

PATHFINDER[®]

LOST OMENS

MONSTERS OF MYTH

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Paizo Inc.
7120 185th Ave NE, Ste 120
Redmond, WA 98052-0577

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This book refers to several other Pathfinder products, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available for free at paizo.com/prd.

APG

Advanced Player's Guide

SoM

Secrets of Magic





INTRODUCTION

Without legendary monsters, there are no legendary heroes. While humanoid villains and forces of nature provide plenty of challenges for aspiring heroes, their surest path to prowess, power, and reputation hinges on successfully vanquishing fabled monsters. A hero might battle countless undead hordes, thwart ruthless plots, or unmask political corruption for decades without rising above the ability or notice that mark a capable adventurer. If they seek to excel and rise to the status of myth themselves, they could do no better than to seek out a creature of legend.

Such a daring exploit is, necessarily, easier said than done. For one thing, finding these creatures can be a daunting challenge on its own. Their very existence can be a matter of conjecture, as often the only evidence is scattered among bardic tales, children's songs, scraps of letters, and old poetic traditions. Perhaps the stirring performance of an impassioned bard provides knowledge and ignites the will of a hero to seek out a fabled foe. Perhaps they first glean insights from heeding the hushed whispers of townsfolk, or from examining moldering tomes in forgotten archives. Perhaps they must seek far afield for a reclusive sage who understands a singular weakness. Tracking down and preparing to meet a monster of myth is often a storied adventure in its own right.

Legendary monsters don't make their own legends—their victims do. In a fundamental way, these monsters are always created by the world around them. A swath of destruction or a devastated town commands profound, visceral attention. The sudden annihilation of a generations-old family or a long-established guild can haunt a community for decades. Putting a face to this devastation focuses fears and, in the process, helps to limit them. Events or actions that weren't actually connected become attributed to a single, powerful being. Of course, the being may indeed be that powerful and vicious. Or, bathed in the protective swirls of myth, the creature may become as powerful as its tales claim.

Few monsters are truly legendary. The vast majority of even the named, noteworthy, and unique monsters on Golarion are not so, regardless of their strength, size, tactics, or longevity. After all, the process by which monsters of myth gain the notoriety that elevates them from a simple menace to the status of local folklore—or worldwide legend—is not a simple one. While cunning, bloodthirst, an instinct for terror, or even just an imposing silhouette may first draw the attention of local communities or travelers, not every such instance brings fame. A local predator quickly dispatched doesn't command the

sustained awe needed for a creature to achieve legendary status. The monster must win, evade, survive, and leave evidence. The stories must be told, retold, elaborated, and passed along. When the actual sightings are few and far between, the gaps become spaces for fertile imaginations to roam, and the tales gain a life of their own.

Monsters of myth are thus a mirror to the societies that create their tales and spread their fame. They reflect that culture's fears and grow from them, whether knowingly or not. Some of these creatures are truly the craven horrors that the myths depict. Yet others, perhaps, are not so loathsome. Instead, they may simply pursue ends that put them at odds with humanoid societies or cherished moralities. They may follow creeds of their own with unerring dedication, regardless of the cost. Still others, utterly oblivious to their effects on lesser creatures, and may be shocked to learn that they have acquired the moniker of monster.

As such, the creatures detailed here aren't all incarnations of evil to serve as adversarial foils for aspiring heroes. Some are beyond morality, and a few may even be beyond comprehension. And some may, in fact, have something to teach the heroes. Perhaps this is a moral outlook or some esoteric knowledge—or perhaps it's a sobering lesson on how humanoid societies push that which they do not understand into becoming the monstrous.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book provides an in-depth portrayal of twenty notable creatures. Each one has a name, a history, and a place that defines it and makes it unique. Each one is entwined with the fabric of Golarion, shaping one of the corners of the world. Poems, songs, letters, folktales, and other documents from those who have encountered each legendary creature provide insights into how the creature thinks and interacts. The creature's strengths, weaknesses, and motivations come through, sometimes clearly and sometimes in hints or contradictions. Myths and exaggerations also color these accounts, showing how deeply these creatures touch hearts and minds. In other cases, contradictions point to the variety of the creature's behavior, which might stretch over generations of humanoid lives or across differing nations. Each entry includes recommendations for GMs on how to use the creatures as part of campaigns at various tiers of play.

Following these descriptions is a statblock for each creature. The statblock contains all the information necessary to run that creature as a legendary adversary for a group of heroes. That doesn't mean that every creature is a high-level monster, however. The creatures presented here represent a variety of levels and abilities, with many suited for encounters by lower-level parties. Furthermore, several creatures are presented with variant statblocks that provide a way to adapt that creature for encounters with heroes at higher or lower levels. Some entries also include notable treasures, rewards, or historical tidbits. Variant rules and ways of tying player characters to these monsters round out the options presented for bringing these monsters to life in a variety of campaigns.

OTHER LEGENDARY MONSTERS

The storied continents of Golarion hold more myths and mysteries than a single tome ever could. A number of other creatures of legend are listed below.

Amasseln: A colossal, two-headed, centaur-like creature, this guardian of the lobarian forest has the heads and torso of a stone giant attached to an oversized moose body. Rarely deigning to discuss matters with anyone but himself, Amasseln roams great distances to vanquish threats to the health and safety of the forest.

The First Owlbear: The result of arcane experimentation in ages past, the First Owlbear still roams the forests of Avistan. With an owl's head atop a feathered, bear-shaped body, this implacable, ornery, and far-ranging predator is also remarkably fecund. The First Owlbear travels with an ever-changing family of mates and offspring, comprised of bears, giant owls, and other owlbears.

Glisensyr: This sentient glacier menaces travelers through the Kodar Mountains, hiding in plain sight in mountain passes. Said to be the unintended spawn of infighting among Irrisen's winter witches, Glisensyr's motives remain inscrutable, but it seems to delight in triggering avalanches, trapping hunters, and generally bedeviling those who pass its way.

Golokango: A thousand years ago, this demonic jungle spirit sorely vexed denizens across the Mwangi Expanse, blighting the land and harvesting souls in service of the demon-lord Angazhan. With power over air and water, he could conjure whirlwinds, desiccate rivers, and destroy trees. Now imprisoned inside Ranage's Circle, he patiently plots his freedom.

Gulgamodh: A gargantuan construct guardian of Absalom made centuries ago, Gulgamodh tumbled into a sinkhole that opened up following an earthquake. Its right arm, which protruded above the ground, became the focal point of local beautification efforts, and Titan's Fountain was born. Recently, heroic efforts raised Gulgamodh again to provide timely aid.

Juggerloathe: The spawn of a massive bulette and Lamashtu's herald Yethazmari, this massive, spiked creature weighs over 100 tons and stretches 50 feet from its enormous mouth to its cobra-like tail. Having terrorized the denizens of Belkzen for centuries, it will lie dormant for decades, then ravage an area, swallowing entire villages and leaving only undead.

Old Murdermaw: A giant red snapper lurking in the depths of the Varisian Gulf, Old Murdermaw is rumored to have lived for centuries. With a rare predatory drive and a taste for humanoid flesh, Old Murdermaw has been known to swipe a sailor—or a sailor's leg—off any low-lying vessel adrift at night.

Tryg: This small robot moves throughout Numeria on rolling treads and gazes out through a single eye—large, round, and yellow—that stretches directly from its body. Clever and curious, it can use its three-fingered hands on four spindly arms, along with its integrated tools, to craft, disable, or cut through almost anything.

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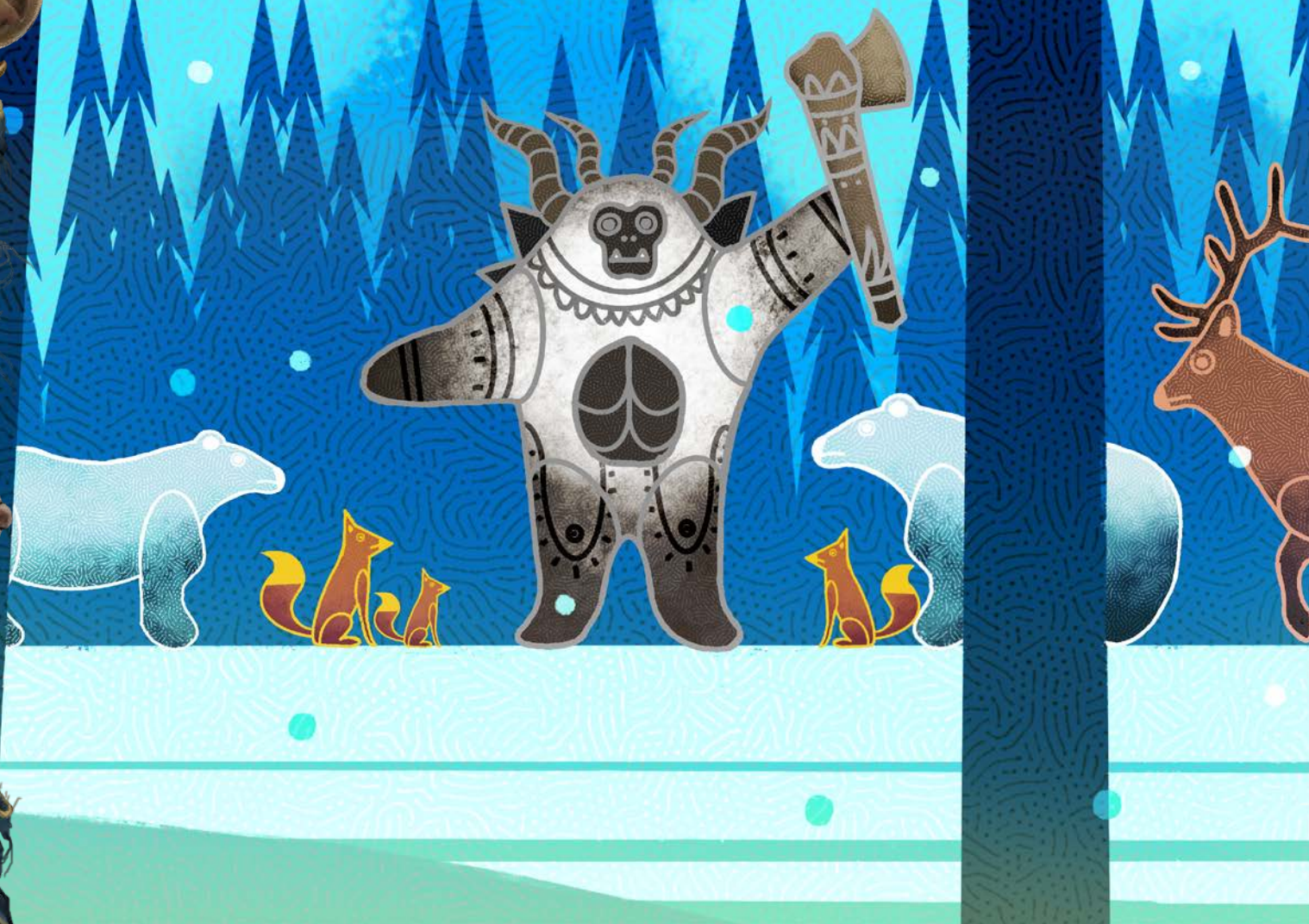
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AINAMUUREN

“It was a terrifying beast! Covered in a thick, snowy fur and standing on two legs. You could say it almost looked like a person, but it stood taller than an elk and had a ferocious set of fangs!”

“It was a yeti you saw.”

“No, it couldn’t be a yeti. It didn’t move with that... frightening ferocity. No, it moved slowly, and with intent. It seemed almost sad as it walked. I moved closer and saw that it was covered in markings, like magic writing or the tattoos that Ulfen bear. When it heard me move, it turned in my direction. I couldn’t tell if it saw me, but it let out a deep huff that sounded like a bear’s growl. That’s when I fled. Now that I think about it, I don’t believe it meant to attack me. I think it just wanted to be left alone.”

—Malno Frost-Bound, recalling a failed hunt

I am Ainamuuren. My people are the saumen kar, though such was not always our name. Once, long ago, we were proud and foolish and free. We gamboled in the snow and shaped ice into our likeness, without fear of the dangers yet to come. We made tools stronger than steel from the hearts of glaciers, and folk traveled many miles to behold our wonders. But that was long ago. Let me tell you the story of my people: who we were, who we are, and what we shall leave behind when we are gone.

In a time before time, before the stars rained from the heavens and the world was torn asunder, we walked among humans and elves under a different name, though even then we were few. The deepest snows and mightiest glaciers were ours, and few protested our claim to them. Our flesh was unmarked by the brands that every one of us now bears, and those from all corners of the world would seek our guidance and protection when crossing the northern ice. This was our way, since time immemorial.

Then came the day that humans call "Earthfall." As continents sank beneath the waves and stars fell from the sky like burning tears, the ice beneath our feet cracked and tore, rent asunder. The sky grew dark, and we lost many summers before the sun returned once again. Bubbling filth poured forth from under the ice, and when it touched the flesh of elf or human, it brought death, corruption, and then undeath. We wept for our neighbors, but the worst was yet to come. The corruption from beneath the ice could not harm us, and the pitiful humans, bereft of reason and reduced to little more than tar-covered zombies, could not defeat us in battle. Then the whispers came.

Each night, as the stars appeared and the moon rose, the whispers would begin unbidden. They would speak grim truths to us, no matter how hard we tried to ignore their susurrations. "The humans have brought this nightmare upon you! The ice rots and withers beneath their blighted footsteps." We knew these words were true, just as we knew that they were not spoken to us out of any sense of benevolence or preservation. The humans were fleeing to the south, trying to escape this darksome scourge, and the elves had all vanished, nowhere to be found. So what purpose did these whispers possibly serve? What goal could the whisperer have to speak ill of those it had already laid low?

My mother's mother's mother's mother's mother, Aktamuuren, knew that this could not be allowed to simply continue. That we must find the whisperer, and must demand of it answers. She and the bravest and most noble of our people undertook a great quest, carving their way through undead hordes, slogging through seeping corruption, and always, always surrounded by the screaming of the ice, grown treacherous and untrustworthy due to the darkness spreading beneath it.

Finally, Aktamuuren reached the source of the fateful whispers, and found it to be the source of the corruption, as well. Who or what it was, not even I know. All I know is the words passed down through my family, from mother to child, every generation since that fateful meeting: "To see it is to know a perversion that even death cannot ever defeat. To hear its voice from between its jaws is to hear the ending of all things. It could not harm us, for it came of us, and it wanted us to join it."

Aktamuuren did not succumb to the corruption, and the noble warriors who accompanied her would not have their hearts turned to wickedness. Their battle against it began on the first day of Everdark, when the sun sinks below the horizon and does not rise again for four cycles of the moon. That is how long Aktamuuren and the warriors of my people fought. When the sun rose again, only Aktamuuren and the three greatest warriors of the age remained, still defiant against that which sought to consume them. I have long wondered at this; did not Aktamuuren say it could not harm us for it came of us? I have had many years to ponder this, and I have come to the conclusion that the battle fought was one of will and not of ice or steel. I believe that all those who fell must have, eventually, opened their hearts to the whisperer's call and were slain by their brothers and sisters before the corruption could take hold.



SHRINE TO SAUMEN KAR

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Whatever the truth of that conflict, as the sun finally rose once more, Aktamuuren and the other three survivors made a pact. They called out with one voice to the god of our people, begging for a way to stop the whisperer and its corruption before any more lives could be lost. Our god answered, and its curse has bound us ever since.

Our bodies were marked as a sign of our pact. The name of our people, and our very language, were wiped from existence, sacrificed as part of that same pact. We were given a new name, “saumen kar”. I do not know where this name came from, but my mother believed it to be the very last words ever spoken of the first language of our people, and meant “bound in ice.” She never told me how she could know such a thing, or why just those two words out of an entire language would survive its utter destruction, but it does seem fitting that a god who would answer its people’s prayers with such a curse would leave them with nothing of themselves but that final, singular reminder. No one has prayed to that ancient god ever since—how could we? The god’s name was lost along with the rest of our language, and soon all other knowledge of it followed, save for those final acts that formed the pact, etched into it forever. I wonder if the god knew the sacrifice it made in cursing us, whether it accepted its oblivion willingly.

The whisperer was buried deep beneath the ice, its corruption safely locked away within. The curse, the markings, served a crucial purpose: the countless rune fragments, etched upon our souls and flesh, formed the whisperer’s prison. All those who had been corrupted by its dark, creeping slime were drawn to it all at once and then sealed away inside that same prison, as the corruption seeped ever deeper into their beings. For the saumen kar, we were given a prison of our own, but one without any bars or walls. The curse brought us great power, gifting us with magic and instilling a cold so deep in our bones that only the deadliest flames could bring us harm. Yet, it also shortened our lives.

Aktamuuren, forger of the pact, prisoner of the whisperer, was over 3,000 years old when she died. Her daughter did not see a third millennium. Worse, as each generation passed, the runes upon their children grew. I now know the truth: as my people have dwindled, the runes upon our bodies have gathered together. I believe that I bear most, perhaps all, of those ancient glyphs. And I am tired and worn. I have yet to reach my three-hundredth year, but I fear I will not see a four-hundredth. Even three hundred seems terribly far away. When I die, will one of my kin take on this burden and receive the runes? Or am I the last? And if I am all that remains of my people, what does that mean for this world we have protected in isolation for nearly 10,000 years? Will the final closing of the runes seal that ancient prison once and for all, or will the whisperer be freed once more, unleashed on a world without my kind to stand in its way, alongside whatever

twisted remains of the corrupted yet dwell within its frozen prison?

I do not know the true nature of my people’s curse and our pact, or even the face of the ancient god who answered our most desperate prayer. I have entrusted these final secrets to you, Seshu, my one and only friend. If I die, and the whisperer awakens, it will be the Erutaki who face it first, and my heart screams for what may befall you. You are strong and wise, Seshu, but you are young, and by our people’s reckoning, you will be so even when you pass from this world. It is not in my nature to dwell among your people. I am tired and easily wearied by the chattering of humans. But I will not fail my most ancient trust, and you are far more tolerable than most of your kind. I shall entrust all that I know to you and your children, Seshu. May the knowledge prove only a blessing, and may the curse die with me.

THE LAST SAUMEN KAR?

Ainamuuren may be one of the last saumen kar alive on Golarion. The runic “tattoos” covering his body are intricate and show no obvious gaps, though it’s possible that they are yet incomplete; only by comparing them to another saumen kar could anyone be certain, and not even Ainamuuren has seen another of his kind in nearly a century. If any more even still exist, they are most likely living deep in the heart of the Crown of the World, hidden amidst the most inhospitable weather and bone-chilling cold Golarion’s natural world has to offer. Even magic like *endure elements* can’t provide protection from the temperatures in such a place, leaving any ill-advised travelers to an inevitable, frozen demise.

There is an ancient technique that allows the saumen kar to pass on the responsibilities of their pact and curse, though to date few saumen kar have been willing to share its existence with anyone else due to the terrible price involved. Over time, this power grows, granting the mortal some of the magical abilities of a saumen kar and eventually imposing physical changes that make them look like a hybrid of their original ancestry and a saumen kar. Most saumen kar have long refused to befriend anyone outside of their species for fear of drawing someone into a curse that comes with responsibilities and burdens they can’t possibly understand. Saumen kar who have formed connections with members of other ancestries often did so either out of great need, desperation, or loneliness.

