Wound on low-Constitution characters for devastating results, especially if it's a healer.



Easier Tactics — Let the vivictix start combat out in the open, then move quickly to hide. Don't use Mortal Wound, and only use Killing Spree on the third round of combat or later. Have the fiend go toe to toe with characters that can take it, trading blow for blow. While the vivictix will likely win this exchange, it will give the other characters much-needed time to either support the beleaguered character or mount optimal attacks of their own. Should the vivictix fare poorly, retreat and hide in a game of cat and mouse, focusing most actions and efforts on ambushing a single character that is searching for it.

Harder Tactics — As a lurker, the vivictix can easily surprise the characters and gain a massive early advantage. This tactic works extremely well when paired with Killing Spree, allowing the fiend to Multilate almost the entire party in one turn. From there, Mortal Wound should be the next action to use, or Killing Spree again if you can afford it. The vivictix's focus should be downing characters at least once before trying to kill them. The massive cut to their hit point maximum means the fiend stands a much better chance of killing the character in a single hit from massive damage.

The Vivictix

The vivictix has tested me like no other monster that has come before. It is not its power nor its nature that nearly defeated me. No. It was witnessing the fiend's handiwork firsthand. There is death, there is pain, and then there are the actions of vivictixes. I would not wish such a fate on my worst enemy. While I can share with you what tools, weapons, and spells to use when facing a vivictix, I cannot prepare you for its violence. The best I can do is wish you luck and pray you die quickly should you fail.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Lurker

Favors: Barbarians, Clerics, Druids, Shapechanging, Specific Spells (*heal*)

Foils: Fighters, Hit Points (High), Mobility (High), Monks, Rogues

PLOT HOOKS

The Slasher of Blackbark Hollow. The adventurer retirement community of Blackbark hollow has been witness to a string of grisly murders, all retired paladins who once led a crusade against the lower planes. Only two of the crusaders remain, both of whom are far too old to defend themselves against the creature responsible: a vivictix.

Buyer's Remorse. A demon lord puts out a hit on a rival archdevil, and to everyone's shock a vivictix emerges to accept the contract before anyone can object. The demon only intended for the contract to be a mark of disrespect, assuming no fiend would be foolish enough to agree. The lord is looking for anyone willing to put a stop to the vivictix, fearing dire consequences should the prime evil succeed.

TALIEN'S NOTES

When whispers reached me of fiends that put pit fiends and balors to shame, I was skeptical. Then I met my first prime evil. Rarely are the creatures I encounter so aptly named. I have reasoned with devils and even marshaled a demon or two, but I would never dare expect anything but terrible violence from any encounter with a prime evil. Some mystical force drives these creatures to always act in the vilest, most deplorable ways possible. They can turn even the most wholesome and optimistic moments into terrible tragedies. The magnitude of a prime evil's depravity is not fit for this—nor any—book, and I refuse to detail more than what is absolutely necessary to combat them. Even if you engage them with the worst possible expectations, you will still be surprised. You have been warned.

Jailbreak. Seven powerful fiends escape a celestial prison and go on the run. While six of the fiends are eventually captured, the seventh, a vivictix, remains at large. It is suspected the creature is hiding in a metropolis on the material plane, but the city is too populated for the celestials to conduct a proper inquiry without mortal aid.

TREASURE

A vivictix's only pleasure stems from taking life in as many bloody, cruel, and violent ways as possible. All other concerns, especially material ones, are nigh irrelevant. However, those willing to risk exposure to the despicable evil thrumming through a vivictix's veins can drink the foul ichor from its remains (which endure when the creature is killed, even if not on a lower plane), gaining knowledge of those it has killed. Doing so requires a successful DC 23 Constitution ability check, vomiting the ichor up on a failure, which then vanishes along with the creature's remains. A creature that succeeds on consuming the ichor gains all the memories of the vivictix, including specific details of its victims—their names, creature types, and other important characteristics.

ECOLOGY

Prime evils are not bound to the lower planes like other fiends, allowing the adventurous vivictix to be found nearly anywhere there is ample flesh to rend. Variety is the spice of murder to these fiends. They quickly grow bored of killing the same types of creatures over and over, venturing far and wide in search of unique victims. Those that cannot feel agony of violence and loss are of no interest to a vivictix, keeping the fiends away

VIVICTIX

Medium fiend, pure evil (see description)

Armor Class 18
Hit Points 228 (24d8 + 120)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	26 (+8)	21 (+5)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +15, Int +11, Wis +10, Cha +12
Skills Acrobatics +15, Medicine +17, Perception +10, Sleight of Hand +15, Stealth +22
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages Abyssal, Dark Speech, Infernal
Challenge 22 (90,000 XP)

TRAITS

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). When the vivictix fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Pure Evil. The vivictix is violence incarnate, transcending all other forms of evil. Its alignment is pure evil, and its alignment cannot be changed by non-Deific effects. Creatures of this alignment serve no cause other than the practice of evil, committing atrocities and spreading destruction for no other reason than because they can. Additionally, the vivictix cannot be compelled or coerced to act in a manner that would go against this alignment.

Slice and Dice. If the vivictix reduces a creature to 0 hit points, the target's hit point maximum is halved (minimum of 1 hit point) and it has disadvantage on death and Constitution saving throws. This effect lasts until the target finishes a long rest or gains the benefits of *greater restoration*, *heal*, *regenerate*, or similarly powerful healing magic.

ACTIONS

Eviscerate. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 53 (10d8 + 8) piercing or slashing damage (vivictix's choice). If the target is a flesh-and-blood creature, it must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw or instead be critically hit by the attack.

Mortal Wound (1/Short or Long Rest). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one flesh-and-blood creature. *Hit:* The target suffers a mortal wound. While so wounded, a creature must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of its turns. On a failed save the target takes necrotic damage equal to its hit point maximum, or half as much on a success. The wound can only be healed if a creature gains the benefits of *greater restoration*, *heal*, *regenerate*, or similarly powerful healing magic.

Mutilate. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one flesh-and-blood creature. *Hit:* The target must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw or suffer one of the following effects of the vivictix's choice:

- Permanently blinded
- Speed permanently reduced by 20 feet
- Permanent disadvantage on weapon attack rolls and Strength and Dexterity ability checks
- This effect only ends if a creature gains the benefits of *greater restoration*, *heal*, *regenerate*, or similarly powerful healing magic.

Killing Spree (Recharge 6). Until the end of its turn, when the vivictix comes within 5 feet of a creature for the first time on its turn and is not incapacitated, it may make a single Eviscerate or Mutilate attack against that creature (no action required).

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The vivictix can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The vivictix regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Hide. The vivictix takes the Hide action.

Stalk. The vivictix magically teleports to an occupied space it can see within 60 feet of it that is also within 5 feet of an enemy creature.

Strike. The vivictix makes a single attack.

Surgical Precision (Costs 3 Actions). Until the end of its next turn, the vivictix deals double damage on its next successful weapon attack against a creature.

from constructs, oozes, or other fleshless beings. This desire far eclipses common sense, as vivictixes have been discovered lurking in the upper planes, places where no sane fiend would dare venture unless it had a death wish. How these fiends arrive there without being detected is a mystery, though once in place the creature's prodigious skills at subterfuge make it extremely difficult to dislodge.

GOARIGOTH

The fiendish embodiment of misery, goarigoths are cruel beings that aspire only to torture other creatures. Each resembles a muscular, hairless gorilla, its stomach bulging and warping to contain a pocket dimension to which it sends its victims. The creatures possess no apparent head, its cavernous maw and sinister eyes instead manifesting on its broad chest. Goarigoths are unique among the prime evils for their seemingly merciful tendencies, never killing unless necessary. This benevolence is in actuality just another facet of the fiend's cruelty, for those swallowed by a goarigoth spend an eternity of suffering trapped in a realm from which there is no escape. The oldest of goarigoths have consumed countless heroes, their screams echoing from within but a taste of the agony that awaits the fiend's next victims.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a goarigoth with an Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

GOARIGOTH LORE

DC	INFORMATION
16	If you think the pain of the goarigoth's mighty blows are bad, just wait until you get swallowed. It is said its stomach is a pocket plane of perpetual torment, containing hundreds of trapped beings cursed with eternal life and, by extension, eternal suffering.
21	The howl of a goarigoth echoes with the screams of its victims, inspiring dread in those who hear it. Those who fall to the fiend's blows are often spared death, instead being stricken with a traumatic melancholy that is nigh impossible to shake.
27	The gaze of a goarigoth inflicts psychic pain which can shatter one's concentration. While fast despite its bulk, a goarigoth is earthbound. Stay away from its bite and keep your allies healthy, and you just might avoid an eternity of suffering.

TACTICS

The goarigoth likes to focus its attacks, attempting to use its Oppression feature as early as possible. Any character affected by this feature is out of the fight, and the fiend knows it. Move onto healthy targets, using Howl of the Damned to put the hurt on bulkier characters. Swallow characters who lack means of traveling between the planes. No matter how angry, a barbarian has nothing to attack while within the Realm of Torment. Note the tremendous range on Gaze of Agony, which can be useful when dealing with troublesome spellcasters. Use the fiend's legendary actions to Charge into melee. The prodigious reach of Slam should provide the goarigoth plenty of chances to make attacks of opportunity. Use the throwing component of the slams to scatter characters, which is particularly useful for keeping healers away from allies.

Easier Tactics — Don't use Howl of the Damned until the third or fourth round of combat. Keep the fiend's attacks split between targets to minimize potential Oppression interactions. While the goarigoth must bite with its Multiattack, make sure the target is one who can either handle the damage or potentially avoid the hit altogether. High-AC characters are ideal for this. Remember, any creatures swallowed by the goarigoth emerge if the creature is killed, so hope is not lost if the paladin gets munched.

Harder Tactics — Open with Howl of the Damned, then hit a frightened character with everything you've got. If the goarigoth lands a bite attack and restrains the target, use its Bite action again as soon as possible to swallow the creature. An early swallow can prove devastating if on the right character, as nothing short of a *wish* spell can free a creature from the plane. For extra damage, use the Slam attack to throw creatures straight up, adding some extra falling damage when they land. Capitalize on prone targets from this effect for advantage on attacks, using at least one Gaze of Agony attack on the goarigoth's turns to keep spellcasters from concentrating.

The Goarigoth

Our last encounter with a goarigoth ended badly. While we were victorious, the cost was high. It's been weeks and Shana still hasn't recovered from her time spent within the creature's hellish pocket plane. A grim reminder that while we may be heroes, our victory does not come without personal cost. It is with a sense of dread I pen this entry, as I shudder at the thought of a prime evil more powerful and vile than the goarigoth.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Brute

Favors: Armor Class (High), Barbarians, Fighters, Hit Points (High), Paladins

Foils: Bards, Clerics, Druids, Healing, Strength (Low)



PLOT HOOKS

Gloom Hound. Every 10 years a goarigoth appears near the city of Greyhaven and hunts for an entire night. Last time the fiend appeared, a great hero rose to face it, driving the goarigoth away but being swallowed in the process. This time around the town hopes to permanently kill the creature, and perhaps even free their local hero from that painful fate.

Dogs of War. An armored goarigoth is fielded in the titanic conflict between demons and devils. The creature seems to be turning the tide in favor of the devils, upsetting the cosmic balance held in place by the eternal stalemate. Outside help is sought to even the scales.

Brand, the Burning Cataclysm. A blade of epic power said to possess the means of destroying entire worlds is revealed to be within a goarigoth's pocket plane. The fiend must be tracked and destroyed before sinister forces recover the relic, a disastrous outcome that would spell the doom of entire planes.

GOARIGOTH

Huge fiend, pure evil (see description)

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 420 (29d12 + 232)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	8 (−1)	27 (+8)	17 (+3)	22 (+6)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +16, Int +10, Wis +13, Cha +9
Skills Deception +16, Perception +13
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 23
Languages Abyssal, Dark Speech, Infernal
Challenge 24 (62,000 XP)

TRAITS

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). When the goarigoth fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Oppression. When the goarigoth reduces a creature to 0 hit points, it can choose to reduce it to 1 hit point and instead shatter its will. The target becomes incapacitated and cannot willingly cause effects or act in any way, submitting entirely to its own despair and suffering. This effect only ends if the creature receives the stress-inducing benefits of a *wish* spell, divine intervention causing it to end, or the creature spends 1 continuous month recovering during which time it is not harmed in any way. If a creature spends 100 years in this state, the effects become permanent and cannot be removed by any known means. A creature that is immune to psychic damage is also immune to this effect.

Pure Evil. The goarigoth is despair incarnate, transcending all other forms of evil. Its alignment is pure evil, and its alignment cannot be changed by non-Deific effects. Creatures of this alignment serve no cause other than the practice of evil, committing atrocities and spreading destruction for no other reason than because they can. Additionally, the goarigoth cannot be compelled or coerced to act in a manner that would go against this alignment.

Realm of Torment. Any creature swallowed by the goarigoth is transported to a pocket plane filled with other victims of the goarigoth. While on the plane a creature suffers agonizing pain, losing 22 (4d10) hit points at the start of each of its turns, to a minimum of 1 hit point, and it cannot regain hit points while on the pocket plane. Additionally, creatures within do not age, becoming trapped for all eternity. A creature can only escape if the goarigoth dies (causing the plane to collapse and all creatures within to reappear in the unoccupied spaces nearest to where the goarigoth died), or if it uses a spell or magical effect that allows for transportation between the planes cast as a 9th-level spell (such as *planeshift* or *gate*).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The goarigoth makes three attacks, only one of which may be a bite attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 64 (10d10 + 9) piercing damage. If the target is a creature of Large size or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 24 Dexterity saving throw or be grappled and restrained, and the goarigoth cannot bite another creature. If the goarigoth hits a creature restrained in this manner with another bite attack, the target is immediately swallowed.

Gaze of Agony. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +13 to hit, range 300 ft., one target the goarigoth can see. *Hit:* 35 (10d6) psychic damage, and the target cannot concentrate on spells or magical effects until the start of its next turn.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 35 (4d12 + 9) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, the goarigoth may force it to attempt a Strength saving throw. On a failure, the goarigoth throws the target up to 50 feet in a straight line in a direction of the goarigoth's choice, landing prone.

Howl of the Damned (Recharge 5–6). The goarigoth emits a howl echoing with the voices of all the creatures trapped within its pocket plane. Each creature of the goarigoth's choice within 120 feet of it must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 hour. A creature so frightened is also vulnerable to damage dealt by the goarigoth. At the end of each of its turns, an affected creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. If a creature succeeds on a saving throw against this action or if the effect ends for it, it is immune to the goarigoth's Howl of the Damned for 24 hours.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The goarigoth can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The goarigoth regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Charge. The goarigoth moves up to half its speed in a straight line and then makes a slam attack.

Gaze (Costs 2 Actions). The goarigoth uses its Gaze of Agony attack.

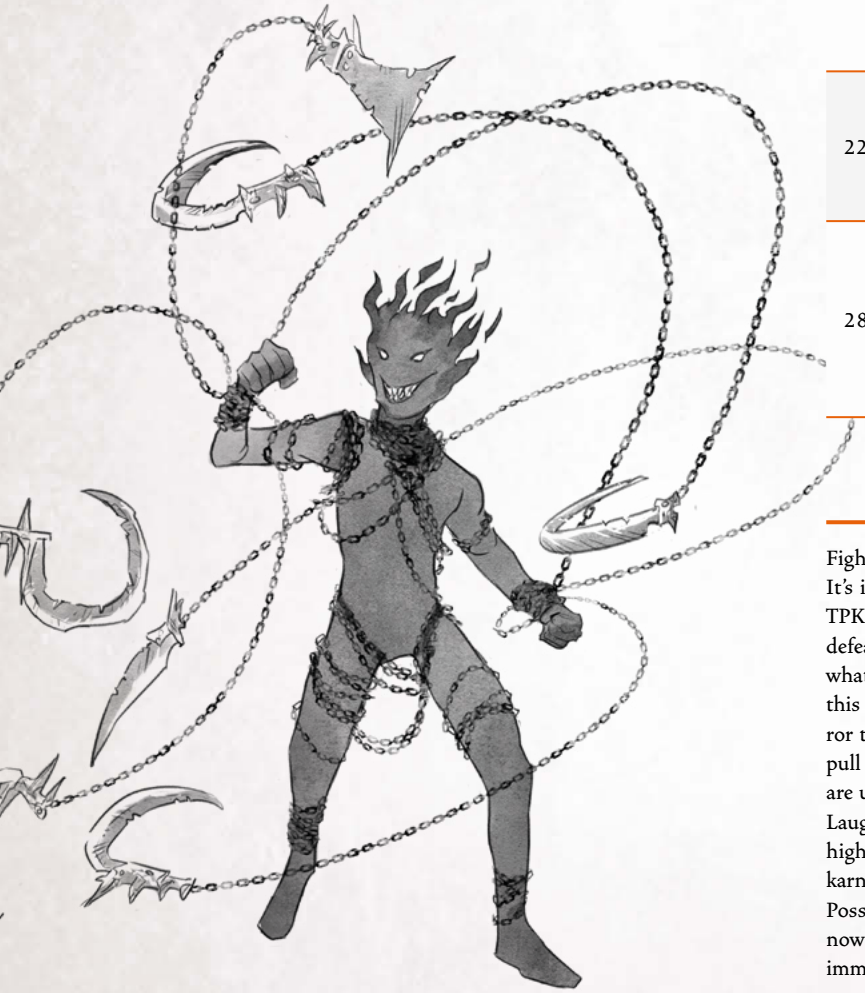
Bite (Costs 3 Actions). The goarigoth uses its Bite attack.

TREASURE

When a goarigoth is slain, its pocket plane collapses, spilling its contents everywhere. Depending on the age of the goarigoth, the contents of this dimension can be significant, as the plane magically expands to accommodate everything the fiend swallows. This treasure often comes still attached to the many creatures swallowed by the goarigoth, most of whom are beyond saving. However, any who have spent less than 100 years within the goarigoth can be cured of their melancholy, liable to reward their saviors for sparing them an eternity of torment.

ECOLOGY

Goarigoths have a taste for misery the way a sommelier has a taste for wine. Each cry of pain and tear of misery has a unique flavor the creature savors. Quality far exceeds quantity in the goarigoth's eyes, though it never passes up a convenient opportunity to bring ruin to all manner of creatures. A goarigoth journeys far to locate new flavors of misery, though it often lacks the means of doing so without aid. They gladly barter with mortal summoners and other fiends to further their goals, but wise creatures know to never trust the goarigoth to honor any agreement. In many cultures, goarigoths are worshiped, idolized by communities who see existence as inherently miserable. These cultists often come to regret this practice, as a goarigoth happily teaches a nihilistic fanatic the meaning of true suffering.



MALEKARNUS

The prime evils revel in their ability to disturb and horrify their enemies before destroying them. The greatest among them are the malekarni, who have elevated evil to an art form that would make an archdevil jealous. Like a horror story brought to life, a malekarnus takes the form of a shadowy humanoid child, its head aflame with a dark fire. Its face is featureless, with only a sharp-toothed smile and empty white eyes that are unsettling to behold. Nothing about a malekarnus is natural. Its body twitches violently with every motion, and its voice is layered with threatening echoes. From its limbs extend writhing magical chains and wicked butcher knives, while its touch can reduce the most stalwart castle to dust. Those unfortunate few that survive an encounter with a malekarnus never forget it, their lives forever tainted by the stain of pure evil.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a malekarnus with an Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

MALEKARNUS LORE

DC	INFORMATION
17	A malekarnus can possess other creatures. While it does not directly control the bodies of those it inhabits, its victims become servants of pure evil. If someone you know experiences a dramatic change in personality toward extreme villainy, a malekarnus may be at work.
22	The chains of a malekarnus are unbreakable and used to draw its victims close for possession. The creature is utterly merciless, creating magical knives to carve out the hearts of dying creatures before they have a chance to get back up.
28	Once a malekarnus has possessed a creature, it is there to stay. The creature is almost impossible the remove, and even when it is exorcised the host often suffers horrifying trauma from such intimate contact. In the rare case it is threatened, the malekarnus can emit a disturbing cackle that terrifies its enemies.

TACTICS

Fighting a malekarnus should be like stepping into a horror movie. It's important to remember this creature is evil incarnate. An efficient TPK is amateur for a malekarnus, which prefers to deliver as crushing a defeat as possible. What that means to each group is unique, so consider what is most likely to horrify and scare your characters when running this monster. Each of the creature's abilities play upon a certain horror theme. Its Chain attack symbolizes the inescapable and inevitable pull of evil, so make sure to target those least likely to escape. If players are using magical teleportation to avoid the malekarnus, use Maniacal Laughter. Note the save DC for the creature's effects is ridiculously high, and even then, it can force a failure using Evil Prevails. The malekarnus should try to possess the first creature that comes close. While Possession does not give the malekarnus full control over its victim, the now pure evil character will quite likely betray former teammates almost immediately, a devastatingly dangerous effect. Describe to the player in

The Malekarnus

An encounter with a malekarnus is the universe's way of telling you that things can always get worse. These fiends are to devils what devils are to common criminals. Even their prime evil brethren fear the malekarni, and anything that strikes fear into a prime evil is a terror of incalculable proportions. Should you face one in battle, know that direct contact will leave agonizing scars, both physical and mental. In my dreams I am haunted by its twisted visage—that of a fiendish, knife-wielding child shrouded in darkness.

— Talien Vos Karven



Classification: Controller

Favors: Armor Class (High), Barbarians, Rogues, Specific Spells (*dispel good and evil*), Strength (High), Warlocks

Foils: Charmed (Protection from), Druids, Fighters, Paladins, Saving Throws (High), Weapons (Damage)

detail what being pure evil means, and watch them wreak havoc. If the malekarnus is evicted when the host is reduced to 0 hit points, have the fiend finish the character off with a quick Knife attack. Remember, the goal of the malekarnus is to be as evil as possible. It will ensure that the characters are hopeless, mangled, and defeated long before it actually kills them.

Easier Tactics — Think of the malekarnus as a supervillain that spends a bit too much time being evil when it should just be killing heroes. It savors the kill, taunts the characters while invisible, and generally spends its actions being as menacing and despicable as possible. Use Dust to Dust to destroy objects belonging to the characters, such as armor, weapons, or holy symbols. Drag grappled targets off of cliffs or into hazards. Chase frightened targets around, harrying them with Knife attacks while the malekarnus whispers telepathic threats to other heroes cowering behind cover. You will know you've done a good job when the players are tense and uncertain of what the creature will do next.

Harder Tactics — Start combat with the malekarnus being invisible from its Maniacal Laughter, positioning the fiend 15 feet off the ground to avoid most melee weapons. Try to Chain as many targets as possible, and hold at least one Evil Prevails use for the malekarnus's Possession. Once you have possessed a character, use the creature's telepathy to frustrate and confuse the others. They likely won't understand the severity of the effect, and a fiend screaming conflicting information can prevent them from deducing a solution.

PLOT HOOKS

Darkest of Days. In the midst of a great war, a malekarnus stalks the battlefield. The fiend has strategically murdered heroes on both sides in an effort to perpetuate the conflict. Its latest evil framed both factions for a savage atrocity that resulted in the extermination of an entire town, which threatens to devolve the war into attempted genocide.

The Wanderer. A famous hero has returned after being missing for more than a decade. Where once she was joyous and friendly, she is now sinister and cruel. This attitude change has been attributed to a weariness of the soul from years of harsh adventuring, but the truth is far more sinister. The hero has been possessed by a malekarnus, which has grand plans for its new "prodigy."

The Curse of Little Greensbrook. The people of Little Greensbrook have long believed that the souls of local orphans who perished in a fire will one day come back to haunt them. It would seem this superstition is coming true, as children in the town are growing to be vile hellions bent on mayhem, murder, and general misbehavior. The real reason for this bedevilment is the malekarnus lairing within the town's well, gleefully watching its machinations unfold.

TREASURE

A malekarnus only keeps treasure for the purposes of perpetuating evil. Avarice is a powerful motivator for humanoids, and one a malekarnus is quick to exploit. If the malekarnus has a lair, it is often filled with valuable items and tools of depravity: torture devices, poisons, and sinister magic. Additionally, when the malekarnus is slain it can choose to grant a creature within 120 feet of it an evil scar as a memento of the conflict. The scar appears in the shape of an infernal symbol and cannot be removed or healed by any means short of divine intervention or the stress-inducing effects of a *wish* spell. When rolling initiative against evil creatures, a creature so scarred experiences excruciating pain and must succeed on a DC 25 Constitution saving throw or be unable to take actions or spend movement on its first turn.

ECOLOGY

No one knows where malekarni come from, nor is there any rush to find out. The creatures can appear almost anywhere, though they seem to prefer areas with large populations. Where other fiends would be more cautious, a malekarnus dives headfirst into a situation. Noble paladins or powerful angels do nothing to dissuade a malekarnus from its self-imposed mission. In fact, the creature seems to enjoy butting heads with powerful creatures and takes great joy in slaughtering the mightiest forces of good. Wherever a malekarnus chooses to live swiftly becomes a realm of bloodshed, violence, and evil. Its malevolence seeps into every corner like a virulent infection. Even once vanquished, the effects of a malekarnus's passing are felt long after it has gone, typically in the form of a massive graveyard where its victims are interred.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region around a malekarnus becomes infused with its evil essence. Whenever the malekarnus finishes a long rest it creates one or more of the following effects within 5 miles of its location:

- Humanoids are born with the pure evil alignment, as detailed in the malekarnus's traits.
- When a creature commits an evil act, it experiences a rush of euphoria and excitement.
- Good creatures experience a deep sense of unease as though they were being watched by hateful eyes.

If the malekarnus is slain, these effects fade immediately.

Malekarnus

Small fiend, pure evil (see description)

Armor Class 24 (natural armor)
Hit Points 368 (32d6 + 256)
Speed 20 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (−1)	22 (+6)	26 (+8)	24 (+7)	28 (+9)	1 (−5)

Saving Throws Dex +14, Con +16, Int +15, Cha +3
Skills Perception +17
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion
Senses darkvision 300 ft., passive Perception 27
Languages Dark Speech, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 26 (90,000 XP)

Traits

Evil Prevails (3/Day). When a creature the malekarnus can see succeeds on a saving throw, the malekarnus can force it to fail instead.

Flame of Malevolence. The malekarnus's head sheds dim light in a 30-foot radius. Creatures of the malekarnus's choice within that area are blind to everything outside the area, and when an affected creature fails an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check it takes 16 (3d10) necrotic damage.

Mythic Resistance. When the malekarnus fails a saving throw, it can expend one of its unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Pure Evil. The malekarnus is malevolence incarnate, transcending all other forms of evil. Its alignment is pure evil, and its alignment cannot be changed by non-Deific effects. Creatures of this alignment serve no cause other than the practice of evil, committing atrocities and spreading destruction for no other reason than because they can. Additionally, the malekarnus cannot be compelled or coerced to act in a manner that would go against this alignment.

Unholy Weaponry. The malekarnus's weapons are magical and are magically created from its body (no action required). If a weapon leaves the malekarnus's possession, the weapon vanishes instantly.

Actions

Multiattack. The malekarnus uses its Possession or Maniacal Laughter action, then makes three attacks.

Chain. *Melee Spell Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (1d12 + 9) slashing damage plus 11 (2d10) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled by a chain of black steel (escape DC 25). The chain is indestructible, and at the start of each of its turns the malekarnus can choose to pull each creature grappled in this manner 20 feet toward it. The malekarnus can have up to ten creatures grappled in this manner at one time. If the malekarnus moves, it can choose to drag each creature it has grappled while it moves or extend the length of the chain to accommodate the distance. If the length of the chain would exceed 60 feet, the malekarnus must relinquish the grapple.

Knife. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one flesh-and-blood creature. *Hit:* 8 (1d4 + 6) piercing damage. If the target is reduced to 0 hit points by this attack or takes damage from this attack while at 0 hit points, the malekarnus carves out its heart, killing it instantly.

Immediately after it kills a creature in this manner, the malekarnus can take a bonus action to consume the heart, regaining 55 (10d10) hit points in the process.

Maniacal Laughter (Recharge 5–6). The malekarnus emits a disturbing cackle in a 60-foot radius. The malekarnus becomes invisible until it takes an action, and each creature within the area must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature so frightened cannot magically teleport or travel to a different plane.

Possession. One creature that the malekarnus has grappled within 5 feet of it must succeed on a DC 25 Charisma saving throw or be possessed by the malekarnus. The malekarnus disappears and the target is charmed by the malekarnus for as long as it remains possessed (effects that would remove the charmed condition automatically fail). A creature immune to the charmed condition is instead not immune to this effect but has advantage on saving throws against this effect. A creature so charmed has its alignment changed to pure evil for as long as it remains possessed, as though it had gained the Pure Evil trait.

While possessing a creature, the malekarnus cannot be targeted by attacks, spells, or other effects, and it cannot take actions (though it can still communicate telepathically and see through the target's eyes). The possession lasts until the malekarnus is forcibly expelled (such as by a *dispel good and evil* spell), the host is reduced to 0 hit points, or if it chooses to leave the target as an action. When the possession ends, the malekarnus reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the body. After the possession ends, a creature must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or take psychic damage equal to half its hit point maximum (rounded down) or half as much on a success due to the trauma of being exposed to such a malevolent being. The target is immune to this malekarnus's Possession for 24 hours after possession ends for the target or after the target succeeds on a saving throw against possession.

Legendary Actions

The malekarnus can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The malekarnus regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Strike. The malekarnus makes a Chain or Knife attack.

Float. The malekarnus moves up to its speed.

Dust to Dust. The malekarnus touches a nonmagical object within reach and destroys its instantly, turning it to dust.

Protean Proselytes

Alien shapechangers from another dimension, protean proselytes are a group of highly specialized mages whose power manifests itself in a variety of mutations and enhancements. No two are alike—unless they want to be—each sporting countless biological tools magically gathered from other creatures they encounter. Each proselyte enhances itself in ways which reflect its current goals, modifying its enhancements to catch known opponents off guard and infiltrate society, all in the name of collecting new biology to enhance its twisted form. Whatever their individual motives, the proselytes are ceaselessly dedicated to this task, working toward some mysterious goal that has yet to be revealed.

PROTEAN INITIATES AND PROTEAN DISCIPLES

Proselytes strive to transcend mortal limits through the practice of biomancy, the magic of life unrestrained. Initiates learn to harness the power of monstrous grafts, subtle mutations, and diets of alchemical concoctions through the systemic application of biomancy. Through arcane autophagy their bodies contort into forms suitable for enhancement. With experimentation, proselytes become disciples, beginning to master the ability to reconstruct themselves further, crafting bodies that defy the natural order laid out by the gods. Those on the cusp of transcendence become incarnates, embodying the bodily perfection necessary to attain a higher order existence.

Recent initiates look very much like they did before undergoing the protean mysteries: they appear younger, healthier, and more vibrant than they ought to. Their initial organ transplants have not grown large enough to be noticeable, and they can easily hide even chitinous shells or armored scales in loose clothing. They smell of acrid alchemical byproducts which suffuses their sweat and other bodily waste. Above all, they are subject to sudden mood shifts as their bodies adjust to the new organs.

As they progress along their monstrous path, they become increasingly grotesque and unnerving as more and more arcane organs and alchemical infusions permeate their body. Those who enhance their physical prowess may have massive armored plates or strange natural weapons, and they prowl about with the sanguine grace of an apex predator. Others join to plumb the esoteric depths forged by Proteus and prepare their bodies for a higher order of intellectual existence. Their characteristics are more difficult to detect—only close examination may reveal the existence of extra internal organs or enhancement to the senses.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: A NOTE FOR DMs

In my campaign, protean proselytes engage in the struggle to overcome the limits of mortal flesh and achieve monstrous apotheosis. They obtain creatures of fantastic power, subject them to occult experimentations, and harvest their organs for implantation into initiates of the protean mysteries. The proselytes follow the teachings of Proteus, the mythical founder of their secretive cabal who reached apotheosis through the hybrid magic of necromancy and transmutation.

Proteus taught that the gods imprisoned mortals in ignoble flesh in an imperfect world and that it can only be overcome once all mortals have reached their pinnacle. Most proselytes work to spread this doctrine to all humanoids. At their most benevolent they use their unmatched knowledge of anatomy to act as surgeons, physicians, and healers, hoping to lead by example. However, many proselytes refuse to wait for benevolent persuasion to bring about mass apotheosis. Instead they seek to cull the weak and entice those who are worthy of their gifts. They often work in secret, recruiting susceptible candidates through the lure of esoteric knowledge of creation. Simultaneously, they denude entire regions of monster populations for the raw materials necessary to craft their organic transplants.

I have no idea what these creatures will look like in your campaign, but this innate uniqueness is part of what makes them so compelling.