Since he may be the last of his kind, Ainamuuren believes that sharing the knowledge of this technique to be the best course of action. If his death would seal the prison, he knows that passing the pact on to those of other ancestries would not jeopardize that possibility, but if his death would instead end the pact and free the whisperer from its prison, the spread of these techniques may be the only thing that can prevent the catastrophe that would unfold.

THE CURSEBEARER

Like all saumen kar, Ainamuuren is a large, muscular humanoid with large horns atop his head. Thick, white fur covers everywhere except his face, hands, and feet, which reveal darker skin beneath the fur, covered in an intricate pattern of stylized runes. Unlike other saumen kar, Ainamuuren possess not two but four long, curving horns, jutting from his head like a primal crown. The large, magical greataxe he carries bears intricate, stylized runic patterns that greatly resemble those carved upon his flesh, with the same sharp focus on angular lines and triangular shapes.

AINAMUUREN

CREATURE 14

UNIQUE CN LARGE COLD HUMANOID

Perception +25; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Erutaki, Jotun

Skills Athletics +28, Medicine +24, Nature +26, Stealth +24 (+25 in forests and snow)

Str +8, **Dex** +4, **Con** +5, **Int** +2, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +0

Items +2 greater striking greataxe

Frostbite Runes Ainamuuren is marked by the runes of the saumen kar, a gift tied to their ancient curse. Ainamuuren gains a +1 status bonus to saving throws against evil and necromancy spells and effects (indicated below). He can sense the presence of evil undead as a pervasive taste of oily corruption in the air. This is a vague sense that allows him to know when such a creature is within 60 feet, though he can't precisely pinpoint their location with this sense. This sense also extends to living creatures who have the negative healing ability, like dhampir.

Snowblind Ainamuuren can Hide and Sneak during even light snowfall, even if it wouldn't be thick enough to normally grant concealment.

AC 33; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +22, **Will** +27;

+1 status bonus to saves against evil and necromancy spells and effects

HP 259; **Immunities** cold; **Resistances** fire 20

Blizzard Evasion ➤ **Trigger** Ainamuuren takes at least 40 points of physical damage from a single attack, and he isn't currently disincorporated; **Effect** Ainamuuren disincorporates into a whirling blizzard for 3 rounds. During this time, he gains resistance 10 to physical damage and weakness 10 to force damage. He gains a fly speed of 40 feet, but the only action he can take is to Fly. While disincorporated, the first time each round that Ainamuuren enters another creature's space or a creature enters Ainamuuren's space, that creature takes 4d8 cold damage and must succeed at a DC 34 Fortitude save or be stunned 1. At the start of his turn, Ainamuuren can end this effect as a free action.

Speed 35 feet

Melee ♦ *greataxe* +29 (cold, sweep), **Damage** 3d12+11 slashing plus 1d8 cold

Melee ♦ horns +28 (agile, cold), **Damage** 3d10+11 bludgeoning plus 1d8 cold and Knockdown

Primal Innate Spells DC 34; **7th** *summon animal* (cave bear or woolly rhinoceros only); **5th** *wall of ice* (×3)

Curse of the Saumen Kar ♦♦ (cold, conjuration, primal)

Frequency once per day; **Effect** Ainamuuren activates the runes covering his body to create an icy prison around a Huge or smaller creature he can see within 60 feet. The prison is a sphere made of unmelting ice, just large enough to fit his target. The target, and any creatures sharing its space, must attempt a DC 34 Reflex save. A creature that fails becomes trapped inside the prison. If it succeeds, the creature is pushed outside the prison into a space of its choice. If the target shares its space with a gargantuan creature, the effect fails.

The dome has AC 10, Hardness 20, and 40 Hit Points; and is immune to cold, critical hits, and precision damage. The prison lasts until destroyed, until Ainamuuren uses this ability to create a new prison, or until he dies.



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PACTBOUND INITIATE

Saumen kar can initiate a member of another ancestry into their pact, imbuing the creature with their power and their curse. Over time, this pact slowly changes the initiate internally and, sometimes, externally as well. The initiate's mind slowly fills with ancient pieces of lore and techniques that are as much part of the saumen kar as their hands and feet. As the initiate's mind adapts to this knowledge and power, their body sometimes evolves in kind—sprouting sweeping horns, gaining heightened olfactory senses, and growing additional height and muscle—becoming a hybrid between their old ancestry and saumen kar, wrapped in runic tattoos.

An unwilling creature can never be forced to become a pactbound initiate, and only those with deep bonds of mutual friendship with a saumen kar can even attempt the process. Befriending a saumen kar can be enough to begin one's initiation into the pact, though they must choose to accept the burden and can change their minds about

undertaking the pact at any point until their final transition (represented by the Bound in Ice feat). Once a creature has completed the pact by accepting the full burden of a saumen kar and taking the Bound in Ice feat, all transformations are permanent. At that point, they can't retrain the Pactbound Dedication, Frostbite Runes, or Bound in Ice feats and must live out the rest of their lives as something between their old ancestry and a saumen kar. If their normal lifespan was less than 400 years, it's increased to at least 400 years. If their natural lifespan was greater than 400 years, it's instead reduced to approximately that amount of time.

PACTBOUND DEDICATION

FEAT 2

RARE **ARCHETYPE** **DEDICATION**

Prerequisites Erutaki or Giant language, trained in Nature, must have earned the trust of a saumen kar who initiates you into the archetype

You befriended one of the last saumen kar and were infused with a fraction of their power, granting you the potential to become a guardian of their ancient pact. You gain cold resistance equal to half your level. You can Hide and Sneak while it's snowing even lightly, even if it wouldn't be thick enough to normally grant concealment. Finally, all saumen kar can sense the mark of their pact upon you, and their attitude toward you is typically one step better than it would be otherwise (hostile to unfriendly, unfriendly to indifferent, etc.) Most saumen kar are unfriendly to outsiders; this would make them indifferent to you.

Special You can't select another dedication feat until you've gained two other feats from the pactbound initiate archetype.

ICE CRAFTER

FEAT 4

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Pactbound Dedication

The ancient ice-crafting techniques of the saumen kar awaken within you. You become trained in Crafting, or become an expert if you were already trained. You gain the Magical Crafting skill feat. You can craft permanent items out of ice instead of metal or wood; these items are a translucent crystal-blue in color, resemble icicles and glacier ice, and have the same statistics and properties as cold iron, including the price and the ability to deal additional damage to certain kinds of creatures.

Any creature who wields or wears a piece of ice-crafted equipment takes 1 cold damage each round from contact with the primal cold of the crafted ice.

CROWN OF THE SAUMEN KAR

FEAT 6

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Pactbound Dedication

Your body begins to evolve and adapt, taking the first steps towards blending your very self with the ancient curse of the saumen kar. You become larger and bulkier, pushing the very edge of height and weight for your size. You gain scent as an imprecise sense with a range of 30 feet and gain a +1 circumstance bonus to Stealth checks made to Sneak or Hide in areas of forest and snow. You sprout a pair of horns from your forehead, gaining a horns unarmed attack that deals 1d8 bludgeoning damage. Your horns are in the brawling group and have the shove and trip traits.



SESHU

FROSTBITE RUNES

FEAT 12

ARCHETYPE EVOCATION PRIMAL

Prerequisites Pactbound Dedication

Thick tattoos, each one a rune fragment from the saumen kar's long-lost language spelling out their pact with their equally lost deity, cover your body and stretch across your limbs, torso, and face. You gain a +1 status bonus to saving throws against evil and necromancy spells and effects. You can sense the presence of evil undead as a pervasive taste of oily corruption in the air; this is a vague sense that allows you to know when such a creature is within 60 feet of you, though you can't precisely pinpoint their location with this sense. As normal for a vague sense, it can be fooled, but undead might not realize they need to take precautions against it. This sense also extends to living creatures who have the negative healing ability, like dhampir.

You deal an additional 1 cold damage with all Strikes made with an ice-crafted weapon. If you have the Crown of the Saumen Kar feat, you deal an additional 1 cold damage with your unarmed horns Strikes.

CURSE OF THE SAUMEN KAR

FEAT 14

ARCHETYPE CONJURATION PRIMAL

Prerequisites Frostbite Runes

Frequency once per day

You activate the runes on your body to create an icy prison around a Huge or smaller creature you can see within 60 feet. The prison is a sphere made of unmelting ice, just large enough to fit your target. The target, and any creatures sharing its space, must attempt a Reflex save, with a DC using the higher of your class DC and spell DC. A creature that fails becomes trapped inside the prison. If it succeeds, the creature is pushed outside the prison into a space of its choice. If the target shares its space with a gargantuan creature, the effect fails.

The dome has AC 10, Hardness 20, and 40 Hit Points; it's immune to cold, critical hits, and precision damage. The prison lasts until destroyed, until you use this ability to create a new prison, or until you die.

BOUND IN ICE


FEAT 16

ARCHETYPE

Prerequisites Frostbite Runes

You become a hybrid of your ancestry and a saumen kar. Your size increases to Large, and your reach becomes 10 feet. Your cold resistance increases to be equal to your level, and you gain fire resistance equal to half your level.

You also gain the Blizzard Evasion reaction.

Blizzard Evasion  **Frequency** once per day; **Trigger** You take 40 or more physical damage from a single attack; **Effect** You disincorporate into a whirling blizzard for up to 3 rounds. During this time, you gain resistance 10 to physical damage and weakness 10 to force damage. You gain a fly speed of 40 feet, but the only action you can take is to Fly. The first time each round you enter another creature's space while disincorporated, or the first time a creature enters your space, that creature takes 4d8 cold damage and must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw against your class DC or spell DC, whichever is higher, or else be stunned 1. At the start of your turn, you can end this effect as a free action.

AN ERUTAKI ALLY

Elder **Seshu** (NG female human shaman) is one of the leaders of the Erutaki people who call the town Aaminiut, on the southern edge of the Crown of the World, home. As a child, Seshu listened to stories of the ancient beings known to her people as "Winter's Chosen." Many believed saumen kar were no more than legends, while others believed the stories simply referred to yetis, the descriptions glorified and embellished over many long winters. Seshu knew better, though. She believed in Winter's Chosen and believed that the day would come when they could help her people.

When the Pathfinder archaeologist **Svala Ice-Rider** (CG female human ranger) inadvertently awakened a dark force sleeping beneath a glacial excavation site, it was Seshu who directed the Pathfinder reinforcements to seek out the old shrine to Winter's Chosen, a shrine Seshu and her family had made offerings to for countless generations. Ainamuuren answered the Pathfinders' call at the shrine, after they proved their worth, and accompanied them to the dig site, helping seal away the ancient evil once more.

Since then, Ainamuuren has met Seshu at the ancient shrine, never more than once every new moon, but often enough to learn the Erutaki language and pass on many of his ancient secrets to the elder. Even Ainamuuren doesn't know how many of his kin still wander Golarion's surface; if he should be the last, and death should finally find a way to claim him, it might fall to Seshu and her kin to deal with the ancient evil Ainamuuren and his people have kept sealed beneath the Crown of the World for countless centuries.

Elder Seshu has chosen not to hoard the knowledge passed down by Ainamuuren. She shares the saumen kar's knowledge of ice crafting with the Erutaki artisans of her village and has told the other elders of their dark history and the warning of the thing that sleeps beneath the ice. Seshu knows that the people of the north fell to the darkness that whispered in the dreams of the saumen kar, and she plans ceaselessly, preparing her people for its return. If becoming a pactbound initiate herself isn't enough to continue the pact when the last saumen kar dies, Seshu prepares for the Erutaki of Aaminiut to fight as long as they can and flee if they must.

Seshu has a suspicion, though. Having sat and listened to Ainamuuren's tales over the course of several years, she has begun to believe that the saumen kar's story holds the key to the truth: perhaps the whisperer that came to the ancient saumen kar wasn't a being, but rather an impulse. Surely, Ainamuuren possesses incredible magic, and if his stories are true, his people were even more powerful those thousands of years past. Perhaps Ainamuuren's story wasn't about a struggle between his people and an unknown entity, but instead a story of a civil war or spiritual upheaval among species. Perhaps their darkest and most powerful members were not lost, but rather sealed away.

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CUETZMONQUALI

“I watched as panic set upon Imictal’s face. He was beaten, and he knew it. Though he had met his defeat, Imictal refused to stop fighting. He called out to his beast, ‘Do not let them take me, Cuetzmonquali! I shall not grant them a true victory this day. Feast upon me and deny them their glory!’ I looked to Aroden, who seemed more intrigued than shocked—a fitting response from the man I had grown to know these past years. Swifter than the wind, the beast set upon Imictal and swallowed him whole, breathing out another gout of flame as it did. There were no screams, only a battle cry that grew muffled as Cuetzmonquali gulped the man down. And then, silence. The beast looked at us. It almost had a smile in its eyes, as if it knew something we didn’t.”

—An excerpt from Arazni’s research journal from her time in Jolizpan

“Grandpa, tell us the story of the Army of Fire again!”

“Artimo, you and your sister must have heard this story a dozen times already. Are you sure you want to hear it again?”

“Yes, please! It’s our favorite!”

“Very well. Thousands of years ago, after the saints had left Xopatl and no one was left in Innazpa that had seen the first living stories arrive, there was a man in Razatlan by the name of Imictal. He was a man with hate and evil in his heart and he believed that the Razatlani people had been wronged by both the saints and the rest of the people of Arcadia. Imictal believed himself the savior of Razatlan and intended to return Arcadia to the time when Razatlan ruled all.

“Imictal gathered an army to help him conquer Arcadia. Some of these people were wicked and hateful like him, but others were fearful of the changing world and found Imictal’s words comforting. Others yet joined him with a sense of loyalty to Razatlan. Eventually, Imictal’s army numbered in the thousands, and they began their attack on Arcadia. Many brave souls fought against Imictal’s army, and as his forces dwindled, he soon realized that he would not have the forces he needed to conquer Arcadia. With that fear in his heart, he called for help.

“His call went out to the gods, but the first to respond was Ah Pook. The Destroyer sensed Imictal’s fear and offered him relief. Ah Pook would grant Imictal an army capable of conquering Arcadia, in exchange for full control of his soul. Worried that he would fail, Imictal agreed. Ah Pook unleashed a blaze that burned away Imictal and his forces, and they were reborn. He was now Imictal the General of Flame, and his forces were the Army of Fire. As an extra gift, Ah Pook took the ashes of Imictal and his army’s mortal bodies and pressed them in his hands. When he opened them, out came a terrible beast made of flame: Cuetzmonquali, the Burning Dragon. Cuetzmonquali became Imictal’s fiery steed, and the General led his reinvigorated Army of Fire to continue conquering the lands.

“Eventually, Imictal and his army marched on Jolizpan.

Imictal sought to burn down the kumaru tree and make a decisive strike against Arcadia. However, he did not expect to meet his match that day. Before he could reach the city, he was stopped by Arazni the Crimson Usher and Aroden the Visitor, who—

“Boo! Boo! Aroden the Stinky, you mean!”

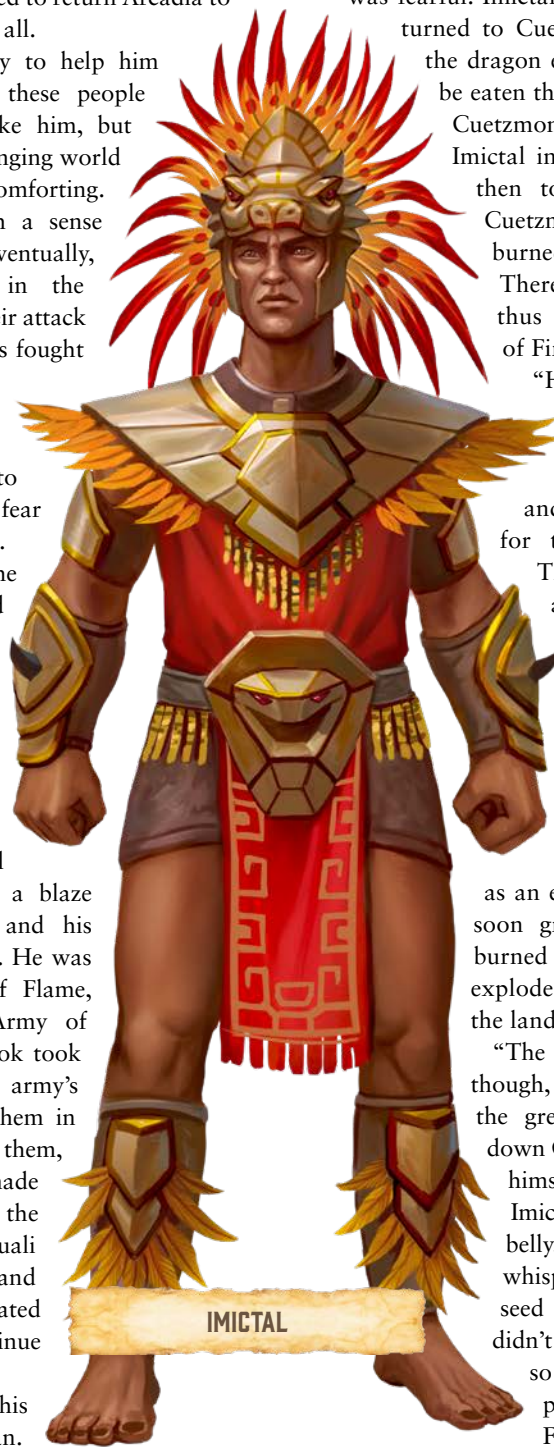
“Now, Jimmela, Aroden was a great ally to Arazni that day, let’s not forget it. The two fought Imictal and used their magics to destroy much of the Army of Fire. It was clear to all that the Imictal would fall that day, most of all to Imictal himself. As I said before, Imictal was a hateful and evil man, but most of all he was fearful. Imictal was so afraid of failure that he

turned to Cuetzmonquali and demanded that the dragon eat him. For Imictal preferred to be eaten than to lose to Arazni and Aroden. Cuetzmonquali, loyal beast that it was, ate Imictal in one bite, spear and all. Arazni then took her blade and cut down Cuetzmonquali, but Imictal had already burned away in his stomach by then. There was nothing left of Imictal, and thus was the end of the first Army of Fire.”

“Hooray! Yay, Arazni! Now tell us about when *you* saw the Army of Fire, Grandpa!”

“I will tell you this story, and then you will head to sleep for the night. Agreed? Very well. Though the Army of Fire was gone and Imictal had burned away, Cuetzmonquali was born of Ah Pook. You know how things made by Old Ohachtsik can be: they’re never truly gone. Cuetzmonquali became like the rest of the worries that Ah Pook creates and returned to torment Arcadia again. The beast started as an ember in the Jolizpan Forest and soon grew into a roaring flame that burned the forest away. Cuetzmonquali exploded from the forest fire and stalked the lands again.