– Jim Davis

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a protean initiate or protean disciple with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

PROTEAN INITIATE AND PROTEAN DISCIPLE LORE

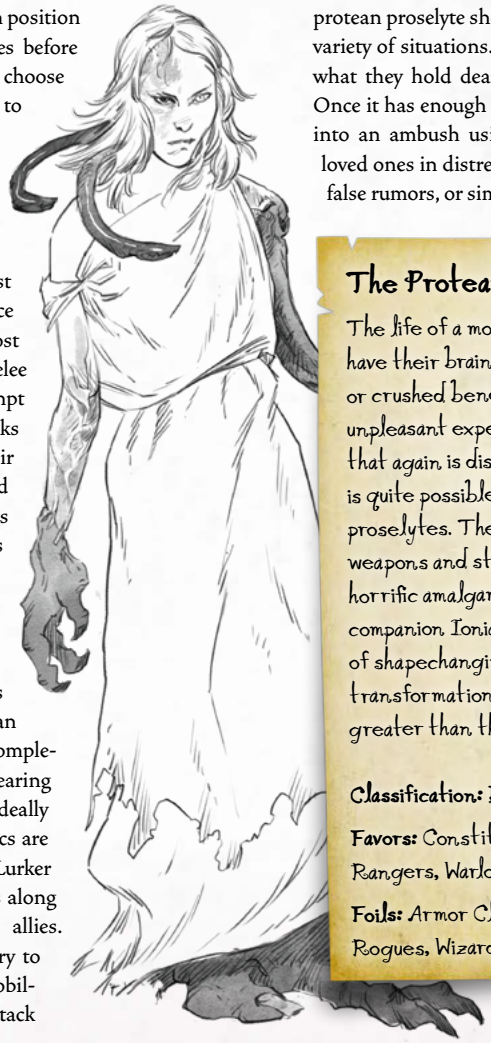
DC	INFORMATION
17	Protean proselytes are gross, obsessive wizards focused on bodily alterations. They're moody and smell weird, but if you can find one that you trust they make great doctors. They can make their fingers grow into claws or spit their teeth at you. The nastiest ones can spray acid or kill you just by looking at you! Watch out—they love to steal your innards.
22	No two proselytes are alike, but they often seem to possess abilities related to local monster populations. Spell-turning shells, venomous stingers, secretions of paralyzing toxin, and blood-draining proboscises are some of the deadlier combat enhancements. Best to keep your distance. Worse are those who can squeeze themselves through tiny cracks, take on the shape of other creatures or objects, or subtly influence the behavior of others. However, whatever form they take, a *dispel magic* briefly incapacitates them. Violent death causes them to burst in a spray of caustic fluid.
28	Proselytes are best dealt with at range, preferably after immobilizing them. The canniest among them counteract this by developing a deadly gaze. They can shift their physiology in response to magical effects, but offensive spells cast in quick succession can overwhelm this adaptation. In melee they are quite deadly and can easily handle multiple opponents, so only the most highly armored or resilient should engage them up close. Those with subtler mutations are harder to see coming and can even evade detection by divination.



TACTICS

The threat posed by protean proselytes depends a great deal on which boons of the flesh it has available in each combat (see the table of the same name for the complete list). At their base, initiates and disciples feature a strong array of melee attacks and are generally tough for their challenge rating, making them brutes with a dash of soldier. Their claw attacks and Organic Weaponry options allow them to adapt to the vagaries of combat without additional attack options from the Boon of the Flesh table, freeing the DM to craft tailor-made opponents to engage the party. This is especially true for proteans that survive an encounter with the party.

Combat-focused proteans benefit greatly from having a balance of defensive traits and offensive attack options. A disciple with the Blood-Draining Appendage, Venomous Stinger, Esoteric Anatomy, and Scintillating Shell boons is a formidable melee opponent and can afford to ignore frontline defenders in favor of attacking a party's squishier members. Contrast that with a disciple with Amorphous Infusion, Shapechanging Flesh, Pheromone Control Gland, and Deadly Stare. Such a foe makes for a sneaky infiltrator and assassin but is at risk of being overwhelmed in a straight-up fight. Be mindful of boons that require the use of the Organic Weaponry attack options, as proteans may only use it once as part of their Multiattack feature. A protean with too many attack options will invariably feel constrained by the number of actions it can perform in a turn.



Proteans prefer to attack from a hidden position and will spend time observing their foes before attacking. If they have the option, they choose a battlefield that offers plenty of cover to break line of sight of ranged attackers. They target known casters first, aiming to knock them out of the fight early before focusing on tougher opponents. If observation isn't possible, proteans target the opponent who seems the most threatening first and switch targets once it becomes apparent who is the most vulnerable. When facing multiple melee opponents, initiates and disciples attempt to harm as many as possible with attacks that effect multiple targets, focusing their single-target attacks on the least armored foe. In nearly all cases, these proteans prefer melee combat and close distance as quickly as possible, avoiding unnecessary risks along the way.

Disciples form the locus of protean cabals and surround themselves with initiates eager to earn the disciple's favor. When fighting as a group, protean proselytes should have boons which complement each other, with the majority bearing primarily Brute and Soldier boons and ideally at least one Lurker and Skirmisher. Tactics are the same as described, and those with Lurker boons observe their opponents and pass along information via pheromones to their allies. Proteans with defensive boons should try to block heavy hitters, while those with mobility and damage-dealing boons should attack softer targets first. Occasionally, protean proselytes acquire a menagerie of hybrid monsters, mostly due to honing their biomancy on animals before experimenting on themselves. Cockatrices, manticores, owlbears, chimeras, hydras, and behirs make for appropriate monstrous companions for proteans. Additionally, the abominable hybrids, assassin vipers, or beasts of legend from *Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 1* make excellent companions.

Outside of combat, initiates and disciples make excellent infiltrators and spies. A protean initiate with the Alien Mind and Pheromone Control Gland boons makes for a potent, dangerous mastermind. Proteans of a more benevolent nature use their boons to assist others. A disciple with Shapechanging Flesh, Brutal Strength, Phase Organ, and Preternatural Speed boons makes for an interesting bodyguard, while an initiate with Rejuvenating Fluid Ducts and Blood-Draining Appendage makes for a grotesque, if effective, physician.

Easier Tactics — Forgo having the proselyte observe before attacking or ambushing the party from hiding. Stealth should be used only for escape and evading detection from its opponents. Instead, focus on having a big melee brawl with the protean using mostly single-target attacks spread out across multiple melee combatants. The protean should travel in direct routes to its opponents, even if it leaves itself within line of sight of casters and ranged attackers. Finally, if allowed, it should surrender if brought to below 20 percent of its hit points.

Harder Tactics — Making full use of its Monstrous Morphology, the protean proselyte should shadow the party in order to observe them in a variety of situations. It seeks to understand what motivates them, learn what they hold dear, and determine their strengths and weaknesses. Once it has enough information, the protean attempts to lure the party into an ambush using subterfuge and misdirection, by appearing as loved ones in distress, manipulating locals against the party, spreading false rumors, or similar deceitful tactics.

The Protean Initiate and Protean Disciple

The life of a monster ecologist is not easy. I've seen interns have their brains sucked out, be immersed in cubes of acid, or crushed beneath a giant's heel, to name a few of the more unpleasant experiences. The thought of going through all that again is distressing, to say the least, but nonetheless is quite possible when encountering these strange protean proselytes. These creatures mutilate their bodies with the weapons and strengths of other monsters, resulting a truly horrific amalgamation. One has only to look at my druidic companion Ionia to witness a far more wholesome practice of shapechanging, so one has to wonder if the agonizing transformations of the proselytes are in service to a cause greater than their own benefit.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Brute

Favors: Constitution (High), Fighters, Range, Rangers, Warlocks

Foils: Armor Class (Low), Barbarians, Paladins, Rogues, Wizards

A battlefield with lots of three-quarters cover or total cover is ideal, as well as one that allows for the protean to approach its opponents from multiple routes. If possible, attack while the party is at rest or asleep. Proteans attacking in a group should focus all their attacks on one target, acting in near-perfect unison, and attacking unconscious foes to prevent them returning to the battle.

PLOT HOOKS

Basic Instinct. A protean disciple has surreptitiously deposited the potent alchemical solutions necessary for initiation into the local water supply with the expectation that nearby villagers will spontaneously begin their journey toward perfection. However, the villagers now display bestial mutations and have fallen victim to their most violent and animalistic urges. The disciple needs help containing the situation and turns to the party for aid, but can they fully trust this odd-smelling mage who seems too eager to comment on the mutant villagers?

Does Not Want. An initiate wants out of its cabal but has already undergone considerable alterations despite its body rejecting multiple transplants. It's sick of the hormonal shifts and fears it will die if the surgeries continue. Other proteans in the cabal see this as a sign of insufficient vision and instead wish to proceed at a faster pace. The initiate wants its old life back. Is this possible, and will the cabal step aside when perfection is so close?

Chop Shop. A disciple who runs a local hospital with the help of its cabal is concerned about recent rumors. People suddenly gone missing, mutilated livestock, and sightings of weird, misshapen figures skulking along the outskirts of town all suggest an unknown cabal of protean proselytes has moved into the area. Now, locals have found the body of one of the disappeared with its organs surgically removed. With anger against the hospital rising, can the party stop the organ harvesting before it's too late?

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: PHEROMONES

The pheromone language is there to give the DM cover for all sorts of shenanigans. Pheromones are ripe for inclusion in a fantasy campaign because the role they play in animal communication seems magical. I know not everyone likes to use scientific language or even knowledge acquired through science in their fantasy roleplaying games. I politely disagree and ask the gentle reader to consider the possibilities of opening other parts of your mind to your imagination.

Pheromone communication gives cover for the DM featuring proteans surrounded by bizarre and mage-wrought animals or those controlling people like drones. Indeed, the Pheromone Control Gland on the Boons of the Flesh table approximates weaponized pheromone communication. I'm certain that you, the DM, can come up with any number of alternate features and abilities that I elected to leave off the list of options.

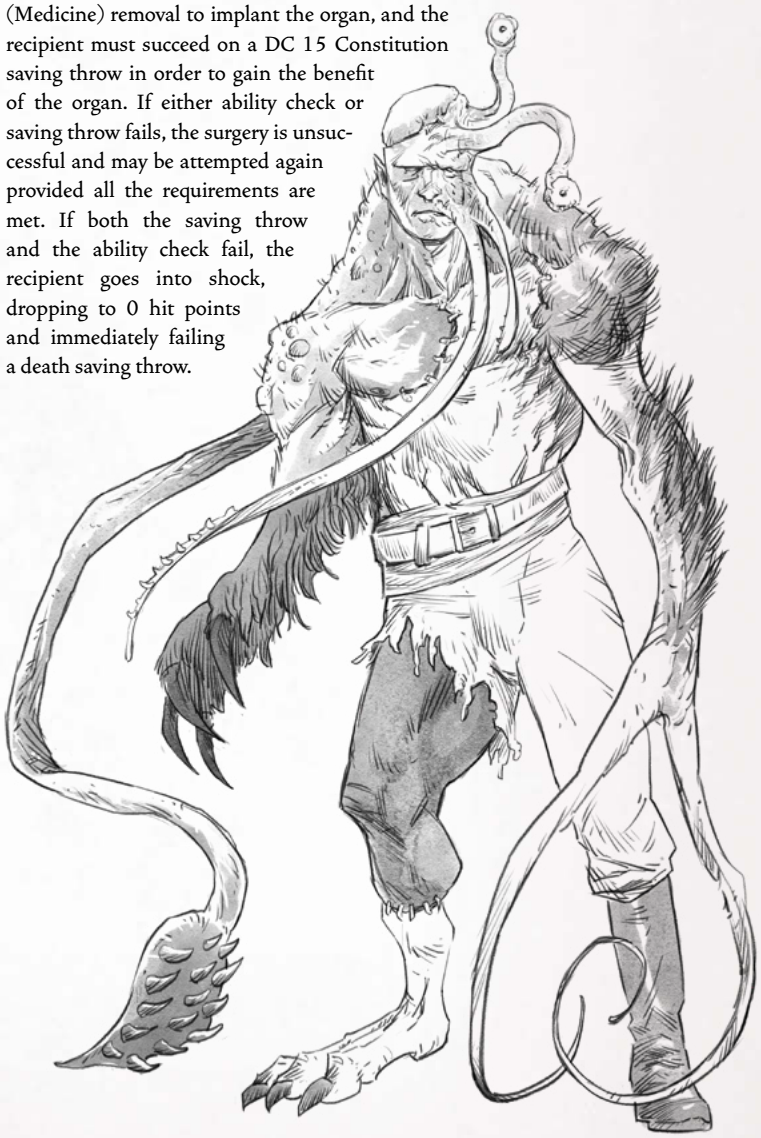
Those who wish to have an exhaustive list are free to use, elaborate on, or hack apart the following ideas as is their wish: abilities which befriend, control, or enhance animals; turning people into drones; confusion, dazed, or charmed effects; domination and enthrallment; projecting strong emotions or manipulating emotional responses. I'd recommend against using them too heavily in combat and instead use them as a justification for your machinations.

– Jim Davis

TREASURE

A character with a dagger or knife can remove an arcane organ from a dead or unconscious protean proselyte with a Wisdom (Medicine) ability check with a DC equal to the protean's Constitution score. The DM then selects or randomly determines which organ is extracted from the boons active on the protean at the time of surgery, chosen from the options the protean selected from the Boons of the Flesh table. The organ must be preserved in alchemically balanced amniotic fluid, which may be harvested from the protean along with the organ. A properly stored organ must be implanted within one month of its removal before necrotizing.

Surgery requires 5,000 gp in magical ingredients or a suitably equipped alchemy lab, surgeon's tools, and an unconscious recipient. At the end of the 8-hour procedure, the surgeon must make a Wisdom (Medicine) removal to implant the organ, and the recipient must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw in order to gain the benefit of the organ. If either ability check or saving throw fails, the surgery is unsuccessful and may be attempted again provided all the requirements are met. If both the saving throw and the ability check fail, the recipient goes into shock, dropping to 0 hit points and immediately failing a death saving throw.



Protean Initiate

Medium monstrosity (shapechanger), neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 199 (21d8 + 105)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	4 (−3)

Saving Throws Con +9, Wis +7
Skills Medicine +11, Perception +11, Stealth +7
Damage Immunities acid
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages Common, pheromone
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Traits

Arcane Innards. The initiate is a highly magical being. Spells and magical effects that can detect magic can detect the initiate, which gives off an aura of transmutation.

If subjected to a spell or magical effect that disrupts magic (such as a *dispel magic* or *antimagic field*) the initiate must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw versus the source's spell save DC (or 15 if there is none) or become incapacitated until the end of its next turn.

Monstrous Morphology. The initiate has surgically grafted parts of other monsters into its form. A typical initiate has two different grafts, chosen from the Boons of the Flesh table. The initiate may exchange one or more of these grafts with a different option from the Boons of the Flesh table whenever it finishes a long rest.

Unstable Humors. When the initiate dies, it explodes in a spray of bone and viscera. Each creature in a 15-foot-radius sphere of the protean when it dies must attempt a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) acid damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Actions

Multiattack. The initiate attacks once with its claws and once with its Organic Weaponry.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* + 7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Organic Weaponry. The initiate has the following attack options, in addition to options it gained through its Monstrous Morphology trait.

Chitinous Saber. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., up to three targets within reach. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Wightbone Spines. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, the spine lodges itself in the target, reducing its hit point maximum by an amount equal to the damage taken. A creature may use an action to attempt a DC 17 Wisdom (Medicine) check to remove the spine, ending the reduction on a success.

Reactions

Adaptive Defense. As a reaction when the initiate attempts a saving throw, it gains a +5 bonus to that type of saving throw until the end of that turn.

Protean Disciple

Medium monstrosity (shapechanger), neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 262 (25d8 + 150)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	18 (+4)	22 (+6)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	6 (−2)

Saving Throws Con +12, Wis +9, Cha +4
Skills Medicine +15, Perception +15, Stealth +10
Damage Immunities acid
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 25
Languages Common, pheromone
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Traits

Arcane Innards. The disciple is a highly magical being. Spells and magical effects that can detect magic can detect the disciple, which gives off an aura of transmutation.

If subjected to a spell or magical effect that disrupts magic (such as a *dispel magic* or *antimagic field*) the disciple must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw versus the source's spell save DC (or 15 if there is none) or become incapacitated until the end of its next turn.

Monstrous Morphology. The disciple has surgically grafted parts of other monsters into its form. A typical disciple has four different grafts, chosen from the Boons of the Flesh table. The disciple may exchange one or more of these grafts with a different option from the Boons of the Flesh table whenever it finishes a long rest.

Unstable Humors. When the disciple dies, it explodes in a spray of bone and viscera. Each creature in a 15-foot-radius sphere of the protean when it dies must attempt a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) acid damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Actions

Multiattack. The disciple makes two attacks with its claws and uses one of its Organic Weaponry options.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* + 10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Organic Weaponry. The disciple has the following attack options, in addition to options it gained through its Monstrous Morphology trait.

Chitinous Saber. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., up to three targets within reach. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) slashing damage.

Wightbone Spines. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (4d10 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, the spine lodges itself in the target, reducing its hit point maximum by an amount equal to the damage taken. A creature may use an action to attempt a DC 20 Wisdom (Medicine) check to remove the spine, ending the reduction on a success.

Reactions

Adaptive Defense. As a reaction when the disciple attempts a saving throw, it gains a +5 bonus to that type of saving throw until the end of that turn.

In either case, upon awakening the recipient has four levels of exhaustion. Once the exhaustion wears off the recipient can make free use of its new abilities, provided the surgery was successful. Maintaining the organ requires the weekly consumption of a *potion of greater* healing or an equivalent concoction worth 100 gp, and a non-protean can only benefit from a single one of these organs at a time. For every week that goes by without maintenance the organ recipient gains one level of exhaustion that cannot be removed until consuming the required potion.

ECOLOGY

Initiates are the visible face of the protean proselytes in any place where the proteans operate openly. For this reason, many initiates are cheerful and inviting, if a bit moody. Disciples tend to be more secretive and shun the general populace, although they may be quite pleasant one on one. Most proteans live in sprawling enclaves at the edge of civilization, maintaining what ties they desire with the locals. These enclaves contain living quarters, laboratories, spawning vats, surgical theaters, and research libraries; admittance requires initiation into the protean mysteries.

Curiosity, focused drive, and a desire to push boundaries characterize the proteans. They are urbane and knowledgeable about a wide range of topics. Even those with malicious motives can't help but partake in engaging conversation with educated, experienced, or clever interlocutors. Those who reject the cloistered lifestyle form warbands or cults of personality, preying upon those who inhabit the edges of polite society. These proteans are often found at houses of ill repute, gladiatorial arenas, and other places of intense, violent energy.

Protean proselytes communicate with each other via pheromones enhanced through magic-laden philters. Pheromone communication allows proteans to share a gestalt awareness of their surroundings without exposing themselves to the risks of verbal communication.

The Protean Incarnate

When we spellcasters change shape, it is into a specific form based on our experiences and observations of real creatures. Nothing stops us from transforming into figments of our imagination, beyond the existential horror of our own creativity. When viewing the protean incarnate, I see these fears are well founded. The fact this creature exists, let alone that it's a product of deliberate personal choice, is profoundly disturbing. Archmagister King suggested we burn it with fire, and I have to say for once I agree.

– Talien Vos Karven



Classification: Elite

Favors: Armor Class (High), Fighters, Monks, Range (Long), Rangers

Foils: Armor Class (Low), Constitution (Low), Paladins, Rogues, Spells

PROTEAN INCARNATE

A former humanoid grown massive on a slurry of alchemical concoctions and thaumaturgic hormones, the protean incarnate towers over lesser proteans, its body bulging with grafted muscle tissue and implanted organs. The incarnate radiates a palpable aura of formidable might born out of unlocking the esoteric power contained in all life. It bears little resemblance to the creature it once was having cast off its former body piece by piece as it ascended the path to perfection. It appears grotesque, with asymmetrical features, multiple eyes, grafted limbs, and veins pulsating with transformative elixirs which give it its acrid smell. Despite its gruesome visage, the incarnate vibrates with vitality, freed from the necessities of daily life.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a protean incarnate with a group Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

PROTEAN INCARNATE LORE

DC	INFORMATION
17	The protean incarnate is an ogre-sized creature that just doesn't look right, like a demon from the netherworld sent to haunt our waking nightmares. It's too fast for its size and can rend a horse and rider into pieces with its glistening claws. Rumor says it can't be killed. Worse still, it can look like anyone it wants to.
22	The incarnate is a beast in a straight up brawl. Its claws are just the beginning; it can shoot out barbed slivers of bone, unfold an arm into a serrated scythe, or spray out a shower of jagged teeth. If you face the same one twice, don't expect it to fight the same way as before. Whatever worked last time probably won't this time, even if you battle it many times in a day. Bury it under rocks or drown it and hope it can't breathe underwater.
28	Incarnates share the same weakness of lesser proteans. The best strategy remains to slow them down or immobilize them and keep your distance. They can be highly resistant to spells, but a variety of damage types or effects cast in quick succession has a good chance of breaking through their defenses. To truly defeat them you must be as relentless and fearless as they are. Do not let them run and hide—track them down and destroy their corpses with fire or acid.

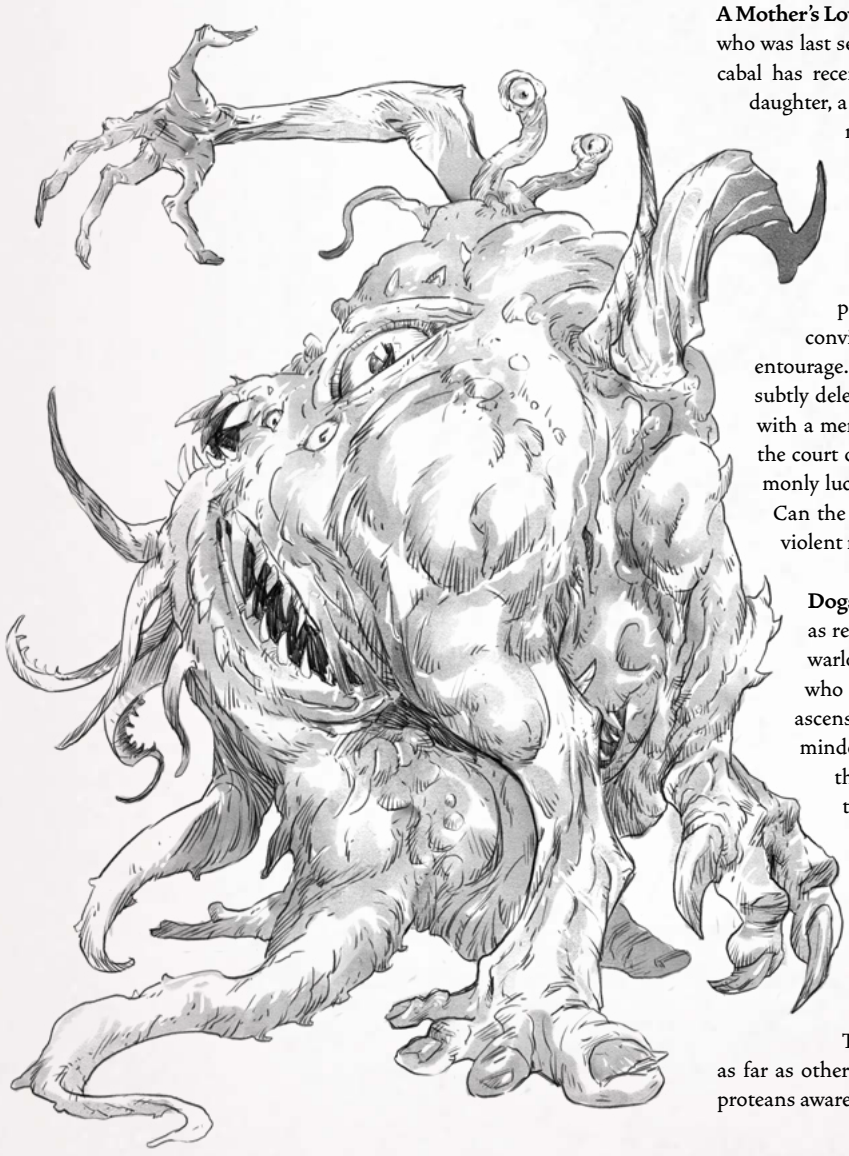
TACTICS

The sheer number of traits and abilities the incarnate can possess means that the DM should carefully review this monster before using it in combat. It has many attack options, and the DM is encouraged to note which attacks work best against individual party members ahead of time to reduce the number of decisions needed on its turn. Remember, the incarnate is patient and observant, anticipating its opponents' responses and denying them chances to bring their full might to bear. Feel free to use your metagame knowledge of the characters to your fullest extent.

The incarnate is rarely surprised or caught off guard. Even in a safe location it remains ready to act at a moment's notice, and it typically has boons that allow it to respond to emergencies. When on the hunt, the incarnate uses boons that aid it in stalking and observing its quarry, engaging it in conversation, and even mimicking the prey itself to gain access to private locations. Only when it is satisfied that it can learn nothing else from its target does the incarnate reveal itself.

In combat the incarnate prefers to strike from a hidden position, preferably attacking stragglers or lone scouts first in order to weaken the opposition. It leads with its most damaging attack against the weakest target and is not above withdrawing from combat after slaying a single opponent in order to assess its next move. If pinned down in melee, it attacks as many opponents as possible while reserving ranged attacks for highly mobile or unarmored targets. It favors terrain with ample cover and short lines of sight, using its ability to see through obscured areas, which includes darkness, to keep the party guessing where it will strike next.

Given time to prepare, the incarnate brings any disciples or initiates under its command into battle. These lesser proteans should have boons chosen to support the incarnate. Defense-focused disciples pinning down enemy melee fighters, pairs of initiates with Lurker boons stalking the periphery of the battlefield, flying proteans with area-of-effect or ranged attacks, and one or two disciples with Brute boons are a solid reserve.



Easier Tactics — Have the incarnate split its attacks between many different targets, focusing mainly on those who seem the toughest or best armored. While the incarnate cannot be surprised, it can be encountered with less-than-ideal boons. Have it face the party by itself, and use all its legendary actions on movement and attacks instead of recharging special attacks. As always, refrain from killing unconscious characters or plan on taking them captive in the event of an actual TPK.

Harder Tactics — Keep moving and hitting the weakest character with Wightbone Spines and Deadly Stare (recharged with legendary actions) until it is dead. Work up the AC chain until you reach the hardest-to-hit characters. Continue to focus your attacks, and if it gets too dangerous in melee, grapple one target and drag it away from its buddies, using your legendary action to move and break line of sight. Don't be afraid to spend a round repositioning or in feigned retreat to set up your next big attack. Reserve an attack for unconscious characters so they don't return to the fight. Revel in the slaughter and take pleasure in your TPK.

PLOT HOOKS

A Mother's Love. A mother seeks aid in rescuing her long-lost daughter who was last seen in the company of a shadowy cabal of proteans. The cabal has recently grown bolder in their recruitment thanks to the daughter, a newly minted incarnate. The mother insists the cabal is manipulating her daughter but does not realize her child is the new cabal leader. Can the party persuade the incarnate to return to her former life, or will they run afoul of the cabal's plans for the region?

Noble Failson. A monarch's third son—an incompetent and entitled noble if ever there was one—is convinced that he's being stalked by someone in the courtly entourage. In truth, an incarnate infiltrated the court and seeks to subtly delegitimize the royal family before replacing the monarch with a member of its cabal. The incarnate must tread carefully as the court contains several powerful mages, but so far, the uncommonly lucky son has ruined every attempt to discredit his name. Can the party ferret out the incarnate before it resorts to more violent measures?

Dogs of War. Rumors of war spread through the countryside as reports of a warband of hulking soldiers lead by a vicious warlord increase daily. The warlord is a powerful incarnate who became impatient with the slow pace of universal ascension and gathered a force of combat homunculi and like-minded proteans. They have taken it upon themselves to cull the weak and uplift the survivors, and each victory swells their ranks. Local military forces haven't been heard from since marching out to face the warband, and now the people are growing panicked. Will the party be able to halt the proteans' advance?

TREASURE

The greatest wealth of an incarnate is its flesh (at least as far as other proteans are concerned). If an incarnate is slain, any proteans aware of its destruction go to extraordinary lengths to recover

the remains, as the complete annihilation of an incarnate's body is considered a dire blasphemy. However, creatures willing to risk antagonizing the proteans can distill the components for a potent spell from the incarnate's flesh: *immutable form*. Doing so requires a successful DC 22 Intelligence (Alchemist's Supplies) check, spoiling the remains on a failure. On a success, a creature gains the knowledge of the spell, adding it to its spells known via its spellbook or class spell list (when applicable).

ECOLOGY

The incarnate cares little for the world it left behind and spends most of its time communing with higher-order beings through deep meditations or overseeing the enhancement of lesser proteans. As masters of the protean mysteries, they gather about them a coterie of disciples and unique hybrids who form the nucleus of the many idiosyncratic cabals devoted to their interpretation of Proteus's teachings.

New Spell – Immutable Form

This spell is a class spell for druids, warlocks, and wizards.

Immutable Form

8th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 hour
Range: Self
Components: V, S, M (a solid gold egg worth 1,000 gp)
Duration: 8 hours

Your body becomes resilient to any effects that would alter your state of being. For the duration of the spell, you are immune to the blinded, deafened, and exhaustion conditions.

Additionally, you are immune to spells and magical effects that change your shape or appearance unless you choose to be affected. If you choose to be affected in this manner, *immutable form* immediately ends.

Protean Incarnate

Large monstrosity (shapechanger), neutral

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 375 (30d10 + 210)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	18 (+4)	24 (+7)	18 (+4)	21 (+5)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +14, Int +11, Wis +12
Skills Perception +19, Stealth +11
Damage Immunities acid; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 29
Languages Common, pheromone
Challenge 22 (41,000 XP)

TRAITS

Arcane Innards. The incarnate is a highly magical being. Spells and magical effects that can detect magic can detect the incarnate, which gives off an aura of transmutation.

If subjected to a spell or magical effect that disrupts magic (such as a *dispel magic* or *antimagic field*) the incarnate must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw versus the source's spell save DC (or 15 if there is none) or become incapacitated until the end of its next turn.

Advanced Monstrous Morphology. The incarnate has surgically grafted parts of other monsters into its form. A typical incarnate has seven different grafts, chosen from the Boons of the Flesh table. The incarnate may exchange two of these grafts for two different options from the Boons of the Flesh table whenever it finishes a short rest, or four of these grafts with a different option from the Boons of the Flesh table whenever it finishes a long rest.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). When the incarnate fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Prescient Resistance. The first time the incarnate takes damage on a turn, it gains resistance to that damage type until the start of its next turn.

Unstable Humors. When the incarnate dies, it explodes in a spray of bone and viscera. Each creature in a 15-foot-radius sphere of the protean when it dies must attempt a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw, taking 70 (20d6) acid damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The incarnate makes two attacks with its claws and uses two different Organic Weaponry options.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) slashing damage.

Organic Weaponry. The incarnate has the following attack options, in addition to options it gained through its Advanced Monstrous Morphology trait.

- **Chitinous Saber.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., up to three targets within reach. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) slashing damage.
- **Wightbone Spines.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (3d12 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, the spine lodges itself in the target, reducing its hit point maximum by an amount equal to the damage taken. A creature may use an action to attempt a DC 22 Wisdom (Medicine) check to remove the spine, ending the reduction on a success.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The incarnate can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The incarnate regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Claw. The incarnate makes a claws attack.

Move. The incarnate moves up to half its speed.

Recharge (Costs 3 Actions). The incarnate recharges one of its actions.

Once established the cabal assists the incarnate in its esoteric research and keeps guard over it as the incarnate spends long periods in deep, trance-like states.

While the incarnate has little concern for mundane life, it is not generally disdainful or contemptuous of the mortals who seek it. To those who seem clever, driven, or well-versed in esoteric lore, the incarnate is patient and thoughtful. However, they tend to answer questions with cryptic responses and keep their own motives well hidden. They prefer to dwell in remote locations inaccessible by conventional means—subterranean complexes, mountain fortresses, or deep in overgrown forests. When an incarnate appears near civilization it is almost always to further its own goals, whether that be the enlightenment of the populace through benevolence, installing puppet rulers, or enforcing their vision of paradise without care for the consequences.