“The Burning Dragon was clever, though, and hid for some time. Soon, the great warrior Taumáporo tracked down Cuetzmonquali and slew the beast himself. To his surprise, he found Imictal’s spear in Cuetzmonquali’s belly. As he took the spear, Ah Pook whispered in his heart and planted a seed of fear. Taumáporo thought he didn’t have enough strength on his own, so he claimed the spear. Using its power, he summoned the Army of Fire from Xibalba to storm Arcadia



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once more. The second Army of Fire was eventually stopped, but Cuetzmonquali returned again many centuries later. Much later, Yulaira the Unforgivable claimed the spear and led the third Army of Fire, but was stopped as before. Despite this, Cuetzmonquali returned yet again.

"Qulcaman found the Burning Dragon, claimed Imictal's spear, and summoned the fourth Army of Fire. Your auntie Soraïla saw this happen in her cards and she called on myself, your father, your auntie Luneirva, and noble Palmordo, gods rest their soul. Soraïla led us into the heart of Razatlan to face the Army of Fire. The battle was great. Your aunties fought side by side with their spears and cards, cutting down the burning warriors. Your father's magic healed our injuries and blessed us with Kazutal's might. The songs from my flute kept the fighting song in our hearts and pushed us even when we grew tired. Palmordo used their shield-bow to defend us from Qulcaman's flames. Palmordo's fighting spirit pushed on until the final moments, when they gave their life to defend us as Qulcaman erupted into fire in his desperate attempt to turn the tide. It was a difficult battle, but I had your father and everyone else to help me. It was scary, but together we gave each other courage.

"And, you know what else the battle was?"

"What, grandpa?"

"It was hot! When they call it the Army of Fire, they mean it!"

"Grandpa! You're silly!"

"Yes, I might be, but do you know what you two are? You're a pair of sleepy heads! Off to bed now. You have training in the morning. You'll need it, so you can track down Cuetzmonquali and stop the next Army of Fire before it attacks Arcadia again."

"Thanks for the story, Grandpa."

"You're welcome for the story. Good night."

THE ARMY OF FIRE

Deep beneath the Black Pyramid, home of the powerful sahkil tormentors, the Army of Fire was born. Ah Pook, god of death, destruction, and the moon, had his sahkil servants collect souls for him and leave them in the bowels of Xibalba for as long as the River of Souls has flowed. Ah Pook typically leaves these souls be, allowing them to cause their own suffering with the belief that their torture is simply moments away. The Destroyer visits these souls from time to time but says nothing, only adding to the mounting dread that each soul harbors.

When Imictal called out to Ah Pook, Ah Pook drew from these souls to supplement the Army of Fire. The first Army of Fire numbered in the tens of thousands, though Imictal's original forces were only a fraction of that. The rest of the souls finally found their nightmares come to life. They were given life once again in the form of burning humanoids, elementals, spirits, and undead that marched on the Material Plane. These souls had no control over their actions and could only watch as they

slaughtered innocents and faced their own deaths over and over again.

Ah Pook sees the Army of Fire as a suitable torture for the countless souls in his collection. Whenever a new mortal claims the *Spear of the Destroyer's Flame*, he collects these souls anew and rebuilds the Army of Fire. The army seems to have countless soldiers to march on, but in reality, they are the same souls, reused over and over to allow for future torture. While Ah Pook continues to add new souls to the Army of Fire, the first souls placed within the army remain in rotation. These souls are now little more than shattered fragments of their former selves, left with only enough awareness to realize their pain.

The only chance of liberating these souls is to claim the *Spear of the Destroyer's Flame* and destroy the weapon for good. With the destruction of the spear, the souls have a second chance to travel the River of Souls and possibly find peace once and for all.

ON SAHKILS AND SOULS

As a mortal becomes overwhelmed with dread and anxiety, there's a chance that these fears set themselves deep within the person's soul. These are not simple fears, such as a fear of the dark or concern about a monster that haunts a village. Instead, these fears are ingrained, the type that haunt a person during their waking hours and can linger for years, if not a lifetime. On their own, these deep fears don't have any effect on the soul, but when a sahkil nurtures such a fear, it can spell doom for the unfortunate soul.

Sahkils revel in the torture of mortals. They work to amplify the fears a mortal holds and foster these fears into something that overwhelms the soul. While a sahkil seems to feed off this process in some manner, the main reason it occurs at all appears to be the deterioration of the soul.

The soul itself can become figuratively worn down by the constant abrasion from repeated exposure to fearful, mortal emotions. While there's no physical or spiritual change to such a soul, there is some kind of noticeable erosion. Death severs the connection between a mortal body and soul, allowing the soul to travel along the River of Souls to face judgment. Fearful souls forget their purpose, languishing due to the wear they experienced in life. These souls remain at the point in the Ethereal Plane where they arrive, unable to travel by themselves. Though the psychopomps are usually quick to find such souls upon their arrival, some of them go unnoticed or unclaimed.

Sahkils claim and feast upon these souls, guiding them through the Ethereal Plane into Xibalba, the Land of Dread that they call home. Once in the darkest reaches of Xibalba, sahkils continue to subject a soul to fears and nightmares, feeding further upon the soul. This process also prevents these souls from reaching their proper judgment, an offense to Pharasma that, naturally, delights sahkils.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

Cuetzmonquali can serve as a direct foe in your adventures or as the catalyst for adventures with the Army of Fire.

LOW-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (1-7)

Cuetzmonquali is too fearsome a foe for low-level characters to face directly, but that doesn't mean they can't help when it attacks. A direct attack from Cuetzmonquali creates notable destruction, and characters can still be helpful heroes by rescuing innocent people during the attacks or protecting key locations from destruction, such as local shrines or forts. PCs might need to help shore up defenses against the attack or put out fires that Cuetzmonquali creates. Evacuating civilians can also be a great help in keeping casualties low. If Cuetzmonquali has already attacked, PCs could help clean up after the beast, rebuilding settlements and working to defend a settlement from threats that would take advantage of the settlement's weakened state.

A powerful foe could slay Cuetzmonquali and claim the *Spear of the Destroyer's Flame* and the Army of Fire with it. While facing the army directly would be an insurmountable task for low-level PCs, they can still face off with some of the forces of the burning army. Squads of low-level enemies such as living wildfires (*Bestiary* 148) and striding fires (*Bestiary* 2 111) can serve as suitable foes. Additionally, any number of undead work well as Army of Fire troops. GMs that wish to give these undead a fire theme can decrease the damage dice of a given creature's Strikes and add 1d4 fire damage as additional damage to these Strikes. In cases where decreasing a damage die would reduce it to 1d4 or can't be reduced further, the creature deals 1 additional fire damage instead. GMs that wish to grant even more fire abilities to existing creatures should follow the creature creation guidelines on pages 56–73 of the *Gamemastery Guide*.

MID-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (8-14)

While Cuetzmonquali is likely just beyond the capabilities of mid-level PCs, they might still be able to take the fight to the Burning Dragon with enough preparation. Cuetzmonquali should represent the ultimate goal of a group of 14th-level PCs. Cuetzmonquali is a Severe threat for such a group, and the PCs will need to work together and protect themselves against fire damage to survive Cuetzmonquali's onslaught. These PCs would face a difficult fight but could claim the *Spear of the Destroyer's Flame* as a reward for their bravery. Characters who can't face Cuetzmonquali directly could work with others to take the beast down. An entire army working together could grant an advantage in a fight and possibly grant enough benefits to the PCs or impairments to Cuetzmonquali to level the playing field.

Such characters might also face off with the more powerful members of the Army of Fire, such as groups of firewyrms and elemental infernos (*Bestiary* 149), powerful undead like graveknights (*Bestiary* 190–191), or unique ghosts. These PCs could also face the hordes of the Army of Fire, fighting troops of your design that represent dozens or even hundreds of members of the army at once. GMs who wish to make use of troops can create new troops by using the creature creation guidelines in the *Gamemastery Guide* and adding the troop mechanics like troop defenses, troop movement, and the troop creature type found in *Bestiary* 3.

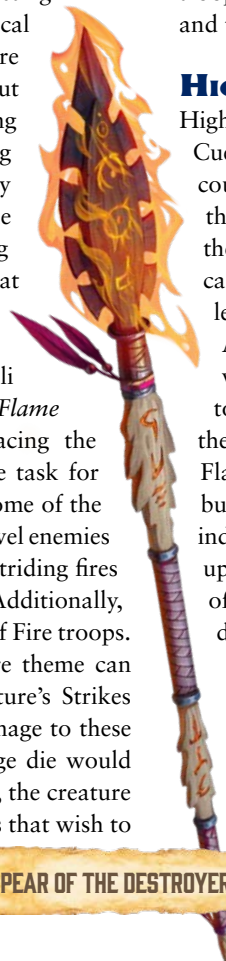
HIGH-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (15-20)

High-level PCs should have less trouble facing off with Cuetzmonquali, and particularly powerful characters could take down the Burning Dragon with ease. In this situation, the *Spear of the Destroyer's Flame* and the Army of Fire might become the main focus of the campaign. PCs who claim the spear can attempt to learn the means to destroy the artifact. Destroying the Army of Fire entirely is a major part of this process, which would require the PCs to gather enough forces to face off with the army in a massive campaign. In theory, a PC who claims the title of Commander of Flame can force the army's forces to fight themselves, but that still leaves the potential for a few powerful individuals to survive. The PCs would need to clean up these final forces, which could include the likes of burning banshees (*Bestiary* 34), undead magma dragons (*Bestiary* 2 93–95), and unique NPCs.

However the PCs attempt to destroy the Army of Fire, it's likely they gain the attention of Ah Pook. The evil god wouldn't want the spear destroyed or the army's souls released, and would likely send his agents to stop the PC's attempts. The PCs would then face an assortment of sahkils (*Bestiary* 3 218–222), including powerful ximtals and kimenhuls. Ah Pook could also send his priests and other powerful NPCs after the heroes. One of these NPCs could steal the spear from the PCs, reclaiming the Army of Fire for Ah Pook and starting the process anew.

Alternatively, the PCs could defeat the Commander of Flame during a battle with the Army of Fire but soon realize that the *Spear of the Destroyer's Flame* is nowhere to be found. These PCs would likely have to track down Cuetzmonquali to slay the beast and reclaim the spear. The search for the Burning Dragon could be a long and dangerous one, especially if Cuetzmonquali goes into hiding within a volcano or other dangerous location.

If and when the PCs have the opportunity to destroy the spear, there's still the matter of slaying the Commander of Flame. One of the PCs might even need to take on the title and sacrifice their life, and indeed their very soul, to destroy the spear and put an end to the Army of Fire. Such a decision doesn't come lightly, and many groups might have trouble making it.



SPEAR OF THE DESTROYER'S FLAME

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THE BURNING DRAGON

Though stories call it the Burning Dragon, Cuetzmonquali is a unique creature with no draconic heritage. Cuetzmonquali resembles an enormous reptile with large frills, two tails ending in massive stingers, and scales that appear to be made of burning flame. Cuetzmonquali is capable of growing any number of horns from its head, on which it can impale and trap its enemies. Each horn grows in a burst of searing flame that burns flesh and scales and results in a blackened obsidian spike jutting from its forehead. These horns molt off occasionally, leaving behind warnings of the beast's presence.

In combat, Cuetzmonquali is a terrifying foe who uses its horns to skewer foes, unleashes white-hot blasts of flame to devastate those who don't approach, and injects a potent burning venom that ignites a foe from within their own body, sapping their strength. Against groups of weaker foes, it simply tramples them to death underfoot. Anyone courageous enough to face Cuetzmonquali and powerful or cunning enough to slay the creature can lay claim to the treasure that lies in its belly: the legendary artifact known as the *Spear of the Destroyer's Flame*.

CUETZMONQUALI

CREATURE 17

UNIQUE NE HUGE BEAST FIRE

Perception +32; greater darkvision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet, smoke vision

Languages Abyssal, Ignan, Razatlani, Requian (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +30, Athletics +33, Intimidation +30, Stealth +28, Survival +30

Str +9, **Dex** +5, **Con** +8, **Int** -2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

Follower of the Flame Cuetzmonquali recognizes the might of the wielder of the *Spear of the Destroyer's Flame*. Out of its respect for that strength, it follows the commands of the spear's wielder and can understand the wielder, regardless of the language the wielder speaks.

Smoke Vision Smoke doesn't impair Cuetzmonquali's vision; it ignores concealment from smoke.

AC 40; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +29, **Will** +26

HP 360; **Immunities** controlled, fire, paralyzed, sleep;

Weaknesses good 15

Searing Skin (aura, divine, evocation, fire) 5 feet. Cuetzmonquali's flesh burns as hot as flame. Creatures that end their turn in the emanation take 4d6 fire damage (DC 35 basic Fortitude save).

Attack of Opportunity

Speed 40 feet, climb 30 feet, fly 20 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +33 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d12+15 piercing plus 2d10 fire

Melee ♦ claws +31 (agile, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d6+15 slashing plus 2d10 fire and Improved Grab

Melee ♦ tail +31 (magical, reach 25 feet), **Damage** 2d4+15 piercing plus 2d10 fire and burning venom

Melee ♦ horn +33 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+15 piercing plus 2d10 fire

Breath Weapon (divine, evocation, fire) Cuetzmonquali unleashes a blast of fire that deals 12d10 fire damage in a 50-foot cone

(DC 38 basic Reflex save). Creatures that fail their saves catch on fire and take 1d12 persistent fire damage. Cuetzmonquali can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

Burning Venom (fire, poison) **Saving Throw** Fortitude DC 38; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 4d6 poison, 2d10 fire, and enfeebled 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 6d6 poison, 3d10 fire, and enfeebled 2 (1 round); **Stage 3** 8d6 poison, 4d10 fire, and enfeebled 3 (1 round)

Constrict ♦ 2d6+8 plus 2d10 fire, DC 38

Double Sting ♦ Cuetzmonquali makes two tail Strikes, each targeting a different creature. These attacks count toward Cuetzmonquali's multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after both attacks.

Impaling Charge ♦♦ Cuetzmonquali charges forward and attempts to gore a foe. It Strides and attempts a horn Strike. On a hit, the target becomes impaled on one of Cuetzmonquali's horns. The creature becomes grabbed. If Cuetzmonquali moves, it brings the grabbed creature along with it. Cuetzmonquali doesn't need to use additional actions to keep the creature grabbed; the creature remains grabbed as long as it's impaled. The grabbed creature can attempt to Escape as normal, but the DC to do so is 40, rather than Cuetzmonquali's Athletics DC. If Cuetzmonquali critically hit the creature to impale it, that creature is restrained for 1 round, in addition to being grabbed and impaled as per a success.

Trample ♦♦♦ (attack) Large or smaller, claw, DC 38

SPEAR OF THE DESTROYER'S FLAME

ITEM 20

UNIQUE ARTIFACT EVOCATION MAGICAL

Usage held in 2 hands; **Bulk** 3

The tip of this +3 *major striking greater flaming returning speed longspear* is edged with several razor-sharp obsidian blades. The spear has the thrown 30 feet weapon trait, in addition to the normal weapon traits for a longspear.

While the *Spear of the Destroyer's Flame* is in your possession, you gain fire resistance 20. When you critically hit a creature with the spear, the creature's blood begins to boil, unleashing blasts of heat from the wound. The creature takes 2d8 persistent fire damage, in addition to the persistent fire damage from the *greater flaming* rune; all creatures adjacent to the creature when it takes the persistent fire damage take an equal amount of fire damage. Like the fire damage from the *greater flaming* rune, this fire damage ignores a creature's fire resistance, though it doesn't ignore fire immunity.

In addition to its deadliness as a weapon, the *Spear of the Destroyer's Flame* gives its wielder full control over the Army of Fire, though the orders of the Commander of Flame supersede the orders of anyone wielding the spear, as noted on page 17. While the spear is in your possession, you're aware of the location of the Army of Fire and the army's distance from you. In addition, you can give orders to the Army of Fire, and the army's members will understand and obey you, regardless of what language you speak. If you're within 1 mile of the Army of Fire, the army and its members gain a +10 circumstance bonus to their Speeds. Any members of the Army of Fire within 100 feet of you become quickened and can use the additional action to Step, Stride, or Strike. The army remains quickened for 1 minute after moving further than 100 feet from you.

The Army of Fire has unwavering loyalty to the Commander of Flame, an individual who has completed a special activation that ties their soul to the spear. As long as the Army of Fire can see and hear the Commander of Flame, the army will follow the Commander's orders. The Commander of Flame can sense the presence of the Army of Fire and issue orders, regardless of language, with the same effects as for someone in possession of the spear. The Commander of Flame still needs the spear in hand to muster the Army of Fire, however.

If the Commander of Flame doesn't hold the *Spear of the Destroyer's Flame* for 1 week, it returns to Cuetzmonquali's gut, instantly teleporting to the creature's location. If Cuetzmonquali is dead at this time, the spear also resurrects the creature, using the effects of a critical success on a 10th-level *resurrect* ritual.

Activate 1 minute (envision, Interact); **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You attempt to tie your soul to the spear. If the current Commander of Flame still lives, you must attempt either a Will save, Diplomacy check, Intimidation check, or Warfare Lore check. The DC of this check is equal to the current Commander's Will DC, Diplomacy DC, Intimidation DC, or Warfare Lore DC, whichever is highest. On a success, you become the Commander of Flame. On a failure, the

current Commander knows your name and appearance and is aware of your exact location for 24 hours.

Activate 1 hour (envision, Interact); **Frequency** once per week; **Effect** You use the spear's power to muster the Army of Fire. You can choose to either call the Army of Fire to your location or move yourself to the army's location. When calling the army, you select an area you can see within 500 feet. The army is instantly teleported to the location you select, spreading out as necessary to arrive safely. When moving yourself, you instantly teleport yourself to a location within 500 feet of the army. The army is composed of souls given form as burning humanoids, elementals, spirits, and undead.

Destruction If the entire Army of Fire is destroyed and the Commander of Flame is slain with the *Spear of the Destroyer's Flame*, the spear shatters into a massive explosion of flame, dealing 20d10 fire damage in a 30-foot burst (DC 43 basic Reflex save). In addition, the Commander's soul burns away to nothing, destroying the Commander forever and releasing the bound souls of the Army of Fire to the River of Souls.



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DESERT'S HOWL

The creature first appeared for a few hours each night, trailing us from afar. With a silhouette like an oryx, we had a good laugh that it had startled us.

As it departed, our dreams became filled with increasingly disturbing thoughts. Our once cheerful group grew anxious and irritable as insomnia set in—accusations of slights and betrayals becoming commonplace. Angry outbursts turned to desperate wails as we time and again found ourselves back where we started, with dwindling supplies.

Now the creature has returned, following more closely. We can, at last, see all too plainly the hunger in its wild eyes and the quivering of its too-human mouth. It seems to disappear when we look away or dare to approach, only to reappear hours later—sometimes alongside us, sometimes behind, and occasionally watching from atop cliffs or behind acacia trees.

—Unattributed diary discovered in the Thuvian desert

The malevolent and ageless creature known as Desert's Howl has haunted the Thuvian desert for over 3,000 years—though this name, originally in Osirian, is possibly a corruption of “the desert's harm” or “beneath the desert's yoke.” Those who claim to have seen it describe a long-limbed, loping beast with an ibex's horns and a gaunt, humanlike face with desperate eyes. Its once human body has been twisted and reshaped into a frightening amalgam of long, sinewy appendages beneath a bowed and emaciated form. A coarse mane of bristled black hair sprouts from its elongated neck, though the rest of its dappled gray body appears largely wrinkled and bare. With lanky human hands that end in wicked black talons and muscular hind limbs balanced atop pointed, cloven feet, it can maneuver adeptly on all four limbs or walk completely upright, reaching a purported height of over nine feet. Some mistakenly believe Desert's Howl to be some form of desert-dwelling wendigo, but in truth, the monster is something altogether different.