BOONS OF THE FLESH TABLE

Protean proselytes collect the biological material of other creatures, fashioning it into powerful grafts known as Boons of the Flesh. The benefits of these grafts are tremendous, granting proteans awesome advantages and versatility. While proteans can gain useful material from nearly any creature, detailed here are specific benefits a "typical" collection of proteans may have access to. Use these abilities to customize proteans via their Monstrous Morphology trait. The saving throw DC is determined by the protean proselyte type, as follows:

- Initiate: save DC 17
- Disciple: save DC 18
- Incarnate: save DC 21

BOONS OF THE FLESH

BOON	ACTION BENEFIT	STATISTICS BENEFIT	COMBAT ROLE
Acid-Spraying Glands	Organic Weaponry option (recharge 5–6)	The protean sprays acid in a 30-foot cone. Creatures in the affected area must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 35 (10d6) acid damage, or half as much on a success.	Brute
Adhesive Pads	Trait	The protean gains a climbing speed equal to its walking speed and can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.	Lurker
Alien Mind	Trait	The protean is immune to psychic damage, spells from the divination school, and any attempts to detect its thoughts or sense its emotions. Additionally, creatures have disadvantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks against the protean.	Lurker
Amorphous Infusion	Trait	The protean can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide. Additionally, it may use a bonus action to escape from any grapple or physical restraint.	Lurker
Aquatic Adaptation	Trait	The protean gains a swimming speed equal to its walking speed and gains the ability to breathe water and air.	Any
Bio-Electric Conductor	Trait	When the protean is hit by a weapon attack, it releases a burst of bio-electricity in a 10-foot radius. Enemy creatures in the affected area take 9 (2d8) lightning damage.	Brute
Blood-Draining Appendage	Organic Weaponry option	Once per turn when the protean hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, it may grapple the target (escape DC = 8 + proficiency + Strength modifier). While the target is grappled, the protean cannot take the attack option against another target. Additionally, at the start of the protean's turns the target loses a number of hit points equal to the protean's Constitution score.	Brute
Brutal Strength	Trait	The protean deals double damage on melee weapon attacks.	Brute
Chameleon Skin	Trait	Unless the protean is incapacitated, it is always lightly obscured. Additionally, it can use a bonus action on each of its turns to take the Hide action.	Lurker
Deadly Stare	Organic Weaponry option (recharge 5–6)	The protean targets a creature it can see within 60 feet of it with its gaze. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take 45 (10d8) necrotic damage, or half as much on a success. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by this effect withers and dies instantly.	Artillery

BOONS OF THE FLESH

BOON	ACTION BENEFIT	STATISTICS BENEFIT	COMBAT ROLE
Esoteric Anatomy	Trait	The protean is immune to the stunned condition. Additionally, if the protean takes 20 or more damage from a single instance of damage, it instead takes 20 damage.	Brute
Phase Organ	Trait	Attacks made against the protean are made at disadvantage. If the protean is hit by a weapon attack, this effect is suppressed until the start of the protean's next turn.	Brute
Pheromone Control Gland	Trait	The protean gains Innate Spellcasting (its spellcasting ability is Wisdom) and can cast the following spells, requiring no components: At will: *calm emotions*, *charm person* 3/day: *hold person*, *suggestion* 1/day: *dominate person*	Controller
Preternatural Speed	Trait	The protean's base walking speed increases by 30 feet and it gains proficiency in Acrobatics. Additionally, as a bonus action on each of its turns the protean can take the Dash action.	Skirmisher
Rejuvenating Fluid Ducts	Trait	The protean gains Innate Spellcasting (its spellcasting ability is Wisdom) and can cast the following spells, requiring no components: At-will: *cure wounds* 3/day: *lesser restoration* 1/day: *regeneration*	Leader
Resurrection Organ	Trait	If the protean is slain and its body remains intact, it returns to life in 1d4 days at its hit point maximum and regrows any missing limbs in the process.	Any
Rusting Touch	Organic Weaponry option	The protean touches a metallic object within reach. If the object isn't worn or held, the touch destroys a 1-foot cube of the object. If the object is worn or held by a creature, the creature can attempt a Dexterity saving throw, preventing the effect on a success. If the object is armor or a shield, it takes a permanent and cumulative −1 penalty to its AC adjustment. Armor is destroyed if its benefit to AC is reduced to 10, and shields are destroyed if their benefit to AC is reduced to 0. If the object is a weapon, it takes a permanent and cumulative −1 penalty to its damage adjustment. If its penalty drops to −5, the weapon is destroyed.	Controller
Scintillating Shell	Trait	The protean's AC is increased by 4, and it gains advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.	Soldier
Shapechanging Flesh	Trait	The protean can use its action to turn into a creature or object its size or smaller, or back to its true form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed but may be hidden based on the new form. If the protean transforms into an object in this manner, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary object until it moves. The protean reverts to its original form if slain or incapacitated.	Lurker
Venomous Stinger	Organic Weaponry option	*Melee Weapon Attack:* +(8 + proficiency + Strength modifier) to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* (2d6 + Strength modifier) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take 22 (5d8) poison damage and be poisoned for 1 hour. While so poisoned, a creature is blinded and its base walking speed is reduced to 10 feet.	Brute
Wing Grafts	Trait	The protean gains a flying speed equal to its walking speed.	Skirmisher

Sovereign Swarm

Invading the prime material plane from the silver skies of the astral wastes, the villainous sovereign swarm seeks to rob the world of its riches. These vile planar parasites arrive under the guise of beauty and benevolence only to infiltrate and overthrow, representing the horrors of colonial expansionism and imperial ideals. The sovereign swarm brings a cosmic conquest in pursuit of precious treasures and artifacts of power. They claim divinely granted ownership of the relics they wrongfully steal and stop at nothing to increase their growing hoard. The swarm drains the intrinsic power of both the miraculous and the magical, reducing these things to mere mundane objects. Their empire is sustained and energized by this stolen vitality. Each member of the swarm possesses insect-like features: multifaceted eyes, antenna, a segmented body, and two pairs of wings. They all possess the ability to travel rapidly using their mastery of planar rifts and currents. Though they are each members of the same swarm, every creature is different both in physicality and function, serving a single purpose that they were born to perform. They convert structures into cradle-colonies and attempt to seal off their dwellings from all outsiders, while planning secret expansions across the inhabitable land. Each hive of the sovereign swarm has absolute fealty to the hive-regnant, the guiding force behind the collective thought and will of the swarm.

New Language: Sovereign Quadrille

The sovereign swarm does not communicate verbally, as they lack any vocal cords and view their own auditory capabilities as inelegant. Though their leaders are telepathic, most sovereign swarm members communicate in an unusual language known to outsiders as sovereign quadrille. This form of communication is entirely physical, an elegant display that appears as a mixture of dance and charismatic miming. The unusual nature of this language means the sovereign swarms communicate poorly with outsiders. The names of the various swarm creatures presented here were those bestowed upon them by outsiders, for translating the swarms' names into written or audible language is wholly impossible.

RED JACKET SWARM

Standing barely two feet tall and garbed in loose breeches and flashy waistcoats, the red jackets are bee-like, bipedal humanoids that look like miniaturized insectoid swashbucklers. Each red jacket has two sets of overlapping translucent wings—a pair of forewings and hindwings—that allow them to take flight. They crackle with a golden arcane energy and are always found in groups known as crews. Red jackets move with a beautiful, dance-like grace and create song-like sounds as they move their limbs. The strange creatures act with a daring panache, darting about their foes in a deadly display of stingers and steel.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a sovereign swarm with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

RED JACKET SWARM LORE

DC	INFORMATION
11	Red jackets are the laborers of the sovereign swarm but are dangerous in large numbers. They are diminutive in size and physical prowess, but they can pass through walls, floors, and ceilings, attempting to loot, ransack, and overwhelm at every opportunity.
16	Red jackets fight in swarms, control the range of combat with their flight capabilities, and can deafen combatants through generating loud acoustical noises that both give notice of the swarms' arrival and their location.
22	The sovereign swarm is always lured to treasure, which can be used to bait and hook the red jackets. Taking a positional advantage and bombarding them with area-of-effect burst damage, avoiding the conditional effects to which they are immune, is the key to victory when facing the swarm.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: THE TERRIFYING GRACE OF THE SWARM

The sovereign swarm represents the horrors and atrocities of colonialism. Colonialism in tabletop roleplaying games, particularly in 5E, is a complex topic and a charged theme. If you plan to introduce the sovereign swarm, pay extra close attention to your group dynamics and be sensitive to your players' feelings and emotions on the subject.

It is my firm belief that monsters embody the worst elements of human existence: the consent-breaking mind control and removal of agency that we find in enchantments, the acts of murder to get gain by vile and villainous creatures, and the disempowerment and removal of sovereign rights of free people and the pillaging of what they hold sacred.

It is important to note that the swarm will always be revealed as villainous, evil, and unrighteous thieves. That is not to say it would be impossible to reframe and redesign them, but the implication and philosophies behind their design in this volume is to solidify their place as the wrongful robbers and evil expansionists that have sacrificed individual freedom in an innate ideology that prevents them from coexisting with characters for very long.

Most members of the sovereign swarm embed their hive in existing strongholds and fortresses they have conquered. These positions are defensible, and they rely on their ability to travel through planar rifts to invade the outer protections. They can be found in every environment except pure ice terrain, and they are never found under the sea. But they can be found in cave systems and the underdark.

Individuals in the sovereign swarm consume power from treasure and magic items within their bodies and transmit this power to the rest of the hive. The rate of digestion and synthesis varies with every object, and the distillation of these materials fuels their interplanar travels and feeds the hive-regnant's soul.

— Grant Ellis



TACTICS

Red jackets attack in large numbers while seeking to restrain those they combat with a honey-goo glob they project at their foes. They have an innate elusiveness, which often leads to overconfidence in close-quarter combat. They try to cut off any visible exits and are willing to use their gold-craft abilities to prevent combatants from exiting the field of battle. They can restrain a single foe from long range once per combat to set high stakes at the start.

Red jackets have no fear of death and fight ferociously, holding a firm belief that any who fall will be reborn by the grace of their queen. They make use of innate flying abilities, rely on loud noise to bewilder and confuse their opponents, and rarely retreat from a fight.

Easier Tactics — Red jackets don't have to use their Honey-Goo Glob restraining attack to start battle, and they might not use flight to retreat. They should always be deafening to their opponents, and as a swarm they should always be immune to most condition effects. For an easier battle, avoid using their Grabby Hands ability.

The Red Jacket Swarm

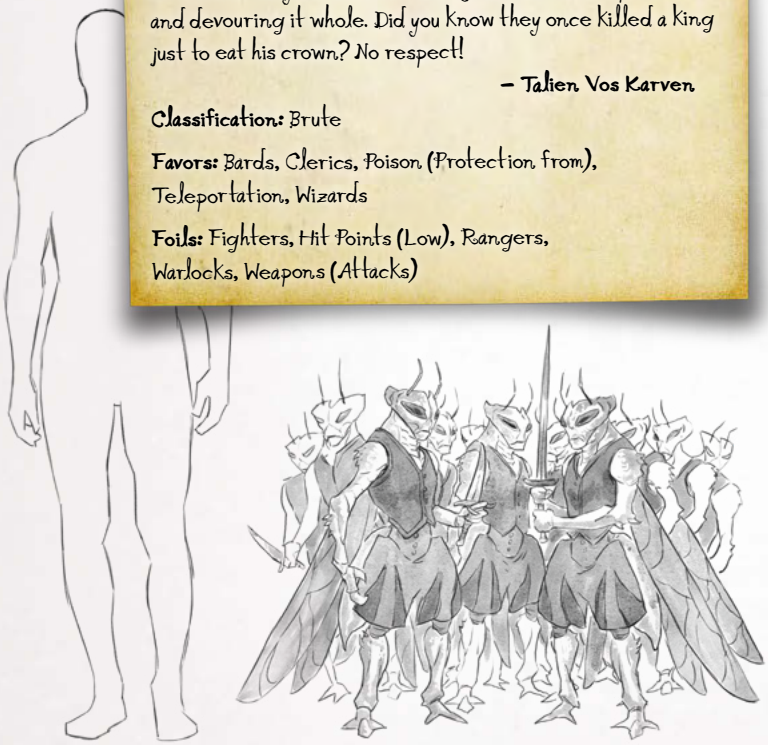
Red jackets! I'd prefer a thousand imps, pixie-fairies, mischievous sprites, or an unbathed hill giant roommate that can't cover their half of the rent before I'd want to deal with these idiots! Red jackets are pompous, aggressive, thieving little pirates that will quickly overrun an entire household, village, city, or country if you let them get out of control. While their songs are sweet and their dances lovely, make no mistake that these invaders have a three-part mission: invade, infest, and eradicate. One can never know exactly what is occurring in their alien brains, but what we do know is they are bent on taking all that is held precious and devouring it whole. Did you know they once killed a king just to eat his crown? No respect!

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Brute

Favors: Bards, Clerics, Poison (Protection from), Teleportation, Wizards

Foils: Fighters, Hit Points (Low), Rangers, Warlocks, Weapons (Attacks)



Red Jacket Swarm

Huge swarm of Tiny humanoids, lawful evil

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 220 (21d12 + 84)
Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (−2)	21 (+5)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Wis +5, Cha +7
Skills Acrobatics +9, Performance +11, Sleight of Hand +9
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages sovereign quadrille
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

TRAITS

Deafening Buzz. Enemy creatures that share a space with the swarm are deafened.

For the Swarm (1/Turn). When the red jacket swarm hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, it can choose to sacrifice some its number to inflict greater harm upon the target. When the swarm does so, the damage of the attack increases by 4 (1d8) poison damage, and the swarm loses 4 (1d8) hit points. The swarm can increase this damage by an additional 4 (1d8) for every 4 (1d8) hit points it chooses to lose, to a maximum of 45 (10d8) additional damage.

Grabby Hands. When a creature ends its turn in the red jacket swarm's space, the swarm can attempt to steal from it (no action required). When the swarm does so, it makes a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) (target's choice). On a success, the swarm steals one object the target is holding or carrying.

Swarm. The red jacket swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny humanoid. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Stinging Blades. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 0 ft., each creature of the swarm's choice in its space. *Hit:* 19 (4d6 + 5) piercing damage.

Honey-Goo Glob (Recharge 5–6). The red jacket swarm projects a gooey glob of honey in a 20-foot cube in a space it can see within 60 feet of it. Each creature in the affected area when the cube appears must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained for as long as it remains in the area. Movement through the cube is quartered, and any creature that attempts to enter the affected area for the first time on a turn must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained for as long as it remains in the affected area.

Harder Tactics — Red jackets work best when they swarm from the sky, restrain spellcasters, and pile on single targets until they bring them down. Between the ability to poison, restrain, and control positioning they should be able to divide and conquer a loosely organized party. Getting out of the way of high-damage attacks is key, but the swarm benefits from deafening their foes, taking away combat advantages from opponents, and gaining advantage against enemies. They can always pass through walls to escape or regroup, and they can always attempt to disarm opponents and separate them from their weapons amid the swarm.

PLOT HOOKS

The Danger within the Walls. The adventurers have assembled within the walls of a local regent as dignitaries. Another diplomat is found murdered, covered in a gold and amber adhesive substance, the window to his room also sealed with the same golden epoxy. It spreads to two more rooms and eventually the drawbridge is down, but the exit is blocked by a gelatinous wall of honey-fall. The party must locate the source of the nocturnal honey hive and combat the assassins before they murder the entire delegation and the local regency, displacing the delicate political balance.

A Swarm of Swords. A sovereign swarm has descended upon a nearby mine, murdering the miners, sealing off tunnels, and claiming the ore for their own. The local kingdom is in desperate need of these resources, for they owe tribute to an ancient dragon that is threatening to decimate the kingdom if payment is not received. The kingdom is lawful and owes the debt justly, but the hive is holding their funds hostage in the darkness below.

To Bee or Not to Bee. An envoy of red jackets is making its way toward an alchemist's tower. The alchemist has finally uncovered the secret to turn substances into gold, and this has created a large pull of red jackets that were caravanning in the area. They are planning to descend upon the tower. The characters have finished a discussion with the alchemist for unrelated reasons when they see the swarm of the apocalypse descending from all directions. They must barricade the defenses and endure the onslaught.

TREASURE

The red jackets are made almost entirely of a "healing honey," and their vital fluids can be repurposed into extraordinary medicine. Likewise, their limbs can be fashioned into instruments. This practice is viewed as almost completely barbaric, but it provides one of the only ways to communicate with the swarm. Thus, defeat of the swarm is one of few ways to open the only avenue to diplomatic relations with the invasive species.

ECOLOGY

Since the nature of these creatures is colonial, they often aggress in large numbers and secure their environment. For example, a collection of red jackets will come upon a town and sense where the gold is. The location is a vault in the town hall or local church building. They view it as their divine right to capture and contain all gold, so they attack en masse and seek to murder everyone inside the structure and then secure the walls and windows. They then harvest and distill the gold and feed it to the queen in hopes that she will grow and give manifest to another member of the swarm.

The red jackets construct their network of habitations in high and hard-to-reach places or in shallow, defensible positions. They seldom make the journey alone to their destination point, instead preferring to send a bumbleblimp out to find a suitable colony-site for the hive. If their colony is devoid of nourishment, they form a swarm and journey across all existence for a place to nest, forming a colonial-cradle.

BEEZERKER

Broad-bodied, lumbering, and evoking the essence of power, the beezerker is an insectoid juggernaut that has evolved into the pinnacle of efficient brutality. Each limb of this creature is designed to inflict as much pain as possible. When the fighting gets most furious, they up the intensity in an attempt to overwhelm and annihilate the opposition. Beezerkers sound like rusty cogs grinding against each other. Unlike other members of the sovereign swarm, beezerkers do not have wings and can't fly. They rely on other members of the swarm to transport them while they hibernate in their honeycomb housing.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a beezerker with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

BEEZERKER LORE

DC	INFORMATION
11	Beezerkers are kept in a perpetual honey-hibernation. They can only be put back to sleep through the psychic connection they share with their hive queen. Once awakened, they seek and destroy any who are not part of their hive. They are wingless and wicked, and they attempt to overwhelm the opposition by just attacking relentlessly and battering them down through a culmination of punishment.
16	Beezerkers can enter a final fury that increases their lethality twice over, increasing their effective damage output and resilience to damage. However, the flame flickers most brightly before it goes out, and this expression applies to the beezerkers that engage in a last stand. Beezerkers also compel duels on behalf of the hive, making escape difficult.
22	Beezerkers are susceptible to a variety of debuffs and attacks that manipulate the mind. They also can be directed toward illusions, and if they lose sight of their foes, they are less likely to come forward and attack blind; they are precise and economical strikers before they unleash their torrential onslaught of melee attacks. Their up-close combat efficacy is misleading—they have a deadly ranged attack that can turn the tide of battle if hits. Beezerkers are the most fearsome members of the sovereignty, and while they can be deceived or disabled, they will fight on until either they fall in combat or they fell their opponent.

TACTICS

Beezerkers focus on engaging in an up-close knockdown, drag-out, melee slobber knocker. They deal impressive damage with their For the Swarm trait, especially when paired with Bravado to score a critical hit. Note that For the Swarm's damage gets rolled again on a critical hit. Beezerkers have plenty of hit points to spare, so use this trait liberally. The increase in durability and damage output forces the players into a fight-or-flight situation. Beezerkers surround single targets, taking advantage of their numbers to focus a single target down. Remember that beezerkers get extra opportunity attacks—as well as multiple reactions—thanks to their Master Duelist trait. While they are rampaging, bloodthirsty bee people, they aren't stupid. Only when a beezerker is forced into its Last Stand will the gloves truly come off, with no expectation on the beezerker's part that it will survive the encounter.

Easier Tactics — Only use Bravado on characters likely to beat the ability check. Typically, these are characters with Expertise or high Wisdom. Never use For the Swarm to gain more than 13 (3d8) poison damage on an attack, and be sure to target characters with resistance to poison damage. Until Last Stand is in effect, the beezerkers should be playful, more interested in enjoying the fight than absolute victory.



The Beezerker

If the bee gods need a zealot warrior to fight for their cause, they would probably pick a beezerker. The sheer volume of strikes, each one expertly placed to bring down their opponent, then following up and destroying the remains is a level of brutality that just doesn't make sense; these are evolved killers that have no remorse.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Controller

Favors: Armor Class (High), Barbarians, Hit Points (High), Paladins, Rogues

Foils: Attacks (Multiple), Damage (Low), Fighters, Monks, Rangers

BEEZERKER

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (chitin)
Hit Points 221 (26d8 + 104)
Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	9 (−1)	8 (−1)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Wis +4, Cha +9
Skills Acrobatics +10, Intimidation +8, Perception +3
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages sovereign quadrille
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

TRAITS

For the Swarm (1/Turn). When the beezerker hits a creature with a melee weapon attack, it can choose to sacrifice some of its own life to inflict greater harm upon the target. When the beezerker does so, the damage of the attack increases by 4 (1d8) poison damage, and the beezerker loses 4 (1d8) hit points. The beezerker can increase this damage by an additional 4 (1d8) for every 4 (1d8) hit points it chooses to lose, to a maximum of 45 (10d8) additional damage.

Last Stand (1/Day). When the beezerker is reduced to 0 hit points and is not incapacitated, it may instead be reduced to 1 hit point and immediately gain 100 temporary hit points. While the beezerker has at least one of these temporary hit points, it has advantage on attack rolls, has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws and ability checks, and is immune to the stunned and unconscious conditions.

Master Duelist. When a creature within 5 feet of the beezerker misses it with a weapon attack, it provokes an opportunity attack against the beezerker.

Additionally, the beezerker has two extra reactions. These reactions can only be used to make opportunity attacks.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The beezerker makes three attacks. It can forgo making two of these attacks to instead take the Dodge action or use its Bravado action.

Stinger Saber. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

Bravado. The beezerker attempts to intimidate a creature within 30 feet of it that can hear it, making a Charisma (Intimidation) check contested by the target's Wisdom (Insight). On a success, the next hit the beezerker scores with a weapon attack against the target becomes a critical hit. This benefit lasts until the start of the beezerker's next turn.

REACTIONS

Expert Defense. As a reaction when the beezerker is forced to attempt a saving throw, the beezerker can grant itself advantage on the saving throw.

Harder Tactics — Bravado plus a maximum-damage For the Swarm is the key to ruthless victory. Use the beezerker's mobility to get close to squishy characters and let 'em have it. Use the self-damaging effects of For the Swarm to activate Last Stand as early as possible, ensuring the beezerkers put out ludicrous amounts of damage in a short period of time.

PLOT HOOKS

The Villainous Honey-Vaults of Vile Darkness. Members of the sovereign swarm stumbled upon something they shouldn't have and attempted to assimilate a power that was beyond their understanding. The result was an unfathomable honey-lich that animated the sleepless dead and confined them in honey-comb coffins. The result is a villainous horde of high-speed killers protecting the phylactery of a powerful undead beekeeper.

The Long Voyage Home. While investigating an ancient tomb, the remains of powerful creatures are found torn asunder. A patrol of beezerkers are searching for an exit, but they are hyperaggressive and territorial. They don't realize they've been abandoned by the rest of the hive. The party must reactivate the planar gate and lure the beezerkers into the portal by solving the various puzzles that have kept them from journeying home.

A Dangerous Display. An unusual and alien sarcophagus is being paraded on display by an archaeological society. This is no burial construct; it is actually a beezerker honey-vault that contains a dangerous warrior of the sovereign swarm. Before long, the container opens and the beezerker is unleashed upon the unsuspecting spectators with the party on hand to deal with it. Where did the container come from? Are there others in the area? Are we on the verge of another invasion?

TREASURE

Beezerkers are clad in the finest armor the sovereign swarm can design: a chitinous form of plate fashioned from the chemically treated shells of the countless beezerkers that have given their lives in defense of the swarm. Such heavy armor is grafted onto a beezerker's body but can be removed with a successful DC 19 (Wisdom) Medicine check, destroying the armor on a failure. An amor so removed can be worn by other humanoids of the same size.

SOVEREIGN SWARM ARMOR

ARMOR	COST	ARMOR CLASS (AC)	STRENGTH	STEALTH	WEIGHT
Chitin	10,000 gp	19	Str 17	Disadvantage	5 lb.

ECOLOGY

Beezerkers are usually stored in crews of four or more in coffin-like chambers known as honey-vaults. They are filled with a golden substance that suspends the animation of the beezerker until the arcane seal is opened. Beezerkers are usually only found in host-hives as a last line of defense or transported in and unlocked as an aggressive attack. They are, for the most part, kept suspended due to their volatility and overdeveloped sense of protection. In the rare instance beezerkers are called to serve a nonviolent function, they are rambunctious, aggressive, and excessive in their demeanor. They view life, especially those of lesser creatures and other components of the swarm, to be easily expendable. For a beezerker to die in battle is a desirable and honorable fate, and any who think otherwise are either the hive-regnant or insane.

BUMBLEBLIMP

Large, bulbous, and covered in razor-sharp micro-hairs, the hovering bumbleblimp soars through the sky, seeking out precious metals and arcane treasures. The bumbleblimp sounds like an oversized brass horn, resembles a wagon-sized bumblebee, and moves in an incredibly swift fashion. The bumbleblimp's appendages are covered in blade-like protrusions, and its many-segmented eyes rotate in a manner that allows it to see in 360 degrees. Their bodies are split into three segments, and they have two sets of wings that sit on top of each other, like a bee, that can generate great force to propel it through the air.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a bumbleblimp with an Intelligence (Arcana) ability check.

BUMBLEBLIMP LORE

DC	INFORMATION
11	Bumbleblimps are extradimensional planar voyagers that can travel great distances in the blink of an eye. They are usually the sign of more of the sovereign swarm to come. They are heavily armored and can survive without breathing air or sleeping. Folks tend to avoid them the same way they might a military convoy or aggressive patrol. Bumbleblimps collect buildings and carry them to remote locations in order to create a haven for members of their hive.
16	Bumbleblimps control their positioning on the battlefield through various intrinsic means that tap into their arcane physiology. They produce poisonous clouds and are not afraid to stomp and shred those engaged with them. Bumbleblimps are drawn toward precious metals and arcane objects, so they can be lured and baited. They are not the most intelligent creatures. Like their smaller cousins, they are rich in spell components and can be used to produce life-saving medical supplies.
22	Bumbleblimps are not effective at long range but are incredibly deadly melee combatants. With no ranged attacks, they absorb a great deal of punishment if they can't close the distance, exploding on death. Bumbleblimps are vital to treating widespread pandemics, as they can be used to produce large quantities of healing salves through their "healing honey" that sustains them.

TACTICS

Bumbleblimps are not fighters but do defend themselves if necessary. Unless threatened by an enemy of deadly strength, bumbleblimps use Thunderous Distress and flee as quickly as possible. If their attackers

prove too powerful or stubborn to deter with that effect, bumbleblimps go on the offensive, using their Seize and Pollen Blast actions aggressively. Note the bumbleblimp's huge pool of hit points, which ensures nearly any battle with the creature takes a considerable amount of time. Don't worry if the poor creature is having trouble hurting the characters. The Fearsome Fuzz trait ensures they damage themselves, and the bumbleblimp has hit points to spare. Note the bumbleblimp's Immense trait. This means your combat will need lots of space, so be sure to prepare your encounter to make good use of both the creature's size and movement.

Easier Tactics — The bumbleblimp should do everything in its power to run for its life. It only attacks if given no other choice, and even then, only until it can make another escape attempt. If badly injured, use the Thunderous Distress action, and keep that up until the bumbleblimp falls. Just remember that with Vengeful Burst, there will likely be other sovereign swarm creatures looking for the characters to even the score.

Harder Tactics — Bumbleblimps are humongous, and there are many ways to use that. The best option is to mount allies upon the creature, riding it into battle like a giant war zeppelin. The bumbleblimp should aid in combat by dropping objects and structures on characters and tanking as many hits as possible for its teammates. When used properly, the bumbleblimp will be the first creature to die in combat, granting its allies a chance to avenge its death thanks to the benefits provided by Vengeful Burst.

PLOT HOOKS

Far Bee It from Me. An eccentric and wide-eyed expert treasure hunter is using a captured and charmed bumbleblimp to locate a legendary treasure hoard across the continent. The characters are going to have to track the movements and exploration pattern of the creature while dealing with its planar hopping abilities. The only issue is once the bumbleblimp finds the mark, it will open a planar gate and bring other members of the hive through.

Dude, Where's My Hive? A number of villagers, townsfolk, and city dwellers from all over have petitioned the local rulers for aid—a large

BUMBLEBLIMP

Gargantuan monstrosity, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 445 (27d20 + 162)
Speed 20 ft., fly 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	4 (−3)	22 (+6)	6 (−2)	17 (+3)	4 (−3)

Saving Throws Con +12, Wis +9, Cha +3
Skills Perception +9
Damage Immunities poison
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages sovereign quadrille
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

TRAITS

Fearsome Fuzz. The bumbleblimp is covered in dense hair as sharp as spears. When a creature within 10 feet of the bumbleblimp hits it with a weapon attack, the creature takes 5 (1d10) piercing damage and 5 (1d10) poison damage.

Heavy Lifting. The bumbleblimp can grapple and carry massive objects and even structures without difficulty. The maximum size of such an object is up to a 300-foot cube with a weight no greater than 1,000 tons.

Immense. The bumbleblimp's size is tremendous. It is 120 feet long from head to abdomen, with a wingspan of 200 feet. On the battlefield the bumbleblimp typically occupies an 80-foot-by-80-foot space. The bumbleblimp can end its movement in a Gargantuan or smaller creature's space and does not treat such spaces as difficult terrain when moving through them.

Vengeful Burst. When the bumbleblimp dies, it explodes in a burst of magical golden spores and molten particles, which alight upon those who slew it. Each enemy creature in a 50-foot radius of the bumbleblimp when this effect occurs must succeed on a DC 19 Charisma saving throw or be affected by a vengeful curse. A creature so cursed emits dim light for 10 feet, cannot be hidden or invisible, and creatures have advantage on attack rolls against it.

ACTIONS

Seize. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 42 (6d10 + 9) slashing damage, and the target is grappled. While a creature is so grappled, it is restrained, and the bumbleblimp cannot use this attack against another target.

Gate (1/Long Rest). The bumbleblimp opens a magical portal in an unoccupied space it can see within 60 feet of it to a precise location on a different plane of existence. The portal is a circular opening 120 feet in diameter, which the bumbleblimp can orient any direction it chooses and lasts for 1 minute. The portal has a front and a back on each plane where it appears. Travel through the portal is possible only by moving through its front. Anything that does so is instantly transported to the other plane, appearing in the unoccupied space nearest to the portal.

Deities and other planar rulers can prevent portals created by this spell from opening in their presence or anywhere within their domains.

Pollen Blast. The bumbleblimp generates a 60-foot cone of poisonous pollen. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking take 39 (6d12) poison damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Thunderous Distress (Recharge 5–6). The bumbleblimp begins beating its wings in distress, emitting a mind-shattering drone in a 120-foot radius centered on it. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or be knocked unconscious until the droning ends. The bumbleblimp must take a bonus action on each of its subsequent turns to continue the droning. When a creature not stunned by the effect starts its turn in the affected area, it must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or be knocked unconscious until the droning ends.

This effect ends early if the bumbleblimp is incapacitated or does not take damage from an enemy creature at least once each round.

bee-like object has been descending upon various settlements and strongholds, tearing the houses and structures out of the earth and carrying them off! To where is the majestic bumbleblimp carrying these buildings? Is this a sign of a swarm to come?

Royal Ransackers. Extraplanar bank robbers are using a bumbleblimp to locate, infiltrate, and remove large amounts of treasure across the planes! You are going to need to set a trap and lock these criminals up. Uncover the secret of the interdimensional thieves' guild and catch them before they strike again!

TREASURE

Bumbleblimps' wings possess gossamer scales which can be used to empower spells from the conjuration school. Harvesting the scales requires 1 hour of strenuous activity and a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Medicine) check on an incapacitated or slain bumbleblimp, which provides enough scales for a single use. When casting a spell from the conjuration school that requires a material component, the caster may add bumbleblimp scales to the spell's components, consuming them in the process. A spell benefiting from this component has its level increased to 8th level, unless it is being cast at 9th level, in which case using this component has no effect.

ECOLOGY

The solitary bumbleblimp voyages across the astral plane and shifts into existence searching for a home for the hive. It is always drawn to the largest treasure it can locate in a 500-mile radius. The bumbleblimp is the key to opening planar portals for the rest of the sovereign swarm. They are hardy, need no air to survive, and don't mind the climate, whatever it's like. They have even been known to cruise underwater in search of ancient sunken secrets. The bizarre transports are drawn to deposits of wealth and valuable matter, no matter the source, acting as scouts for their colonies. Bumbleblimps collect various buildings, uprooting them from their foundations, and stay among the stolen structures as they prepare planar gates to invite their sovereign swarm companions to bring colonization.

The Bumbleblimp

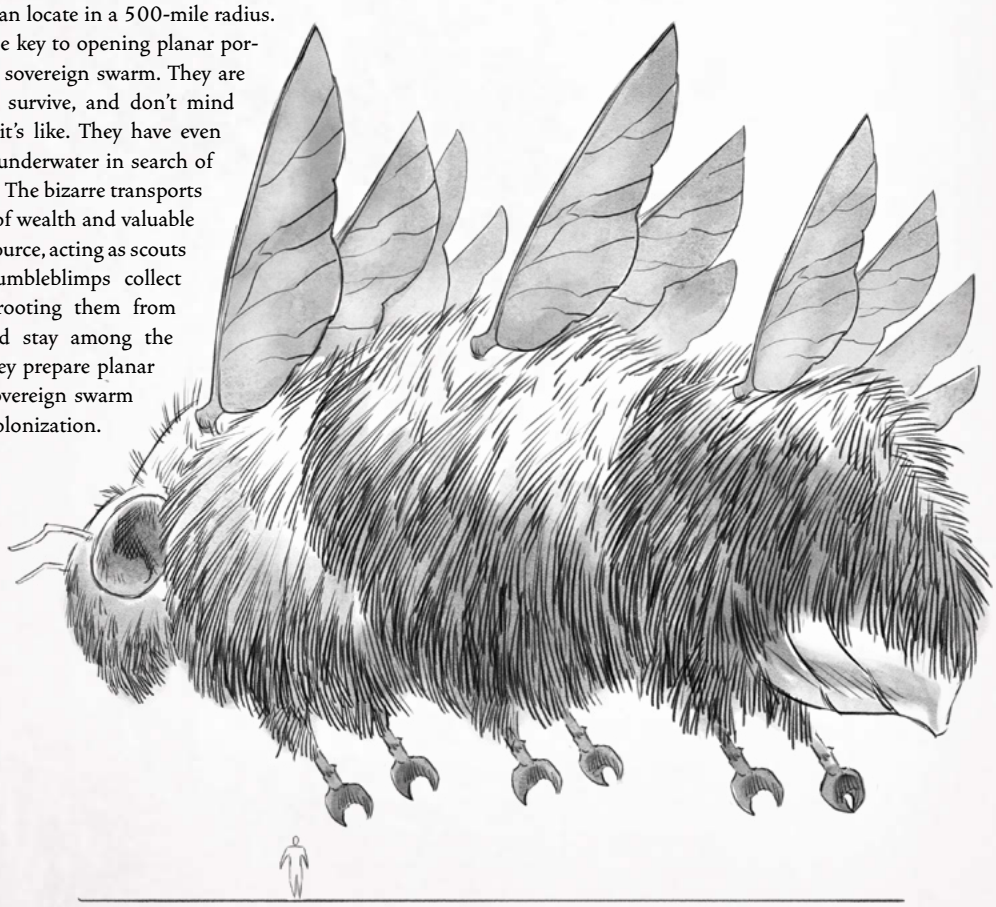
These majestic creatures might make a racket, but they are instrumental in the discovery of sleeping treasure troves of bygone ages. The bumbleblimp is an anomaly in that it shouldn't be as swift and agile as it is, but they are surprisingly nimble creatures. One can never be so sure what is going on behind their dead eyes, but they have a habit of sniffing out your treasure and attempting to take it from you with their dangerous mandibles. Sometimes you can throw them off the trail by tossing coins at them or leaving a treasure chest to keep them occupied while you move through the area. Watch out, for they've been known to steal entire structures from their foundations, ripping the rock from the earth itself, and stacking them away in a collection to prepare for the rest of their swarm.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Controller

Favors: Conditions (Incapacitated), Fighters, Range (Long), Rangers, Warlocks

Foils: Barbarians, Constitution (Low), Melee, Monks, Paladins



HIVE-REGNANT

Manifesting between the unseen realm of alien dreams and the material plane, the hive-regnant towers majestically over the sovereign swarm with a divine grace and beauty. Her sovereign song rings out like a beautiful aria performed by the most gifted vocalist ever heard. Each of her movements casts a spell upon all who see her. Every note she sings pierces the soul of all who hear them. She represents the collective will of the hive and aligns every activity her subjects take with her unknowable will. When making a rare physical appearance, hive-regnants appear as noble insectoids of a humanoid stature, towering over their lesser swarm kin. Their bodies are always mantled in extravagant finery, and their telepathic voices echo with a threatening tone which ensures obedience.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a hive-regnant with an Intelligence (History) ability check.

HIVE-REGNANT LORE

DC	INFORMATION
17	A hive-regnant is an otherworldly apparition that stands as tall as a tree. Her voice can bring her minions into the area at a moment's notice. The greater the amount of gold she gathers, the stronger she grows. Hive-regnants mean bad weather, dead crops, and a sign that we ought to move on. If a hive-host has formed in the region it is best to seek out adventurers to purge the colony!
22	A hive-regnant is resistant to most attacks and methods of combat. She focuses on controlling and manipulating larger groups of opponents with her enchantments and area-of-effect abilities. Her ethereal nature allows her to control combat positioning, but she is most vulnerable when surrounded. But beware, if she does feel threatened she will summon her minions to disrupt the flow of combat.
28	While hive-regnants are terrifying and borderline divine, they are not invincible. If separated from their treasure they diminish in size. If the sovereign swarm is defeated, they cannot exist. Sometimes it is easier to remove a hive-regnant's minions in order to remove her from the fray. Splitting her hive and taking them out in a series of skirmishes usually ends the infestation of the sovereign swarm and puts an end to the hive-regnant's rule.

TACTICS

Hive-regnants have two strategies: convert or combat. Hive-regnants always begin with conversion if their lair or general domain is invaded, but they initiate combat if they are the invaders. A hive-regnant's lair and innate abilities create lots of opportunities to charm foes and enthrall enemies long before combat begins. If the hive-regnant succeeds, the sovereign swarm disarms and indoctrinates those they have captured. If you face the hive-regnant

The Hive-Regnant

To hear her voice in one's mind and witness her graceful dance is to brush with divinity itself. However, every pretty word inflicts such pain! The hive-regnant manifests when the swarm settles in a host-hive. Her will directs and drives the colony, calling to the minds of her minions to gather gold, seek treasure, and hoard the riches and relics of the world within their desecrated chambers. The song might be sweet as honey, but the meaning is sinister and an unwelcome mantra to all.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Artillery

Favors: Fighters, Flight, Range (Long), Rangers, Warlocks

Foils: Bards, Poison (Protection from), Sorcerers, Wisdom (Low), Wizards



in combat, she summons a swarm and focuses on peppering the party with stinging magic missiles. A regnant always attempts to escape with *planeshift* if severely threatened, using any remaining allies to cover her retreat. Take special note of the regnant's signature spell, *creeping doom*. This mighty effect can both shield the regnant from attack or massacre characters, so use it wisely.

Easier Tactics — The hive-regnant should seek to conquer rather than kill. She uses her *command* spell and similar nonlethal tools to incapacitate and capture the characters, only turning to lethal options should she have no other recourse. Keep the number of allies manageable, with a host of weak charmed humanoids to complement the more formidable members of the sovereign swarm. Use the regnant's Absolute Authority feature sparingly, and only cast *creeping doom* a single instance in combat, preferably toward the end of the fight.

Harder Tactics — The hive-regnant should aim to charm a character as quickly as possible, following up with her Sacrifice legendary action as often as possible to exploit her new thrall. *Creeping doom* should be cast almost immediately, following by a swift usage of Absolute Focus to ensure concentration is not dropped. From there a judicious application of *magic missile* and *command* at every opportunity should prove devastating. Remember that *command* cast at 5th level means the regnant can target several creatures at once. With her high spell save DC, this is guaranteed to get strong results on at least one affected character. To give the fight even more kick, use powerful humanoid thralls in addition to the many formidable forces of the sovereign swarm to overwhelm the would-be heroes.

New Spell – Creeping Doom

This spell is a class spell for druids and warlocks.

Creeping Doom

9th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 120 feet
Components: V, S, M (a live, venomous insect)
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You conjure a magical swarm of stinging, biting insects in a 20-foot cube centered on a point on the ground within range. The swarm is imbued with magical vitality, granting it 200 hit points, though it cannot be harmed or damaged by any means other than those detailed in this spell. If the swarm is reduced to 0 hit points, the spell immediately ends. As a bonus action on each of your turns, you can command the swarm to move up to 30 feet along the ground.

When the cube appears and at the start of each of your turns, the swarm deals 15 piercing damage and 15 poison damage to creatures of your choice in its area as the insects assault those within. When the spell deals damage in this manner, the swarm loses 40 hit points.

Additionally, when a creature within the affected area takes damage, you can choose to have the swarm take that damage instead.

PLOT HOOKS

The Red Hive of Doom. A new hive-regnant has amassed a swarm from across seven planes of existence. The doomsday hive is unleashed and set loose upon the characters' home region. Can the swarm be stopped before it makes its way to the capitol and wipes out the last bastion of safety?

The Bee-lievers of the Swarm. A holy sect has declared war on all faiths, fighting in the name of the hive-regnant. They are forcing tithes and offerings upon all and forcibly taking what is not given. Can the characters remove the influence of the hive-regnant and oust the cult of the sovereign swarm?

Colonial Collapse. A hive-regnant is dwindling in power and might. She has no choice but to keep her hive captive and lure unsuspecting adventurers into her domain in hopes to capture them and consume their items to feed and empower her colony. The characters are lured to their hive-host, and they must escape the death traps set forth by a hive on the brink of collapse.

TREASURE

Hive-regnants wield potent magic, practiced and refined over generations of conquest and authoritarian rule. The creatures are notorious for their ability to cast a particularly loathsome spell, *creeping doom*. This spell is a trade secret to hive-regnants, who only share its knowledge with those who pledge to serve their cause willingly. Such blessed creatures may add *creeping doom* to their class spell lists.

ECOLOGY

Hive-regnants live in the hive-host environment that has been conquered by their swarm. They prefer to remain in the ethereal and not manifest in the prime material, as that is where they are most vulnerable. But to all that see a hive-regnant, they are creatures of striking beauty and grace and can cut all bravery from would-be heroes as they appear mid-air above their sovereign swarm. A hive-regnant always tends to be within 100 miles of her swarm and can either retreat to the swarm or summon the swarm to her. There is a distinct melancholy about them, almost as if the love and admiration had for them by all who gaze upon them brings them great pain.

A HIVE-REGNANT'S LAIR

A hive-regnant makes its lair in the demiplane between the prime material and the astral—a pocket dimension known as a cradle. Cradles are masses of cylindrical discs of golden color that crackle with the essence of a million magical treasures that have been stolen over an uncountable number of generations. All absorbed magical energies are stored in the cradle and feed into the hive-regnant. Creatures attempting to reach the cradle can rarely do so without invitation. If a swarm dwindles in power and faces eradication, the hive-regnant will open a gate and play her sweet music inviting outsiders in. There she will attempt to convert and corrupt the intruders. The hive-regnant's goal within the lair is to expand the swarm, and one means of doing that is through the indoctrination and domination of outsiders.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties) a hive-regnant can take one lair action to cause one of the following effects; the hive-regnant can't use the same lair action two rounds in a row:

- The hive-regnant's droning music of the lair pierces the heart of a creature. The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed for 1 minute. The creature may repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending this effect on itself on a success.
- A swarm of poisonous stingers swirl in a 20-foot radius centered on a point that the hive-regnant can see. Each creature in the swarm must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) poison damage.
- A glob of honey-goo drops from the air, landing in a 5-foot cube in a space within the lair. Creatures in the affected area when the cube appears must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained for as long as they remain in the affected area. A creature can take an action to attempt a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, freeing itself on a success.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region containing a hive-regnant's lair is warped by its magic, creating one or more of the following effects:

- Unattended objects become coated in a thin film of nutritious honey.
- If a humanoid spends at least 1 hour within 1 mile of the lair, that creature must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed by the hive-regnant.
- The droning music of the swarm rings out for a 1-mile radius from the lair, frightening away any beasts from the region.

HIVE-REGNANT

Large humanoid, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural amor)
Hit Points 228 (24d10 + 96)
Speed 20 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (−1)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)	21 (+5)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Dex +11, Con +11, Int +11
Skills Insight +11, Perception +12, Performance +21
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder
Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 22
Languages sovereign quadrille, telepathy 1 mile
Challenge 23 (50,000 XP)

TRAITS

Absolute Authority. While the hive-regnant is not incapacitated, she exudes an aura of authority in a 60-foot radius. At the start of each of her turns, the hive-regnant can choose to designate each creature she is aware of in the area as either a friend or foe until the start of her next turn, granting a target the following benefits or penalties for as long as they remain within the affected area.

Friend. A friend of the hive-regnant deals an additional 7 (2d6) poison damage on its weapon attacks and regains 11 (2d10) hit points at the end of each of its turns.

Foe. A foe of the hive-regnant cannot be immune or resistant to poison damage and has disadvantage on ability checks.

Innate Spellcasting. The hive-regnant's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 22, +14 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *command* (5th level), *locate animals or plants*, *magic missile* (5th level)
3/day each: *cloudkill*, *hold monster*, *project image*
2/day each: *creeping doom*, *dominate monster*, *gate*, *planeshift*

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the hive-regnant fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The hive-regnant casts two spells, one of which must be a spell she can cast at will. The regnant can forgo casting a spell in this manner to instead use her Absolute Focus action.

Absolute Focus. If the hive-regnant is concentrating on a spell, she can choose to remove the concentration component from the spell, allowing it to persist for its full duration without the need to concentrate. The hive-regnant can use a bonus action on each of her turns to end the affected spell.

Summon Swarm (Recharge 5–6). The hive-regnant magically summons a red jacket swarm in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of her. The swarm acts immediately after the hive-regnant in initiative order and lasts for 1 hour.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The hive-regnant can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The hive-regnant regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Move. The hive-regnant moves up to her speed.

Release the Sting. The hive-regnant casts *magic missile*.

Sacrifice (Costs 2 Actions). The regnant chooses a friendly creature she can see within 60 feet of her and commands it to sacrifice its life. If the creature is willing, it loses 55 (10d10) hit points and the regnant regains a number of hit points equal to the hit points lost. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by this effect dies instantly.

Muster the Troops (Costs 3 Actions). The hive-regnant recharges her Summon Swarm action.

Tricksters

As mysterious as they are mischievous, the humanoid beings known as tricksters walk among ordinary folk, reveling in chaos and subverting the status quo. Whether elegant or eccentric, suave or sneaky, innocent or indifferent, a trickster is a living contradiction. Their actions may not necessarily match their words. Just because you see the trickster does not mean that you should trust your eyes, because with a trickster what you see isn't all you get. Whether they are dangerous or not often depends on how you react to them, as "chaotic" does not necessarily mean evil, but it doesn't exclude it either. Will the trickster become your friend, your enemy, or merely an eye in the shadow who wants to tip the scales a bit in one direction? Be cautious! A scorned trickster or one who has been hindered at whatever game it's playing is unlikely to be friendly. You may become its new obsession, destined to suffer a myriad of increasingly dangerous indignities.

DREAMERS

Cloaked figures covered in a body of stars; the dreamers walk among other races to spark their imagination then feed upon their wondrous dreams. Their skin resembles a panoply of constellations, ever shifting with a subtle speed. Dreamers are elven in shape, with long black hair which flows as if moved by a soft wind. In their presence there is a strange sense that sound is drawn to this figure, almost as if all noises were being pulled by a magnetic force. Their eyes sparkle like gemstones, glittering fiercely when entertained or angry.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a dreamer with an Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Religion) check.

DREAMER LORE

DC	INFORMATION
14	Dreamers are highly magical tricksters that are more interested in shenanigans than battle. They exude a dreamlike influence on the world around them, changing the properties of energy and thought.
19	Dreamers can be peaceful, violent, or anywhere in between. Some seem curious and want nothing more than to experience new dreams while others want to cause nightmares and feed on them later. They are dangerous and in their own world can be extremely difficult to defeat.
25	Dreamers dwell in a world of their own creation. Those that fall by their hand can be banished to this realm for the remainder of their lives, or until the dreamer chooses to release them.



The Dreamer

At first, I believed dreamers to be merely thoughts and images reflected in one's mind, but I have unearthed a mischievous creature that can manifest imagination into something physical and beyond my understanding. During one encounter I found myself in a forest of unique foliage but was hit with a wave of exhaustion and collapsed under the night sky. I awoke in a strange, well-lit tavern with only one other figure, sitting across from me with a smile on its face. It asked me my goals, aspirations, and dreams and even shared a bit of some shimmering liquid from a waterskin which tasted like moonlight. Apparently, they knew of my mission but claimed I would never succeed. That remains to be seen.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Controller

Favors: Bards, Psychic (Protection from), Sorcerers, Specific Spells (*dispel magic*), Wizards

Foils: Barbarians, Fighters, Monks, Perception (Low)

TACTICS

While a dreamer can be friendly or interested in the characters, it is rarely helpful. A dreamer can magically induce sleep, change its appearance, or even disappear without a trace. Take note of the dreamer's fearsome array of spells. These magical powers can produce a wide variety of effects, many of which serve a function beyond that of combat. While a dreamer's first choice is to approach sleeping targets, feed off their dreams, and gather information, if necessary they force information from their targets with *zone of truth*. If a creature is hostile, the dreamer does not hesitate to subdue it immediately to move onto its next target. Spells like *mass suggestion* and *maze* are among its most powerful magics, which can easily foil a party with a single cast. Note the dreamer's Mental Mirror feature, which complements its limited selection of damage-dealing spells. However, don't feel like you need to engage in combat immediately. A dreamer can be playful or benevolent at first, using harmless spells for the sake of entertainment. Remember, until the players feel attacked or harmed, there may be no reason to roll for initiative, so use this window to layer the battlefield with useful spells and position the dreamer optimally.

Easier Tactics — The dreamer is focused more on using the characters for entertainment rather than killing them. Even if the situation escalates to violence, the creature should never kill any characters, instead transporting any it downs to its lair until its mercurial desires are satisfied. Use nonlethal spells such as *sleep*, *silence*, *slow*, and *compulsion*, among others. Be sure to read the descriptions of these spells in detail, as their effects are quite complex and can make for many interesting

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Mythological tricksters are something we've seen in so many different cultures, and they've been associated with anything from divinity to the idea of fey. I wanted to make something that had a lot of opportunity for mischief, but if these creatures become friendly with characters, together they can create fantastic stories. With tricksters comes mischief, and when combined with the clever minds of your players, hijinks will ensue. While these creatures can defend themselves, they also possess a lot of often-underutilized spells, particularly for areas of play other than combat. These absolutely chaos-loving creatures is something I purposefully wanted to supply.

— Gabe Hicks

DREAMER

Medium fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 178 (21d8 + 84)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Wis +9, Cha +12
Skills Deception +12, Insight +9, Perception +9, Persuasion +12, Stealth +13
Damage Resistances psychic
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned, stunned
Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Elvish, Primordial, Sylvan, Undercommon
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

TRAITS

Mental Mirror. When the dreamer takes damage from a creature other than psychic damage, it can choose to deal psychic damage to the creature equal to the damage it took.

Refreshing Dreams. As a bonus action on each of its turns, the dreamer can expend a spell slot to magically regain hit points. The number of hit points regained is 5 (1d10), plus an additional 5 (1d10) for each spell slot level higher than 1st.

Spellcasting. The dreamer is a 16th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). The dreamer has the following spells prepared and can cast them without the need for material components:

Cantrips (at will): *control flames, firebolt, mage hand, message, vicious mockery*
1st level (4 slots): *bane, disguise self, hex, sleep, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *alter self, blur, invisibility, silence, zone of truth*
3rd level (3 slots): *blink, counterspell, lightning bolt, slow*
4th level (3 slots): *compulsion, greater invisibility, phantasmal killer, storm sphere*
5th level (2 slots): *awaken, dream, modify memory, seeming*
6th level (1 slot): *harm, mass suggestion*
7th level (1 slot): *forcecage, sequester*
8th level (1 slot): *demiplane, maze*

World of Dreams. The area within 30 feet of the dreamer is subject to its will, allowing it to alter the properties of minds and magic within the area. When a creature in the affected area would take damage other than bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, the dreamer can change the type of damage dealt to one of its choice.

Additionally, when a creature other than the dreamer in the affected area is reduced to 0 hit points, the dreamer can choose to instead reduce it to 1 hit point, knock it unconscious for 8 hours, and magically transport the creature to the dreamer's lair.

ACTIONS

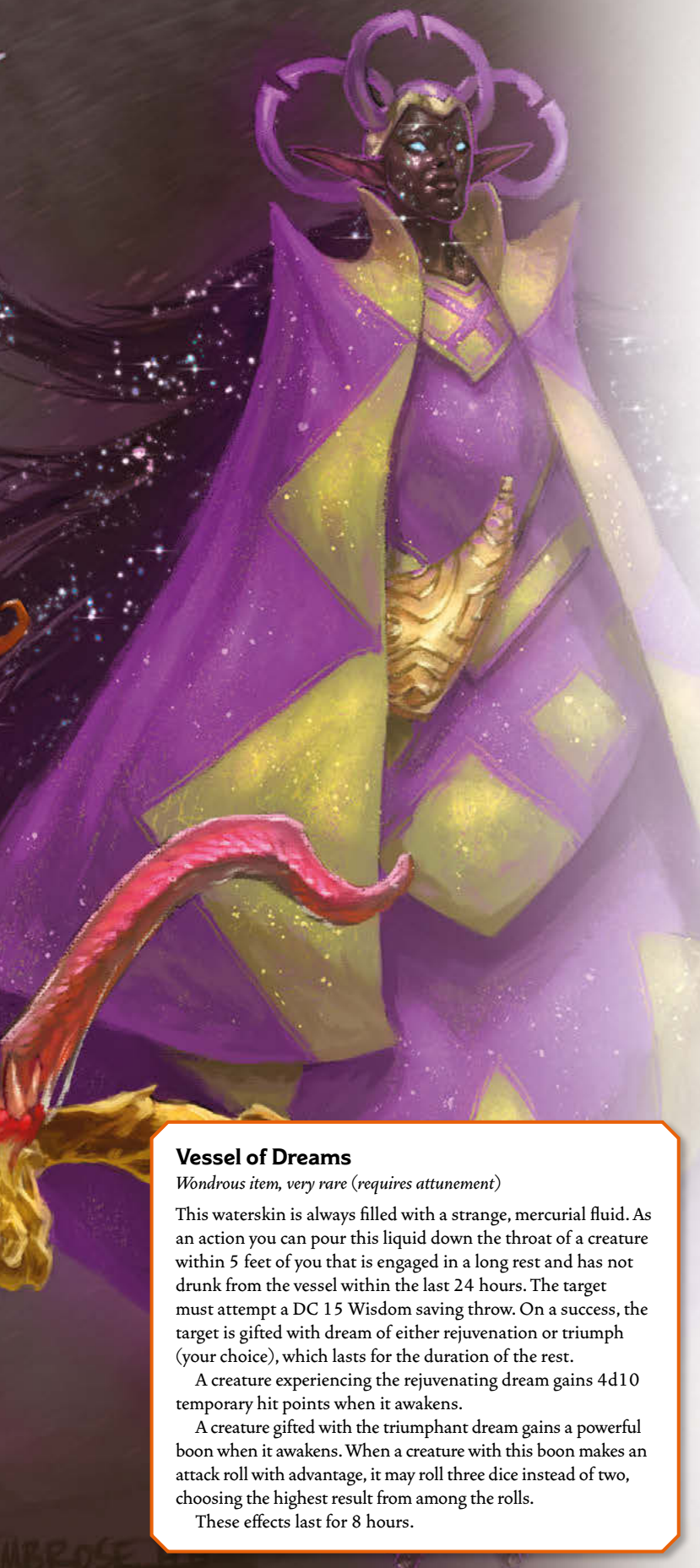
Shooting Stars. *Melee* or *Ranged Spell Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 80 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) force damage plus 11 (2d10) radiant damage.

Body of Stars (Recharge 5–6). The dreamer's body emits a flurry of stars in a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on it. Creatures of the dreamer's choice in the affected area must attempt a DC 20 Constitution saving throw, taking 33 (6d10) radiant damage and becoming blinded until the end of the creature's next turn on a failure, or taking half as much damage and preventing the blinded condition on a success.

REACTIONS

Dream Stealer. As a reaction when the dreamer fails a saving throw against a spell or magical effect, it can choose to suffer no effect and force a creature it can see within 60 feet of it to suffer the effect of the failure instead.





moments at the table. The characters should succeed in combat against the dreamer if they foil its tricks, causing the creature to either concede or retreat. The dreamer can always come back later and try its tricks again, recovering in its lair until the time is right.

Harder Tactics — The dreamer should have a specific character in mind to be the target of its games. All others are obstacles to be removed. Use spells like *mass suggestion* and *maze* to remove allies from the fight, reflecting damage with Mental Mirror and recycling spell slots into hit points with Refreshing Dreams. Make sure to change all damage dealt to the dreamer to psychic damage with World of Dreams, making good use of the creature's resistance to that type of damage. Once the target character is reduced to 0 hit points, transport it to the dreamer's demiplane, with the creature following as soon as possible with the *demiplane* spell.

PLOT HOOKS

Night Fair. There's a hidden fair that you can only get into by falling asleep near a specific area in the forbidden woods. The ring master is extremely friendly and offers a currency called "dream coins." If you win, legend says you'll experience a magical sleep like nothing before. But if you lose...

In Your Dreams. A cabal of witch hunters are tracking a particularly invasive dreamer. The hunters seek passage into the dreamer's lair and have devised a spell to allow them entry. They require only a single ingredient, a hair from the dreamer's head.

The Man of Stars. Rumor has it that if you fall asleep in a specific forest, pixies will visit your dreams as a man made of stars. Some claim a strange man has been asking for people to find a dream for him. Most have avoided the man because they find him odd, but others claim a unique reward is offered in exchange for help.

TREASURE

All dreamers hold a *vessel of dreams*, which appears as a magical waterskin and is thought to be an object created by the dreamer itself, willed into existence. These rare items may be given as a gift or taken by force, though dreamers can recognize if such an item was taken by force and often react to this realization with extreme hostility.

Vessel of Dreams

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This waterskin is always filled with a strange, mercurial fluid. As an action you can pour this liquid down the throat of a creature within 5 feet of you that is engaged in a long rest and has not drunk from the vessel within the last 24 hours. The target must attempt a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the target is gifted with dream of either rejuvenation or triumph (your choice), which lasts for the duration of the rest.

A creature experiencing the rejuvenating dream gains 4d10 temporary hit points when it awakens.

A creature gifted with the triumphant dream gains a powerful boon when it awakens. When a creature with this boon makes an attack roll with advantage, it may roll three dice instead of two, choosing the highest result from among the rolls.

These effects last for 8 hours.

ECOLOGY

Dreamers enjoy sparsely populated places where people live in comfort and prosperity. They avoid enormous cities, as word of their actions may get around and they prefer to keep a low profile. While their presence is rarely lethal, in smaller communities the activities of a dreamer can prove detrimental. If driven out, dreamers find refuge among woodland fey, with whom they share a powerful kinship. In the rare event dreamers allow themselves to be observed, they are often found basking in the moonlight, drinking deeply from their *vessel of dreams* and savoring the many flavors to be found within the endless wonder of dreams. When encountering heroes, a dreamer may request something in exchange from those it provides with pleasant or fulfilling dreams, such as claiming a future dream, causing long-lasting slumbers, and other sleep-related payments.

A DREAMER'S LAIR

Dreamers create worlds born of the magic of dreams in conjunction with a *demiplane* spell. These domains are bizarre realms of ever-shifting color and shape. While each lair is unique, a "typical" dreamer lair consists of a field of black grass and a starry sky with three moons, all different colors, traversing a fluid sky. Whenever a dreamer begins a long rest, it can choose to magically transport itself to its lair where it remains for the duration of the rest before returning to the material world.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the dreamer takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects. The dreamer can't cause the same effect two rounds in a row:

- Creatures of the dreamer's choice in the lair must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or have their concentration (if any) broken.
- All creatures in a 15-foot radius centered on a point of the dreamer's choice within the lair must attempt a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) radiant damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.
- One of the lair's moons projects a 15-foot-radius cylinder that is 1 mile high, centered in a point of the dreamer's choice within the lair, which lasts until the next initiative count of 20. The area is filled with bright light, and when a creature enters the affected area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it magically regains 16 (3d10) hit points.

The Mimiking

It was strange indeed, meeting that jester along the road. While as friendly as any clown, its mask was clearly more than just an accessory, moving as if flesh. I asked them who they were, and they said, "the mimicking." I asked who they were mimicking, and they said, "Everything." At this point I realized asking questions was pointless and made casual conversation, to which the creature was receptive. The jester told me they "brought life to the lifeless," a cryptic answer. The world was so full of life, and they wanted to add more to it. I was told they are simply creating subjects for a kingdom, and their kingdom would span across the land. As a parting gift I received three golden coins which bounced in my hand, dancing to a tune I could not hear. Overall one of the strangest encounters of my life.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Soldier

Favors: Bards, Damage (Area of Effect), Sorcerers, Specific Spells (*dispel magic*), Wizards

Foils: Attacks, Barbarians, Fighters, Paladins, Perception (High)

MIMIKING

With the mask of a jester and a hearty laugh, a mimiking is always preparing for its next show. Its clothing resembles a court jester's, with bells and feathers to accompany its playful demeanor. Its face is forever obscured by a porcelain mask, which changes its expression to match a wide variety of emotions. Mimikings delight in bringing life to the lifeless, reveling in the mayhem caused by an army of animated objects. When challenged, mimkings act with haughty authority. They see all other creatures as their playthings, unworthy or incapable of appreciating their peculiar brand of comedy.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a mimiking with an Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

MIMIKING LORE

DC	INFORMATION
15	Mimikings rule over kingdoms of animated subjects, brought to life by the creature's bizarre magic. These beings are formidable when in battle with a mimiking, who commands them with startling leadership and charisma.
20	Mimikings can take nearly any shape through the aid of powerful magic. They require a host of suitable objects to create their armies, but they prefer a collection of wacky and strange accessories to complement their tricky demeanors.
26	The royalty of a mimiking is magical in nature, preventing weak-minded creatures from even attacking it. Even when killed, a mimiking will return to life if even one of its "subjects" survives somewhere in the world.

TACTICS

With a mimiking, anything can be one of their subjects. You can set it up so it already has plenty before it encounters the party or make it so that it's still working on building up its royal court. This creature focuses heavily on self-preservation and will gladly sacrifice any of its subjects if it feels its life is in danger. Remember, to create a mimic, the mimiking must first cast *animate objects*, then follow with the Create Mimic action. This performs poorly in combat, so be sure to get all the mimiking's minions figured out before combat starts. Note the False Appearance trait the mimiking grants it subjects. This can create quite the troubling scenario, as the characters attack the mimiking only for an entire room of powerful objects to spring to life in its defense.

Easier Tactics — Don't use the mimiking's most powerful spells, such as *shapechange* and *feeblemind*. The effects of these spells are extremely challenging to navigate. Instead, focus on the mimiking's objects, creating a wide assortment for the characters to wade through. The creature doesn't have to get involved directly until most of its minions are wiped out, wading into battle when it has no other recourse. While it is a tricky and strange character, a mimiking is still royalty. It does not

surrender to those of ignoble birth, nor does it beg for its life, instead arguing it should be spared because of its unusual and regal nature.

Harder Tactics — The mimiking should have some massive objects waiting to fight, striking the party with surprise thanks to the False Appearance trait. Once battle is joined, the mimiking should dash about the battlefield to strike with its Trickster's Dagger. At least one minion should be kept in a hidden place, allowing the mimiking to use its Object Permanence feature to eventually return for round two. Only total victory should satisfy the mimiking, forcing the characters to kneel to its authority and power.

PLOT HOOKS

Forest Dance. Recently in a forbidden forest there have been strange lights and music coming from among the trees. Someone wandered too far inside and spoke of dancing objects around a fire and a masked figure playing an instrument. They were singing and dancing, and the objects were dancing in sync.

Up and Walked Away. Items have been disappearing from people's homes. They've all traveled on the same road into town but they find in the morning that gold, silverware, equipment, and other items have

MIMIKING

Medium fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 217 (29d8 + 87)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	23 (+6)	17 (+3)	21 (+5)	19 (+4)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Dex +12, Int +11, Cha +13
Skills Arcana +11, Insight +16, Performance +19, Sleight of Hand +13, Stealth +12
Damage Resistances force; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Gnomish, Primordial, Undercommon
Challenge 17 (22,000 XP)

TRAITS

Eyes of the King. The mimiking can telepathically communicate with any creature created by it, so long as it shares a plane of existence with the creature. The mimiking can concentrate (as if concentrating on a spell) to perceive what the creature perceives with its senses.

Innate Spellcasting. The mimiking's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 21, +13 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components nor concentration to maintain a spell's effects for its duration:

At will: *animate objects*, *disguise self*, *friends*, *grease*, *magic mouth*, *zone of truth*
3/day each: *counterspell*, *dimension door*, *phantasmal killer*
1/day each: *feeblemind*, *shapechange*

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). When the mimiking fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Object Permanence. If the mimiking is slain, it rejuvenates in 1d10 days so long as one creature created by it lives. When the mimiking returns to life in this manner, a creature it has created dies instantly, and the mimiking emerges from the object at with full hit points.

Untouchable. When a creature makes an attack against a mimiking for the first time on a turn, it must first succeed on a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw or have the attack automatically miss and be unable to attack the mimiking again until the start of the creature's next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mimiking makes three Trickster's Dagger attacks.

Trickster's Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target: *Hit:* 8 (1d4 + 6) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, the mimiking can choose to force it to attempt a DC 21 Charisma saving throw or become invisible until the end of its next turn.

Create Mimic (5/Day). The mimiking touches a creature it has created via the *animate objects* spell. The duration of the spell becomes permanent, and the mimiking need not concentrate on the spell to maintain its effects for the duration.

Additionally, an affected creature gains the following trait.

False Appearance. When the creature remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary object.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The mimiking can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The mimiking regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Trickster's Dagger. The mimiking makes a Trickster's Dagger attack.

Be a Chest (Costs 2 Actions). The mimiking magically conjures 2d4 chests (AC 15, 40 hit points) in separate unoccupied spaces within 30 feet of it and magically teleports itself into a chest of its choice and takes the Hide action. As an action a creature can open a chest, which causes the chest to vanish. If a chest opened in this manner does not contain the mimiking, the creature which opened the chest must succeed on a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw or take 28 (8d6) fire damage, or half as much on a success.

Be My Guest (Costs 2 Actions). The mimiking instantly casts *animate objects*.

Put to the Test (Cost 3 Actions). The mimiking forces a creature it can see within 60 feet of it to attempt a DC 21 Charisma saving throw, becoming cursed for 1 minute on a failure. While so cursed, the target is vulnerable to damage dealt by the mimiking and its allies. A creature can attempt a DC 21 Charisma (Performance) check while the mimiking has can see it, ending the curse on a success.

vanished. There are no signs of forced entry, and the local thieves guild denies involvement. Even more curiously, it appears as though someone opened the homes from the inside, and dozens of tiny footprints are observed leaving the scene of each crime.