Desert's Howl is an elusive creature, and even experienced trackers describe its presence as inscrutable. It seems to feed on animals only rarely, as though it revels in toying with its prey and finds a kind of abhorrent joy in specifically hunting humans and other sapient beings. In that regard, Desert's Howl is primarily a pursuit predator, methodically exhausting its prey across long distances and over many nights. Those who have survived being in its proximity describe feeling overwhelmed by its aberrant mind—that when it's near, the vilest thoughts and feelings begin to permeate the psyche, inhibit one's judgment, and instill deep-rooted anxieties and paranoia that linger long after it leaves. Others liken the experience to being hunted by the desert itself, as if the land conspires with Desert's Howl to disorient the creature's quarry and lead them astray. Those who travel the desert frequently say to turn back at the very first sign that something is amiss, for a false sense of security will lead the foolish straight into the creature's trap.

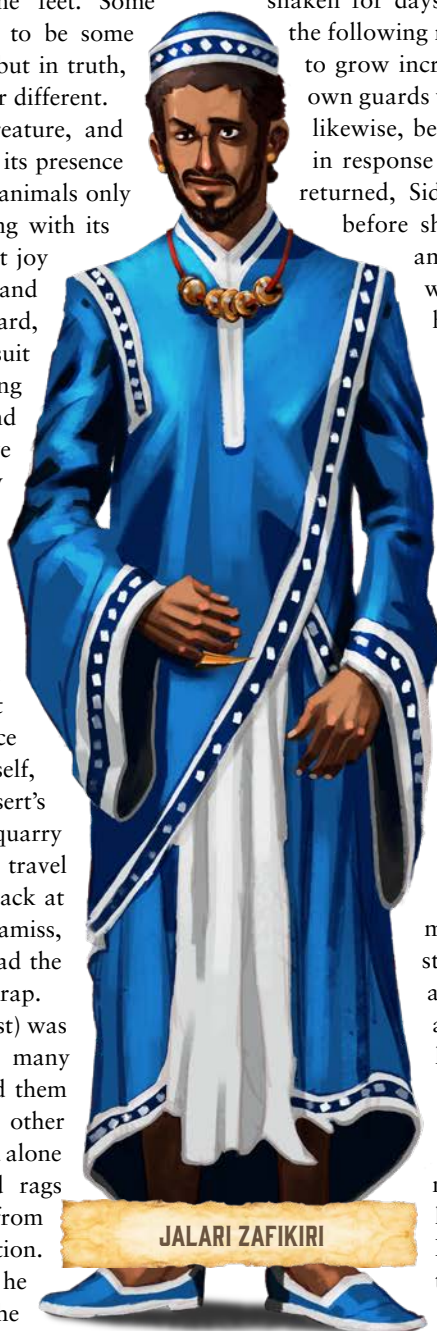
Azeel (LN male half-elf survivalist) was a Thuvian desert guide who, for many years, guided caravans and steered them clear of monster migrations and other dangers. However, he once returned alone to Merab, wearing only tattered rags and a blindfold while suffering from extreme heatstroke and dehydration. Reluctant at first to accept that he had truly escaped the desert, he

began gesticulating wildly and spinning conflicting tales about the fates of his traveling companions. Now the subject of ridicule, Azeel tells stories to anyone who'll listen—stories of rocks and trees that seemed to move on their own, of the sun hanging wrongly in the sky, of a pale face that he kept imagining in the dark, and of his companions' screams as they were snatched away, one by one, and carried into the night. In the end, he says, he only escaped by learning not to rely on his eyes.

An Osirian noblewoman named **Sidrah** (LG female human aristocrat) has given similar testimony regarding her husband's disappearance, though some suspect that her story is an elaborate cover for foul play. While caravaning to Pashow, she claims they were viciously attacked in the night by a horrific creature with a face like a man, only for it to disappear moments later. Still shaken for days afterward, she couldn't sleep during the following nights. Her husband, meanwhile, began to grow increasingly agitated, convinced that their own guards were conspiring against them, and they, likewise, began to act out and desert the caravan in response to his accusations. When the creature returned, Sidrah heard its labored snuffling long before she caught sight of it. She hid quickly among the supplies, but her husband wasn't so fortunate, and she soon heard his abrupt screams give way to a cacophony of wet tearing, crunching, and sucking. The last thing she remembers is plugging her ears with paraffin to drown out the horrible sounds as she did her best to stifle her fear and quiet her breathing.

No one knows for sure where Desert's Howl originated from, although countless such stories are told around campfires throughout Thuvia. Some claim that it came directly from the Abyss or that it's the hideous spawn of Lamashtu. Still, the most popular stories all claim that the creature was once human—most often a notorious rogue and highwayman named Jalari Zafikiri.

Jalari was once the scourge of every merchant and noble in Thuvia. He struck at their valuables with deftness and precision, sometimes alone or accompanied by his trusted bandit lords, only to flee into the desert to stash his treasure before his targets even realized what had transpired. They say his last job was to be his finest, a mark of such unparalleled value that he would retire for good afterward. However, even Jalari underestimated the response that followed, for soon after, there wasn't a single grain of



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sand in the great dune sea that remained safe for him. Pursued by soldiers, bounty hunters, adventurers, and even some water lords who were drawn to the price on his head, Jalari had no choice but to seal himself away inside one of his secret troves.

At this point, most stories differ, but the result is always the same. Some say that the rogue succumbed to starvation for a time before giving over his soul to a vile and ravenous spirit. Others claim that the object he stole was a wish-granting ring and that, in a desperate bid to escape his situation, he made two poorly worded wishes that transformed him. Some even say that the object of his desire was none other than the fabled sun orchid elixir, stolen from the Citadel of the Alchemist. In these stories, the sample he stole was incomplete, corrupted, or impure, and his recklessness led him to consume the elixir with no understanding of what it would do to him. In the end, whatever the catalyst of his transformation, every version tells of Jalari becoming cursed to live an eternal life knowing only hunger and hatred, destined to share his fate with others who travel the desert sands.

Rumors surrounding Desert's Howl most often revolve around the figure of Jalari Zafikiri and the hidden caches where he's said to have stored the treasure from his long and illustrious career. The exact number and locations of Jalari's troves were his most closely guarded secret, but rumor has it that the rogue encrypted this information onto gold coins that he once kept on a cord around his neck. Such coins are occasionally found in circulation to the present day—identifiable by intricate patterns of holes and markings that Jalari supposedly made with a fine point awl—though most have certainly been lost to history, are elaborate counterfeits, or have long been melted down and reminted. Nonetheless, some curators are known to be keenly interested in these “treasure coins” and allegedly have a means of verifying their authenticity.

Alternatively, some claim that the real way to find this treasure is by tracking Desert's Howl back to its lair. They say that the creature retains little intelligence beyond its ability to hunt and stalk prey but that it instinctively returns to Jalari's many hideouts between feedings. Nobody knows precisely what his hoard might contain, only that it's undoubtedly a vast fortune of precious metals, magic items, and antiques. Some sightings of the creature include a strange detail—an old, tarnished ring with a single, offset ruby that it wears on one of its fingers—though this detail is unsubstantiated.

THE DESERT'S CURSE

Regardless of Desert's Howl's origin, all stories seem to agree on one fact: the desert changed after the arrival of

Desert's Howl. Whatever malevolent force birthed the creature yet lingers among the desert's sands, carried by the night winds and creeping along the backs of the insects and lizards that call the desert home. This force continues to hunt unfortunate travelers, bringing swift death to them at best and transforming them into horrible, twisted monsters at worst.

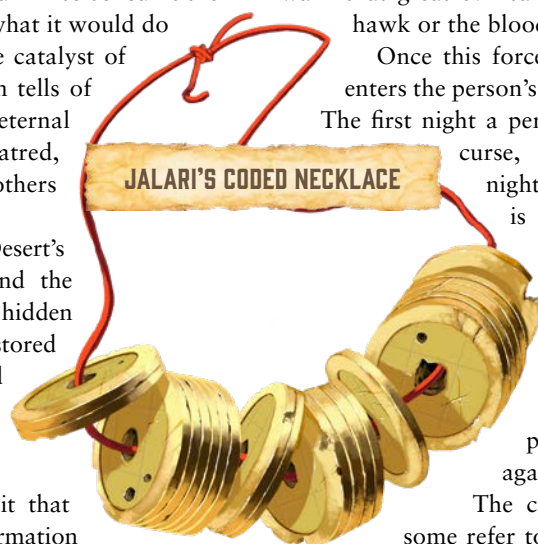
This force, which the locals refer to as the “desert's curse,” is much like the spores of a fungus, floating about in the desert until it finds a suitable place to take root and grow. Acting with a sort of intelligence, this force avoids using the desert's creatures for hosts but still uses them as a means to spread itself. Travelers through the Thuvian deserts avoid feeding on local animals except in dire circumstances since local tales warn that great evil can hide in the belly of a desert hawk or the blood of the burning lizards.

Once this force finds itself near a person, it enters the person's mind and begins to propagate. The first night a person is exposed to the desert's curse, they experience terrible nightmares. If a person's mind is strong, this nightmare is all that ever comes of the curse, burned away by a strong will like a body sweating out a fever. Most aren't so lucky, however, and the desert's curse takes hold, using the power of the person's mind against them.

The curse takes this power, which some refer to as mental essence or psychic energy, and enhances it, which allows the curse to manifest tangible beings from within the person's mind and set them upon the person's companions and even the person themselves. In most cases, these living echoes of mental power slay all around them and then vanish as the mind that sustains them perishes. From here, the curse continues to float about the desert, seeking its next victim.

In some cases, the manifestation begins to transform the person, changing them into a monstrous creature that stalks the desert sands. As they move, they spread this mental “virus” to others, continuing the will of the desert's curse.

The few scholars even aware of this curse are in disagreement about its nature. Some believe it to be the mildly self-aware leftover of an evil deity's energy—the same deity that created Desert's Howl. Others believe it to be created by Desert's Howl, a subconscious attempt by the creature to create more of itself, like an animal continuing its species. Others still believe this force to be some alien energy from beyond Golarion, trapped within Thuvia and seeking an appropriate host to return to its home. Whatever the case, the desert's curse is very real and only grows more dangerous with every day that passes.



IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

Desert's Howl is a powerful creature, but its presence can add an eerie pressure to any campaign.

Low-Level Campaigns (1-7)

Many try to cross the deserts of Thuvia, and many are lost to these very sands. Some travelers succumb to the natural dangers that the desert holds, but others instead contend with a living nightmare, forced to face the influence of Desert's Howl. The nightmares that Desert's Howl brings about can set themselves deep into the minds of desert travelers, and dozens (if not hundreds) of the unfortunate lost now remain in the desert, living out their final days believing their nightmares to be true.

Characters that travel the Thuvian deserts are likely to run into others already lost to the desert nightmares. Adventurers, merchants, thieves, and more can serve as foes for anyone crossing the desert. These unfortunate souls are lost in their hallucinations, believing others to be horrible monsters. PCs might stumble into individuals who attack the PCs and who call them terrible fiends or bloodthirsty beasts. The PCs must defend themselves and possibly work to pull these attackers out of their deep-set nightmares.

PCs might also be subjected to Desert's Howl's influence. If the creature remains nearby, it can cause the PCs to begin hallucinating. These hallucinations might play out in much the same way that they did for other desert travelers, causing the PCs to lash out against foes that don't exist. While the creatures might not be real, the danger they pose still is. Hallucinating PCs might turn on each other, leading to a very dangerous situation for an adventuring party.

Alternatively, these hallucinations present a great opportunity to set the PCs against monsters they might not normally face. These creatures could be well beyond the scope of the PCs' power or creatures that would be completely out of place in the desert. These monsters are mere figments and might vanish mid-fight but can still serve as exciting and dangerous encounters. Any damage that characters take could be psychosomatic or caused by the PCs themselves without realizing as much.

Finally, the desert remains an ever-present threat. While travel across the desert would normally be relatively straightforward, though still somewhat perilous, the application of nightmares and Desert's Howl's influence complicates any such trips. PCs unable to rest properly will have a harder time traveling through the desert. This fatigue can make a character much more susceptible to the hot desert weather, and the disorientation that comes from sleep loss can leave a character unable to contribute during exploration. It's only once the PCs can make it out of the desert while dealing with these conditions that they'll be able to take the time to determine the cause of their nightmares.

Mid-Level Campaigns (8-14)

While the desert and lost travelers still pose a threat at these levels, PCs are more likely to face off with the howling spawn (page 23) that stalk the desert sands. A single howling spawn can serve as a suitable antagonist at the lower end of this tier of play. This howling spawn might harry the PCs, making repeated attacks during the day or ambushing the group as they sleep. The spawn might not even attack a group directly, instead preferring to use its magic to confuse the PCs and eventually lead them toward its lair.

At higher levels, PCs might need to contend with an entire group of howling spawn. This group could be the remaining survivors of a caravan or even a former adventuring group, now transformed by the desert's curse. Much like with a single howling spawn, the pack of spawn could constantly harass an adventuring group, wearing them down until they become unable to properly defend themselves. Alternatively, the PCs might stumble upon a refuge or camp in the desert, only to realize too late that the strangers inviting them to sit by the fire are in fact terrible beasts ready to strike.

You could have Desert's Howl itself attack PCs at this tier of play, but not as a direct foe—instead, it could kidnap a friendly NPC traveling with the group. While this event could potentially inspire heroes to try to take on Desert's Howl directly, it could also function as a display of the creature's abilities in anticipation of a direct confrontation later in the heroes' careers.

High-Level Campaigns (15-20)

Only powerful heroes stand a chance against Desert's Howl in a direct fight. Before they can face the monster directly, however, the PCs would need to track it down. Desert's Howl is at an advantage in its hunting territory; tracking it down should be a difficult process with PCs contending with the desert's hazards and possibly howling spawn along the way. Desert's Howl will likely use its ability to haunt the PCs during their search, attacking during their rest or trying to separate them with its magic. Desert's Howl is a hunter and should be played as such.

Once the PCs face off with Desert's Howl, they're in for a tough fight, depending on their level. At the lower ends of this tier of play, PCs will have a difficult time with Desert's Howl alone. More powerful PCs might fight Desert's Howl and a handful of howling spawn all at once. Only the most powerful PCs will have an easier time against Desert's Howl, but even in this case, you can even the playing field just a bit. You could apply the elite adjustment (*Bestiary* 6) to Desert's Howl to shore up its statistics. Alternatively, you could consider applying additional abilities to Desert's Howl and increase its statistics using the creature creation guidelines on pages 56–73 of the *Gamemastery Guide*. This version of Desert's Howl could represent a creature that has been empowered by Lamashtu and can possibly serve as the ultimate opponent for a campaign.

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STALKER IN THE SAND

Desert's Howl is a towering, gray abomination with a shape vaguely similar to that of a bearded man with glowing yellow eyes, long ibex horns, deadly black claws, and cloven hooves. These features have sometimes caused those who encounter it to mistake it for some kind of fiend, a fatal mistake likely to lead to their demise, as Desert's Howl is in truth a twisted aberration composed of a disgusting mix of nightmares, smoke, and ash. As such, *holy water* and other measures that might be effective against fiends have no effect on Desert's Howl.

According to the oral histories of the people who have survived in the Thuvian desert the longest, when Desert's Howl first appeared, it was in much the same shape but no larger than a human. Over time, its proportions lengthened and grew, as did its frightening abilities and appetite for suffering.

Given the incredible range on Desert's Howl's namesake desolate exclamation, creatures are much more likely to hear Desert's Howl than see it. Though such forewarning potentially gives distant creatures additional time to prepare to face or escape the creature, Desert's Howl enjoys the steady build-up of fear that this approach allows, potentially breaking its victims' resolve long before it even appears. Besides, a creature of its power has little to fear from travelers, or even most adventurers, regardless of how much time they have to prepare. In the end, a greater struggle just makes destroying them all the sweeter.

DESERT'S HOWL CREATURE 19

UNIQUE CE HUGE ABERRATION

Perception +33; greater darkvision, fear scent 120 feet

Languages Aklo, Osiriani

Skills Athletics +37, Deception +31, Desert Lore +32, Intimidation +33, Occultism +30, Stealth +33, Survival +31

Str +10, **Dex** +9, **Con** +10, **Int** +5, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +5

Fear Scent Desert's Howl can observe any frightened creatures within 120 feet using an incredibly accurate sense of psychic smell as a precise sense. However, its fear scent extends further if the creature was frightened by Desert's Howl. The taste of such a bouquet of fear in the air becomes irresistible and easy for Desert's Howl to detect, like a shark smelling blood in water. Desert's Howl can sense a creature frightened by its own fear effects as an imprecise sense at a distance of up to 1 mile away.



DESERT'S HOWL

AC 43; **Fort** +38, **Ref** +32, **Will** +29

HP 330, regeneration 30 (deactivated by cold); **Immunities** controlled, emotion, fear, sleep; **Weaknesses** cold 15; **Resistances** fire 20

Aura of Agony (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 10 miles. Desert's Howl exudes a massive psychic disturbance many miles away from its location, assaulting the minds and spirits of those who dare to sleep within the unsettling bounds of its aura of agony. Creatures that attempt to rest while they're within this emanation are beset by disturbing nightmares and hallucinations, regardless of whether they're aware of Desert's Howl's presence. This restlessness causes creatures to wake up fatigued, and they don't recover from fatigue by resting. Creatures affected by aura of agony don't reduce their frightened condition by resting as long as they remain within the area of the aura.

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 90 feet, DC 38

Putrid Evanescence Frequency once per minute;

Trigger Desert's Howl is damaged by another creature; **Effect** Desert's Howl bursts into a cloud of putrid smoke, ash, and nightmares, becoming invisible and teleporting up to 100 feet away to an unoccupied space it can see. It remains invisible until the end of its next turn or until it uses a hostile action, whichever comes first.

Speed 50 feet, climb 25 feet, fly 20 feet, swim 35 feet

Melee claw +36 (agile, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 4d10+20 slashing plus Improved Grab and nightmare fuel

Ranged spit +35 (range 50 feet), **Effect** 2d6 fire plus 2d6 mental and paralytic secretion

Occult Innate Spells DC 43; **9th dimension door**, *hallucination* (at will), *hallucinatory terrain* (at will); **2nd invisibility** (at will, self only), *mirror image*

Forlorn Howl (auditory, emotion, fear, mental) Desert's Howl vents a long and desolate wail full of nightmares and despair. The devastating howl can be heard up to 1 mile away under the open sky. Any creature who hears it experiences a sudden sinking in its stomach and heart palpitations, its hair stands on end, and it must attempt a DC 38 Will save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected and becomes temporarily immune for 1 hour.

Success The creature becomes frightened 2.

Failure The creature becomes frightened 3.

Critical Failure The creature becomes doomed 1, frightened 4, and is fleeing for 1 round.

Illusory Ambush ♦♦ Desert's Howl shimmers with illusions and devastates a foe who lost track of its position. Desert's Howl Strides up to twice its Speed. If it ends its movement within its melee reach of at least one enemy to which it's undetected, it can attempt two claw Strikes against that enemy. These attacks count toward Desert's Howl's multiple attack penalty, but the multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after Desert's Howl makes both of these attacks. Desert's Howl remains undetected to the creature it's attacking until after resolving both of the claw attacks.

Nightmare Fuel Desert's Howl's claws are infused with some of the nightmares that make up Desert's Howl's being, and they infect victims with lasting fear, cycling their victims' fears and anxieties in a horrific loop that takes time and rest to break. A creature that takes damage from Desert's Howl's claw Strike while frightened no longer reduces its frightened condition at the end of each turn. Instead, the creature can only decrease its frightened condition by 1 after each full night's rest or with magical effects counteracting the fear, such as *remove fear*.

Paralytic Secretion Desert's Howl's saliva is a potent paralytic substance that drains the energy from prey. A creature hit by its spit Strike must succeed at a DC 41 Fortitude save or become drained 2 as well as paralyzed for 1 round. If the target was already drained, it instead increases the condition's value by 1, to a maximum of drained 4.

Profane Feast ♦ **Requirements** Desert's Howl has a creature grabbed; **Effect** Desert's Howl begins to consume the creature, dealing 2d12+15 piercing damage (DC 41 basic Fortitude save) and exposing the creature to its paralytic secretion.

STALKER'S SPAWN

While Desert's Howl is presumed to be unique, given its inexplicable origin, there have been reports of creatures resembling Desert's Howl that stalk the sands of Thuvia. Though quite similar to the descriptions of Desert's Howl, they seem to be individuals who haven't yet fully completed their transformation into the terrifying beast. Whether these unfortunate people met a cruel fate similar to that which spawned Desert's Howl or are spawn of the nightmarish creature itself is unclear. Some reports of encounters with these creatures note that it's possible to revert the creature back to its humanoid form by cleansing its mind of nightmarish visions, though there's no solid evidence of such an event ever occurring.

HOWLING SPAWN

CREATURE 11

RARE CE LARGE ABERRATION

Perception +21; darkvision, fear scent 60 feet

Languages Aklo

Skills Athletics +22, Deception +19, Intimidation +23, Stealth +21, Survival +19

Str +7, **Dex** +6, **Con** +7, **Int** +3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

Fear Scent Howling spawn can sense frightened creatures

UNSETTLING DREAMS

The nightmares induced by Desert's Howl's presence are vivid and disturbing. The first night often entails frequent waking, often accompanied by gasping or screaming. On subsequent nights, dreams and reality can begin to blur together due to exhaustion, leaving the victim delirious and unable to discern upon waking whether the things they remember truly happened or not. At this point, Desert's Howl can use its illusions to bring to life things the victim saw in their dreams to unsettle them and sow distrust among their allies—perhaps glimpses of their companions acting suspiciously or strange omens and portents carried over from their nightmares.

within 60 feet, using an incredibly accurate sense of psychic smell as a precise sense.

AC 31; **Fort** +24, **Ref** +21, **Will** +18

HP 175, **Regeneration** 20 (deactivated by cold); **Immunities** emotion, fear; **Weaknesses** cold 10; **Resistances** fire 15

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 60 feet, DC 27

Putrid Evanescence ⤴ **Frequency** once per hour; **Trigger** The howling spawn is damaged by another creature; **Effect** The howling spawn bursts into a cloud of putrid smoke, ash, and nightmares, becoming invisible and teleporting up to 30 feet away to an unoccupied space it can see. It remains invisible until the end of its next turn or until it uses a hostile action, whichever comes first.

Speed 35 feet, climb 20 feet, fly 15 feet, swim 30 feet

Melee ♦ claw +24 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d10+13 slashing plus Grab

Ranged ♦ spit +23 (range 30 feet), **Effect** 1d6 fire plus 1d6 mental and paralytic secretion

Occult Innate Spells DC 27; **5th** *hallucination*; **4th** *dimension door*, *hallucinatory terrain*; **2nd** *invisibility* (self only), *mirror image*

Illusory Ambush ♦♦ The howling spawn shimmers with illusions and devastates a foe who lost track of its position. It Strides up to twice its Speed. If it ends its movement within its melee reach of at least one enemy to which it is undetected, it can attempt two claw Strikes against that enemy. The howling spawn remains undetected to the creature it's attacking until after resolving both of the claw attacks.

Paralytic Secretion The howling spawn's saliva is a potent paralytic substance that drains the energy from its prey. A creature hit by its spit Strike must succeed at a DC 30 Fortitude save or become drained 1 as well as paralyzed for 1 round. If the target was already drained, it instead increases the condition's value by 1, to a maximum of drained 4.

Profane Feast ♦ **Requirements** The howling spawn has a creature grabbed; **Effect** The howling spawn begins to consume the creature, dealing 2d12+5 piercing damage (DC 30 basic Fortitude save) and exposing the creature to its paralytic secretion.

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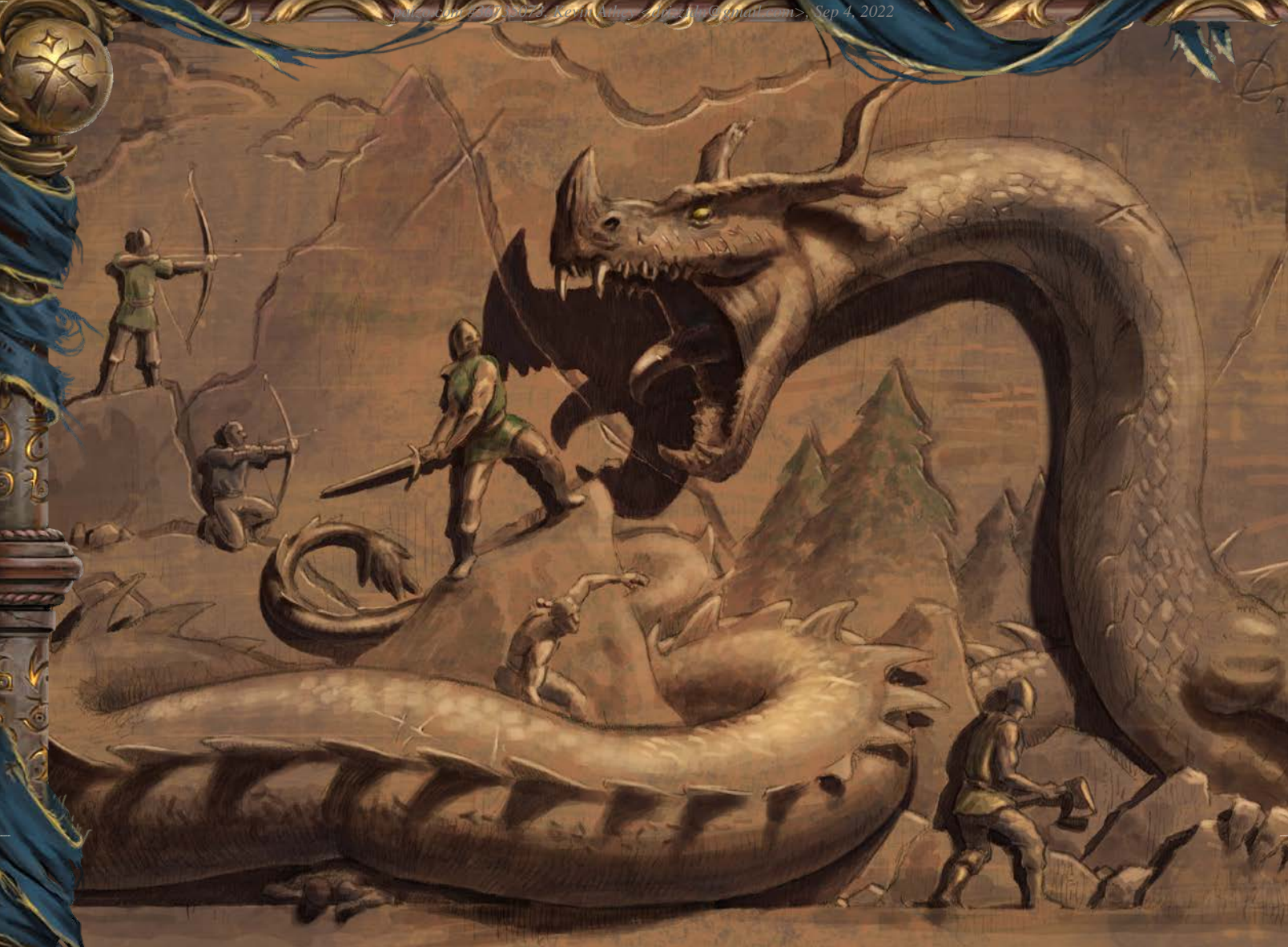
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FAFNHEIR

*Then Fafnheir, thirsting for blood from thanes,
Arose, his roar echoing off rock.
The king uncrowned, bearer of Ridill, cast himself
Heedlessly at the heinous beast, the sword of heroes
Singing in that sunken chamber. But the stroke
Went wide and the wyrm
Caught him, constricting his prey in hideous coils.
“Mighty you may be,” said Fafnheir, mocking,
“In the world above, where ignorance is wisdom.
But in this cairn dwells a creature beyond your accounting.
Gaze on your foe, a fierce exile from the First World,
And lament. Your life belongs to the Father of Linnorms.”*

—A verse from the Saga of Bjurm the Teller

The greatest of all the linnorms to live on Golarion, Fafnheir came to Golarion from the First World. Over the centuries he has spawned many of the lesser linnorms who plague northern lands, and from his direct offspring, countless more creatures have arisen. Now he dwells in a cave complex high in the Grungir Forest, where he has amassed one of Golarion's greatest treasure hoards. Anyone who wants to be king of all the Lands of the Linnorm Kings must slay Fafnheir, but Fafnheir's death curse is especially potent and uses the life of his killer to fuel an explosive resurrection. None have succeeded in killing him, but many courageous heroes have died trying to be the first.

Fafnheir came to Golarion from the First World tens of thousands of years ago. According to his own account—given to supplicants who made their way to his remote lair and placated him with a sacrifice of people, oxen, or sheep—he slew three of the Eldest in the First World and, being bored, came to Golarion in the Age of Creation, more or less on a lark, to see what was happening beyond his plane of existence. Once here, he deigned to grant requests from serpentfolk who worshipped him as a deity and traded favors with Runelord Xanderghul. He slept through most of the Age of Darkness, having already sired many generations of his own kind by then. None of this account is verified, however, and some Ulfen skalds suggest Fafnheir was forced to flee the First World by linnorms and other powers even greater than he.

Scholars knowledgeable in the ways of linnorms speculate how Fafnheir could've spawned so many varieties of linnorms when only females of the species lay eggs. There's no mention of any female linnorms accompanying Fafnheir when he fled the First World, so it's widely assumed that he fled to Golarion in the possession of one or more eggs, which he fertilized and hid. How did Fafnheir come into possession of these eggs, when female linnorms lay one egg at a time? Ulfen loremasters conjecture that he might have gathered or stolen them, and this reason might have spurred Fafnheir's sudden flight from the First World, all those ages ago.

In the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, only those who slay—or tame—such a beast can rule, a tradition that has held since the day Saebjorn Arm-Fang slew a crag linnorm and declared himself king in –624 AR. Many centuries ago, a prophecy foretold that the person who slew Fafnheir would be king of all the Linnorm Kingdoms. For a long time, this prophecy ensured overconfident warriors with an eye on kingship would travel to Fafnheir's lair, only to meet

a quick and gruesome death. Indeed, so many aspiring kings met their end in this way that some scholars suggested Fafnheir forged the prophecy to provide himself a steady diet. The challenge of slaying Fafnheir is increased by his legendary death curse: anyone who slays the Father of Linnorms becomes home to his evil and undying soul, which, over the course of three days, slowly consumes his killer's body until Fafnheir is resurrected. By this logic, Fafnheir believes that he'll eventually be king of all Ulfen after some naive champion beats him in battle, succumbs to the curse, and fuels Fafnheir's return to life. Thankfully, Fafnheir shows no interest in actually becoming ruler of anything and seems content to slumber in his cave, emerging periodically to slake his hunger and remind the wider world of his existence. The Age of Lost Omens has also made this prophecy unreliable, creating an opening for kings like White Estrid and Ostog the Unslain to contemplate making a bid for even higher status without daring to confront Fafnheir.

The Father of Linnorms is unusual among his kind for being particularly intelligent and crafty; he remembers thousands of years of history and is wise in the ways of nature and arcane magic. Rumors persist that, even while sleeping, Fafnheir is vaguely aware of events that occur in Grungir Forest and that his dreams manifest as spectral hallucinations that occasionally take on



ENTRANCE TO FAFNHEIR'S LAIR

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physical form. For this reason, mortals occasionally seek out his wisdom rather than his head, and while Fafnheir is cruel and utterly evil, he also has rarely left his lair in thousands of years and is predictably bored. Visitors who reach his den and bring gifts to sate his hunger can win an audience, though they'd best talk fast and rely on flattery. Fafnheir is actually much more likely to listen to supplicants he finds nonthreatening; heroes with a long list of adventures to their name are potential linnorm kings, and Fafnheir prudently exterminates all such individuals. But young and untested heroes who are confronted with ancient riddles they can't solve, searching for relics lost in lands far away, or eager for knowledge of the First World often find enlightenment at Fafnheir's cave—provided they can brave the many dangers surrounding that fearful place.

FAFNHEIR'S LAIR

The northern reaches of Grungir Forest have been warped by Fafnheir's malevolent evil; the trees are twisted and barren, the waters are fetid and foul, and the air is cloudy with poisonous fumes. Many of the plants here crave blood and flesh, and violent and capricious faeries hunt by night. Many cairn linnorms—supposedly sworn to Fafnheir's service like a kind of honor guard—make their homes here. Most dangerous, however, are the undead remains of would-be linnorm kings, their corpses animated by primal magic. A bare few of these walking dead—King Jorunn of the Fleet of Bildt and Gorbrand Ivarsson among them—retain some memory of their former selves and bear the magical weapons they brought to fight Fafnheir. At least once every generation, some descendant of these ghosts and wights ventures into Grungir not to fight the linnorms but to reclaim their family heirloom. Anyone able to win the goodwill of these undead leaders could also secure safe passage through the worst sections of the forest; most of the undead, however, stalk and slay any living thing they see.

Canny hunters know the cave of Fafnheir by the dank stench arising from its misted darkness and the field of bones that surrounds it. Linnorm eggs dot this landscape, claimed by Fafnheir over the centuries and waiting to hatch; newborns often squirm and crawl just inside the cave entrance within a vast and sloppy nest of mud. Ulfen raiding parties sometimes venture to the cave just to cull these young, fleeing before Fafnheir awakes, but those who seek the Father of Linnorms must go further, into the maze of serpentine tunnels that wind beneath the earth. Countless subterranean creatures, from dero to xulgaths, infest these caverns, like insects making their home in the nest of a large beast (and of no more notice than an insect to the linnorm that calls the cavern home). Because Fafnheir can fly, the winding tunnels of his lair include long shafts that descend straight into darkness.

Eventually, however, three of the tunnels end in a vast chamber heated by vents from the world's core. There, the Father of Linnorms slumbers on a lake of gold and other treasures—including *Ridill*, the ancient dragon-slaying sword. When he raises his head, Fafnheir can hear everything that transpires in any of the tunnels that lead to his lair, even the pleas of petitioners waiting outside his cave. To reply to them, he must emerge—a colossal, slithering horror unique on all Golarion.

ON THE ELDEST

The touch of the First World is more common among the Lands of the Linnorm Kings than in other regions of the Inner Sea. On occasion, travelers stumble upon visiting fey and manage to convince the First World creatures to share stories of their home. Of the various stories, songs, and sagas that Ulfen travelers have gathered from fey over lifetimes, two are of particular interest when investigating Fafnheir's origin.

"I saw him, I did, there in Ragadahn's lair. A clutch of eggs he held, he did, he did! Ragadahn did not know it, but those were not his children. Fafnheir had found a way to win over his fifth mate, Klaiminora. Klaiminora the Song of the Storm, they called her, you see? She could sing but a note and call great tempests and destroy entire forests. Oh, she was beautiful.

"Well, as I said, Fafnheir fathered children with her and had no intent of letting Ragadahn take credit for the offspring. And so, Fafnheir moved in as Ragadahn slept and stole his children away. That's when I followed, you see, for I wanted to be the first to tell the story. He went to the edges of the First World and tore at the sky with his teeth, pulling it away like a cloth. Just as he left, he snapped at me. Almost took my wings with him, he did, he did!"

—Account of Fafnheir's retreat from the First World, as told by Volbarinosko, sprite chronicler

"Yes, I remember when he came to us, offering a chance at freedom. He spoke of the Eldest like cruel parents or prison wardens. We would be free of their oppression and take their power for ourselves. With that, we could shape the First World to our liking. 'You can make a towering tree that grows beyond the sky and make it your home,' he told me. I didn't believe him, but the others seemed entranced by his words. Most of them followed him, preparing themselves to fight for their 'liberated destiny' as he called it. I stayed where I was. I knew better. I heard later the attack was a failure. Powerful as Fafnheir was, he couldn't contend with the Eldest working together. Only by throwing the rest of his 'army' at them as a distraction was he able to flee. Good riddance."

—Details of the Second Eldest War, as spoken by Traversi Paliquial, brownie



RIDILL

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

Fafnheir is a legendary threat. While not all heroes can even dream of facing the Father of Linnorms directly, he can still be a part of most campaigns.

Low-Level Campaigns (1-7)

Novice adventurers would be foolish to fight any linnorm, let alone the Father of Linnorms. However, Fafnheir's lair can still be a suitable, but no less dangerous, adventuring site. The tunnels and caverns that make up the lair are home to all manner of threats, not just linnorms. Gangs of subterranean creatures can serve as foes for heroes exploring Fafnheir's lair. These creatures could also become allies, providing the PCs with information and safety while in the depths of the lair.

Just outside the lair, the PCs might find an assortment of dangerous creatures, from bloodthirsty plants like assassin vines (*Bestiary* 2 26) and snapping flytraps (*Bestiary* 160) to undead like skeletal champions (*Bestiary* 298) and draugr (*Bestiary* 2 102). These creatures are innumerable, and heroes looking for treasure are just as likely to discover notable riches scattered among the surrounding mud and snow.

The lair itself could also pose a number of dangers. The lair's exposure to heat vents and magma includes potential hazards for would-be explorers. The environment section on pages 512–519 of the *Core Rulebook* includes information on underground environments, as well as details on various volcanic hazards.

Fafnheir likely has a number of linnorm eggs and young linnorms (page 29) within his lair. One of these young linnorms would be a suitable foe for low-level characters. Such a linnorm could be especially dangerous when paired with the environmental dangers within the caverns. A group of PCs at the high end of this tier might face several young linnorms at once.

Regardless of the adventures they have within, heroes need to take care when traveling within the lair, lest they wake Fafnheir himself. While these PCs shouldn't face Fafnheir directly, they might instead have to survive a blast from his powerful breath attack unleashed in their direction. Such a blast would deal less damage than normal since it travels some distance to reach the PCs, but it can still serve as a terrifying sample of Fafnheir's might.