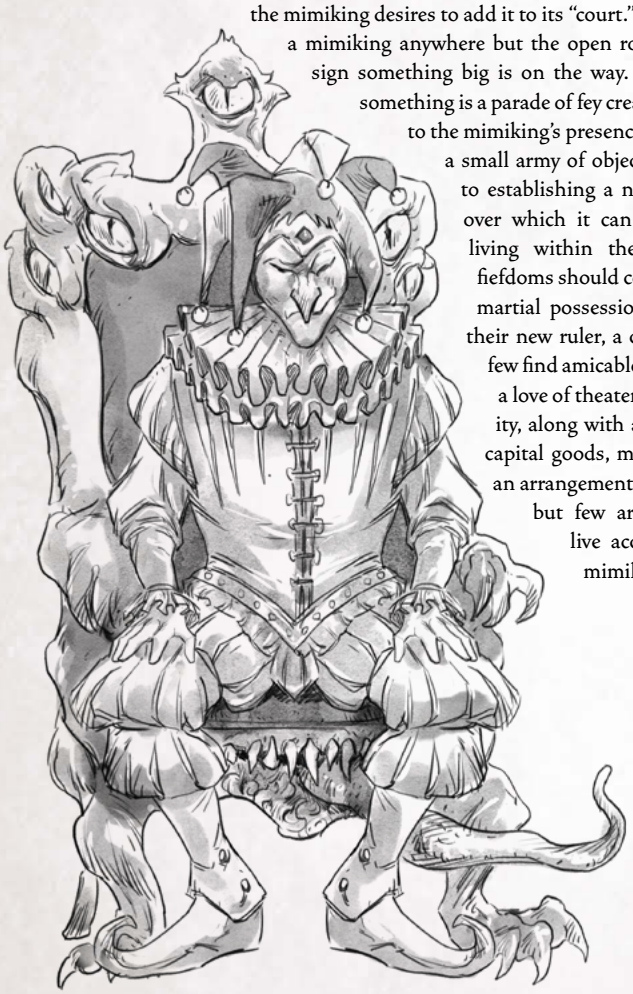
Beauty in the Least. A jester has been seen traveling the road performing for travelers. These shows transform the audience's possessions into performers, some of which never make it back to their proper owners. As the number of lost goods increases, heroes are sought to recover the items from the mimiking responsible.

TREASURE

The mask of a mimiking is a beautiful piece of porcelain artistry, tempting any who slay the creature into removing it. This is an act of folly that caries great consequence. Those that attempt to remove the mask must succeed on a DC 21 Charisma saving throw or be cursed for 1 year. While so cursed, a creature must obey the authority of the first figure of royalty it encounters after becoming cursed, following the ruler's demands to the best of its ability.

ECOLOGY

The most interesting thing to a mimiking are the objects and belongings of other creatures. The more curious and strange the object, the more the mimiking desires to add it to its "court." Discovering a mimiking anywhere but the open road is a sure sign something big is on the way. Usually this something is a parade of fey creatures drawn to the mimiking's presence, along with a small army of objects dedicated to establishing a new kingdom over which it can rule. Those living within these acquired fiefdoms should consider their martial possessions forfeit to their new ruler, a circumstance few find amicable. Those with a love of theater and creativity, along with a disdain for capital goods, may find such an arrangement appropriate, but few are willing to live according to a mimiking's terms.



LOOMING HARVEST

A gentle, elderly figure wearing clerical robes with a soft smile and a softer voice is the peculiar visage chosen by the trickster known as a looming harvest. Their disposition is warm, although if touched their bodies are as cold as ice. This physical form is a facade—their true form is revealed through their enormous shadow, which is cast no matter the lighting. These sinister fey subsist on the essence of other creatures.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a looming harvest with an Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

LOOMING HARVEST LORE

DC	INFORMATION
16	A looming harvest is two creatures sharing a single body. Its humanoid shape always appears as an elderly, unassuming figure, while its trickster form is a terrifying shadow. Both forms are dangerous, though the trickster shape is undoubtably the worst of the two.
21	Only when a looming harvest's humanoid form is slain does its trickster form manifest itself. Thankfully a harvester cannot kill, but instead it harvests a mysterious force within all beings known as "essence."
27	Having one's essence reaped by a looming harvest is incredibly debilitating, rendering even the mightiest hero impotent. Those defeated by a harvester can lose their memories of the encounter or, far worse, have their entire identities erased.

The Looming Harvest

I met the kindest elderly man on a lonesome road, and he offered me a blessing. His warm words made me feel stronger and healthier than I had in a long time. Other than that, I remember nothing of that night. When I opened my eyes the next day I was still on the street and could barely move my head. I looked around and saw familiar faces, each of which suffered the same fate as I. I am not accustomed to forgetfulness, and I confess I still find the entire experience quite unsettling. I have retraced my steps from that day and encountered several activities I have no recollection of performing. Why the creature chose only to erase those memories is unknown, but next time I see it I'll be sure to ask.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Artillery

Favors: Bards, Charisma (High), Healing, Paladins, Warlocks

Foils: Attacks, Barbarians, Druids, Fighters, Hit Points (Low)

TACTICS

Conflict with a looming harvester is a two-stage fight, each of which is based upon its forms. The humanoid form of the harvester is but a prelude to its horrifying true form, though even the former can be quite challenging. It possesses a formidable arsenal of spells along with the ability to instantly defeat any creature it manages to reduce to 0 hit points. Thanks to the Fate of the Harvested feature, a harvester can never kill, but losing one's memory can be just as catastrophic to a character's adventuring career. If the humanoid form is defeated, the trickster form enters the fray.

This shape is far more powerful, capable of taking tons of punishment and dealing impressive damage. Use Shift the Mind to eat up characters' reactions, and utilize Manifest Chaos to circumvent any protections the party has raised against the harvester.

Easier Tactics — Hold back when it comes to spellcasting. Both forms have a formidable array of magic that can easily overwhelm an inexperienced party. Even if the harvester manages to gain the upper hand, remember that defeat isn't a total disaster thanks to Fate of the Harvested. Should the party fall, erase their memories of the encounter, plus one other thing they are likely to care about. That way there are still consequences for failure, but nothing severe enough to end the campaign.



Harder Tactics — The harvester's primary goal is to bring a character down as quickly as possible, as there is no coming back from that for 24 hours. Absorb Essence is a hugely powerful trait once the creature has assumed its trickster form. Draw out the fight to make use of its power. Should enough characters become subjected to its effects, they become powerfulness before the trickster, eventually becoming incapable of succeeding on any saving throws or even hitting with an attack.

PLOT HOOKS

The Clerical Gift. A friendly cleric has arrived in town at the same moment as the party, offering potent magic in return for a favor. The cleric asks the characters to bring it seven tales of legend and regale the trickster in disguise with these stories.

Forgotten Harvest. A group of people were found in a town, all in ethereal states. They seemed to be living and breathing, but not moving. A day later they all woke, but they had no memory of anything from the last week. The harvester responsible is close by, threatening to return at a moment's notice.

The Living Shadow. Last night a friend came to the party and ask what they'd missed in the last week. Apparently, the heroes had committed several heroic deeds in a nearby haunted castle, though strangely they have no memory of the event.

TREASURE

The necklace worn by a looming harvest's humanoid form is a potent magic item that can sometimes be recovered from its remains. These objects are known as *talismans of deceit*.

Talisman of Deceit

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

While wearing this ruby-inlaid talisman you gain proficiency in Deception and double your proficiency bonus when making Charisma (Deception) checks.

Additionally, as a bonus action on each of your turns, you can change your shape and appearance to that of any humanoid creature of your size that you have seen. While in this shape, you cannot be forced to reveal your true nature against your will.

ECOLOGY

The looming harvest prefers busy cities where it can gather the most essence to extend its own life. They never truly harm their prey, but few can appreciate losing vast swathes of memory. Why a looming harvest conducts itself in this manner is unknown. The creatures seem to gain no benefit from destroying the memories of others beyond its own pleasure. What memories a harvester chooses to remove vary from specimen to specimen, but in rare instances the creatures have testified that the "death" of these memories is an exquisite experience that varies depending on the nature of the memories. This fact keeps harvesters on the road, always searching for new opportunities to experience the destruction of unique memories that can be found nowhere else.

LOOMING HARVEST (HUMANOID FORM)

Medium fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 180 (19d8 + 95)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	23 (+6)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Con +11, Wis +12, Cha +14
Skills Deception +20, Perception +12, Persuasion +12
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 22
Languages Abyssal, Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Infernal
Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)

TRAITS

Fate of the Harvested. When a creature is reduced to 0 hit points by the harvester, it is instead reduced to 1 hit point, it is knocked unconscious for 24 hours, and the harvester regains 35 (10d6) hit points. When the target awakens, any memories of the harvester's choice are magically erased, which cannot be restored without the aid of a *wish* spell or divine intervention.

Innate Spellcasting. The looming harvest's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 22, +14 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components nor concentration to maintain a spell's effects for its duration:

At will: *aid*, *mind spike*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *witchbolt*
3/day each: *alter self*, *cloudkill*, *dominate person*
1/day each: *geas*, *heroes' feast*, *mental prison*

Ruby of Deceit. While in its humanoid form, the looming harvest is always equipped with a ruby necklace. While it wears this necklace, as a bonus action the harvest can assume the shape and appearance of any humanoid it has seen. While in this shape, the harvest has advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks.

Time of Harvest. When the looming harvest is reduced to 0 hit points or slain, it instead changes into its trickster form and is restored to that form's full hit points. The harvest remains in that form until it finishes a long rest, at which point it returns to its humanoid form.

Weaker Alone. When the looming harvest deals damage to a creature and the creature does not have a friendly creature within 5 feet of it, the creature takes an extra 10 (3d6) necrotic damage.

ACTIONS

Minor Drain. *Melee* or *Ranged Spell Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 80 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) force damage plus 11 (2d10) psychic damage.

Looming Harvest (Trickster form)

Huge fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 218 (19d12 + 95)
Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	23 (+6)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Con +11, Wis +12, Cha +14
Skills Deception +20, Perception +12, Persuasion +12
Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, thunder
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 22
Languages Abyssal, Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Infernal
Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)

Traits

Absorb Essence. The harvester exudes an aura which harvests the essence of creatures in a 60-foot-radius sphere. At the start of each of its turns, creatures of the harvester's choice in the affected area must succeed on a DC 22 Charisma saving throw or have their essence reaped. While so reaped, a creature that attempts an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check rolls a d4, called an essence die, and subtracts the result from the attempt.

Additionally, each time a harvested creature fails this saving throw again, the size of the essence die which affects it increases by one dice size category (d6, d8, d10, d12) to a maximum of a d12.

This effect lasts for 1 hour, until the harvester chooses to remove it (no action required), or until the harvester is slain.

Fate of the Harvested. When a creature is reduced to 0 hit points by the harvester, it is instead reduced to 1 hit point, it is knocked unconscious for 24 hours, and the harvester regains 35 (10d6) hit points. When the target awakens, any memories of the harvester's choice are magically erased, which cannot be restored without the aid of a *wish* spell or divine intervention.

Incorporeal Movement. The harvester can move through other creatures and objects as though they were difficult terrain. The harvester takes 22 (4d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Innate Spellcasting. The looming harvest's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 22, +14 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components nor concentration to maintain a spell's effects for its duration:

At will (cast at 5th level): *mind spike*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *witchbolt*
3/day each: *mass suggestion*, *mind blank*, *power word pain*
1/day each: *maddening darkness*, *psychic scream*

Actions

Essence of Darkness (Recharge 5–6). The harvester forces each creature of its choice that is suffering the effects of its Absorb Essence feature within 120 feet of it to exude magical darkness for 1 minute in a 10-foot-radius sphere.

Manifest Chaos. The harvester manifests chaotic energy in a 15-foot cube centered on a point it can see within 120 feet of it. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw or take 35 (10d6) damage. This damage can be acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder (harvester's choice).

Shift the Mind. The harvest forces a creature it can see within 120 feet of it to attempt a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature uses its reaction to make a single weapon attack against a target of the harvester's choice within reach or range. If the target is unable to make a weapon attack, this effect automatically fails.

Legendary Actions

The looming harvest can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The looming harvest regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

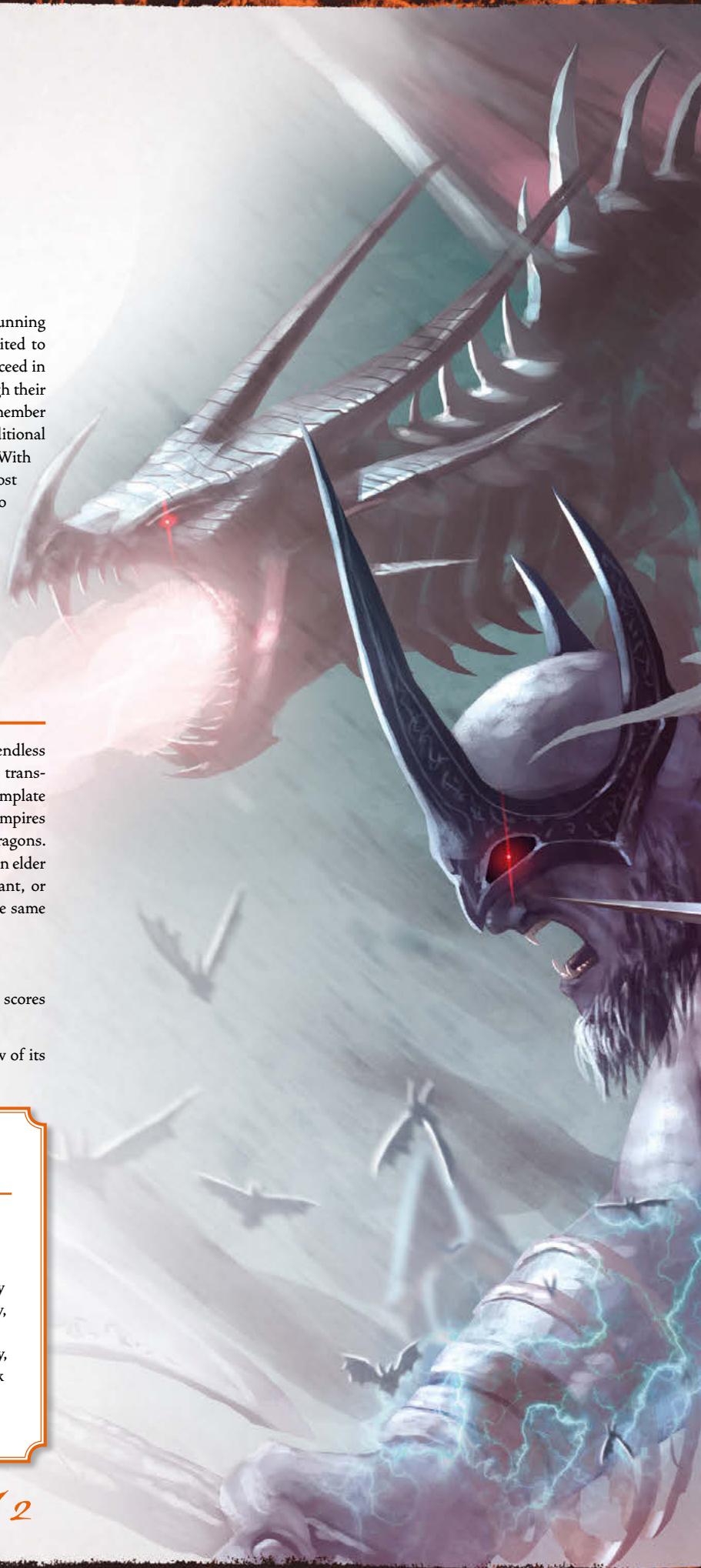
Manifest Chaos. The looming harvest uses its Manifest Chaos action.

Shift the Mind. The harvester uses its Shift the Mind action.

Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). The harvester casts a spell.

Vampire Nobility

Vampires are among some of the most dangerous and cunning undead in the known realms. Their ambition is rarely limited to simply acquiring food and living in isolation. When vampires succeed in dark deeds of staggering evil, the necrotic power that flows through their sallow veins induces an unholy transformation. The result is a member of the esteemed and feared vampire nobility. Bereft of the traditional vampire weaknesses, the nobles are implacable foes to the living. With strength far eclipsing their traditional kin coupled with a new host of unholy powers, these creatures are enough to strike terror into even veteran vampire hunters. Among other vampires, the nobles are highly respected for both their ability and the infamous atrocities committed to achieve their current state. While each vampire noble is unique, a few patterns have emerged in their abilities and tactics—enough to be classified into specific types of vampire nobility.



VAMPIRE TEMPLATE

The curse of vampirism is a plague on mortals, creating an endless scourge of enduring, sinister, undead foes. Creatures that are transformed into vampires, but not vampire spawn, can use the template detailed here to adjust their statistics. Note that while most vampires are humanoids, this template can also be applied to giants and dragons. Such vampires are rare, possible only created through the acts of an elder vampire or another giant/dragon vampire. When a dragon, giant, or humanoid becomes a vampire, its traits and statistics remain the same except for the following.

Type. The creature's type changes to undead (shapechanger).

Ability Scores. The creature's Strength, Dexterity, and Charisma scores increase by 3, to a maximum of 30.

Saving Throws. The creature gains proficiency in a saving throw of its choice.

TALIEN'S NOTES

I've met more than a few vampires in my day. A few of them I even liked. This was not the case when encountering the so-called vampire nobility. Each is an egomaniacal undead monstrosity without which the world would be better. Every vampire noble achieved its station through acts of depravity, evil, and violence on a scale that turns the stomach. Their existence is an affront to decency and life itself. Unfortunately, none of the traditional anti-vampire techniques seem to work on these dark creatures. It is exceedingly unwise to engage them in battle until an effective strategy can be divined.



Skills. The creature gains proficiency in two of the following skills of its choice: Deception, Intimidation, Persuasion, Stealth. If it selects a skill in which it is already proficient, its proficiency bonus is instead doubled for any ability check it makes using that skill.

Damage Resistances. The creature is resistant to necrotic damage as well as bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

Challenge Rating. The creature's challenge rating increases by 4, and its proficiency bonus adjusts accordingly.

Traits

The creature gains the following traits.

- **Misty Escape.** When the vampire is reduced to 0 hit points outside its resting place, it can transform into a cloud of mist (via its Shapechanger trait) instead of falling unconscious so long as it isn't in sunlight or running water. If it can't transform, it is destroyed.

  While it has 0 hit points in mist form, it can't revert to its vampire form, and it must reach its resting place within 2 hours or be destroyed. Once in its resting place, it reverts to its vampire form. It is then paralyzed until it regains at least 1 hit point. After spending 1 hour in its resting place with 0 hit points, it regains 1 hit point.

- **Regeneration.** At the start of each of its turns, if the vampire has at least 1 hit point it regains a number of hit points equal to its Constitution score. This effect does not occur if the vampire is in sunlight or running water, or if it has taken radiant damage or damage from holy water since the start of its last turn.

- **Shapechanger.** If the vampire isn't in sunlight or running water, it can use its action to polymorph into a beast with a challenge rating of 3 or lower, a cloud of mist the same size as the vampire's true form, or back into its true form.

  While in the shape of a beast, the vampire gains temporary hit points equal to the form's hit point maximum, which cannot be replaced by temporary hit points from another source unless the vampire allows it. Additionally, its Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution change to match the beast form, but its other statistics are unchanged, and everything it is wearing becomes a part of its new form. This effect ends if the temporary hit points granted by the form are reduced to 0.

  While in mist form, the vampire can't take any actions, speak, or manipulate objects. It is weightless and has a flying speed of 20 feet (hover) and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the mist can do so without squeezing, and it can't pass through water. Finally, while in this form the vampire has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws and is immune to all damage (except for the damage it takes from sunlight).

- **Vampire Weaknesses.** The vampire is subject to weaknesses consistent with "ordinary" vampires.[1]

Actions

The creature gains the following actions:

- **Bite.** If the creature does not have a Bite attack, it can make a Bite attack as a Strength- or Dexterity-based weapon attack in which it is proficient. If the creature has a Multiattack feature, once per turn it can forgo making an attack with that feature and instead make an attack with its Bite. This attack can only be made against a target the vampire is grappling or against a willing, incapacitated, or restrained creature. This attack deals 4 (1d8) + the vampire's Strength or Dexterity modifier (whichever is higher) piercing damage plus 21 (6d6) necrotic damage.

  If the creature already has a Bite attack, the attack instead deals an additional 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a successful hit.

  In either case, the target's hit point maximum is reduced by any necrotic damage it takes from this attack, which lasts until it finishes a long rest, and the vampire regains a number of hit points equal to the necrotic damage dealt. The target dies if this effect reduces it to 0 hit points. A creature of the same type as the vampire was in life slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under the vampire's control (if humanoid), or another vampire under the vampire's control (if dragon or giant).

- **Charm.** The vampire targets one creature of the type it was in life that it can see within 60 feet of it. If the target can see the vampire, it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against a DC of 8 + the vampire's proficiency bonus + its Charisma modifier, becoming charmed for 24 hours on a failure. A creature so charmed treats the vampire as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under the vampire's control, it interprets the vampire's requests or actions in a manner most favorable to the vampire and will willingly allow itself to be the target of the vampire's bite attack.

  Each time the vampire or its allies do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. The effect also ends early if the vampire is destroyed, is on a different place of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

[1] This feature references a collection of weaknesses unique to vampires, detailed in the 5th Edition core rules.

LEGENDARY VAMPIRES

Some vampires can become legendary if they were not already. To become legendary, a vampire must be free from other vampires' control and must drink the blood of a creature with which it has fallen in love. Such legendary vampires gain the following benefits.

Challenge Rating. The vampire's challenge rating increases by 2, and its proficiency bonus adjusts accordingly.

Traits. The vampire gains the following trait.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). When the vampire fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The vampire can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The vampire regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

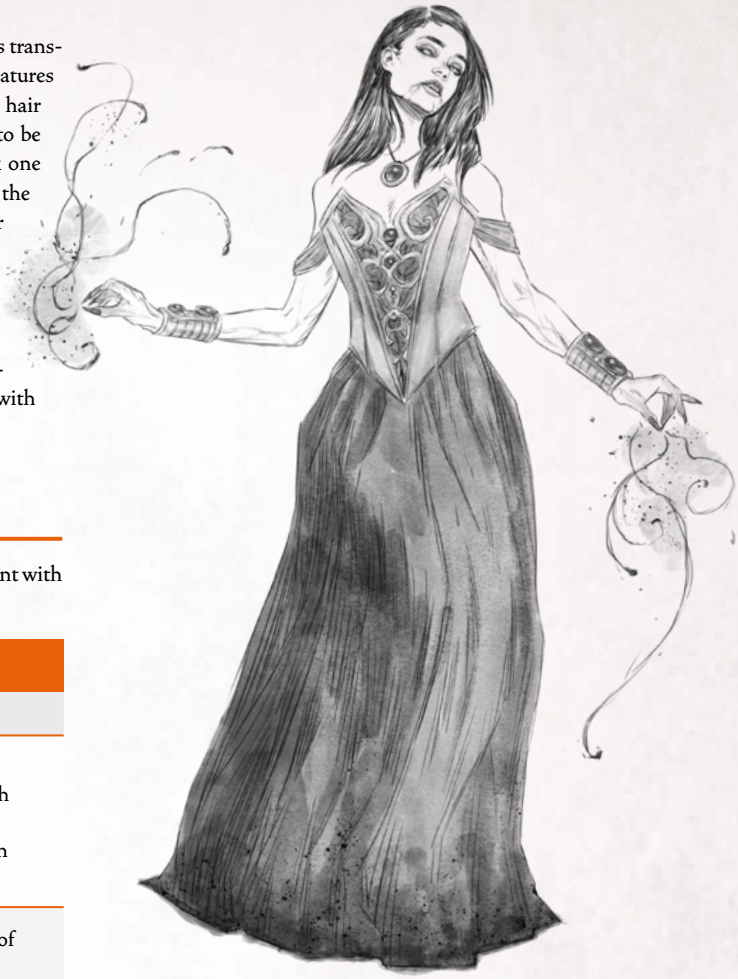
Move. The vampire moves up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Strike. The vampire makes an attack other than its Bite attack.

Bite (Costs 2 Actions). The vampire makes a Bite attack.

BLOODCOUNT(ESS)

When a vampire feasts upon the blood of a thousand mortals, it is transformed into a fearsome bloodcount. The appearance of these creatures is striking; their skin is pure white, while their eyes, nails, and hair are brilliant shades of crimson. Curiously, a bloodcount seems to be unable to speak above a whisper, though one should never ask one to repeat itself. Bloodcounts wield terrific blood magic, draining the life from their living thralls as fuel for unholy spells. True to their name, bloodcounts have an unhealthy obsession with the blood of the living (even for vampires). They harvest the vital fluids from their many victims, to be stored in a vast pool within a well-defended lair. To a bloodcount, there are few pleasures more serene than immersion within the blood of countless innocents, to be waited on hand and foot by those it has enslaved with its magic.



LORE

A character can learn the following information about a bloodcount with an Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

BLOODCOUNT(ESS) LORE

DC	INFORMATION
14	One of the so called "vampire nobility," bloodcounts are magically powerful vampires that share few weaknesses with their lesser kin. They practice a strange blood magic that allows them to siphon the blood of their allies to strengthen their spells.
19	When slain, a bloodcount begins reforming at a giant pool of blood within its lair. Destroying this pool is the only way to permanently destroy the creature, typically requiring direct exposure to sunlight and barrels of holy water.
25	Bloodcounts are made stronger by the presence of living allies, many of which serve as reservoirs of magical power for the vampire to unleash devastating magic. Do your best to separate the creature from its entourage to weaken its magic. It will still be formidable but far more manageable to a party of experienced adventurers.

TACTICS

As leaders, bloodcounts hate fighting alone. Their Hemomancy feature demands the presence of living allies to unleash ferociously powerful spells. A bloodcount should keep at least two living thralls on hand at all times to serve as batteries for its Spellcasting feature. Use up its lower-level spell slots before the characters get a chance to kill the thralls, empowering their effects to 6th level or higher. Note that such spells are difficult to counter with *counterspell* or dispel with *dispel magic*. The bloodcount can also use its Feast action on these allies in the event it wishes to recover a lot of hit points, though a *cure wounds* spell cast at a high level is usually a better option. Since the bloodcount can cast two spells, always cast the cantrip first. The characters shouldn't know what kind of spell is being cast unless they identify it first, forcing them to consider carefully when they attempt to *counterspell*.

The Bloodcount(ess)

I had the misfortune of interviewing a bloodcountess while researching a cabal of supposedly "misunderstood" vampires. Never have I felt so much like prey within the talons of a vicious predator as when sitting across from such a creature. It was as if my very blood longed to leap from my veins and down her throat. At her side were pitiful thralls ensnared by magic, from which she sipped blood as one would drink from a glass of wine. What was most disturbing were the expressions of joy on her servants' faces as they expired. The long-awaited end to their suffering had finally come. Also, she gave terrible answers to my questions.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Leader

Favors: Bards, Clerics, Hit Points (High), Paladins, Spells (Protection from)

Foils: Rogues, Sorcerers, Stealth, Warlocks, Wisdom (Low), Wizards

The bloodcount's *create undead* and *animate dead* spells can be used to tremendous effect at your discretion. With the ability to cast the spells at higher levels via Hemomancy, a bloodcount can raise a small army of undead cannon fodder in a few short minutes thanks to its ability to overlook material components. Any character that manages to fight through the horde of undead to face the bloodcount in melee should be subjected to its fearsome claws. The bloody wound effect from these attacks can be devastating to a creature out of range of healing magic, making it easy prey for the vampire's Feast action.

Easier Tactics — The fewer minions the bloodcount has, the weaker it is. This goes double for any living creatures in its thrall. Only have a single cast of *animate dead* or *create undead* before combat, and keep the thrall's hit points low. Note that these thralls are under the effects of *charm person* or *dominate person* spells, which can be dispelled by crafty characters or end when the creatures are harmed by the bloodcount via Hemomancy. Freed thralls gladly turn on their former master, as a bloodcount will have done little to deserve anything but hatred from its former minions.

Harder Tactics — Not only will the bloodcount have several robust living thralls with lots of hit points to siphon, but they willingly serve the bloodcount. Whether it's due to brainwashing or abuse, these creatures are not magically chained to the vampire and gladly give their lives in its defense. Additionally, use the bloodcount's *charm person* and *dominate person* spells to make characters friendly toward the vampire, then siphon their hit points with Hemomancy. Remember to cast *dispel magic* at higher levels to completely wipe out spell effects benefitting the party, and always Feast on a character at 0 hit points when given the chance.

PLOT HOOKS

The Crimson Court. Seven bloodcounts have gathered to form an empire of both the living and the dead. Known as the Crimson Court, the vampires have subjugated the mortal races to serve as food and slaves for their dark kingdom. A crusade, which has need of many adventurers to lead the charge, is being formed to lay siege to the Crimson Court.

The Red Well. A village is believed cursed by its locals who superstitiously gift their old and dying to a bloodcount by casting them into a well at the center of town. The bloodcount has made its home here, emerging to slaughter the villagers when they fail to provide victims of their own volition.

Daughter of the Wolf. A young girl taken by vampires from the town of Wolfwater has ascended to a bloodcountess and seeks bloody vengeance against other vampires for her fate. Calling herself the Daughter of the Wolf, the bloodcountess has already slain seven vampires, with the survivors offering handsome rewards for her destruction.

TREASURE

Bloodcounts keep expansive lairs and typically acquire vast amounts of treasure over their lifetime. They keep their most prized possessions within their blood pools, which become saturated with dark energies. To the bloodcount these items are simply its favorite magical tools, but to other creatures they can be weapons of formidable arcane power in addition to their usual properties. Known as hemomancy items, any wondrous item in the bloodcount's possession can gain this property through prolonged exposure to its blood pool.

New Enchantment – Hemomancy

In addition to the item's usual benefits, a creature attuned to this item can siphon the blood of its allies to empower its spells. When you cast a spell that expends a spell slot from a class spellcasting feature while holding or wearing this item, you can choose to use the blood of a friendly flesh-and-blood creature within 60 feet of you to empower the spell. A spell so empowered has its spell level increased (as though it were cast using a higher-level spell slot) to a maximum of 8th level. The friendly creature loses 5 (1d10) hit points for each level by which the spell was increased. If the item does not ordinarily require attunement, it instead requires attunement to gain the benefits of this feature.

ECOLOGY

While bloodcounts do not suffer nearly as much as other vampires from sunlight and running water, they still prefer the shadows and dry land. Since most bloodcounts are quite old, their lairs are often expansive castles, manors, or dungeons. These vampires appreciate good living, and at least half of any living space is dedicated to the count's personal pleasures. These areas are typically opulent and refined—a reflection of the bloodcount's noble countenance among its peers. The rest is dedicated to its many thralls, servants, and guests—still classy accommodations, but notably less refined when compared to the bloodcount's. When traveling, a bloodcount typically enlists a small army of minions, carriages, and supplies so that no comfort is lacking while on the road. These vampires have no fear of operating openly, wielding considerable political influence that keeps them safe from most serious threats to their wellbeing.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the bloodcount takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects. The bloodcount can't cause the same effect two rounds in a row:

- The entire lair is rocked by a pulse of life-detecting magic. The bloodcount learns the exact location of each flesh-and-blood creature within its lair.
- The bloodcount afflicts a creature it knows is in its lair with maddening whispers. A creature so afflicted automatically fails Wisdom saving throws until the next initiative count of 20.
- Until the next initiative count of 20, creatures of its choice that the bloodcount can see have their senses reduced to 10 feet and are blind beyond that radius.

Bloodcount (ESS)

Medium undead, any evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 160 (20d8 + 70)
Speed 30., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	24 (+7)	17 (+3)	21 (+5)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Con +12, Wis +10, Cha +11
Skills Arcana +13, Deception +11, History +13, Insight +10, Perception +15, Persuasion +11
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned, stunned
Senses bloodsense 120 ft. (see traits), darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 25
Languages the languages it knew in life
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

TRAITS

Blood Pool. When the bloodcount is slain, its body and everything it is carrying collapses into blood and evaporates. If slain while exposed to sunlight or in running water, the bloodcount is destroyed. Otherwise, the bloodcount reforms in its blood pool over the course of 1 week, along with all of its equipment. If the blood pool is destroyed, exposed to sunlight for 1 hour, or diluted with 10 gallons of holy water while the bloodcount is reforming, the bloodcount is destroyed.

Bloodsense. The bloodcount automatically perceives flesh-and-blood creatures within 120 feet of it with its sense of smell.

Crimson Cloak. When the bloodcount rolls initiative, it can choose to raise a bubble of translucent blood around itself, which grants the bloodcount 80 temporary hit points. If the bloodcount would regain hit points that would exceed its hit point maximum, it instead adds any extra hit points to its bubble in the form of temporary hit points, to a maximum of 80 temporary hit points. If the bloodcount would regain hit points beyond its hit point maximum while the bubble is not in effect, the bubble reforms, granting the bloodcount a number of temporary hit points it would have regained beyond its hit point maximum.