Mid-Level Campaigns (8-14)

More powerful characters will likely contend with similar threats in and around Fafnheir's lair as those faced by low-level characters. Suitable undead can take the form of graveknights (*Bestiary* 190–191), dread wraiths (*Bestiary* 2 298), and seething spirits (*Bestiary* 3 228) upset at their failure in slaying Fafnheir. Dezullons (*Bestiary* 94) and viper vines (*Bestiary* 2 287) number among the ranks of particularly dangerous plants.

At this tier of play, heroes are capable of further plumbing the depths of Fafnheir's lair. The PCs might have different reasons for such a journey, including an

attempt to map the lair or to claim some lost relic. Much like with a low-level group, these adventures shouldn't bring the PCs close to Fafnheir himself, but his abilities can still present a challenge from a distance.

Particularly daring PCs might choose to parlay with Fafnheir directly in hopes of earning the linnorm's favor or some kind of reward in the form of treasure or knowledge. Fafnheir recognizes the capabilities of these characters but is still willing to listen to their requests. Winning over Fafnheir isn't a simple task, however, and the Father of Linnorms will likely send PCs on dangerous quests, such as to slay a powerful warrior in the region or to claim a notable treasure for his horde.

High-Level Campaigns (15-20)

Only the most powerful characters can venture throughout Fafnheir's lair and survive all of the dangers within. These characters might need to battle one of the cairn linnorms (*Bestiary* 2 166) that live among the lair's deepest reaches. Depending on the might of the characters, they might end up facing multiple cairn linnorms at once.

The Father of Linnorms is one of the most powerful creatures on Golarion, and only the most capable of heroes stand a chance against him. Heroes looking to take down Fafnheir would do well to prepare for a deadly fight. While doing so includes the proper preparation of spell and blade, heroes should also consider learning as much about their foe as possible. The PCs should take the time to learn the layout of the lair as well as Fafnheir's abilities. A ritual such as *legend lore* can be invaluable, though characters without access to this ritual could instead sneak into the depths of Fafnheir's lair and watch the linnorm to learn what they can.

One item that can turn the tide in the PCs' favor is the legendary sword *Ridill*. Unfortunately, as the sword remains in Fafnheir's hoard, characters who wish to make use of the sword would need to sneak in and steal the blade from under the sleeping dragon's nose. This task could be the main focus of a campaign all on its own, especially for PCs who wish to slay some other dragon.

The fight with Fafnheir could be straightforward, a blow-for-blow battle in a dangerous cavern, or it could be a more complicated combat that spans the various tunnels and caves of the lair, spilling out into the wilderness of the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. Particularly canny PCs might be able to convince Fafnheir to leave the Lands of the Linnorm Kings or even Golarion entirely, especially if they wield *Ridill*. Fafnheir has survived for millennia and might be willing to negotiate for his life. Such a result could lead to the PCs aiding Fafnheir in reclaiming his home within the First World. Fafnheir would need to make sure he's safe within the First World, and the only way to guarantee that would be to convince the Eldest and any others who would oppose Fafnheir's return. Depending on how things play out, the PCs might have to defend themselves against the gods of the First World with Fafnheir at their side, or the PCs could team up with the Eldest to be rid of Fafnheir once and for all.

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FATHER OF LINNORMS

Fafnheir is the fabled Father of Linnorms. He's larger than all other linnorms on Golarion, with a length of 60 feet and a weight upwards of 10 tons. Fafnheir is a clever and powerful creature, worthy of the fear of all people in the Lands of the Linnorm Kings.

FAFNHEIR

CREATURE 24

UNIQUE CE GARGANTUAN DRAGON

Perception +38; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 120 feet, true seeing

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Skald, Sylvan

Skills Acrobatics +40, Arcana +35, Athletics +48, First World Lore +40, Intimidation +45, Nature +35, Saga Lands Lore +35, Stealth +40, Survival +40

Str +12, **Dex** +9, **Con** +12, **Int** +4, **Wis** +9, **Cha** +9

AC 51; **Fort** +42, **Ref** +36, **Will** +38; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 500, regeneration 20 (deactivated by cold iron);
Immunities curse, electricity, fire, paralyzed, sleep;
Weaknesses cold iron 20

Curse of the Woeful Wyrd (curse, primal) When a creature slays Fafnheir, it becomes home to his soul, which slowly emerges from his killer's body. The creature must attempt a DC 52 Will save or become doomed 2 (doomed 1 on a success, unaffected on a critical success). Unless the creature critically succeeded at the saving throw, each day the doomed value increases by 1. If the creature dies while suffering the curse of the woeful wyrd, its corpse explodes in a 60-foot burst with the effect of Blasting Breath. Fafnheir is immediately returned to life in the nearest available space to the corpse with full Hit Points and no conditions. Even an indirect slaying usually still allows Fafnheir to curse the soul of his slayer through the metaphysical link between them.

Enormous Fafnheir takes up a space of 6 squares by 6 squares (30 feet by 30 feet) and is 60 feet long.

Extra Reactions Fafnheir gains 2 reactions at the start of each of his turns.

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 90 feet, DC 45

Attack of Opportunity Tail only.

Spit Boiling Blood Trigger A creature within 60 feet damages Fafnheir; **Effect** Fafnheir spits blood at the creature. It must immediately attempt a Fortitude save against boiling blood (page 29).

Speed 50 feet, burrow 25 feet, fly 160 feet, swim 80 feet; *freedom of movement*

Melee Jaws +44 (magical, reach 25 feet),

Damage 4d12+26 piercing plus boiling blood

Melee Claw +44 (agile, magical, reach 25 feet), **Damage** 4d10+22 slashing

Melee Horns +44 (deadly d12, magical, reach 25 feet), **Damage** 4d12+26 bludgeoning

Melee Tail +44 (agile, magical, reach 30 feet), **Damage** 4d10+22 bludgeoning plus Improved Grab

Primal Innate Spells DC 45; **10th:** *plane shift* (at will, only to the First World or the Material Plane), *spell turning* (at will);

Constant (10th) *freedom of movement*, *true seeing*

Blasting Breath (electricity, evocation, fire, primal) Fafnheir exhales a cataclysmic firestorm laced with lightning and hurricane-strength winds, dealing 20d6 fire damage in a 90-foot cone (DC 48 basic Reflex save). Additionally, Fafnheir deals 10d6 additional electricity damage to one creature within the area of Blasting Breath of Fafnheir's choice, determined by the same basic Reflex save. Creatures in the area must also attempt a DC 48 Fortitude save to resist the powerful winds and deafening thunderclaps of the breath. Creatures that fail experience the effects of *gust of wind*,

FAFNHEIR

affecting Large or smaller creatures as normal. Finally, creatures that fail their Fortitude save become deafened for 1 minute (permanently deafened on a critical failure).

Boiling Blood (fire, poison) **Saving Throw** DC 48 Fortitude;

Maximum Duration 10 rounds; **Stage 1** 6d8 fire damage and drained 1 (1 round); **Stage 2** 6d10 fire damage and drained 2 (1 round); **Stage 3** 6d12 fire damage and drained 3 (1 round)

Furious Frenzy ♦♦ Fafnheir makes two claw Strikes and one Strike with his jaws, horns, or tail, in any order.

YOUNG LINNORMS

As discussed on page 165 of *Bestiary 2*, female linnorms lay eggs in the wilderness, where linnorms are known to hunt. A linnorm egg remains viable for many years, protected by a tough, leathery skin easily mistaken for stone. When a male linnorm eventually stumbles across the egg, he fertilizes it and takes it to a secure and remote location, leaving it alone to eventually hatch. Newborn linnorms remain hidden in their nests for several months as they mature, growing large enough to hunt on their own and setting out into the world. These linnorms are roughly the equivalent of older teenagers when compared to other species. Younger linnorms, while still primal creatures with a strong tie to the First World, haven't yet manifested most of their magical powers. They still can't breathe deadly fire or lightning or see invisible creatures, and, most importantly, they can be slain without prompting the linnorm's legendary death curse. They do, however, have voracious appetites, consuming any living thing to fuel their rapid growth. A linnorm is most vulnerable during this time; scouts who find tracks of a young linnorm quickly muster a hunting party of stalwart and experienced warriors to track the creature down and kill it quickly—before they draw the attention of the linnorm's father.

YOUNG LINNORM

CREATURE 7

UNCOMMON CE LARGE DRAGON

Perception +15; darkvision, low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Aklo, Draconic, Sylvan (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +15, Athletics +17

Str +6, **Dex** +3, **Con** +5, **Int** -4, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +5

AC 25; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +15, **Will** +12; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 115, regeneration 5 (deactivated by cold iron); **Immunities** curse, paralyzed, sleep; **Weaknesses** cold iron 5

Attack of Opportunity ➤ Tail only.

Speed 30 feet, fly 60 feet, swim 45 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +18 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d10+9 piercing plus young linnorm venom

Melee ♦ claw +18 (agile, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+9 slashing

Melee ♦ tail +18 (agile, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d8+9 bludgeoning plus Improved Grab

Constrict ♦ 2d8+4 bludgeoning, DC 25

Young Linnorm Venom (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 25 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 10 rounds; **Stage 1** 4d6 poison damage and drained 1

VARIETIES OF YOUNG LINNORMS

While the statistics for young linnorms suit most uses, you might choose to customize a creature by giving it abilities and traits found in its adult variety.

- **Cairn Linnorm:** Immune to acid; venom inflicts acid damage instead of poison damage; gains a climb speed of 30 feet; loses Constrict.
- **Crag Linnorm:** Immune to fire; venom inflicts fire damage instead of poison damage.
- **Fjord Linnorm:** Immune to cold; venom inflicts cold damage instead of poison damage and clumsy instead of drained.
- **Ice Linnorm:** Immune to cold; venom inflicts cold damage instead of poison damage.
- **Shoal Linnorm:** Immune to fire; venom inflicts fire damage instead of poison damage.
- **Taiga Linnorm:** Immune to electricity; venom inflicts electricity damage instead of poison damage; gains Spines; loses Constrict.
- **Tarn Linnorm:** Immune to acid; venom inflicts acid damage instead of poison damage; gains Double Bite.
- **Tor Linnorm:** Immune to fire; venom inflicts fire damage instead of poison damage; gains a climb speed of 30 feet.

Despite their sizable threat, presenting the head of one of these linnorm youths is more likely to see a warrior laughed out of town than crowned king. Young linnorms who survive for more than a few months become Huge, gaining elite adjustments (*Bestiary* 6) and other distinctive linnorm traits, such as *true seeing* and *freedom of movement*. By the time a linnorm manifests its breath weapon and death curse after a year, it's fully grown into an adult.

RIDILL

ITEM 20

UNIQUE ARTIFACT EVOCATION MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

Usage held in 2 hands; **Bulk** 4

This 12-foot sword was made by a cyclops in the ancient past. It might be the greatest dragon-killing weapon ever made, and Fafnheir justly fears it, which is why he keeps it hidden in his hoard. Runes of dragon slaying are written down its blade. *Ridill* is a +3 major striking dragon bane^{SoM} speed adamantine greatsword. While wielding *Ridill*, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to saves against fear. This increases to +4 if the effect is from a dragon. If you have an ability that depends on Large weapons (such as barbarian giant instinct), it works with *Ridill*.

Ridill is always considered to have the appropriate material or damage type necessary to deactivate a dragon's regeneration or cause the dragon's weakness to apply. For example, *Ridill* is considered to be cold iron when attacking a linnorm, while it would be treated as having dealt cold damage when attacking a red dragon. If the dragon has more than one weakness, only the highest value applies.

Destruction If you boil *Ridill* in the blood of 10 different types of dragon (blue dragon, red dragon, etc.) and drop the eye of a cyclops seer into the brew, *Ridill* melts away into nothingness.

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GROGRISANT

“To Grogrisant, the inhabitants of that cabin on the Tandak Plains were of no consequence, tiny creatures that fled its presence only to be crushed beneath its uncaring feet. But because mere mortals were beneath its notice, Grogrisant had no regard for the child his rampage left behind, a human infant in a cradle miraculously unharmed by his passage. And it was this child that Elisa the lioness, whose cubs had recently been slain by Opparan poachers, found as she and her pride followed in Grogrisant’s wake. It was this child she adopted as her own, naming him Taldaris. And as the years passed, he grew in strength and cunning until he was the master of all things, his limbs quick with the speed and power of the beasts who raised him, and his mind broad with the craft and wisdom that was his birthright.”

—Taldaris, Pride of the Empire

Report of the Imperial College of Heralds to Grand Princess Eutropia, on the Matter of the Grogrisant

The noble houses of Taldor have long commemorated their family history with heraldry painted on shields, emblazoned on tunics, or flown from high flags atop castles. These symbols include many fierce and storied beasts, from the proud unicorn to the unruly boar. However, among Taldor's heraldic animals, Grogrisant is supreme and reserved for the imperial line alone. Thus, when your imperial majesty requested a history of the grogrisant, this task fell to me, head of the college of heralds.

First, a matter of semantics that has confused many, for there is the grogrisant, and there is Grogrisant proper. The latter is the name of the Imperial Beast, a colossal lion of vast power and majesty that roamed the Tandak Plains 6,000 years ago only to be slain by your ancestor, Taldaris I, founder of the Lion Throne. In the many centuries since, this lion—or new ones very much like it—has continued to appear; these later creatures we refer to as the grogrisant, a title not unlike the one which you yourself so wisely wear.

Grogrisant and its heirs are creatures imbued with a wild, primal magic. We believe it was this magic that caused Grogrisant to grow to enormous size, imbuing it with various magical powers. First and foremost, its mane shone bright as the sun itself, blinding any who came near. When it walked the plains, it was perceived as a kind of shimmering heat wave, almost like a desert mirage. This comparison is especially apt, as Grogrisant could not be located by magic, and its paws—though as large as a person—left no tracks. Its most distinctive physical feature, aside from its great size and brilliant mane, were its six eyes, and with its gaze it cast beams of burning primal fire. In short, to face Grogrisant was to face death.

It lived for centuries and was a well-known hazard of the region in the 13th century before the coming of Aroden, when it was commonly presumed to be an avatar of nature, a living embodiment of the Tandak Plains. Many worshipped it as a god. The oft-repeated story that Grogrisant was responsible for the death of Taldaris's human parents has its roots in *Holdun's Chronicles*, a history of the reign of Taldor's first five emperors compiled centuries after the death of Taldaris I. Any troubadour in Taldor can sing this apocryphal tale for a

silver penny. Eventually Taldaris slew Grogrisant, taking its indestructible pelt as a trophy. A talented magical tailor by the name of Evanya fashioned the pelt into the cloak and hood that became an heirloom of your family.

And so Grogrisant's tale should have come to an end. Yet, centuries later, it seemed to appear again. By this time, the Tandak Plains were home to many villages and towns. The grogrisant's rampages put them all in great danger, but no one dared assault the creature. Finally, a young hero by the name of Cassidor prevailed upon reigning emperor Remoque I for a favor, and the emperor unwisely said, "I shall grant you anything in my power." Cassidor asked for the hand of the crown princess in marriage, and Remoque, bound by his word, was obliged to grant it, but he ordered that the only meal fit for such a wedding feast was the flesh of the grogrisant, which Cassidor was thenceforth obliged to kill. The young champion gathered a small army of heroes from across the known world, and the result was the Great Grisantian Hunt, a tale I believe you know well.

That, however, was only the first return of the grogrisant, which has continued to challenge our nation. There has never been more than one grogrisant at a time, and it lives for centuries. While it lives, it mates with the largest and fiercest lions of Taldor, siring a unique breed of grisantian lions—beasts that share the grogrisant's size, if less of its magical power.

How the Grogrisant Manifests

But how, many ask, does the grogrisant continue to return generation after generation? Is it born again? Is it a single creature that cannot die? Your imperial majesty, we in the College of Heralds have tasked the wisest sages and loremasters to answer this question, and while their treatises on the subject are many (and excessively long), I can tell you what, after all that, we in the college believe.

Nature is a source of immense magical power, and this magic manifests in unpredictable ways according to nature's own inscrutable ends. Over time, magic arising from the land within our empire coalesces around a lion, always a perfect physical specimen. Grisantian lions are often the subject of this energy, for they are strong and powerful, but the effect can also occur in ordinary lions;



GRAND PRINCESS EUTROPIA

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health is more important than breeding, and the effect is at least somewhat random. The affected lion slowly grows larger and larger, and its hide becomes more and more resilient. If it is female, it grows a mane, and this mane becomes brighter and brighter until, eventually, it bursts into flame. This triggers a final transformation in the creature itself, resulting in the distinctive six eyes of the grogrisant. The entire process can take many years—a century or more—but we believe it begins almost immediately upon the death of the previous grogrisant, so while there is only ever one grogrisant at a time, there is a period between manifestations during which the next grogrisant slowly grows into its power. In the College of Heraldry, we refer to these periods between grogrisants as interregnums. If an interregnum lasts for centuries, we believe it's because the grogrisant has manifested in a lion native to the World's Edge Mountains, where it can live unnoticed for many years.

We also theorize that the primal energy that causes the grogrisant to manifest can be tapped or interrupted. This possibility helps to explain why certain interregnums are exceptionally long and the grogrisant is not seen for many centuries. We do not know how this process is interrupted or who is responsible. It may even be a natural phenomenon. It's been suggested that the construction of towns and cities disrupts the accumulation of natural magic, and that our empire itself might in some way be responsible for these longer interregnums. Others argue primal magic-wielders tap this energy for potent rituals, and when many such spells are worked over a long period, the grogrisant cannot manifest.

Some in the empire see this as a good thing. There's no doubt that the grogrisant has taken many lives and caused harm. But the grogrisant is also a manifestation of the empire itself, a symbol of our strength and power. Moreover, the grogrisant is a test—a test of our resolve, our culture, and our perseverance as a people. Some say to triumph over the grogrisant is to validate our right to exist. And if the grogrisant should arise no more, why then, how will we know we are worthy? How would we know that we are truly Taldan?

—Viviadne Caristos, Master of the Imperial College of Heraldry

An excerpt from *Primal Touchstones: An Exploration on the Nature of Nature and its Effect on Everyday Life* by R. M. Kotrin-Theivos

While primal energy is generally understandable, there are some cases where it seems to act of its own accord,

leading to unexpected results. One such case is with Grogrisant. For those readers unfamiliar with the Taldan legend, I will summarize as follows.

Grogrisant was an enormous, fantastical lion. It sported a mane as bright as the sun and six terrifying eyes. The creature was larger than an elephant, and defeating it was a mighty deed worthy of legend. "Legend" is quite literal in this case, as the grogrisant has reappeared at various times throughout Taldor's history. Unlike some legends, however, the grogrisant is very real, and there is concrete evidence of its existence—such as the pelt that Taldor's emperors wear during celebrations.

I mention Grogrisant because it seems to be a living example of the primal made manifest. While I have not studied Grogrisant directly, I have managed to capture a grisantian lion—a direct descendant of Grogrisant, sired by the legendary beast and left to roam the wilds of Taldor.

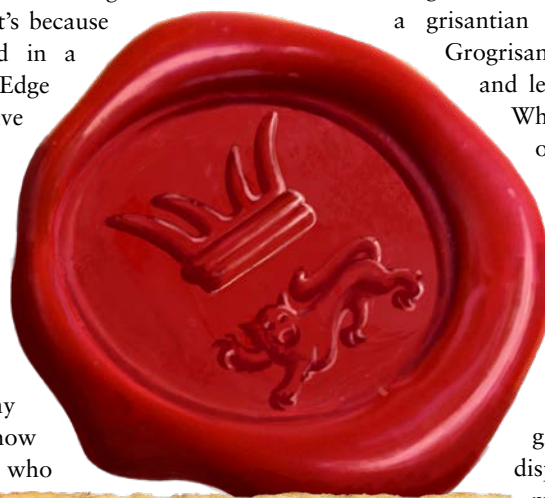
While a grisantian lion possesses only a fraction of the power and might of its forebearer, it does provide some insight into the power of the primal.

Using the arcane techniques described in previous chapters, I set about to understand the origin of Grogrisant through one of its descendants. The grisantian lion's aura immediately displayed high quantities of various magical energies. While the very presence of magic coursing through the grisantian lion was

quite a revelation, it was the necromantic component that most drew my attention.

The process of unweaving a magical aura is much more difficult than unmaking a magical cloak, yet I persevered. Once finished, I released a portion of this magical energy back into the world, tagging it with my divination key as I've done before. When I used my observation ritual to track it some weeks later, I noticed the magic had been recycled as expected, but rather than simply being absorbed in the nearest available space, it had returned to Taldor. Specifically, it seemed to empower a portion of a forest recently cleared for logging. The magic seemed intent on restoring the fallen trees in the area.

Repeated releases produced similar results, with the energy restoring a giant eagle, creating a small hive of bees, and empowering a traveling druid's spell. While I'm not entirely sure of this, I believe that some aspect of the Taldor wilds, most likely the Verduran Forest, is intentionally drawing upon primal energies to create a guardian for itself. The continual rebirth of the grogrisant seems to support this theory, though there is still more research to be done. The question is: why does Taldor itself feel the need to produce a guardian such as Grogrisant?



SEAL OF THE GRAND THRONE OF HOUSE STAVIAN

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

The grogrisant's appearance in your campaign can herald the beginnings of great turmoil and the potential for even greater glory.

Low-Level Campaigns (1-7)

At low levels of play, the grogrisant is too mighty a foe for characters to face. However, it could still be the focus of a low-level campaign, even if it isn't the PCs' direct foe. The PCs could join a hunt for the grogrisant and travel deep into the wilds of Taldor, searching for any sign of the creature's existence. This journey can be fraught with dangers depending on where the hunt takes place.

The Verduran Forest is one possible location for a grogrisant hunt. The forest is vast and provides several opportunities for danger in the form of wild animals, fearsome beasts, dangerous plants and fungi, and tricky fey. While the forest contains small communities within, most of these can only offer the most basic of resources, and PCs requiring the likes of cold iron weapons or other important items for their search are better off bringing such equipment with them rather than relying on the local population. Reaching the depths of the forest could be a challenging process, and the PCs would need to prepare for a weeks-long, even months-long trip, which could push their survival skills to the limit.

The other likely hideout for the grogrisant is high on the peaks of the World's Edge mountains. The mountains are littered with small mining villages and other communities, more so than in the Verduran Forest. The geography can help break up the journey into multi-day treks rather than longer affairs, but these shorter days of travel can be just as dangerous. Unstable footing, landslides, and other mountainous hazards could put an end to a trip much faster than the Verduran's hazards. Heroes traveling through the mountains will need to be sure of their climbing abilities and prepare themselves with suitable equipment, such as climbing kits and useful spells like *feather fall*.

These low-level characters can't face off with the grogrisant or any grisantian lions, but they can still face powerful lions during their hunt. A lion (*Bestiary* 52) is a powerful creature on its own, and a pride of lions can be dangerous even for a group of more powerful characters. A lion with the elite adjustment (*Bestiary* 6) or the statistics for a smilodon (*Bestiary* 53) can represent a young grisantian lion and serve as a suitable foe early in a group's career.

While on this hunt, the PCs might find signs of the grogrisant or of a grisantian lair, such as tracks, tufts of fur, or a broken claw. Tracking down the den of one of these lions is a noble goal, and returning home with knowledge of the den's location can earn the PCs a healthy amount of gold. Depending on its overall state, a broken claw or tooth could also fetch a sizable reward as well; either could also be a component for crafting a new weapon and producing interesting items like unique daggers or swords.

Mid-Level Campaigns (8-14)

With the knowledge of a grisantian lion (page 34)'s whereabouts, a group at this tier of play could face one directly. PCs looking to hunt a grisantian lion need to prepare for a dangerous encounter. A grisantian lion typically uses its environment to ambush prey, so PCs hunting one would need to keep an eye on every high cliff and dark cavern they cross, where the grisantian lion could be lying in wait to strike.

More powerful characters could fight the grogrisant directly. The grogrisant usually lairs deep in the most remote regions of Taldor, and tracking it down is a monumental task. While PCs can use their own skills to track down the grogrisant, there are a number of other methods that could make the process easier. A ritual like *commune with nature* or *legend lore* might provide clues on the lion's whereabouts. Spells like *scrying* and *locate* could make the process easier as well, but the uncommon nature of these spells could complicate things. The druids of the Verduran Forest might be persuaded to help locate the grogrisant, though convincing them would prove a difficult task. A grisantian lion might also have information on the dwelling of its parent, but again, persuading the beast to offer its aid would pose a difficult prospect.

High-Level Campaigns (15-20)

High-level characters might have less of a problem dealing with the grogrisant as a foe. Applying the elite adjustment could help keep the grogrisant challenging for a time, but particularly powerful characters would likely still outclass the mighty beast. At this tier of play, the nature of the grogrisant's origin might present a more suitable challenge than the creature itself.

The PCs could take the time to learn the origins of the grogrisant, searching Taldan records on accounts of the creature's origin and exploring the natural events that bring about the creature. This could take the form of a number of different primal phenomena. A unique leyline (*Secrets of Magic* 214–217) might run along the Verduran Forest or World's Edge mountains, providing the energy that takes hold within a new grogrisant. Disrupting the energy of a leyline would be an almost-impossible task, but a powerful ritual could be the key to doing so.

The grogrisant could also be the result of a druidic ritual from thousands of years ago. Locating the source of this ritual could lead the PCs to a powerful order of druids hidden deep in the Verduran Forest or even beyond Taldor. These druids are likely to be just as challenging as the grogrisant, if not more so. While slaying these druids would be the end of the grogrisant, negotiating with the druids could lead to a greater understanding of the creature's origin or even the possibility of controlling it outright.

Stopping the grogrisant's rebirth might be impossible, however, and perhaps the most appropriate way to deal with the beast is to capture it and keep it safely contained forever.

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THE EMPIRE'S PRIDE

Grogrisant is an enormous lion with multiple eyes and a golden, glowing mane. As it was originally slain by Taldor's founding emperor, the legendary hero Taldaris, Grogrisant's appearance marks both danger for the people of Taldor and the potential for Taldans to prove their might against a creature from their fabled past. How it continues to appear time and time again remains a mystery, one that Taldan scholars continuously attempt to decipher.

GROGRISANT

CREATURE 16

UNIQUE CN HUGE BEAST PRIMAL

Perception +30; darkvision, low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +28, Athletics +35, Intimidation +32, Stealth +28, Survival +28

Str +9, **Dex** +6, **Con** +9, **Int** -2, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +5

AC 38; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +28, **Will** +25

HP 295; **Immunities** blinded, disease; **Resistances** fire 15, physical 15 (except bludgeoning), poison 20

Aura of Blinding Light (aura, evocation, incapacitation, light, primal, visual) 40 feet. Any creature that begins its turn in the aura must attempt a DC 34 Fort save or be blinded for 1 minute and become temporarily immune for 1 day. If the creature critically fails this save, it's permanently blinded.

Speed 40 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee **✦** jaws +32, **Damage** 3d12+18 piercing plus Improved Grab

Melee **✦** claw +32 (agile), **Damage** 3d10+15 slashing

Primal Innate Spells DC 34, spell attack +26; **8th** *fire shield*, *searing light*; **Cantrips** *8th* *dancing lights*; **Constant** *nonetection*, *pass without trace*

Dual Pounce **✦✦** Grogrisant Strides and makes two claw Strikes against the same creature at the end of that movement. Each attack counts against Grogrisant's multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after Grogrisant makes both attacks. If both attacks hit, combine their damage for the purpose of resistances and weaknesses.

Rend **✦** claw. If Grogrisant Rends after a successful Dual Pounce, combine the Rend's damage with that from the Dual Pounce for the purpose of resistances and weaknesses.

Vicious Rend **✧** **Trigger** Grogrisant uses Rend; **Effect** The target's armor takes damage equal to the damage from Rend. The target can attempt a DC 37 basic Reflex save, negating the armor damage on a successful save.

GRISANTIAN LIONS

The appearance of the grogrisant is a once-in-a-generation event, but the spawn of that legendary creature are well known in the World's Edge Mountains and throughout Taldor. These primal beasts don't travel in a pride as ordinary lions do. Instead, they avoid others of their kind, even to mate, and they seek out ordinary lions once a year or so for this purpose. A grisantian lion who bears cubs nurses and tends their offspring only long enough

for their young to become self-sufficient—which takes only a few months, thanks to their kind's incredibly rapid growth and development.

A full-grown grisantian lion is as big as an elephant and exceedingly aggressive, hunting anything that comes across its path. While ordinary lions rely on stealth and pack tactics to secure a meal, the grisantian lion is too big to hide in tall grass. Instead, it has adapted to the mountains, where it selects a large and hard-to-reach cave as its home before claiming it from whatever creature is so unfortunate as to already inhabit the place. A grisantian lion is a canny hunter, able to track for miles, and remains behind rocky cliffs and outcroppings as it approaches its prey. Once close enough, it pounces, tearing open the prey's armor and shredding the flesh within. If threatened, a grisantian lion seizes its meal in its mouth and leaps off, scaling a nearby cliff face and retreating to its den.

Although they're wild creatures that can never be tamed, grisantian lions understand Taldane and occasionally agree to help those who defend nature. However, such alliances are temporary and unreliable at best.

GRISANTIAN LION

CREATURE 12

RARE CN HUGE BEAST PRIMAL

Perception +25; low-light vision, scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Common (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +22, Athletics +25, Intimidation +25, Stealth +22, Survival +22

Str +7, **Dex** +5, **Con** +7, **Int** -3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** -2

AC 32; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +22, **Will** +19

HP 215; **Immunities** disease; **Resistances** fire 10, physical 10 (except bludgeoning)

Speed 35 feet, climb 20 feet

Melee **✦** jaws +26, **Damage** 3d10+14 piercing plus Grab

Melee **✦** claw +26 (agile), **Damage** 3d8+12 slashing

Dual Pounce **✦✦** The grisantian lion Strides and makes two claw Strikes against the same creature at the end of that movement. Each attack counts against the grisantian lion's multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after the grisantian lion makes both attacks. If both attacks hit, combine their damage for the purpose of resistances and weaknesses.

Rend **✦** claw. If the grisantian lion Rends after a successful Dual Pounce, combine the Rend's damage with that from the Dual Pounce for the purpose of resistances and weaknesses.

Vicious Rend **✧** **Trigger** The grisantian lion uses Rend; **Effect** The target's armor takes damage equal to the damage from Rend. The target can attempt a DC 29 basic Reflex save to reduce this damage.

GRISANTIAN PELT

Highly desired for the prestige, the pelt of the grogrisant also has invaluable properties. Standard-grade items can be made from the pelt of a grisantian lion, but high-grade items require the pelt of the grogrisant itself.

GRISANTIAN PELT

MATERIAL 12+

RARE PRECIOUS

This supernaturally tough animal skin is gold and shines in sunlight. It can be used to make any item usually made of cloth, leather, or hide. This material is immune to fire, and its Hardness is doubled against piercing or slashing damage. Up to 4 Bulk of grisantian pelt can be harvested from a single creature (this is usually more than enough for 4 suits of standard grade armor or 2 suit of high-grade armor).

Type standard-grade grisantian hide object; **Level** 12; **Price** 1,200 gp per Bulk

Type high-grade grisantian hide object; **Level** 18; **Price** 12,000 gp per Bulk

GRISANTIAN PELT ITEMS

Thin Items	Hardness	HP	BT
Standard-grade	6	24	12
High-grade	8	32	16
Items	Hardness	HP	BT
Standard-grade	9	36	18
High-grade	11	44	22

GRISANTIAN PELT ARMOR

ITEM 12+

RARE

Usage worn armor; **Bulk** varies by armor

Grisantian pelt armor is immune to fire damage, and its Hardness is doubled against piercing or slashing damage. Wearing armor made from grisantian pelt also grants you a +1 circumstance bonus to your AC and saving throws against attacks and spells that deal fire damage.

Type standard-grade grisantian pelt armor; **Level** 12; **Price** 1,800 gp + 180 gp per Bulk; **Craft Requirements** The initial raw materials must include grisantian pelt worth at least 900 gp + 90 gp per Bulk.

Type high-grade grisantian pelt armor; **Level** 19; **Price** 33,000 gp + 3,300 gp per Bulk; **Craft Requirements** The initial raw materials must include grisantian pelt worth at least 16,500 gp + 1,650 gp per Bulk.

MANTLE OF THE GROGRISANT

ITEM 18

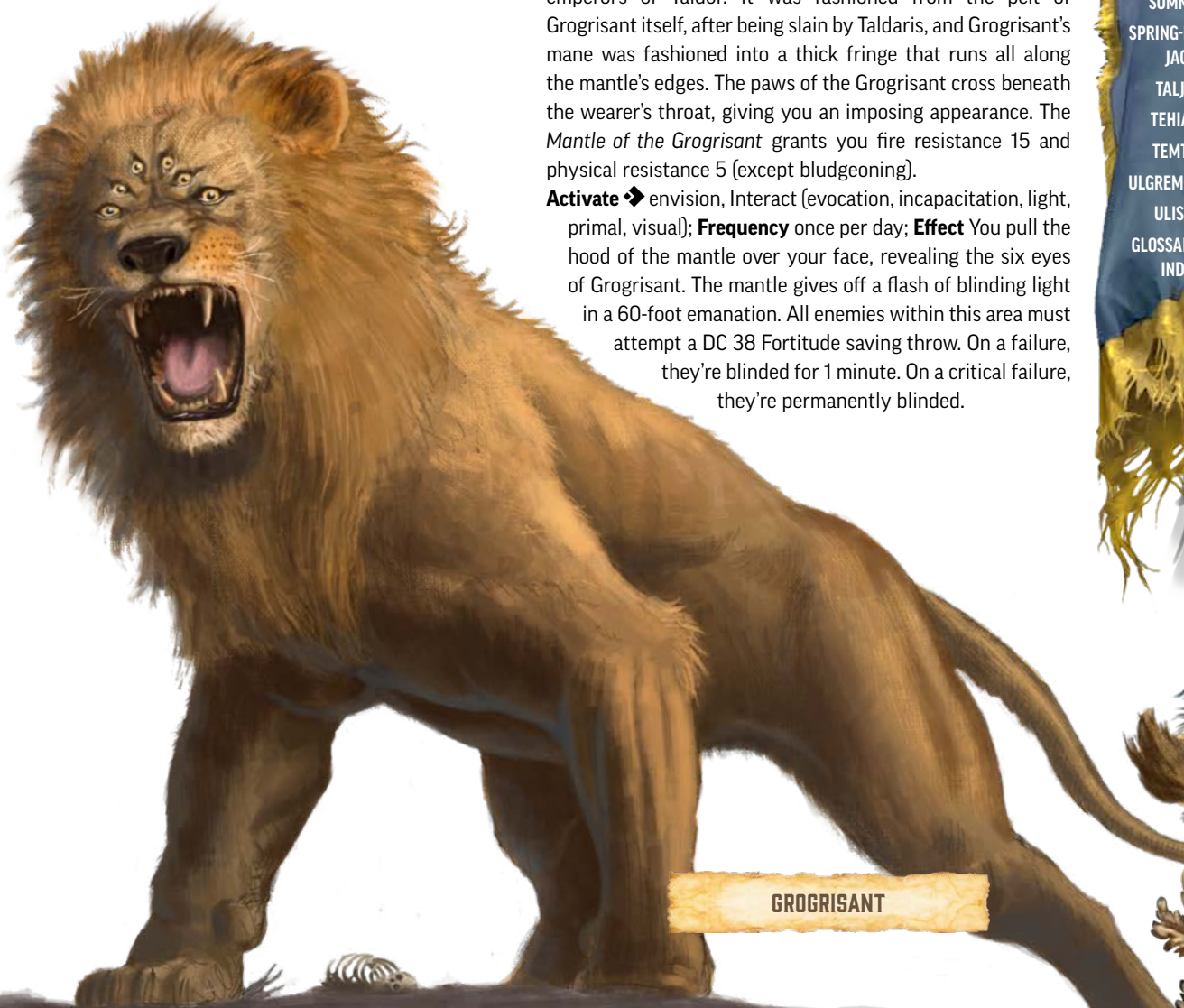
UNIQUE ABJURATION INVESTED PRIMAL

Price 22,000 gp

Usage worn cloak; **Bulk** L

This long, golden cloak is among the royal regalia of the emperors of Taldor. It was fashioned from the pelt of Grogrisant itself, after being slain by Taldaris, and Grogrisant's mane was fashioned into a thick fringe that runs all along the mantle's edges. The paws of the Grogrisant cross beneath the wearer's throat, giving you an imposing appearance. The *Mantle of the Grogrisant* grants you fire resistance 15 and physical resistance 5 (except bludgeoning).

Activate ◆ envision, Interact (evocation, incapacitation, light, primal, visual); **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You pull the hood of the mantle over your face, revealing the six eyes of Grogrisant. The mantle gives off a flash of blinding light in a 60-foot emanation. All enemies within this area must attempt a DC 38 Fortitude saving throw. On a failure, they're blinded for 1 minute. On a critical failure, they're permanently blinded.



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KAIJU

The skies parted, and the terrible heads poked through first. Each arrived with a screech that shook the mountains around us. Animals howled as they fled and the trees trembled with fear. Mogaru stood his ground, ready to strike as Agyra flew closer. By this time Mogaru had forgotten entirely about our village. Those with some sense continued to grab their things and flee. The rest of us just watched with awe. What else could we do? Whether we lived or died was no longer up to us.

—From the memoir of Makoto Fujii, painter

Colossal creatures both terrifying and elusive, kaiju have roamed or visited Golarion since long before the dawn of civilizations, though their later entrances often ushered in the end of said societies. Their massive feats of destruction have left behind many legendary stories. Some hail the kaiju as heroic figures delivering nature's retribution upon exploitative and arrogant empires. Others cast them as foes bent on wanton ruin, seeking devastation and misery from either humanity or a rival kaiju.

However, in most stories and many historical records, kaiju aren't the instigators of their attacks. More often than not, they only wake from hibernation in response to a disturbance. The fearsome beasts are rarely seen in daily life, for they live in some of the most remote parts of the world—or rather, these locations are remote because of the kaiju's presence. Most settlements are wise enough to avoid disturbing the beast's slumber.