Hemomancy. When the bloodcount begins casting a spell at 1st level or higher, it can choose to use the blood of a friendly flesh-and-blood creature within 60 feet of it to empower the spell. A spell so empowered has its spell level increased (as though it were cast using a higher-level spell slot) to a maximum of 8th level. The friendly creature loses 5 (1d10) hit points for each level by which the spell was increased.

Spellcasting[2]**.** The bloodcount is a 16th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). The bloodcount has the following spells prepared, which it can cast without the need for material components.

Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast*, *minor illusion*, *toll the dead*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person*, *cure wounds*, *hellish rebuke*, *shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, *hold person*, *misty step*
3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*
4th level (3 slots): *confusion*, *greater invisibility*
5th level (2 slots): *cone of cold*, *dominate person*
6th level (1 slot): *create undead*, *mass suggestion*
7th level (1 slot): *finger of death*
8th level (1 slot): *telepathy*

Vampire Royalty[3]**.** The bloodcount is not subject to the weaknesses suffered by ordinary vampires. When the bloodcount would suffer a weakness that would affect ordinary vampires, it instead has disadvantage on attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks for 1 hour or until it is not exposed to that weakness, whichever comes first.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The bloodcount chooses one of the following options.

- The bloodcount casts two spells, one of which must be a cantrip.
- The bloodcount casts a cantrip and makes one attack.
- The bloodcount makes two attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one flesh-and-blood creature that is charmed or incapacitated. *Hit:* The target is grappled (escape DC 21) and loses 39 (6d12) hit points, and the bloodcount regains hit points equal to the hit points lost by the target. The target dies if this damage reduces its hit points to 0 or if it is at 0 hit points when it is hit by this attack. The bloodcount can choose for a humanoid creature of challenge rating 5 or lower or a character of level 5 or lower so slain by this effect to rise as a vampire spawn in 24 hours. The bloodcount can choose for a humanoid creature of challenge rating 10 or lower or a character of level 10 or lower so slain by this effect to rise as a vampire in 24 hours (see the Vampire Template for details). In both cases, the newly created undead is under the bloodcount's control.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage. If the target is a flesh-and-blood creature, it suffers a bloody wound. At the start of each of its turns, a creature with a bloody wound loses 7 (2d6) hit points. Each time the bloodcount hits the wounded target with this attack, the hit points lost from the wound increases by 7 (2d6). The wound closes if the target magically regains hit points or if the creature receives a successful DC 19 (Wisdom) Medicine check as an action.

Feast (Recharge 6). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature with 50 hit points or fewer. *Hit:* The target is reduced to 0 hit points, and the bloodcount regains 25 hit points. If the target of this attack was a creature at 0 hit points, it is instead slain instantly.

[2] Some spells presented here can be found in the official 5th Edition supplement, *XGE*.

[3] This feature references a collection of weaknesses unique to vampires, as detailed in the 5th Edition core rules.

SILENCER

Gore-hungry horrors of terrific size, the deadly silencers serve as enforcers and executioners to the houses of vampire nobility. A silencer is an undead terror created from venerable, ancient giantkind. Its proud heritage and tradition desecrated by an undead existence, these cursed creatures have no choice but to serve the whims of other vampires. This coupling of undead malevolence and giant strength is formidable. Silencers tower over most adversaries, with glowing yellow eyes and tremendous fangs protruding from chiseled maws. These vampires can lay waste to a dozen creatures in a single strike from their mighty halberds or drain all the blood from an unfortunate humanoid in a single gulp. Thankfully, silencers are rare, as no giant willingly accepts such a fate.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a silencer with an Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

SILENCER LORE

DC	INFORMATION
14	If you've ever wondered what it's like to be torn apart by a noiseless, undead giant, go find a silencer. Its mighty halberd can cleave through armies, the screams of its victims silenced by an aura of magic. The unluckiest of victims are drained of their blood, which is rarely enough to satiate the dark titan.
19	Silencers are freakishly strong. They can toss even the mightiest barbarian about like a ragdoll, even throwing victims as living missiles. A silencer hungers for both blood and magic in equal measure. They can devour spells, using the magic to rejuvenate their terrible bulk.
25	While it's extremely difficult to halt a silencer, such a strategy is well worth the effort. The creatures are ponderously slow, committing all their might toward a single course of action. Keep your distance and don't trust spells to keep you safe, and you just might come out on top.

TACTICS

Silencers are simple creatures by design. They take only a single action, and said action is usually incredibly effective. Choose carefully which actions the silencer takes, as you won't get many, even during a long encounter. Note the cleaving interaction on the silencer's Halberd attack. This allows it to hit multiple targets with a single swing, provided it does not miss. To ensure the highest number of hits, always have the silencer target the characters with the lowest AC first. The silencer's bonus to hit is huge, but an early miss can be devastating for the creature's performance on the battlefield. Use the silencer's Bite to finish off injured targets, as the massive necrotic damage on the attack can instantly kill even a high-level character at low hit points. Be careful about when you use the silencer's Unstoppable feature. Attacks of

The Silencer

I'm used to feeling small, so a giant's size doesn't bother me. What does bother me is when said giant has humongous fangs, hungers for blood, and is nearly immortal. Most giants revere their elders, making a silencer a crime against both nature and giant society. Sister Solaria implied that I should spend more time among these creatures to learn the true value of silence. I'm pretty sure she was joking, but I've been keeping my mouth shut around her just to be safe.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Brute

Favors: Barbarians, Mobility (High), Paladins, Strength (High), Warlocks

Foils: Bards, Conditions (Incapacitated), Monks, Spells (Verbal), Wizards



opportunity and movement can be just as important as its main action. Try to keep the silencer within 30 feet of spellcasters to utilize Aura of Silence and Devour Magic against any troublesome spells. When run well, the silencer should be a terrifying foe that feels unstoppable until it finally falls.

Easier Tactics — Silencers benefit from being as close to their enemies as possible. To make an encounter with such a creature easier, have the silencer meet the characters at a considerable distance. This forces it to spend at least one turn crossing the vast distance and doing nothing else. Keep the attacks focused on characters with lots of hit points, and don't use Bite without intention to kill. All it takes is one lucky critical hit to end a character.

Harder Tactics — A silencer is wise and should pick its battles well. It should start the fight in close quarters, making full use of its Halberd to hit as many targets as possible. Do everything in your power to lay down tons of damage early, as it will put the characters on the defensive. This frees up the silencer to move strategically, using Devour Magic on key spells the characters need to survive. An effective tactic is to grab a low-Strength character with Mighty Brawling, then immediately throw the target far away from any teammates who could help.

PLOT HOOKS

The Enforcer. A noble vampire house dispatches a silencer to bring a renegade member to heel. Unfortunately, the fugitive has found refuge in

SILENCER

Huge undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 18 (plate)
Hit Points 387 (31d12 + 186)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	8 (−1)	22 (+6)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +16, Con +12, Wis +10, Cha +7
Skills Athletics +15, Perception +16
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned, stunned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 26
Languages the languages it knew in life
Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

TRAITS

Ancient Evil. When the silencer is slain, its body and everything it is carrying disintegrates into shards of black, worthless crystal. The body of the silencer then immediately begins growing out of the ground, encased in black crystal, at the place it first became a vampire. Over the course of 24 hours while its body remains encased, the silencer is restored to "life" at its hit point maximum. While the silencer is encased, if the crystal is destroyed (AC 15, 100 hit points) or anointed with holy water, the effect ends, and the silencer is permanently destroyed.

Aura of Silence. While it is not incapacitated, the silencer is surrounded by an aura of magical silence in a 30-foot-radius sphere. Any creature or object completely within the aura is deafened and immune to thunder damage. Additionally, no sound can be created within nor pass through the area, making verbal communication and the casting of spells with verbal components impossible.

Mighty Brawling. As a bonus action on each of its turns, the silencer can attempt to grapple or shove a creature within reach.

Vampire Nobility[4]. The silencer is not subject to the weaknesses suffered by ordinary vampires. When the silencer would suffer a weakness that would affect ordinary vampires, it instead has disadvantage on attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks for 1 hour or until it is not exposed to that weakness, whichever comes first.

Unstoppable (1/Turn). If an effect or condition would stop the silencer from using an action or moving, it may instead move or take an action.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target takes 23 (2d12 + 10) piercing damage plus 70 (20d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a flesh-and-blood creature, its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. The silencer can choose for a giant slain in this way to rise within 24 hours as a vampire under the silencer's control (see the Vampire Template for details).

Halberd. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 43 (6d10 + 10) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, the silencer can immediately use a bonus action repeat the attack (using the same attack roll, but not the same damage) against another creature within reach. The silencer cannot hit a creature in this manner that it has already hit with its halberd that turn.

Throw. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, range 60/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 49 (6d12 + 10) bludgeoning damage. The silencer can use a Medium or smaller creature it is grappling as ammunition to make this attack. On a successful hit, a creature used as ammunition takes bludgeoning damage equal to the damage dealt by the attack. On a miss, a creature used as ammunition takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it traveled over the course of the attack, in addition to appropriate falling damage, to a combined maximum of 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage. In either case, the creature lands prone.

Devour Magic. The silencer chooses a spell effect within 120 feet of it that it is aware of and makes a Strength (Athletics) check. If the result of the check is equal to or greater than 15 + the spell's level, the spell ends and the silencer regains 6 (1d12) hit points, plus an additional 6 (1d12) hit points for each level of the targeted spell higher than 1st.

[4] This feature references a collection of weaknesses unique to vampires, as detailed in the 5th Edition core rules.

a populated elven city. The silencer is unable to enter for obvious reasons and has instead blockaded the city, slaughtering travelers until the fugitive is captured and released into its custody.

For the Giants! A tribe of storm giants has lost a venerable elder to a vampire house, which has since been transformed into a silencer. The tribe is known for their extraordinary crafting skills and will handsomely reward any who put their elder to rest, so long as they return with proof and honor the giants' burial customs.

Executioner's Block. A mighty paladin fails to cleanse a vampire house and is captured in the attempt. As a warning to others, the house intends to publicly execute the paladin, with a silencer to dramatically perform the act. A prison break is in the works, a plan put in action by the paladin's lifelong friend who is also looking for mighty allies willing to make war with the prominent vampire house.

TREASURE

The equipment carried by a silencer is either too big to carry or too corrupted to safely use. However, beneath the horrors of vampiric undeath is the soul of a venerable and honored giant. When the silencer finally falls, this spirit is released and often is quite grateful to those responsible. Should the spirit choose to linger, its ghostly visage hovers over the body of the silencer for up to 1 minute, waiting for the ones responsible to converse with it. Should such a creature converse with the giant's spirit, it will be imparted with a powerful, permanent magical boon according to the type of giant from which the silencer was created. Once the spirit has granted a single boon, it immediately passes on.

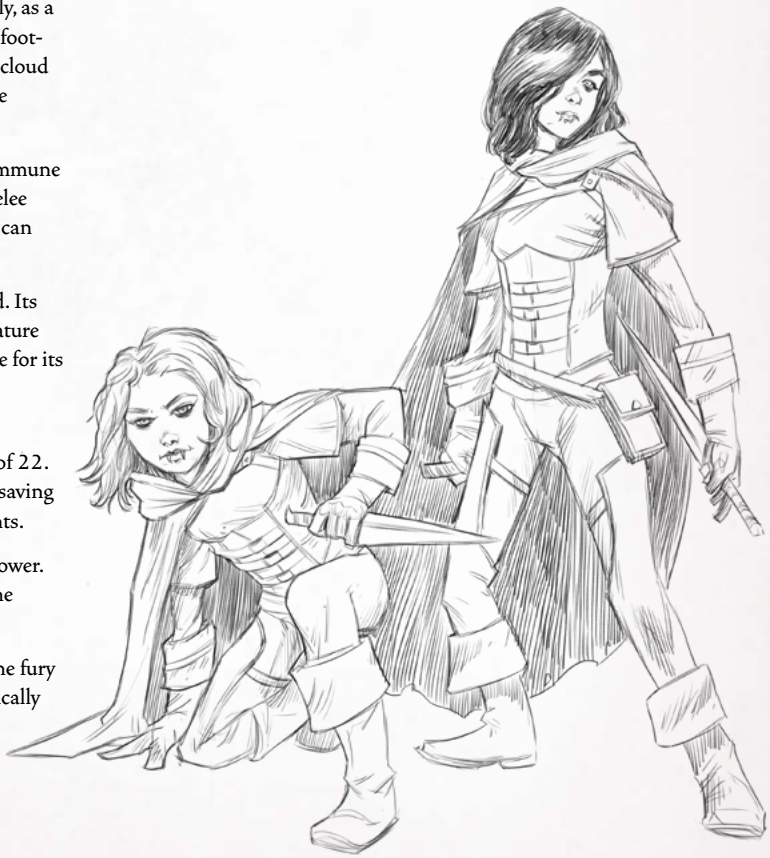
- **Boon of Clouds.** The creature's spirit is imbued with the magic of the sky. It gains a flying speed of 30 feet (hover). Additionally, as a bonus action the creature can surround itself in fog in a 15-foot-radius sphere, which makes the area partially obscured. The cloud lasts until the creature falls unconscious or until the creature dismisses it as a bonus action.
- **Boon of Flames.** The creature's skin is burning hot and is immune to fire damage. Additionally, when the creature is hit by a melee weapon attack or touched by a creature within 5 feet of it, it can choose to deal 7 (2d6) fire damage to that creature.
- **Boon of Frost.** The creature's voice echoes upon a cold wind. Its voice is immune to spells and magical effects, unless the creature chooses for it not to be. Additionally, the creature can choose for its voice to be heard up to 1 mile away.
- **Boon of Hills.** The creature becomes more stalwart. The creature's Constitution score increases by 2, to a maximum of 22. Additionally, when the creature succeeds on a Constitution saving throw against an enemy creature, it regains 9 (2d8) hit points.
- **Boon of Stone.** The creature's gaze is endowed with great power. The creature gains truesight out to 120 feet. Additionally, the creature can take a bonus action to use the Search action.
- **Boon of Storm.** The creature's soul becomes imbued with the fury of the storm. The creature can expend its movement to magically teleport in a flash of lightning to an unoccupied space it can see. The distance of this teleport is equal to the number of feet of movement expended.

ECOLOGY

Twisted tools of the vampire courts and hated by the living, silencers gain little from their immortal existence. Silencers are blunt, crude instruments among the vampire courts, where there is literally little room for such a creature. Most vampire houses prefer to keep silencers as secret weapons, deployed only to execute a hated rival or teach the living a lesson. In the rare event a silencer is left to its own devices, it wanders the land in search of its still-living kin. However, giants have much to fear from silencers, which can gladly reduce entire tribes to vampiric slavery. A tribe of giant vampires would easily rival the might of a noble house, leaving most rogue silencers little time to enjoy their freedom before being hunted down and destroyed. There are rumors of "silent kings and queens" in the ruins of ancient giant cities, ruling over legions of vampiric giants, but such legends are unlikely to carry any truth.

SHROUDLING

Vampires are loath to feed on the children of the living. They make for poor minions and poorer meals, but in moments of desperation a vampire may curse such an innocent with undeath. In the rare event such an abomination survives its "parent" to become a full vampire, it instead transforms into the dreaded shroudling. Royal assassins and spies of the vampire nobility, shroudlings are a terrifying sight to behold. Their childish innocence is replaced with undead malevolence. With fangs like those of venomous snakes, shroudlings stalk the dark shadows of the world in search of unsuspecting victims. These creatures are to be pitied as much as they are feared, for each is trapped in an eternal childhood. They will never experience physical or emotional maturity—a fact that makes their deadly and powerful nature all the more disturbing.



LORE

A character can learn the following information about a shroudling with an Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

SHROUDLING LORE

DC	INFORMATION
14	Shroudlings are child vampires with an affinity for darkness and stealth. They strike from the shadows without warning and are experts in the art of assassination. A shroudling's bite is extremely powerful and can deliver a lethal dose of venom to those unfortunate enough to leave their necks vulnerable.
19	Beware your own shadow when stalked by a shroudling. The creatures can lurk within, sapping your lifeforce before striking at the worst possible moment. The creatures are supernaturally stealthy, performing most actions without alerting others to their presence.
25	The secret to a shroudling's strength is darkness. Even a small fragment of shadow is enough for a shroudling to stalk its prey. The creatures wither under full illumination, both exposing their presence and preventing their escape.

TACTICS

Like all lurkers, shroudlings require stealth and guile. The shroudling needs to take a Hide action or use Shadow Step to become hidden, both of which eat up most of its actions. Remember, any hidden creature must either be obscured, invisible, or have cover from those trying to look for it. Lose these elements, and the shroudling's presence is exposed, no matter how high its Stealth roll. The one exception to this is the creature's Shadow Ride action, which allows the shroudling to vanish into the shadows of other creatures. The shroudling can (and should) be hidden when it does this, so the victim does not realize it's being stalked by a deadly vampire child. From within the shadow the creature can wait for the perfect moment to strike, using Cackling Laughter and Shadow Fang to soften up its target. Note that the shroudling's Sneak Attack feature works on creatures who have no allies within 5 feet of them, making it perfect for attacking isolated targets.

Easier Tactics — The shroudling shouldn't start combat hidden, instead making every effort to hide as soon as possible. That way the characters at least know they are fighting a sneaky child vampire and can prepare accordingly. Optimize the shroudling's actions to make use of Sneak Attack in conjunction with the Bite action, slipping in the occasional Dagger attack to avoid overwhelming the party. The accessibility of darkness makes a big difference for the shroudling, so make sure any combat areas are well lit. If you are feeling extra generous, allow the characters to battle the shroudling in or near sources of sunlight.

Harder Tactics — Long before combat starts, allow the Shroudling to slip into a character's shadow with Shadow Ride. With an average Stealth roll of 28 it should be very difficult for the party to spot the vampire unless they are looking for it. Note that from within the shadow, the shroudling can damage the characters with its Shadow Fang action and frustrate the party with its Cackling Laughter action, all without revealing its presence. Once the party realizes they are under attack, roll initiative and have the shroudling leap from the shadow and attack the character it's stalking. Ideally, a solid bite should be enough to put that character in perilous condition, doubly so if the shroudling scores a critical hit. From there, be elusive. Force the characters to use the Search action to find the vampire, eating into their precious action economy.

PLOT HOOKS

Child of Night. A shroudling seeks out its still-living parents but cannot escape its nature and return to a normal life. The parents are willing to pay any price to break the curse of vampirism on their child, and the sooner the better. The shroudling can only hold back its nature for so long.

No Escape. A fishing town at the center of a large lake is menaced by a shroudling. Any time someone tries to leave, they are ambushed by the vampire and slain. After a month of captivity, supplies in the town are running low, with more and more citizens risking escape to no avail.

Twin Evils. A pair of shroudlings take a contract to assassinate the head cleric of a beloved holy order. The vampires have declared the cleric and their entire congregation will be slain in seven days' time, along with any who dare defend them. This threat has ensured few are willing to fight in the cleric's defense, whose congregation is growing desperate in their search for adequate protection.

The Shroudling

Child vampires are everything wrong with children to the nth degree, plus fangs and an appetite for blood. The mischievous shroudlings lurk in one's own shadow, drinking precious life force and cackling at awkward moments. Their skills in assassination are exceptional. The shroudling I was tracking managed to sneak into a powerful wizard's keep, slay its target, and escape in under an hour. No magical protection proved capable of slowing the creature down. The only sure solution to a shroudling stalking you is to be immersed in sunlight—a scenario that is nigh impossible to achieve without the aid of magic. It is because of creatures like these I am thankful for my career as a spellcaster.

— Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Lurker

Favors: Constitution (High), Rangers, Rogues, Sorcerers, Sunlight

Foils: Bards, Darkvision, Perception (Low), Warlocks, Wizards

TREASURE

Shroudlings are naturally equipped with ideal tools for assassination and espionage, instead preferring to spend their wealth on hidden lairs far from prying eyes. However, the creatures always accept payment in the form of fresh blood, which they keep in a special container known as a *sanguine urn*. While to the vampire this strange object provides nothing but a supply of fresh blood, it has uses for the living as well.

ECOLOGY

While other vampires command minions and lair within castles, shroudlings prefer to roam. They travel between various vampire courts in search of contracts that both pay well and satisfy their sadistic need to kill. While shroudlings prefer to operate at night, they can make do during the day in a pinch. Foolish mortals hiding in fortified castles would be far better off in a sunlit field when stalked by these vampires. Even other

SHROUDLING

Small undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18
Hit Points 195 (23d6 + 115)
Speed 50 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	26 (+8)	21 (+5)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +14, Int +9, Wis +11, Cha +8
Skills Deception +8, Perception +11, Sleight of Hand +20, Stealth +20
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned, stunned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages the languages it knew in life
Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)

TRAITS

Darkwalker. If the shroudling is hidden, actions it takes do not automatically reveal its presence.

Enduring Evil. When the shroudling is slain, its body and everything it is carrying vanishes in a cloud of black smoke. The body of the shroudling then immediately appears in its coffin, which, if removed, vanishes and reappears in the coffin within 1 hour. Over the course of 24 hours while its body remains in the coffin, the shroudling is restored to "life" at its hit point maximum. If the shroudling's head is removed by a silver blade, its heart is pierced by a wooden stake, or its remains are immersed in holy water, the effect ends and the shroudling is permanently destroyed.

Shadow Ride. As a bonus action the shroudling can enter the shadow of a creature within 5 feet of it. When the shroudling does so, its body merges with the shadow and it cannot move or take actions other than the Shadow Fang action, Cackling Laughter action, or a bonus action to end this effect. The shroudling remains in the shadow wherever it moves and cannot take damage or be affected by other creatures. This effect ends if the target creature is completely within sunlight, and the shroudling cannot enter the shadow of a creature completely within sunlight. When the effect ends, the shroudling appears in the nearest unoccupied space.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The shroudling deals an extra 49 (14d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll or when the target isn't within 5 feet of one or more of its allies, and the shroudling doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Vampire Nobility[5]. The shroudling is not subject to the weaknesses suffered by ordinary vampires. When the shroudling would suffer a weakness that would affect ordinary vampires, it instead has disadvantage on attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks for 1 hour or until it is not exposed to that weakness, whichever comes first.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The shroudling makes two Knife attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target takes 35 (5d10 + 8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, the shroudling can choose to inject it with poison. If it does so, the target must succeed on a DC 19 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. A poisoned creature takes 22 (4d10) poison damage at the start of each of its turns while it is poisoned. The shroudling can choose for a humanoid creature of challenge rating 5 or lower or a character of level 5 or lower so slain by this attack or poison to rise as a vampire spawn in 24 hours. The shroudling can choose for a humanoid creature of challenging rating 10 or lower or a character of level 10 or lower so slain by this effect to rise as a vampire in 24 hours (see the Vampire Template for details).

Dagger. *Melee* or *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d4 + 8) piercing damage.

Cackling Laughter. The shroudling cackles menacingly, which can be heard by creatures up to 30 feet away. Living creatures that hear the laughter must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of both the shroudling and their own shadow for 1 hour. This effect ends if a creature takes damage from the shroudling or remains completely within sunlight for 1 continuous minute.

Shadow Fang. The shroudling drains the life from a creature in whose shadow it is hidden, per its Shadow Ride trait. The affected creature must attempt a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 26 (4d12) necrotic damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much on a success. In either case, the target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This effect lasts until the target receives the benefits of a *greater restoration* or *heal* spell.

Shadow Step. The shroudling magically teleports to an area of complete darkness within 60 feet of it then may immediately take a bonus action to take the Hide action.

[5] This feature references a collection of weaknesses unique to vampires, as detailed in the 5th Edition core rules.

vampires have cause to fear shroudlings, who are more than capable (and willing) to stake the hearts of their brethren. This combined with the shroudling's disturbing demeanor ensures few are welcome among the ranks of other vampires unless absolutely necessary.

Sanguine Urn

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This gothic-style urn keeps any fluid stored within it as fresh as the day it was poured. As an action a creature can pour the blood of a flesh-and-blood creature that died up to 1 minute ago into the urn. The urn can hold up to 10 quarts of blood poured in this manner.

Additionally, a creature can take an action to drink a quart of blood from the urn. A living creature that drinks from the urn in this manner magically regains 40 hit points and is cured of any diseases or poisons. An undead creature that drinks from the urn in this manner instead has advantage on attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks for 1 minute.

Curse. When a living creature drinks blood from the urn it must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be cursed. A creature so cursed cannot gain any benefits from drinking fluids other than blood from a flesh-and-blood creature that is living or that died up to 1 minute ago.

The Elder

When I encountered the culture of vampire nobility, I assumed there must be those occupying the highest rungs of their society. Once again, my suppositions are proven to be correct beyond my wildest expectations. These vampire elders are a dark apex atop a mountain of horror. Gone is the disarming charm and subtle wordplay I have come to expect from lesser vampires. While interviewing one Archduchess Vel Victoria Venfaust, I was imprisoned, my valuables confiscated, and my life threatened at every turn. According to Vel Victoria such treatment was "befitting of one whose miniscule existence proves barely tolerable." Should the esteemed countess be reading this passage, note this is not a complaint about my time spent in your care, but merely an observation made with respect to your power and authority.

– Talien Vos Karven



Classification: Elite

Favors: Barbarians, Fighters, Necrotic (Protection from), Paladins, Strength (High)

Foils: Clerics, Healing (Magical), Hit Points (Low), Rogues, Sorcerers

ELDER

In the court of vampire nobility, the elders reign supreme. While others of their kind prefer subtlety, intrigue, and nuance, elders utilize overwhelming force. These vampires have lived far too long to trouble themselves with insolence or opposition. Each rules with an iron fist, employing legions of lesser creatures to bring countless foul schemes to fruition. An elder vampire is a dark reflection of its former life, malevolently magnified by the necrotic power coursing through its bloodless veins. When encountering powerful foes, an elder drops its noble countenance in favor of a monstrous strigoi form—a winged horror that mixes the worst qualities of bat and humanoid into a vicious whole. Between this concealed strength and an arsenal of formidable magic, the vampire elder is a creature few are lucky to survive let alone defeat.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about an elder with an Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

ELDER LORE

DC	INFORMATION
17	The elders are the peak of vampire high society. These undead care nothing for charms of intrigue, resorting immediately to violence when their commands are not followed. Unless you and your companions are ferociously powerful, it is wise to acquiesce to whatever demands the vampire makes of you. It's your best hope for survival.
22	Elder vampires are extremely difficult to defeat, let alone permanently destroy. They reap the life force from their enemies, using it as fuel to prolong their cursed existence. Even when defeated an elder is not truly slain. You must track down its coffin and liberally apply silver, stakes, and holy water to permanently end the menace.
28	Elder vampires wield both magic and martial power in equal, deadly measure. However, their most fearsome ability is the aura of dread the creatures exude at all times. The longer one spends in the presence of an elder, the more terrified one becomes, even to the point of being frightened to death.

TACTICS

Elder vampires are complex creatures, combining formidable martial skill, magic, and supernatural vampire-ness into one deadly whole. The creature's most important feature is its Aura of Dread. All an elder needs to affect a creature with this feature is an awareness of its presence. Unless the elder has a good reason to keep a character alive, it should always try to affect as many victims as possible with this feature. Should the characters fail to employ countermeasures, such as improving their Wisdom saving throws or removing the frightened condition, they will quickly find themselves at the vampire's mercy.

Outside of this feature, the elder has many tools at its disposal. In melee the vampire is a horrific opponent, dealing out considerable damage to anything within reach. Note the tremendous damage on

the vampire's Bite attack, which, when made against paralyzed targets, automatically critically hits for humongous damage. When confronted with maneuverable or hard-to-hit opponents, the elder does itself the indignity of assuming its strigoi form. Note that while in this state, the elder cannot cast spells with verbal components nor communicate intelligibly. The elder has several powerful spells in its employ, many of which do necrotic damage. This fact is critical, as using such magic causes the creature to regain a ton of hit points via its Bloodbaron feature. Keep these spells in reserve for when the elder needs healing.

Easier Tactics — Be kind with the Aura of Dread feature, or at the very least make sure the characters know it's coming first. Protecting against the frightened condition is fairly easy and the surest way to avoid getting killed by the Aura of Dread. If you don't want the elder to heal too much, use *cloudkill* in lieu of *circle of death* or *blight*. Only employ the Bite attack against targets with high hit points, as it has the capacity to instantly slay any bloodied heroes on an unlucky critical hit.

Harder Tactics — Choose one character in the group the vampire hates the most and use Curse of the Nether against that target. Because this effect requires a Charisma saving throw, it is extremely problematic for most characters to beat. The elder should position itself to maximize its Aura of Dread feature. Combine this with the powers of the elder's *dreadblade* to keep the party separated and disoriented. Any paralyzed characters should be bitten for the automatic critical hit, and use *power word stun* to incapacitate those that prove too burly for the elder to down easily. Should pesky *eldritch blast*–spamming warlocks rear their heads, use *globe of invulnerability* to shield the elder. Note that when the elder changes form, it can continue to concentrate on such spells and should make use of this dynamic to full effect.

PLOT HOOKS

The Bloodmoon Ball. At the night of the next blood moon, the many houses of vampire nobility will gather to celebrate with dance, song, and feast. Some of the most powerful and influential vampires from across the planes will be there, with the venerable Lord Dracule presiding over the entire affair. The forces of good seek mighty heroes to join them in crashing the party and slaying as many vampires as possible.

Shadow out of Time. An ancient coffin from millennia past is opened, unleashing an elder vampire from an era predating recorded history. While the elder ravages the countryside, a guild of researchers advise a cautious response, aiming to capture the vampire and learn valuable, long-forgotten secrets.

Who Hunts the Hunters. A rogue vampire elder begins a campaign of revenge against its peers. As one house after another falls, the living find themselves caught in the crossfire. As casualties mount, heroes are requested to put a stop to the vengeful vampire by any means necessary.

TREASURE

Elder vampires are rarely impoverished. Their great power and tremendous careers invariably accumulate absurd amounts of wealth. Elders have a taste for the finer things in death. They build tremendous lairs, hire deadly minions, and import luxurious affectations. Rarely is an elder vampire without this vast network of resources, but one is never without its signature weapon: a *darkblade*.

Darkblade

Weapon (greatsword), legendary (requires attunement)

This weapon's blade emits black wisps of smoke. While you hold the weapon, as a bonus action you can cause all sources of light within 60 feet of you to only emit 5 feet of light for 1 hour. Additionally, darkness in the affected area becomes magical darkness in which you can see as long as you are attuned to the *darkblade*. Finally, when you hit a creature completely within darkness with the weapon, the weapon deals an additional 2d6 slashing damage.



ECOLOGY

Vampire elders "live" to rule. They establish kingdoms of darkness where undead thrive and the living are little better than cattle. Power is the only thing an elder respects, which leaves very few worthy beings in their eyes. Anything less than absolute obedience toward the elder's will is unacceptable. The creatures have been known to go to war over the slightest defiance, risking everything to ensure their dominance over all they encounter, including most other vampires. Their fortresses are crewed by entire clans of subservient vampires and powerful undead, each of which manages a different arm of the elder's influential network. This network ensures the elder never wants for anything, cultivating the finest foods and pleasure for its every convenience. Only a fool would mistake an elder's obsession with leadership for an unwillingness to fight its own battles, an assumption the vampire is all too eager to prove woefully incorrect.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the elder takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects. The elder can't cause the same effect two rounds in a row:

- The elder sends a telepathic request for help to an undead creature within its lair. A creature that chooses to answer the call magically teleports into an unoccupied space within 120 feet of the elder.
- The vampire causes an area of darkness it can see to become difficult terrain until the next initiative count of 20. Additionally, when a living creature in the area would regain hit points, it instead regains half as many hit points.
- Until the next initiative count of 20, the vampire can be heard anywhere in its lair, and its voice cannot be suppressed or silenced by magical means.

The Dreadwyrm

To whatever foolhardy vampire bit an ancient dragon...what is wrong with you?! When I began my research into the vampire nobility, I could not have conceived of such foul creatures as dreadwyrms. As if dragons didn't stack the deck of life enough, these creatures have found a way to achieve vampiric apotheosis. I can only hope the presence of a dreadwyrm is enough to abate the legendary feuds between dragons. For if chromatic, metallic, gem, and the rest do not unite against the threat posed by dreadwyrms, what hope do the rest of us have?

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Elite

Favors: Druids, Fighters, Flight, Paladins, Range

Foils: Barbarians, Clerics, Healing, Mobility (High), Monks

DREADWYRM

The curse of vampirism is hellish for dragons. As a species that grows more powerful with age, to be trapped in any but the most ancient stage of life is crippling. However, for venerable specimens nearing the end of their existence, the prospect can prove quite tempting. Those dragons willing to dive into an undead existence become dreadwyrms: horrifically powerful vampires glutting themselves upon the living. Draconic avarice is replaced with a crippling addiction for blood. There is little these creatures will not do to feast upon others, with other dragons considered a delicacy in the dreadwyrm's lifeless eyes. Even for a dragon, a dreadwyrm is tremendous in size. Its once-distinguished coloration is replaced with scales of crimson and black, while its wings are like great, black shrouds. The creature can cloak nearly its entire body within the folds of its wings, allowing for a surprising degree of stealth. Its formidable draconic fangs are even more pronounced, ideal for grasping and draining prey.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a dreadwyrm with an Intelligence (Religion) ability check.

DREADWYRM LORE

DC	INFORMATION
18	Dreadwyrms combine the most dangerous aspects of vampires and dragons. They are surprisingly cunning, able to assume the shapes of humanoids, beasts, and even a cloud of darkness. Rumor has it they don't even hoard treasure, focusing all their attention upon feasting on the blood of the living.
23	Most dragons are not sneaky, but most dragons aren't also vampires. Dreadwyrms strike from the shadows, using their powers of shapechanging to acquire an ideal tactical position before attacking. These creatures do not breathe calamity like other dragons. They instead inhale the blood of the living across great distances, sapping the life from even the most stalwart hero.
29	Draconic fortitude combined with vampiric resilience creates a truly fearsome result in the dreadwyrm. The creature can take a staggering amount of punishment, and even when "killed" will quickly return to "life" unless its hoard is located, its head removed by a silver blade, its heart pierced by a stake, and the remains immersed in holy water. Take longer than 72 hours, and the dreadwyrm will return, ready for round two.

TACTICS

While a dreadwyrm possesses astonishing physical might, that is far from its most formidable tool. The standard array of dragon attacks is present: bite, claws, tail, and breath weapon. Use them as you would with any other dragon for a reasonable result. Note the dreadwyrm's bite works like other vampires', dealing bonus necrotic damage and lowering the hit point maximum of the target. The creature's Siphoning Breath works similarly but can affect a huge number of creatures due to

Elder

Medium (Large in strigoi form) undead (shapechanger), lawful evil

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)
Hit Points 368 (32d8 + 224)
Speed 30 ft. (fly 90 ft. in strigoi form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	19 (+4)	24 (+7)	19 (+4)	21 (+5)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Str +14, Dex +11, Int +11
Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +14, Deception +15, Insight +11, Intimidation +15, Perception +12
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned, stunned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 22
Languages the languages it knew in life
Challenge 23 (50,000 XP)

Traits

Shapechanger. The elder can take a bonus action to transform between its strigoi form and its true form. Its statistics, other than size and speed, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is transformed with it. The elder reverts to its true form if it dies.

In its strigoi form the elder has advantage on melee attacks as well as on Strength saving throws and ability checks. Additionally, while in its strigoi form the elder cannot communicate verbally or cast spells with verbal components.

Aura of Dread. The elder exudes an aura of dread in a 60-foot-radius sphere. When the elder starts each of its turns, creatures of its choice within the affected area must succeed on a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of it. If a creature frightened in this manner fails this saving throw against the elder's Aura of Dread feature again, it is also paralyzed. If a creature is both frightened and paralyzed in this manner and fails this saving throw again, it is slain instantly. The frightened and paralyzed conditions end if a creature ends its turn and cannot see the elder.

Bloodbaron. When the elder deals necrotic damage to a flesh-and-blood creature, it gains hit points equal to half the damage dealt (rounded down).

Elder Evil. When the elder is slain, its body and everything it is carrying vanishes in a cloud of black smoke. The body of the elder immediately appears in its coffin, which, if removed, vanishes and reappears in the coffin within 1 hour. Over the course of 24 hours while its body remains in the coffin, the elder is restored to "life" at its hit point maximum. If the elder's head is removed by a silver blade, its heart pierced by a wooden stake, and its remains immersed in holy water, the effect ends and the elder is permanently destroyed.

Innate Spellcasting. The elder's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 23, +15 to hit with spell attacks). The elder can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *blight*, *cloudkill*, *dispel magic*, *telekinesis*
2/day each: *circle of death*, *globe of invulnerability*, *project image*
1/day each: *control weather*, *power word kill*

Mythic Resistance. When the elder fails a saving throw, it can expend one of its unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Vampire Nobility[6]. The elder is not subject to the weaknesses suffered by ordinary vampires. When the elder would suffer a weakness that would affect ordinary vampires, it instead has disadvantage on attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks for 1 hour or until it is not exposed to that weakness, whichever comes first.

Actions

Multiattack. The elder makes three attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack, or makes one attack and casts a spell it can cast at will.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) piercing damage plus 39 (6d12) necrotic damage. If the target is a flesh-and-blood creature, its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. The elder can choose for a dragon, giant, or humanoid slain in this way to rise within 24 hours as a vampire under the elder's control (see the Vampire Template for details).

Cape (Elder Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target must succeed on a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw or be disarmed of its weapon or drop whatever it is holding. The elder can then use a reaction to immediately catch the disarmed weapon or item with a free hand.

Claws (Strigoi Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 34 (8d6 + 6) slashing damage. If the target is a flesh-and-blood creature, it takes an additional 10 (3d6) necrotic damage.

Darkblade (Elder Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (4d6 + 6) slashing damage. If the target is a flesh-and-blood creature, it takes an additional 10 (3d6) necrotic damage.

Wings (Strigoi Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target is pushed up to 30 feet away from the elder and must succeed on a DC 22 Strength saving throw or fall prone.

Curse of the Nether (Recharge 5–6). The elder afflicts a creature it can see within 60 feet of it with a curse. The target must succeed on a DC 23 Charisma saving throw or be partially banished to a shadowy dimension for as long as it remains cursed. A creature so banished cannot be immune to the frightened condition, its speed is halved, and it deals half damage.

Legendary Actions

The elder can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The elder regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Move. The elder moves up to its walking speed.

Strike. The elder makes a single attack that is not a bite attack.

Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). The elder casts a spell it can cast at will.

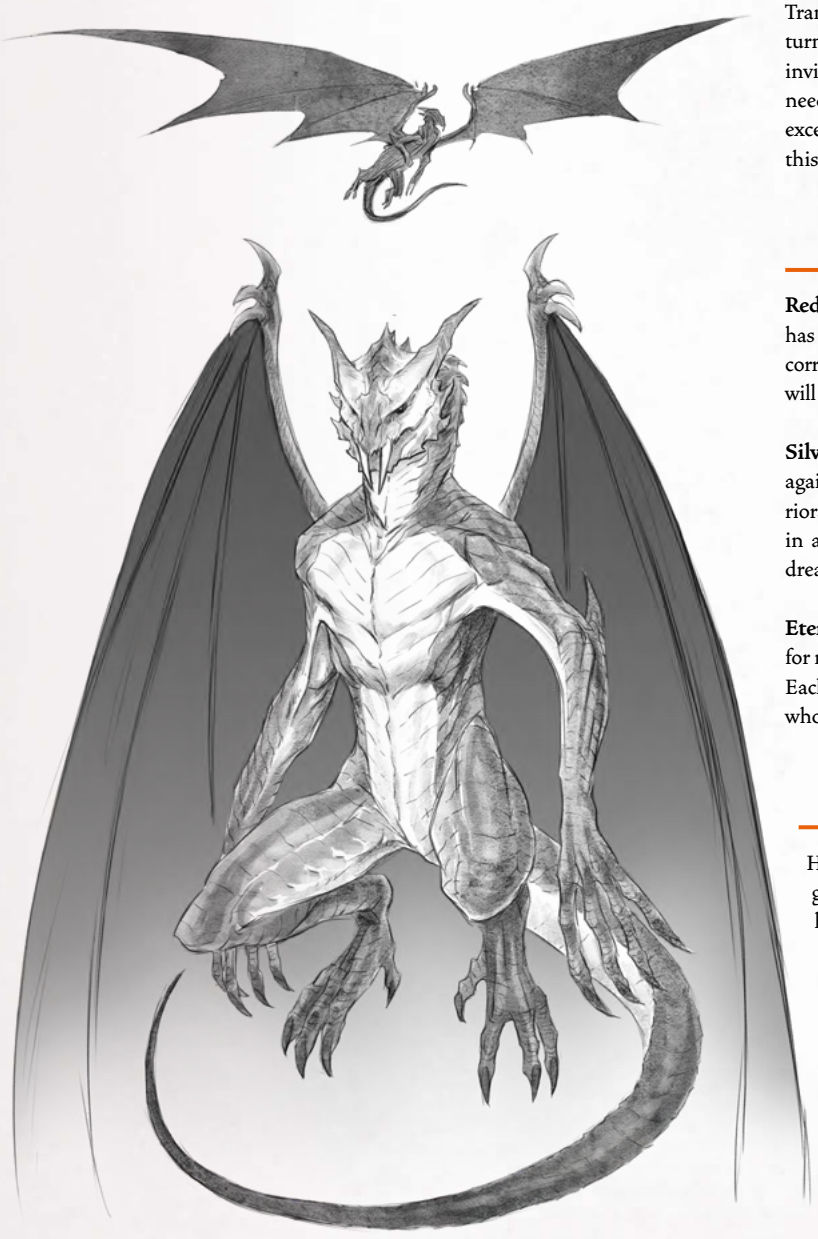
Vanish (Costs 2 Actions). The elder magically teleports to an unoccupied space completely within darkness within 60 feet of it.

Gathering Darkness (Costs 3 Actions). The elder recharges its Curse of the Nether action.

[6] This feature references a collection of weaknesses unique to vampires, as detailed in the 5th Edition core rules.

its massive area of effect. It's wise to open with Siphoning Breath, as its effectiveness is based on the current health of those it harms, which will likely be full-health characters when combat starts. Coupled with the dreadwyrm's impressive damage on hits, any serious hit point reduction can result in downing a character or even instant death on a critical hit.

The dreadwyrm possesses several cunning tools, notably its Shapechanger and Dominating Presence. Use Shapechanger to pad the dreadwyrm's already ridiculous hit point maximum or to escape from troublesome positions on the battlefield. Remember, if the dreadwyrm gets forced out of its assumed forms by damage, it cannot use Shapechanger again for some time. Dominating Presence should be used on the second or third round of combat, when the characters have employed their ideal strategy. All it takes is for one character to fail that formidable DC 26 Wisdom saving throw for the dreadwyrm to wreak havoc, though it must be able to speak to the victim to do so. Balance its vampire cunning with draconic might, and the result will be a unique, unforgettable encounter.



Easier Tactics — Though the dreadwyrm is sneaky, it should either not start combat hidden or not gain surprise when it attacks, particularly if the characters know it exists. Try to use Siphoning Breath and Dominating Presence once each, and preferably many rounds apart. Give the characters a turn or two to recover from the horrors of those effects before slamming them again. If you are feeling generous, have the dreadwyrm use its entire action to Hide, particularly after it's changed shape into something far less threatening than its true form. This game of cat and mouse can feel fun and thematic while providing the party with a moment to breathe.

Harder Tactics — A creature with a challenge rating of 29 is always going to be difficult, so note that running the dreadwyrm like this will be exceedingly dangerous to all but the most powerful characters. Start combat with a Siphoning Breath. If you don't get a recharge on the second turn, it's probably not worth using again in lieu of Dominating Presence and Multiattack. Be smart about whom you target with Bite. There is no saving throw against its hit point reduction, and it can be performed as a legendary action, making it extremely powerful. Transform the dreadwyrm into its darkness form either at the end of its turn or as a legendary action, as while in that state the creature is nigh invincible. The dreadwyrm can always return to its true form when it needs to. Unless the characters have a source of daylight on hand and an excellent strategy, their odds of succeeding against a dreadwyrm used in this manner are supremely low.

PLOT HOOKS

Red Harvest. A dark shadow looms over an elven forest. A vampiric dragon has come to feast upon its populace, using legions of vampire spawn to corral the population. On the night of the next blood moon the dragon will feed, the blood of thousands transforming it into a mighty dreadwyrm.

Silver Crusade. An order of vampire hunters declares a silver crusade against an ancient dreadwyrm and its noble house. Hundreds of warriors gather together, planning to strike simultaneously to end the house in a single night. However, none are daring enough to challenge the dreadwyrm directly, leaving the crusade in dire need of epic heroes.

Eternal Rivalry. An ancient dracolich and dreadwyrm have been rivals for millennia, locked in an eternal struggle for dominance over the living. Each offers untold riches to any who could tip the scales in their favor, but who would be foolish enough to trust the words of evil, undead dragons?

TREASURE

Having lost the draconic instinct to acquire treasure, dreadwyrms only gather wealth with the intention of using it and maintaining a hoard large enough to rejuvenate if slain. Hunting other dragons isn't easy, prompting dreadwyrms to pay for powerful minions, magical items, and other services to further their goals. However, each success grants possession of the victim's hoard, with longtime dreadwyrms acquiring incalculable resources for whatever house they have aligned themselves with (if any). In addition to whatever wealth they have gathered from other dragons, a powerful spellcaster can develop a foul spell from the dreadwyrm's remains. Doing so requires a successful DC 24 Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (Arcana) check and the fang of a recently deceased dreadwyrm. On a success, the creature permanently adds the spell *red harvest* to its class spell list or spells known, assuming it meets the prerequisites.

New Spell – Red Harvest

This spell is a class spell for clerics, warlocks, and wizards.

Red Harvest

9th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action, 1 bonus action, and 1 reaction
Range: Self (90-foot cone)
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

You generate a magical siphon that draws forth the blood from creatures in the affected area, which you can then feed upon to boost your vitality. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a Constitution saving throw or have its hit point maximum reduced by half (rounded down) on a failed saving throw, or reduced by one quarter (rounded down) on a success. This reduction lasts until an affected creature finish a long rest. You regain 20 hit points for each creature that fails the saving throw against the spell, and 10 hit points for each creature that succeeds on the saving throw against the spell, gaining any hit points that would put you above your hit point maximum as temporary hit points.

ECOLOGY

The presence of a dreadwyrm is challenging to a noble vampiric house. The creature is far too powerful to trust but incredibly useful. So long as its fellow vampires keep the horror supplied with fresh blood and assist in hunts against other dragons, a dreadwyrm gladly pledges its loyalty. This relationship can prove extremely tenuous, as dreadwyrms don't just hunger for the blood of other dragons—they are cripplingly addicted to it. To go more than a decade without feasting on a fellow wyrm is torturous for these creatures, causing erratic and irrational behavior. What is worse, rarely are dragons in steady supply. Scholars have hypothesized the draconic obsession with treasure has mixed abominably with vampiric hunger, which while fascinating does little to solve the problem. Should a dreadwyrm grow desperate enough for dragon blood, it may even operate in broad daylight, ceaselessly searching for any dragon to alleviate the craving. This understandably proves quite troubling for the affiliated vampire house, gaining much unwanted attention and antipathy from the living in the path of the manic dreadwyrm.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the dreadwyrm uses a lair action to cause one of the following effects. The dreadwyrm can't cause the same effect two rounds in a row:

- The dreadwyrm becomes invisible until it makes an attack or uses an action.
- The dreadwyrm chooses a creature it has charmed and binds it to the dreadwyrm's will. A creature so bound remains charmed for as long as the dreadwyrm "lives." This effect immediately ends if the dreadwyrm uses this feature again on another creature.
- Each creature of the dreadwyrm's choice that is charmed by the dragon is instead frightened of it for as long as it would be charmed.

THE FOUR IGNOBLE HOUSES

Even elder vampires recognize the need for order and occasional cooperation, though only with other vampires. To that end, the most ancient and powerful among them established four dark houses to which each member of vampire high society owes allegiance. This structure ensures the perpetuity of the vampire "tradition" and their very existence as a species, pooling their vast resources and collectively battling external threats they could not defeat alone. While a vampire rarely puts its house's interests above its own, it never willingly betrays a house to which it has sworn fealty. As stewards of the four ignoble houses, elders have the capacity to induct new vampires in elaborate cultural ceremonies, providing the new member with the following trait according to the house to which it has been sworn.



House Bellov. The vampire is loyal to House Bellov, vanguard in the war against the living in which every vampire is a soldier. It has resistance to damage from spells.



House Ignatus. The vampire is loyal to House Ignatus, keepers of the thirsting flame which reflects the hunger within all vampires. It is immune to fire damage and has advantage on attacks against flesh-and-blood creatures that don't have all their hit points.



House Meduvian. The vampire is loyal to House Meduvian, deceivers who keep the world blissfully unaware of the true scope of the vampire menace. It is immune to psychic damage, any effect that would sense its emotions or read its thoughts, divination spells, and the charmed condition.



House Umbrixol. The vampire is loyal to House Umbrixol, masters of the darkness in which all vampires find sanctuary. It is immune to cold damage and invisible when completely within darkness unless it chooses not to be.

Dreadwyrm

Gargantuan undead (shapechanger), lawful evil

Armor Class 20
Hit Points 906 (49d20 + 392)
Speed 50 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	30 (+10)	27 (+8)	19 (+4)	23 (+6)	29 (+9)

Saving Throws Dex +19, Int +13, Wis +15, Cha +18
Skills Insight +15, Intimidation +18, Perception +15, Persuasion +18, Stealth +19
Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned, stunned
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 25
Languages the languages it knew in life
Challenge 29 (135,000 XP)

Traits

Dread Hoard. When the dreadwyrm is slain, its body and everything it is carrying is reduced to ashes. The body of the dreadwyrm then immediately appears atop its hoard, and if removed vanishes and reappears atop the hoard within 1 hour. Over the course of 72 hours while its body remains atop the hoard, the dreadwyrm is restored to "life" at its hit point maximum. If the dreadwyrm's head is removed by a silver blade, its heart pierced by a wooden stake, and its remains immersed in holy water, the effect ends and the dreadwyrm is permanently destroyed.

Mythic Resistance. When the dreadwyrm fails a saving throw, it can expend one of its unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Shapechanger. If the dreadwyrm isn't in sunlight or running water, it can use its bonus action to polymorph into a beast of challenge rating 15 or lower, a gargantuan cloud of darkness, a humanoid creature, or back into its true form.

While in the shape of a beast or humanoid, the vampire gains temporary hit points equal to the form's hit point maximum, which cannot be replaced by temporary hit points from another source unless the vampire allows it. Additionally, its statistics other than the creature's Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution are unchanged, and everything it is wearing becomes a part of its new form. This effect ends early if the temporary hit points granted by the form are reduced to 0, in which case the dreadwyrm can't transform into a beast or humanoid using this feature again for 24 hours.

While in darkness form, the dreadwyrm can't take any actions other than using its Shapechanger feature, speaking, or manipulating objects. It is weightless and has a flying speed of 60 feet (hover) and can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. In addition, if air can pass through a space, the darkness can do so without squeezing, and it can't pass through water. Finally, while in this form the dreadwyrm has advantage on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saving throws and is immune to all damage for as long as it is not exposed to daylight.

Vampire Nobility[7]. The dreadwyrm is not subject to the weaknesses suffered by ordinary vampires. When the dreadwyrm would suffer a weakness that would affect ordinary vampires, it instead has disadvantage on attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks for 1 hour or until it is not exposed to that weakness, whichever comes first.

Actions

Multiattack. The dreadwyrm can makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws. In lieu of making a bite attack in this manner, the dragon can instead make a tail attack or use its Charming Presence.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 23 (2d12 + 10) piercing damage plus 55 (10d10) necrotic damage. If the target is a flesh-and-blood creature, its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the dreadwyrm magically regains a number of hit points equal to the necrotic damage dealt. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. The dreadwyrm can choose for a dragon slain in this way to rise within 24 hours as a vampire under the dreadwyrm's control (see the Vampire Template for details).

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 31 (6d6 + 10) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 25 ft., each target of the dreadwyrm's choice within reach. *Hit:* 46 (8d8 + 10) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, the dreadwyrm can force it to attempt a DC 27 Strength saving throw, knocking the creature prone on a failure.

Charming Presence. Each creature of the dreadwyrm's choice within 120 feet of it and aware of it must succeed on a DC 26 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the dreadwyrm for 1 hour. If an affected creature takes damage while charmed in this manner, it may repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. If the effect ends for a creature, that creature is immune to the dreadwyrm's Charming Presence for 24 hours.

As a bonus action on each of its turns, the dreadwyrm can issue a verbal command to a creature it has charmed in this manner that can hear it, which the creature must follow to the best of its ability for as long as it remains charmed by the dreadwyrm.

Siphoning Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dreadwyrm inhales in a 90-foot cone, drawing in the vitality of all flesh-and-blood creatures in the affected area. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 26 Constitution saving throw or have its maximum hit points halved, or quartered on a success (minimum of 1 hit point). This reduction lasts until an affected creature finishes a long rest. Additionally, for each creature that attempts a saving throw against this effect, the dreadwyrm regains 20 hit points if it fails the save, or half as much if it succeeds.

Legendary Actions

The dreadwyrm can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dreadwyrm regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Claw. The dreadwyrm makes a claw attack.

Move. The dreadwyrm moves up to its speed.

Bite (Costs 2 Actions). The dreadwyrm makes a bite attack.

Tail (Costs 2 Actions). The dreadwyrm makes a tail attack.

Shapechanger (Costs 3 Actions). The dreadwyrm uses its Shapechanger feature.

[7] This feature references a collection of weaknesses unique to vampires, as detailed in the 5th Edition core rules.

Wild Hunts

Fey can be pernicious, mercurial, and strange on a good day. On a bad day, they can be worse than fiends from the pit. Those strange and powerful fey belonging to the deadly revels known as wild hunts are far worse. Their forms are strange and twisted, ideally suited to one foul purpose: hunting sentient beings for sport. Due to their great power, this leaves few deserving a wild hunt's perverse affections. Mighty creatures from across the planes have good cause to fear wild hunts. The fey muster hundreds to join in their revels and bear witness to their prodigious skill at hunting sentients. Each hunt holds magical oaths binding thousands of fey to its service, most of which are spies dedicated to the uncovering of worthy prey. What qualifies as worthy varies from hunt to hunt, with strange criteria sensible only to the wild hunt's masters. Despite their cruelty, a wild hunt is bound by ancient laws that ensure a sporting chance, though few manage to escape. Those that do are forever a disgrace to a hunt's name, which is powerless to seek revenge. Other fey lords despise wild hunts and their masters, which are far too apolitical to be fun, and way too dangerous to ignore.

LANTERN HOUND

Magical, mercurial, and dangerous in equal measure, the mysterious lantern hounds are the first sound a creature often hears when a wild hunt comes upon them. While each specimen is unique, a typical lantern hound is like a massive wolf, its skull-like head burning with a fey flame. This flickering conflagration is as much a part of the hound as flesh and fur, with the color changing depending on the hound's mood. The fur of the hound is ashen grey, often painted with symbols of the wild hunt to which the hound is pledged. When roused to a fury, the baying of lanterns hounds is cacophonous, a mixture of roaring flame and wolfish snarls.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a lantern hound with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

LANTERN HOUND LORE

DC	INFORMATION
13	Lantern hounds are powerful fey beasts that hunt like wolves and shed magical light wherever they stalk. They are fast, strong, and far more intelligent than they appear. When in a pack they are most fearsome, working together to take down mighty prey.
18	The bite of a lantern hound burns with a fey fire, whose light reveals even the most well-hidden rogue. The howls of a lantern hound frighten non-fey. This fear is all encompassing toward any fey, which can prove deadly when surrounded by the chaotic creatures.
24	Silver weapons are ideal for slaying lantern hounds, especially if you don't have magical weaponry available. Lantern hounds have been known to maul creatures they hold in their teeth, inflicting their victims with a strange fey disease that makes them easier to track.

TALIEN'S NOTES

I don't much like hunting when I'm on the predator end, so the prospect of being prey is aggressively unappealing. The strange ways of fey seem tame when compared to the rituals of the wild hunt. Once their prey is chosen, a wild hunt publicly declares their intention—not that it helps the poor soul. The hunt then chooses a day of mysticism and magic to begin the hunt. As soon as the hunting horn sounds, the fey have twelve hours to complete their task. While that may not seem like much, I assure you, dear reader, that is an eternity when pursued by maniacal fey. Thankfully, most wild hunts are performed by lesser members of their order, with only the most powerful beings imaginable warranting a full mustering. I hope never to witness such a terrible spectacle—a horde of flaming hounds, flying terrors, horned couriers, mounted nobles, and finally the rumored king, all reveling in the torturous execution of frightened prey.

The Lantern Hound

I'm a cat person, but I respect dogs. It's a shame such a miraculous creature is put toward ignoble ends like wild hunts. While fearsome, these lantern hounds are but a reflection of their training (I think). I've enlisted Haloa's help in trapping one of the beasts to see if it can be trained to serve more wholesome ends. I get along with beasts all right, and with fey remarkably well, so I'm bound to meet with success. My latest intern Mixxus is already prepping the training hall, and he is confident the cages he's acquired are sure to hold the creature.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Brute

Favors: Armor Class (High), Clerics, Fighters, Saving Throws (High), Wizards

Foils: Attacks, Paladins, Rangers, Rogues, Stealth

TACTICS

A lone lantern hound is a dead lantern hound. The creatures are ideally suited for cooperation, using features like Pack Tactics and the grapple on their Candle Bite attack to gain the upper hand. Don't have any hounds you are using rush mindlessly into battle. Use Cacophonous Baying and the hound's allies to encircle the characters. The frightened condition should keep them from going anywhere while the hounds close the circle. Lantern hounds should always team up on a target. Together they

can grapple and drag characters apart, isolating them from healing and other aid. If it looks like the characters will win, use Maul to infect a character or two with faerie fever, then come back later with the rest of the wild hunt in tow.

Easier Tactics — The fewer allies the lantern hound has, the easier the encounter. The lantern hound should have either one teammate slightly less powerful than itself, or a bunch of weak ones. Even a gang of minor fey can be powerful against a prone character getting mauled by an angry lantern hound. Remember, rarely is the goal of a lantern hound to kill the characters—it merely wounds them so the rest of the hunt can move in for the kill.

Harder Tactics — Close the gap on the party fast, dragging grappled characters in different directions, preferably into cover. A good and faithful lantern hound ensures its quarry becomes infected with faerie fever, breaking off once this objective has been completed. Use Flickering Trickery to disengage effectively, regrouping with the hound's allies to strike again at a more opportune time.

PLOT HOOKS

Good Dog. A faithful lantern hound has been left behind by its wild hunt and has camped out in the woods awaiting its master's return. Unfortunately for the locals, the hound is still ferocious, driving away any who come near and killing livestock for food. The hound would gladly leave, if only it could be shown the way home.



LANTERN HOUND

Medium fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 177 (19d8 + 92)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	6 (−2)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +5
Skills Athletics +9, Perception +9, Survival +9
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Sylvan
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

TRAITS

Cacophonous Baying. As a bonus action on each of its turns, the hound begins to bay and howl. Every creature other than fey within 300 feet of the hound that can hear the baying must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of all fey for as long as it can hear the baying. On a successful save, a creature is immune to this effect for 24 hours. The hound must take a bonus action on subsequent turns to continue baying but can stop at any time. The baying ends early if the hound is incapacitated.

Flames of Revelation. The flames of the hound emit dim light in a 30-foot radius centered on it. Creatures other than fey in the affected area are wreathed in a luminescent blue aura. Creatures so wreathed cannot be hidden or invisible.

Magic Resistance. The hound has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

Pack Tactics. The hound has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the hound's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Candle Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage. If the target is a creature, the hound can force it to attempt a DC 17 Strength saving throw, becoming grappled (escape DC 17) and knocked prone on a failure. If the hound is grappling a creature in this manner, it can't use its Candle Bite attack against another target.

Maul. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target grappled by the hound. *Hit:* 31 (4d12 + 5) slashing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or contract faerie fever.

While infected with the disease, when a creature would roll a 10 or higher on a Strength-based attack roll, saving throw, or ability check, it instead rolls a 10. Additionally, wherever an infected creature moves, it leaves behind a trail of luminescent, floating, multicolored sparks that fade after 1 hour.

REACTIONS

Flickering Trickery. As a reaction to when the hound is attacked by a creature it can see within 30 feet of it, the lantern hound can magically vanish in a puff of smoke, causing the attack to miss. The hound then reappears in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the target and may make a single attack against it.





Turf War. War is raging in the fey realms between an invading pack of hellfire hounds and a defending colony of lantern hounds. Too bored to get involved, a wild hunt calls for outsiders to come out against the invading fiends, with help from what few able-bodied lantern hounds remain.

Burning Both Ends. A wild hunt is employing mutant lantern hounds that blaze with an emerald fire. The creatures are near rabid and completely untamed, delighting their hunt to no end with acts of savagery. This highly volatile situation has the other wild hunts unsettled and looking for a way to destroy the kennels without getting involved directly.

TREASURE

The skull of a lantern hound burns even past death, smoldering with fey fire, and is an ideal component for spellcasting. When a creature casts a spell with a material component that forces an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw, it can use a lantern hound skull as an additional component, consuming it in the process. If the target succeeds on its first saving throw against the spell, it takes 39 (6d12) psychic damage.

ECOLOGY

Lantern hounds were bred to serve wild hunts, though many have since escaped and become free-roaming creatures. In the fey realm the creatures are generally avoided, far too wily and powerful for any but the wild hunts to control. Outside their home plane, lantern hounds are dangerously aggressive, dominating their environment. Their training compels the creatures to kill and maim for sport, making them a blight on the local environment. Such hounds are typically abandoned, escaped, or wayward creatures. Many wild hunts will gladly pay mortals handsomely for their return, though any looking to make such deals would do well to take extreme precautions.

The Falconer

My first familiar was a parrot. That lasted about a week. It's a shame I know of no cat creature large enough to shut down one of these falconers. The damn things fall out of the sky like a lightning bolt, crushing their quarry with overwhelming force. It's an impressive technique, risking the falconer's safety for significant results. I suspect a brave hero might be able to exploit this strategy to prompt a grievous tactical error from the falconer, but so far none of my companions have been willing to try. Next week, I'm getting a new intern to replace Mixxus—we will see if she is up to the challenge!

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Lurker

Favors: Flight, Range (Long), Rangers, Rogues, Warlocks

Foils: Barbarians, Clerics, Melee, Monks, Perception (Low)

FALCONER

Masterful scouts and harriers of the wild hunt, the monstrous falconers soar the skies in search of elusive quarry. The massive body of a falconer is a confusing mess of humanoid and raptor. Its chest and legs allow for a bipedal stance, while its arms are massive wings between which is nestled the fearsome head of a falcon. The entire body save the scaled feet is covered in feathers whose colors reflect those of the wild hunt to which the falconer is sworn. Fey creatures can escape the watchful eyes of a falconer, which conveys this information to a wild hunt through signals performed with the standard it carries. The voice of a falconer is unpleasant, even to other members of the hunt, so the creatures rarely speak except when only their quarry is present.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a falconer with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

FALCONER LORE

DC	INFORMATION
15	If you thought you'd be safe from a wild hunt in the sky, think again! Their falconers are expert scouts and assassins despite their size. They can hide in the sky until directly overhead, then plummet to the earth in a devastating attack. Watch your head!
20	Falconers carry the standard of their respective wild hunt, which carries a mysterious magic that ensures those nearby never miss a target. Thankfully, the damnable thing can be destroyed, which should be your top priority should the falconer's allies take up position near it.
26	While the surprise attacks of a falconer are powerful, they are dangerous to perform. Should the creature miss, it will slam into the ground at top speed—easy pickings for heroes ready to capitalize on the fey's misfortune.

TACTICS

The falconer is an unusual lurker. Whereas others of its kind need cover or darkness to hide, the falconer instead hides in plain sight thanks to its Sky Stalker feature. While the characters may notice a cloud acting strangely, that doesn't prevent the falconer from enabling its Sneak Attack feature, which is what really counts. Position the falconer above the most vulnerable character and use Power Dive. The damage of that attack combined with Sneak Attack should be more than enough to grievously injure a character. From there, the falconer can engage in more hit-and-run tactics, using Hunt's Standard to aid ground-bound allies. If you don't want to have a massive aerial battle, it is wise to employ many such allies to help the falconer get additional sneak attacks after the initial strike.

Easier Tactics — The characters should be well aware of the falconer's presence, even if they can't spot the thing. In the event they don't notice a suspicious cloud hanging overhead, only employ Power Dive against a character that won't be downed by some lucky dice rolls. Once the initial attack has landed, keep the falconer on the ground to give melee characters something to do. Hunt's Standard is a necessary aid in such

a situation, kept more manageable by a modest collection of allies to support the falconer on the ground.

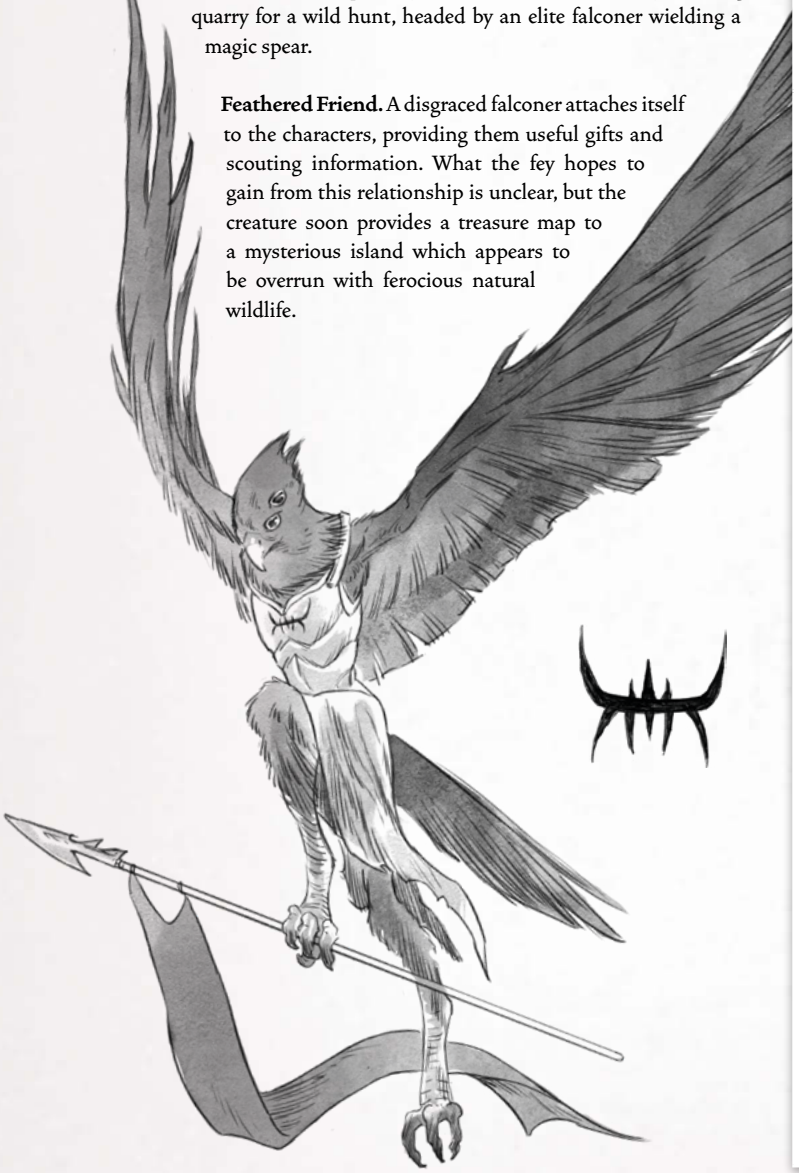
Harder Tactics — A strong ambush is key to a ruthless encounter. As soon as the Power Dive/Sneak Attack combo lands, fey allies should rush to support. The falconer should leave a Hunt's Standard on the battlefield before retreating back into the sky, waiting for another ideal chance to Power Dive. A good use of a Dash action should make this process even more deadlier.

PLOT HOOKS

Eye in the Sky. Wherever the characters go, a curious cloud follows. The falconer is watching the heroes, waiting for them to uncover an ancient relic, which it then intends to steal. Should the party prove uncooperative, the falconer is more than willing to call in support.

Death from Above. A squad of falconer assassins known as the thundercrashers hunts the characters. Should the heroes survive the assassination attempt, they will be considered worthy of being quarry for a wild hunt, headed by an elite falconer wielding a magic spear.

Feathered Friend. A disgraced falconer attaches itself to the characters, providing them useful gifts and scouting information. What the fey hopes to gain from this relationship is unclear, but the creature soon provides a treasure map to a mysterious island which appears to be overrun with ferocious natural wildlife.



FALCONER

Large fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 16
Hit Points 204 (24d10 + 72)
Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	23 (+6)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	8 (−1)

Saving Throws Dex +11, Con +8, Cha +4
Skills Acrobatics +11, Perception +7, Stealth +11
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Sylvan
Challenge 13 (5,000 XP)

TRAITS

Hunt's Standard (1/Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action if the falconer is on the ground, it can plant the standard of the wild hunt. The standard is an object with an AC of 14 and 40 hit points. If a fey creature within 15 feet of the standard that can see the standard makes an attack and misses, it instead hits.

Magic Resistance. The falconer has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

Sky Stalker. If the falconer ends its turns and is 500 feet or higher off the ground, it becomes heavily obscured by a thin layer of clouds until the start of its next turn. The clouds are magical and do not obstruct the falconer's vision.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The falconer deals an extra 21 (6d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the falconer that isn't incapacitated and the falconer doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The falconer makes two attacks, only one of which may be a Spear attack. The falconer may forgo making one of these attacks to instead take the Dash or Hide action.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, the falconer may grapple it (escape DC 16).

Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d12 + 6) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned. A creature so poisoned has its speed halved.

Power Dive. The falconer falls up to 500 feet and makes a single weapon attack at the end of the fall. If the falconer falls at least 200 feet and the attack hits, the falconer instead scores a critical hit, the target is knocked unconscious until the start of its next turn, and the falconer does not land prone nor takes damage from the fall. If the attack misses, the falconer lands prone and takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet it fell, to a maximum of 70 (20d6).

TREASURE

Falconers need little to eviscerate their prey, but all carry the precious standard of the wild hunt to which their service is pledged. While the standard is nothing more than a flag on a spear, to the mercurial fey there are few things more precious. The loss of such a standard is a devastating outcome for a wild hunt, which in turn goes to extraordinary lengths to retrieve it. Any falconer that loses this standard to a non-fey is disgraced until the item is recovered.

ECOLOGY

Falconers hate operating alone. They lack the courage to strike without backup, and even then, they are notoriously overcautious before striking. This paranoia is deserved, for should a falconer fail in its task as scout and assassin it brings terrific shame to a wild hunt. Inversely, daring acts performed by a falconer bring tremendous glory and entertainment to its allies. When not in the fey realm, falconers stay close to other fey, though they trust no one but other members of its wild hunt. One can expect betrayal and self-service from such a falconer, which holds itself to no moral standard or obligation other than its own.

HOUNDMASTER

Grim and dirty workers of cantankerous disposition, houndmasters keep the aggressive and dangerous beasts of the wild hunt in line, ensuring the prey is sufficiently panicked and the fey nobility kept safe. Each houndmaster is like a satyr that lost its battle with its monstrous body. Their bodies are covered in fur, with torsos sprouting a dozen gnarled, muscular arms. Their heads are always hidden beneath the skull of a deer, with only their luminous green eyes betraying the shape of their ugly heads. The prodigious strength of a houndmaster is necessary, for these fey keep a tight leash on their many unruly beasts. Their backs are always hunched beneath the weight of wilderness supplies, forcing them to lean on sturdy walking sticks for support.

The Houndmaster

Every expedition requires exceptional logistics, and these wild hunts are no different. The poor creatures known as houndmasters seem almost created for this purpose, their many arms hefting the ridiculously excessive needs of the fey nobility they service. What's even more impressive is the creature's ability to handle the many magical beasts a wild hunt employs. Dragons, monsters, or animals—all succumb to the beguiling influence of the houndmaster with startling ease. I asked Haloa how such an act was possible with a mere touch, to which his response was the usual "you–wouldn't–understand" look he is so fond of giving.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Soldier

Favors: Barbarians, Damage (Area of Effect), Druids, Strength (High), Wizards

Foils: Mobility (High), Monks, Rangers, Rogues, Stealth

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a houndmaster with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

HOUNDMASTER LORE

DC	INFORMATION
16	Houndmasters manage the beasts of the wild hunt. These can be nearly anything, but the most feared are the dreaded lantern hounds. The houndmaster is no slouch in combat, its many arms proving quite useful for collaring unruly creatures before bludgeoning them to death with an oaken staff.
21	A houndmaster is rarely encountered alone and uses its formidable magic to bolster its allies in battle. It can even spirit wounded creatures away from harm, healing their injuries by siphoning life from enemies.
27	The eyes of a houndmaster are everywhere. The creature can perceive all that its allies do, keeping tabs on its friends and on the wild hunt's prey. Slaying the houndmaster is the first critical step toward foiling such a hunt, as without their logistical support the fey are much easier to evade.

TACTICS

A houndmaster stands shoulder to shoulder with its allies and approaches battle with the goal of balancing being on the front lines with survival. Use the Cloak of the Wilds feature to keep the houndmaster away from the deadliest characters. It's important the fey keeps getting chances to land melee attacks, healing up its allies via its Feeding Frenzy feature. Collar and Chain can be a wonderful tool for locking down dangerous characters, providing the houndmaster and its allies with superior strategic positioning. Save Whystle for when the majority of the monsters are damaged, ensuring maximum effect. Empathic Touch rarely comes into play mid-combat, but it can be a great tool for providing the houndmaster with a formidable local ally against the characters.

Easier Tactics — Keep the number of allies the houndmaster has to fewer than five, with preferably only one of them being above a challenge rating of 5. This should allow for plenty of monsters with enough hit points to survive a few rounds without being too dangerous to ignore. The characters should have direct access to the houndmaster for most of the battle, particularly when it comes to their damage dealers. Don't use Collar and Chain on characters who lack magical teleportation or proficiency in Athletics, as there is little chance of escape without those benefits.

Harder Tactics — Use the houndmaster's considerable speed to move strategically between the front lines, utilizing its reach to avoid provoking opportunity attacks. The allies of the houndmaster should be a good mix of high damage and high health. The damage dealers should ideally be ranged, while the high health options give the houndmaster something to tank for it should things get dicey. Use four Collar and Chain attacks on the first round of combat to ensure the characters have little opportunity to outmaneuver your encounter.

PLOT HOOKS

Missing Pet. An aged houndmaster has lost his pet purple worm and needs it back soon for an upcoming hunt. The fey has placed illegible lost-and-found posters everywhere, but the problem isn't finding the worm—it's bringing it back to the houndmaster alive.

Endangered Species. A magical zoo is raided by a houndmaster, who steals many of the finest and rarest creatures. The zoo would very much like the return of their exhibits, and soon. The houndmaster plans to employ the creatures in an upcoming dangerous hunt, and it's nearly too late already.

The Dragon Whisperer. An especially talented houndmaster known as the dragon whisperer is on the hunt for new "hounds" for his kennels. At 50,000 gp an egg, it's a worthy enough offer to bolster the courage of the average poacher, much to the chagrin of nearby dragons.

TREASURE

The most valuable possessions in a houndmaster's care are its pets. While the kennels houndmasters maintain on the fey realm are vast, every "hound" is precious to the strange fey. Occasionally, a houndmaster is killed or a hound lost in the field. Such creatures are exceptionally well trained and are well conditioned to respond to commands. Making a meaningful connection with such a creature is both difficult and dangerous, requiring a successful DC 23 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to trigger the creature's conditioning. A failure instead triggers an aggressive response. However, most of the houndmaster's minions are sentient, with it being a virtuous act to free them of this conditioning. Doing so requires extensive therapy and rehabilitation, the details of which are best discussed with your DM and the manner of which varies from creature to creature.

HOUNDMASTER

Large fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor), 20 with Cloak of the Wilds
Hit Points 233 (31d10 + 63)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	17 (+3)	19 (+4)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +12, Dex+9, Con +10, Cha +7
Skills Animal Handling +16, Medicine +16, Nature +6, Perception +10
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages Sylvan
Challenge 18 (5,000 XP)

TRAITS

Cloak of the Wilds. The houndmaster's cloak gives it partial cover against enemy creatures (+2 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throw, included in statistics). Additionally, while wearing the clock the houndmaster moves through plants as though they were difficult terrain. If the houndmaster ends its turn inside a plant, it is immediately shunted to the nearest unoccupied space and takes 5 (1d10) force damage for every 5 feet it is shunted.

Eyes of the Hunt. The houndmaster can see through the eyes of willing friendly fey creatures within 1 mile of it. Creatures that are not hidden from at least one of these creatures are not hidden from the houndmaster.

Feeding Frenzy. When the houndmaster deals damage to a creature with a melee weapon attack, a friendly creature of its choice within 10 feet of it magically regains a number of hit points equal to half the damage dealt by the attack (rounded down).

Magic Resistance. The houndmaster has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The houndmaster makes four attacks, only two of which can be Staff attacks.

Collar and Chain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 40 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target is grappled (escape DC 20) and restrained. On each of its turns, the houndmaster may use a bonus action to pull creatures of its choice grappled by this attack 20 feet closer to it in a straight line. The houndmaster magically creates chains to make this attack and can hold up to ten chains in this manner (one for each free hand).

Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Empathic Touch (Recharge 5–6). The houndmaster touches a beast, dragon, fey, or monstrosity with an Intelligence of 6 or lower within reach, attempting a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check contested by the target's Wisdom (Insight). If the houndmaster wins the contest, the target is charmed by the houndmaster for 24 hours. This effect immediately ends if the houndmaster or one of its allies deals damage to the target.

Whystle (Recharge 5–6). The houndmaster blows on a magical whistle that can only be heard by fey creatures up to 1 mile away. Friendly fey creatures that hear the whistle gain 33 (6d10) temporary hit points, which last for 1 hour.

REACTIONS

Safeguard. As a reaction when a friendly creature the houndmaster can see within 120 feet of it is reduced to 0 hit points, the houndmaster can instead have it reduced to 1 hit point, and the creature is magically teleported to an unoccupied space within 20 feet of the houndmaster. If there is no eligible unoccupied space to which the creature can teleport, the teleportation effect fails.

ECOLOGY

When not engaged in wild hunts, houndmasters prowl the planes in search of new creatures to tame. While some races are happy to sell all manner of exotic beasts to a houndmaster, many are understandability not, forcing the fey into poaching and illegal trafficking to get what it wants. Presenting a fey lord with a new and exciting "hound" for a hunt is an honor each houndmaster longs for, even above its own life. Losing such valuable creatures while participating in a hunt brings shame upon the entire affair, often driving the responsible houndmaster into a psychotic rage. The fey field delights in such displays, viewing the resulting carnage as a pleasant spectacle worthy of more than a few friendly wagers.



FIELDIAN

With a galloping of hooves and flash of green steel, the vicious fieldians take to the hunt in pursuit of prey to slaughter. These haughty and cruel fey appear as horned elves adorned in formal hunting attire. At their side are mystical cavalry sabers fashioned from green steel, while upon each of their backs is slung an elegant longbow that sings with every arrow fired. One would almost call these fey beautiful if it weren't for their malevolent nature. Their speech is like song, using poetic words and flowery prose throughout the hunt. This veneer of nobility falls when a fieldian spots its prey. Atop steeds of magical mist, fieldians run down their quarry with unrivaled savagery, toying with their victims like a cat does with a mouse.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about a fieldian with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

FIELDIAN LORE

DC	INFORMATION
17	If there is a fieldian pursuing you, be afraid. The creatures conjure steeds from the mist, often beasts ideally suited to hunt down their quarry. While mounted fieldians are extremely dangerous, charging headlong into battle and inflicting ferocious carnage with their sabers.
22	Fieldians have an eye for battle, selecting their favorite opponent to be their quarry. This is no mere choice but a binding magical enchantment that allows the fieldian to strike the intended victim with greater precision. However, if you manage to frustrate or foil the fieldian, it can never again make you its quarry.
28	Few obstacles can halt a determined fieldian. The fey can easily pass through most magical barriers and obstacles. Thanks to their versatile steeds, fieldians can be nigh inescapable. Your best bet is to grab and hold on to the elusive fey or pepper them with ranged weapons until they yield.

TACTICS

A fieldian fights like a mounted combatant without any of the usual hassle. This even includes size, as the Mistlight Steed feature only improves the fey's statistics rather than providing a new creature. Hit and run is the essential strategy of a skirmisher, and this is especially true of a fieldian. You need some distance between the fieldian and the characters to make use of Deadly Charge, which when combined with Quarry is a recipe for some massive damage. Don't underestimate the fieldian's singing longbow. A cunning strategy is to spend a few turns keeping the fieldian at range before closing the gap with a formidable Dash action. Unlike other members of the wild hunt, fieldians have little need of allies, making for an ideal vanguard force.

Easier Tactics — The fieldian should not be mounted via its Mistlight Steed feature when battle begins. It should place Quarry on the character with the highest hit point maximum and focus all of its efforts on that target before moving on. Keep the fey in melee, provoking attacks of opportunity as it moves out to set up a Deadly Charge. This should provide plenty of chances to lay the hurt on the fieldian while still showing off the fey's signature moves.

Harder Tactics — Clever use of total cover is essential to a difficult fieldian encounter. The creature should hit and then move to cover at the end of its turn, forcing ranged characters and spellcasters to either ready actions or move into more favorable positions. The fieldian should almost always choose flight or burrow as its bonus movement option from Mistlight Steed. Burrow is especially effective when paired with the previous strategy, as its nigh impossible to get to a creature lurking underground.

PLOT HOOKS

Party Crashers. A village tavern is host to some unusual guests: a troupe of fieldians on their way to a forest ball. The fey have taken to drinking and general mischief, using each patron that walks through the doors as an opportunity to scout for worthy prey. With many guests driven off or vanishing mysteriously, the problem is quickly coming to a head the longer the fieldians linger.

The Laughing Knight. A fieldian enters a jousting tournament, calling itself the laughing knight. Too scared to refuse, the authorities allow the creature to compete, which in turn inflicts grievous injuries on its competitors. When the fey "accidently" takes the head off a fellow knight, a solution is sought to remove the fieldian from the tournament. An honorable method is preferred, but the desperate officials are willing to look the other way should things get messy.

FIELDIAN

Medium fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 18
Hit Points 427 (45d8 + 225)
Speed 30 ft. (60 ft. with Mistlight Steed)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	27 (+8)	21 (+5)	23 (+6)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +12, Wis +9, Cha +16
Skills Acrobatics +21, Intimidate +12, Perception +9, Performance +12
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Sylvan
Challenge 21 (20,000 XP)

TRAITS

Deadly Charge. Once per turn, if the fieldian moves at least 30 feet in a straight line toward a creature and then hits it with a melee weapon attack, the target must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or be critically hit by the attack.

Mistlight Steed. As a bonus action on each of its turns, the fieldian can generate a magical steed from mist and mount it. The steed appears as a Large beast equipped with the necessary barding to seat a rider. The steed is an illusion that is solid only to the fieldian, granting it the following benefits until the fieldian dismisses the effect as a bonus action, is forcibly dismounted, uses the ability to conjure another such steed, or takes a short or long rest.

- The fieldian's base walking speed is increased by 30 feet, and it gains either a burrowing, swimming, or flying speed equal to its walking speed (fieldian's choice).
- The fieldian has advantage on attack rolls against Medium or smaller creatures.
- As a reaction when it takes damage, the fieldian can instead take half damage and destroy its steed, ending the effect.

Quarry. At the start of each of its turns, the fieldian can magically designate a creature it can see within 300 feet of it as its quarry. When the fieldian hits its quarry with a weapon attack, it deals an additional 14 (4d6) damage. The fieldian can only have one quarry at a time. If the fieldian designates a new quarry or does not hit its current quarry with a weapon attack within 1 hour, the effect ends and the target can never again be the fieldian's quarry.

Spell Resistance. The fieldian takes half damage from spells and has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fieldian makes two attacks. The fieldian can forgo making one of these attacks to instead use the Dash action.

Emerald Saber. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d6 + 8) slashing damage and 7 (2d6) radiant damage.

Singing Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d8 + 8) piercing damage plus 11 (2d10) thunder damage.

Tally Ho! (Recharge 5–6). The fieldian emits a raucous hunting cry. Until the end of its next turn, the fieldian is immune to difficult terrain from spells, and when it encounters a spell effect that would prevent its movement (such as a *wall of stone* or *forcecage*), it can immediately attempt a Charisma saving throw, the DC of which is equal to 10 + the spell's level. On a successful saving throw, the spell immediately ends. On a failed saving throw, the fieldian's movement is prevented and it cannot use this feature on that spell effect again.

REACTIONS

Wyld Guard. As a reaction when the fieldian attempts a saving throw other than a Dexterity saving throw, it may add its Dexterity modifier to the result of the saving throw and all other saving throws using that ability score until the end of that turn.

The Test. A fieldian challenges the characters to complete a rigorous obstacle course. Should they accept, the fieldian will reward them with a small arsenal of magical weapons. This generous arrangement is but an appetizer to fatten the characters up for a wild hunt, one the fieldian and its master are eager to enjoy.

TREASURE

The refined hunter's uniform of a fieldian is a master-crafted outfit of impeccable taste, style, and skill. While each uniform is perfectly tailored to fit its wearer, those who earn a fieldian's favor may be blessed with the opportunity to have such a piece fashioned for them. Such a uniform is one of a kind, fit for any high-class affair of nearly any race, and the envy of all with a passion for fashion. Collectors gladly pay a fortune for a fieldian-made outfit intended for a humanoid (the fieldian's own outfits shrivel away in the hands of humanoids), and they can be refitted with a successful DC 28 Dexterity (Weaver's Tools) check.

ECOLOGY

Unlike their wild hunt brethren, fieldians are highly social and fond of mortals. This affection is extremely patronizing and cruel. These fey care nothing for the thoughts and feelings of mortals and gladly toy with their lives in a variety of thoughtlessly punishing ways. Aggressively social, fieldians seek out company at every opportunity. They are rarely encountered alone, often surrounded by lesser fey or, in rare circumstances, other fieldians. The sound of a fancy party and high society is sure to attract a nearby fieldian, which takes perverse joy in exercising bizarre fey customs and treading mercilessly on local norms. When on the hunt, fieldians are a raucous bunch: laughing, drinking, and swapping stories nonstop.







The Fieldian

I've seen a demon kill for fun. It's not a pretty sight, but this casual cruelty pales in comparison to the elaborate, refined, and pretentious malevolence of the fieldians of the wild hunt. Don't let their casual resemblance to elves fool you. I would sooner dine with a fiend of the pit then break bread with these fey. My first encounter with them was when I was studying the last member of an endangered species of dragon. The fieldians rode it down, dismembered the poor creature, and skinned it alive. That wasn't even the worst part. It was the laughter: like children playing a harmless game.

– Talien Vos Karven

Classification: Skirmisher

Favors: Fighters, Grappling, Range (Long), Rangers, Rogues

Foils: Cover (Magical), Monks, Sorcerers, Spells (Damage), Warlocks

ERLKING

Legends tell of a grand leader of the wild hunt, a fey so fearsome that only a handful of lucky creatures throughout recorded history managed to escape its deadly skill. These tales are false, hopeful rumors planted by malicious fey to ensure a good hunt. None have escaped the peerless coursing skills of an erlking. Their truesilver weapons cut neither flesh nor bone, instead wounding the souls of their unfortunate prey. Those who behold an erlking bear witness to perfection of form. Every inch of the fey's humanoid body is taught muscle covered in leathery skin, its many callouses and scars earned from an eternity hunting the most dangerous game. Erlkings are elflike in their details. Silvery hair parts where massive elk horns sprout from the fey's head, while its eyes glow a vibrant green. Erlkings rarely speak, but their voices are surprisingly soft, full of respect and a cruel patience.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about an erlking with an Intelligence (Nature) ability check.

ERLKING LORE

DC	INFORMATION
19	Erlkings only bother to hunt the most dangerous prey. Their truesilver spears spare the flesh and scar the soul, leaving behind perfect corpses and no hope of resurrection. What's worse, erlkings are rarely alone, mustering a full wild hunt lasting a dreaded 12 hours.
24	Once you have been trapped within the misty confines of a wild hunt, your only hope is survival. Attacking an erlking is near suicide; daring to even look at the fey could find you cursed into impotent ruin. Just survive until dawn and you are free to go.
30	Witnesses to an erlking's might speak of its extraordinary hunting skills. As stealthy as a shadow, cunning as a dragon, and mighty as a giant, an erlking has no weakness or vulnerability to exploit. They can even dissolve magic with a touch, ensuring no prey is beyond their reach.

TACTICS

An erlking is a lurker, soldier, and brute mixed into one fearsome whole. As the leaders of the wild hunt, an erlking should almost never be encountered alone unless in truly extraordinary circumstances. Additionally, an erlking has 12 hours to complete its hunt. It tracks, stalks, and observes the characters before closing in for the kill. This is a sport hunt, so the erlking wants to have as much fun as possible, making full use of any allies and seeing just how cunning the prey (in this case the characters) can be. The creature's most powerful trait is its Crown of the Wild. This nasty effect can reduce creatures into worthless wrecks as their dice produce continuously dismal results. Remember, curses last until effects that specifically target them (such as *remove curse*) intervene. Beyond this the erlking is fairly simple. Its attacks are straightforward and powerful, cutting down creatures thanks to its Soul-scarring feature. Remember, a creature returned to life retains any reduction to its hit point maximum, leaving resurrection a poor solution to the fey's impressive damage.

The Erlking

Fey lords are no stranger to me. I've dined in the Gloaming Court, swapped stories with the Queen of Air and Darkness, and crossed flutes with the Illustrated Prince. Unfortunately, these good relationships proved useless when researching the dreaded lords of the wild hunt. Even a conversation with Baba Yaga set up by Ionia proved frustratingly cryptic. A palpable aura of fear surrounded any mention of these erlkings. While I'm loath to shy away from the pursuit of knowledge, a part of me feels pursuing the matter further will prove catastrophically dangerous to my career.

– Talien Vos Karven



Classification: Elite

Favors: Barbarians, Hit Points (High), Paladins, Perception (High), Rogues

Foils: Bards, Clerics, Druids, Healing (Magical), Sight

Easier Tactics — The erlking and his entourage should operate openly, easily heard and avoided for the majority of the wild hunt. Give the characters a chance to kill or drive off the erlking's many allies before a direct confrontation. The erlking should be focused on one particular characters as its prey. Clever characters will be able to shield that ally from the erlking's attacks, taking just enough hits from the fey to not feel ignored. Let the characters flee without an immediate chase. The erlking lives for the hunt, so taking some time to enjoy the pursuit is perfectly acceptable, even if time is running short. Note as a creature with a challenge rating of 30 and one with the TPK brand, the erlking is by no means an easy foe to kill, and success should be measured by how well the characters survived the hunt.

Harder Tactics — This is one hell of an encounter. Dozens of fey should be employed in the hunt, with members of the Wild Hunt monster group featured most prominently. No fewer than eight lantern hounds, one falconer, one houndmaster, and three fieldians should be present alongside the erlking. These allies should strike first, with the erlking hoping to bleed the characters dry over the course of the night. Just when things seem hopeless, the erlking should take to the field alone. It should savor the kill, letting the characters use up the last of their resources in a vain attempt to survive, slowly picking them off one by one. When it's all over, the erlking drinks deeply from its *spiritskin* in a toast to the characters' skills and courage.

PLOT HOOKS

Exclusive Invitation. The characters receive a formal letter from an erlking, inviting them to join in a wild hunt, an invitation they would be wise to not refuse. The prey is an ancient red dragon, but the erlking leading the expedition is keen on determining whether the characters would be worthy prey as well.

Dethroned. An erlking is cast out of his wild hunt and forced into exile. Humiliated and eager for vengeance, the erlking is looking to build a new

field to hunt the usurper. Valiant heroes willing to fight alongside the feylord are promised riches beyond mortal comprehension.

Huntsfall. A wild hunt will come for the characters in 1 month. An erlking sends an envoy telling them the date and suggests they use this time to get their affairs in order. The heroes have a difficult choice: plan a strategy to survive the hunt or journey to the fey realm and commit preemptive regicide.

TREASURE

All erlkings carry a loathsome magical item known as a *spiritskin*. While the monstrous fey mostly hunt for sport, there is one other small pleasure in which they indulge: consuming the souls of their victims. A successful wild hunt involving an erlking sees each participating fey drinking deeply from a *spiritskin*, its bag engorged by the liquid souls of the erlking's many victims.

Spiritskin

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

While the *spiritskin* is on your person, when you deal damage to a creature with a weapon attack, its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage dealt. This reduction lasts for 12 hours. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by this reduction dies instantly.

Additionally, as a reaction when a creature you can see within 60 feet of you is slain, you can transfer the creature's soul into the *spiritskin*. A creature whose soul is trapped within the *spiritskin* cannot be returned to life without a direct act of divine intervention or by freeing it. Each soul within the *spiritskin* serves as an infinite source of water, flavored by the many unique aspects of its life that gave its soul shape. Destroying the *spiritskin* frees all souls trapped within.

ECOLOGY

Erlkings are extremely rare and are most commonly observed while on their wild hunts. It takes an extraordinary creature to bring forth these powerful fey, one that is mighty, cunning, and exceptional among its species. In the fey realm, erlkings dwell in secluded hunting lodges, their many allies and servants bringing rumors of worthy prey to investigate. These homes are magically concealed and nigh impossible to find unless the erlking wants to be found. These fey only show their malevolent side while hunting. To both their allies and innocents, erlkings are respectful and refined, suffering no disrespect or insult without challenge. Erlkings view others of their kind as worthy rivals, with each competing for centennial title of First Hunter. How erlkings come to be is a mystery, though it is believed all of them are related by blood, descended from either divine stock or an ancient, long-forgotten line of fey.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

When an erlking appears on a plane other than the fey realm, it can choose to enchant the area around which it appears with powerful magic, proclaiming a wild hunt to be in session. A wild hunt lasts for 12 hours and creates the following effects within 10 miles of where the erlking appears:

- Creatures cannot magically teleport or travel between the planes in the affected area.
- A dense fog saturates the area. The senses of all creatures other than fey are reduced to 60 feet and are blinded beyond that radius. Creatures with truesight can instead see 120 feet.
- Creatures of the erlking's choice in the affected area are declared to be the prey of the wild hunt. If the prey is able to survive the hunt for 24 hours, it can never again be affected in a harmful manner by the erlking.

If the erlking is slain, these effects end immediately.



Erlking

Large fey, neutral evil

Armor Class 24 (natural armor)
Hit Points 1,000 (87d10 + 522)
Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	21 (+5)	23 (+6)	19 (+4)	26 (+8)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +14, Con +15, Int +13, Cha +15
Skills Athletics +18, Nature +13, Perception +17, Stealth +23, Survival +17
Damage Immunities cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 27
Languages Sylvan
Challenge 30 (155,000 XP)

Traits

Crown of the Wild. When a creature within 60 feet of the erlking starts its turn and can see the erlking and the erlking isn't incapacitated and can see the creature, the erlking can force it to attempt a DC 25 Charisma saving throw, becoming cursed on a failure. While so cursed, whenever the target makes an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check and rolls a 16 or higher, it instead rolls a 15. Each additional time a cursed creature fails this saving throw, the curse grows in power. On a second failure, when the creature would roll an 11 or higher in this manner, it instead rolls a 10. On a third failure, when the creature would roll a 6 or higher in this manner, it instead rolls a 5. On a fourth failure, when a creature would roll a 2 or higher in this manner, it instead rolls a 1.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see the erlking and is frightened until the start of its next turn. While frightened in this manner, a creature must spend all of its movement on each of its turns to move away from the erlking by the safest possible route. If the creature looks at the erlking in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the Charisma saving throw.

Mythic Resistance. When the erlking fails a saving throw, it can expend one of its unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The erlking deals an extra 21 (6d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the erlking isn't incapacitated and the erlking doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Soul-scarring. The erlking's weapons leave no visible injury, instead injuring the soul of its target. When an erlking deals damage to a creature which possesses a soul with a weapon attack, the target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage dealt. This reduction lasts until removed by a *wish* spell or until 12 hours have passed. A creature whose hit point maximum is reduced to 0 by this effect dies instantly, and if the erlking is within 120 feet of the target when the creature dies, it may use its reaction to transfer the target's soul to its *spiritskin*.

Actions

Multiattack. The erlking makes three attacks. The erlking may forgo making one of these attacks to instead use the Hide or Misty Step action.

Hunting Knife. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (2d10 + 9) slashing damage.

Truesilver Spear. *Melee* or *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 15 ft. or range 60/12,000 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (2d12 + 9) piercing damage plus 36 (8d8) cold damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 25 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the start of its next turn.

Hunting Horn (Recharge 5–6). The erlking sounds a massive hunting horn which can be heard by creatures up to 10 miles away. Friendly fey creatures that can hear the horn are emboldened for 1 hour. When a fey creature so emboldened makes an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check and rolls a 10 or lower, it instead rolls an 11.

Enemy creatures of the erlking's choice that can hear the horn must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or be disheartened for 1 hour. A creature so disheartened is vulnerable to damage dealt by fey. At the end of each minute an affected creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success.

Misty Step. The erlking magically teleports to an unoccupied space it can see within 30 feet.

Naturalize. The erlking touches a spell or magical effect within reach, ending it immediately.

Legendary Actions

The erlking can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The erlking regains spent legendary actions at the start of each of its turns.

Hide. The erlking uses the Hide action.

Return. The erlking's Truesilver Spear magically appears in its hand.

Strike. The erlking makes a weapon attack.

Find the Center (Costs 2 Actions). The erlking studies a creature it can see within 120 feet of it. The first hit the erlking scores against the target with a weapon attack before the end of its next turn is instead a critical hit.

Naturalize (Costs 2 Actions). The erlking uses its Naturalize action.

Appendix

FINDING THE PERFECT MONSTER

In this section you will find all the monsters in the book, sorted by Group, Favors, and Foils. The "Group" table is alphabetized on the monster's Group, whereas the "Favors" and "Foils" tables are both ordered alphabetically by their Keywords (Area-of-Effect, Bards, Fire (Damage), etc.).

For a listing of monsters by Challenge, consult the table in the introduction.

MONSTERS BY GROUP

GROUP	MONSTER	CLASSIFICATION	TYPE	CHALLENGE	PAGE
Abhorrors	Bone Splinter	Lurker	Undead	10	14
Abhorrors	Tangle of Limbs	Brute	Undead	14	16
Abhorrors	Voided Soul	Brute	Undead	16	18
Acrylic Oozes	Primary Ooze	Brute	Ooze	10	20
Acrylic Oozes	Secondary Ooze	Brute	Ooze	15	22
Acrylic Oozes	Opalescent Ooze	Controller	Ooze	20	25
Bloodmoon Wolven	Everpup	Controller	Fey	9	29
Bloodmoon Wolven	Quillwolf	Skirmisher	Fey	12	31
Bloodmoon Wolven	Matron of the Hunter's Moon	Controller	Fey	16	34
Centinels	Autumnal Arborian	Artillery	Plant	11	36
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