Many inquisitive and daring minds speculate upon what purpose kaiju serve on a planetary scale. With recent advances in spells and technology capable of quantifying the planet's energies, some kaiju scholars hypothesize that the gigantic beasts may be keepers of the planet's equilibrium intended to prevent any coalescing of power that might become a credible global threat. The animosity between individual kaiju might therefore be an incidental and unintended side effect. Even with this budding understanding, the shock and awe of an awoken kaiju continue to create stories destined to become legends and myths.

AGYRA

Whenever powerful hurricanes and other great storms fall upon Tian Xia, many locals believe them to be the creation of Agyra, the Forever Storm. Agyra resembles an enormous flying reptile with two heads and a long tail covered in massive blades and spines. While Agyra herself is usually not the source of the powerful storms associated with her flights, her mastery of winds and electricity enables her to create typhoons and lightning storms that are still awesome and destructive in their own right.

Agyra lives on a remote island far beyond the edges of Tian Xia, but makes her way toward the continent for a number of reasons. The island is home to a local humanoid population, and Agyra seems willing to attack anyone that poses a threat to island's populace, even flying great distances to track down anyone that's harmed the island and fled. Agyra also harbors a great hatred for Mogaru (page 38) and sometimes flies days to track down the kaiju and fight him. The origin of this resentment is unclear, but most scholars believe the grudge to be ages old.

During Earthfall, the region of Taumata in eastern Tian Xia was torn apart by countless tsunamis, floods, and powerful storms that shattered the land into

the countless islands that comprise it today. Legends state that during this time, a small group of powerful Taumatian spellcasters created a ward to spare their home. This ward collected great energy from the storms, eventually creating Agyra. The wards also protected their home from the storms, leaving behind a single island. The people living on the island are said to be the distant descendants of the early Taumatians, and many believe that Agyra defends these people as she sees them as her creators, in a sense. Most scholars dismiss this idea, as ancient evidence suggests that Agyra could have existed even before Earthfall, but Agyra's connection to the island remains undeniable and intriguing.

EBESHRA

Stories of Ebeshra, the Winged Razor of the furthest clouds, are most often heard along the Wall of Heaven, though others in mountainous regions recall similar incidents. Trekkers on the highest peaks recount how the clear sky became dark and overcast, before a giant serpentine cloud emerged from the heavens and lowered itself toward the earth. Upon approach, it became abundantly clear that Ebeshra is not a cloud and does not, in fact, move. Rather, the kaiju resembles an infinite number of crystal wings folding in and unfurling, morphing in and out of reality to create the illusion of traveling. Due to its unusual nature, Ebeshra sightings are rare and erratic in comparison to other kaiju in both timing and location. Certain conditions, particularly massive breaches of planar dimensions or multiple kaiju fighting, are rumored to attract its attention.

Folklore claims Ebeshra was made by powerful planar entities and gods to stitch a particularly large rip in reality eons ago. To have peace of mind that such catastrophe would never happen again, one deity granted Ebeshra sentience and intelligence in order to repair tears it finds between the planes. The tool it uses—its crystalline body—is thus capable of piercing through dimensions, resulting in many exorbitant bounties for a piece of the kaiju's shell. Only one person has ever survived this task, and they left behind a harrowing account of fluid spikes, morphing substances, and eyes in the strangest of places while scaling Ebeshra. Shortly after delivering the product, both this adventurer and their client fell to delirium, chanting that a thousand eyes looked back. The cursed crystal that the adventurer returned has been missing for years.

MANTRASKA

Mantraska the World Talon looks like a giant raptor bird as tall as a small mountain, with a wing span twice the distance, and utterly covered in vegetation.



MANTRASKA'S FEATHER

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Her breath while hibernating is said to be the thin whisper or deep rumble heard in the deepest parts of a forest. Every so often, explorers who stray close don't realize it, even as they pass right beneath the wings of the kaiju, for Mantraska's plumage resembles plants so closely that she could replace an entire forest and its inhabitants would be none the wiser. Her head and body resemble a mountain covered in ferns; her legs and talons mimic the largest of fallen tree trunks; and her wings, spread out, act as the canopy.

Mantraska considers herself the guardian of the forest she resides in, and both civilization and kaiju that threaten her territory—especially with fire—draw her ire. Unlike other kaiju, who tend to call a single region home, Mantraska migrates between the Forest of Spirits and the Valashmai jungle every 250 years, taking flight within a day of awakening. Before she makes her voyage, she grooms herself to remove old feathers. Her down is said to be incredibly soft and lightweight, often fetching a high price in luxury textile markets. Mantraska's cult, the Raindrops of Forests, are fiercely against such exploitative use, and have been known to ransack home after home to destroy a single dress or cloak. Mantraska's migration patterns have also occasionally introduced invasive species into the forests where she resides.

MOGARU

Mogaru boasts his King of Kaiju title for many reasons. A towering, twin-tailed saurian with red spikes running down his back, he's probably the most infamous of all kaiju due to his numerous attacks upon coastal cities over the ages. Mogaru's clashes with other kaiju are well documented, and more often than not these brawls indirectly save civilizations from the even greater devastation that would have followed, had the opposing monster been left to rampage unchallenged. The kaiju's affinity for music has also been exploited over the ages by ill-willed individuals and heroes alike. Many kaiju scholars make it their life's work to search through historical texts to attempt to better understand what music affects Mogaru and how it may be used to prevent future rampages or call the kaiju in times of need.

Lately, beaches bordering the vast Valashmai Jungle have become littered with pieces of eggshells. A curious scholar went about trying to piece the shells together, and in the process, realized that whatever came from these eggs must be the size of a bear, if not a house. Deep-jungle explorers have also reported stampedes at night, as well as easily started game that take off at the slightest hint of danger. Remote outposts at the edge of the jungle have become hubs for adventurers of late due to these reports, and many are looking to take the chance to see if they can find the deep lake where Mogaru resides. Amid the hubbub, a mysterious elderly naga has put out a humble notice for a singer willing to dedicate their life to a cause.

SHBLOON

Shbloon the Vortex Maw, rumored to resemble a slimy, pale cuttlefish with some hundred tentacles, gained his title from the numerous whirlpools he makes in Valashmai Sea. It's rumored that a single twist of Shbloon's tentacle arm can create a maelstrom that can last for years, endangering not just vessels in the region but also the largest of sea beasts. Most intelligent sea creatures therefore avoid the region, for fear that they may be caught and dragged down into the depths of Shbloon's open lamprey mouth. Given there are numerous such whirlpools in the area, kaiju scholars often argue among themselves over what this may suggest. To some, the whirlpools are merely traps. Others believe there may be multiple creatures like Shbloon, each waiting under a whirlpool. The most horrifying suggestion is that perhaps Shbloon has multiple mouths. If true, Shbloon may be the largest kaiju in existence, given that the whirlpools can be up to a mile from one another.

When an ancient Nagajor ship rose to the surface in the Valashmai Sea about a year ago, rumors emerged of entire treasure troves languishing in Shbloon's stomach—for a century ago, one of the kaiju's vortices caught a pleasure cruise fleet with numerous young aristocracy and several imperial heirs. Only the crew of a single ship managed to return, lucky to escape with all but one important guest in tow; an imperial princess of Lung Wa tried to retrieve her royal jade seal on the ship, and therefore missed the chance to be teleported to safety. While Lung Wa imperial seals no longer hold any authority, they are prized collector items, and many will pay handsomely for the missing princess' seal.

ZIMIBRA

The centipede-like Zimibra is a kaiju who appears in the Shaguang desert. It's said that she hibernates deep below the Wall of Heaven and created much of the Darklands beneath Tian Xia herself. Due to her location, she has some rivalry with the other two kaiju found in the region—particularly with Bezravnus, the three-tailed scorpion kaiju. However, oral history tells that on one occasion, Bezravnus, Yorak the Horned Thunder, and Zimibra teamed up to repel another trio of kaiju who had wandered into the region. Reportedly, the massive battle ended with Mogaru interrupting and slaughtering the other three unknown kaiju while the rest, Zimibra included, made their retreat to safety.

Zimibra is said to secrete an oily substance to maintain the strength of her chitin plates. This substance is also a potent poison that naturally crystallizes and can be ground down to become an ingredient for a panacea elixir, if prepared properly. Some years ago, a large deposit of the mineral became exposed to the elements, contaminating the desert and making dust storms in Shaguang an incredibly dangerous event. Even the nations around the desert are experiencing mass poisoning, which has prompted authorities to begin planning what to do to remedy the situation.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

Kaiju are powerful creatures rivaling the might of demigods. They aren't meant to be direct foes in campaigns, but their influence can affect campaigns at all levels of play.

Low-Level Campaigns (1-7)

A kaiju attack brings devastation to an area, and heroes can help clean up in these places. Innocents could be displaced, trapped under collapsed structures, or forced to flee their homes, and helping these people return to normalcy can be vital work. Healing the injured is an important task as well. Some settlements might find their defenses diminished or outright destroyed, and PCs can serve as the first line of defense against other outside threats while a settlement rebuilds.

While PCs are unable to fight kaiju, they can still learn valuable information about a kaiju's abilities that can help others the next time the kaiju strikes. Kaiju don't always leave survivors, but PCs are likely to escape a kaiju attack; warning other settlements in a kaiju's path could save countless lives. In places where there's not enough time to evacuate, knowing that a kaiju can unleash electricity or leave behind pools of acid is invaluable. With this knowledge in hand, settlements can use what resources they have available to shore up their defenses and minimize damage.

Kaiju are so massive that smaller creatures are likely to live upon a kaiju unnoticed. These creatures can fall off during a kaiju attack and serve as foes for PCs to face. Enormous insects like giant centipedes (*Bestiary* 61) and giant mantises (*Bestiary* 233) or large spiders like hunting spiders and giant tarantulas (*Bestiary* 306–307) might number among these creatures.

Mid-Level Campaigns (8-14)

At this tier of play, the PCs can serve as defense coordinators against kaiju attacks. They would be the ones helping shore up a settlement's defenses. An adventure at this level would be focused on resource management and the ticking clock that is an oncoming kaiju. PCs would need to prioritize defenses based on the kaiju's abilities and other factors such as the weather following in its wake.

Characters at this tier are probably best suited for surviving a kaiju attack. They can be within a settlement as an attack occurs and respond to events as they develop. These PCs might constantly be on the move to rescue people in danger or contend with the various hazards a kaiju can produce (pages 40–41). The attack can be a frightening and thrilling event where the PCs have to dodge falling structures, avoid powerful attacks, and survive the supernatural abilities of a kaiju. Much like in low-level play, these heroes can reduce the damage a kaiju deals, but do so amid a kaiju attack itself.

High-Level Campaigns (15-20)

High-level heroes can always help with defenses and clean up of after a kaiju attack, but they're also the characters most likely to directly influence a kaiju. Again, these characters can't fight a kaiju, but they might be able to stop one for some time. These characters might learn about specific means of drawing a kaiju's attention, such as with specific food or magical effects, or work to subdue a kaiju, such as with a specific song or prayer. This knowledge can save a settlement or even stop a kaiju entirely. Characters might instead use this knowledge to call on a different kaiju to intercept the first, allowing the two monstrosities to face off and buy time for evacuations. Heroes should take care when doing so, however; the fight might be more destructive than a sole kaiju, and the winner of the battle could still cause destruction after the loser falls.



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KAIJU HAZARDS

Even the most powerful heroes can't hope to survive a kaiju's wrath—these titanic beasts are nigh indestructible, and even when defeated, they can easily reconstitute themselves after what amounts to a brief nap. Commoners and adventurers alike can only hope to survive the chaos left in the kaiju's wake, which is often on the scale of major natural disasters. Surviving a kaiju attack is a rare event, and very few civilizations can truly prepare for the scale of damage that the monsters can unleash upon them.

Rather than provide a stat block for a kaiju—who almost certainly exceeds a party of characters' abilities—the following environmental hazards are presented to exemplify, in game terms, the chaos and destruction a kaiju can unleash. The following hazards are intended to represent the abilities of Ebeshra but can be modified to represent any kaiju you need. *Pathfinder Adventure Path #167: Ready? Fight!* contains specific hazards for Mogaru to serve as further inspiration.

COLLAPSING STRUCTURE

HAZARD 15

RARE **COMPLEX** **ENVIRONMENTAL** **KAIJU**

Stealth +20 (master) to notice cracks forming in the walls of the structure as Ebeshra approaches

Description Ebeshra brushes against a structure, possibly causing it to collapse.

Disable DC 43 Athletics (master), Crafting (master), or Engineering Lore (master) to brace the structure to reduce the risk of collapse until the end of the creature's next turn. The DC of the flat check for this round (see Routine) is increased by 4 on a success, or by 8 on a critical success. Increasing the flat check DC to 21 or higher stabilizes the structure, ending this hazard.

Shake Apart **Trigger** Ebeshra applies any amount of force to the structure; **Effect** The building trembles. The floors of the building and the streets within 30 feet of the building become difficult terrain; creatures on this difficult terrain take a -2 circumstance penalty to attack rolls, AC, and skill checks. The hazard rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action) The GM rolls a DC 9 flat check to determine if the building partially collapses, increasing the DC as listed above. On a successful check, dust and debris fall within the building and 30 feet around it, providing concealment and dealing 6d6 bludgeoning damage to 1d4 randomly chosen targets (DC 35 basic Reflex save; on a critical failure, the creature is knocked prone). On a critical success, the effect is the same, but the debris deals 12d6 bludgeoning damage to 2d4 randomly chosen targets instead (DC 35 basic Reflex save; on a critical failure, the creature is restrained by rubble until freed [Force Open DC 38, Escape DC 35]).

Reset The building becomes susceptible to Shake Apart again 1d6 rounds after it's stabilized.

CRYSTAL PIN

HAZARD 20

RARE **ABJURATION** **DIVINE** **ENVIRONMENTAL** **KAIJU**

Stealth DC 10

Description Ebeshra fires a crystal at a creature to pin them onto the Material Plane.

Disable DC 48 Occultism (legendary) or Religion (legendary) to earn Ebeshra's favor and allow safe travel or DC 51 Deception (master) to momentarily divert Ebeshra's attention

Fire Pin **Trigger** A creature Ebeshra can see begins to use a teleportation effect or an effect that would move any number of targets to a different plane; **Effect** Ebeshra hurls a crystal at the triggering creature. The triggering creature and all creatures within 50 feet of the creature take 16d8 piercing damage (DC 45 basic Reflex save) and additional effects based on the result of their save.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The effect is counteracted, and the creature can't use teleportation effects or planar travel effects for 1 minute.

Failure As success, but for 1 day instead of 1 minute.

Critical Failure As success, but for 1 week instead of 1 minute. Additionally, the creature becomes pinned under the crystal and must succeed at 3 total DC 45 checks to Escape from under the crystal.

Reset Ebeshra waits 1d4 rounds to break off another crystal.

PLANAR TEAR

HAZARD 22

RARE **COMPLEX** **CONJURATION** **DIVINE** **ENVIRONMENTAL** **KAIJU** **TELEPORTATION**

Stealth +32 (master) to notice Ebeshra twisting its shape in preparation of creating a planar rift

Description Ebeshra opens a massive rift in the Material Plane that pulls nearby creatures into another plane entirely. The rift is typically to a random plane in the multiverse, though Ebeshra can have the rift pull creatures into a plane of Ebeshra's choosing. Additionally, Ebeshra can choose any number of creatures to be immune to the effects of the planar rift, usually due to the kaiju recognizing the innocence of the creatures.

Disable DC 47 Lore (master) related to the specific plane beyond the rift to disrupt the planar frequency and close the rift, DC 52 Arcana (legendary) or Occultism (legendary) to undo the magical manifestation of the rift, DC 55 Performance (legendary) to play a tone that counteracts the rift's harmonic frequency, or DC 55 Diplomacy (legendary) or Religion (legendary) to plead with Ebeshra to close the rift

Tear Reality **Trigger** Ebeshra recognizes a nearby threat as needing an indisputable resolution, or a deity tasks Ebeshra with creating a planar rift; **Effect** Ebeshra twists its body, aligning its segmented sections into a fine blade, and cuts the fabric of the Material Plane. It creates an enormous rift in a point in the sky within 1 mile. The rift is 100 feet long and 50 feet wide. The hazard rolls initiative.

Routine (1 action) The rift pulls creatures within 500 feet toward it. The rift can pull any creature, regardless of its size. Creatures in the area must attempt a DC 45 Fortitude or Reflex save (the creature's choice) to resist the effects of this pull or attempt to grab something to avoid getting pulled.

Critical Success The creature resists the pull and doesn't move toward the rift.

Success The creature is moved 25 feet toward the rift.

Failure The creature is moved 50 feet toward the rift.

Critical Failure The creature is moved 100 feet toward the rift. The harsh pull causes the creature to take 10d6 bludgeoning damage.

If a creature is directly beneath the rift when the rift pulls it, the creature instead attempts a DC 50 Fortitude or Reflex save (the creature's choice) to avoid being pulled into the rift. On a failure, the creature is pulled up into the rift and thrown to a random point on the plane on the other side.

Reset Ebeshra vanishes 1 minute after opening the rift, which closes the rift. Ebeshra must wait 1 week before it can open another planar rift.

QUAKING SLITHER

HAZARD 14

RARE ENVIRONMENTAL KAIJU

Stealth DC 10

Description Ebeshra slithers across the ground, causing the earth to tremble as though from a powerful earthquake.

Disable three DC 38 Athletics (trained), Crafting (trained), or Engineering Lore (trained) checks to brace a small structure or surface to cancel the effects of the quake in that area, or a single DC 41 Diplomacy (master) check to entreat Ebeshra to stand down

Quake **Trigger** Ebeshra moves at least 60 feet on land;

Effect The ground shakes in a 120-foot emanation from Ebeshra's space. This creates a variety of effects depending on the surrounding environment.

In an area without significant underground space, the ground becomes greater difficult terrain, and creatures on it are flat-footed and clumsy 2 for 1 round.

In areas with existing underground spaces (like sewers, sinkholes, or catacombs), fissures open up in the ground. Creatures in the area tumble into the resulting 80-foot-deep hole unless they succeed at a DC 40 Reflex save.

In bays, on beaches, and in other relatively substantial but shallow bodies of water, the tremors create dangerous waves. Creatures in the water or within 60 feet of the waterline are struck by waves that deal 10d8 bludgeoning damage (DC 35 basic Reflex save). On a critical failure, a creature is instantly swept 60 feet out to sea and 60 feet under the water's surface.

Reset Ebeshra doesn't rush this way again for 1d4 rounds.

STORM DISCHARGE

HAZARD 18

RARE DIVINE ELECTRICITY ENVIRONMENTAL EVOCATION KAIJU

Stealth DC 10

Description Ebeshra aligns its crystalline form to produce a blast of lightning that charges the surrounding area with electrical energy.

Disable DC 45 Nature (master) to balance the electrical charges in the area or DC 48 Deception (expert) to momentarily divert Ebeshra's attention

Lightning Blast **Trigger** A creature takes a hostile action against Ebeshra, produces a visible area effect, or flies within 120 feet of Ebeshra; **Effect** Ebeshra unleashes a 240-foot line of electricity toward the triggering creature. Creatures in the line take 16d8 electricity damage (DC 42 basic

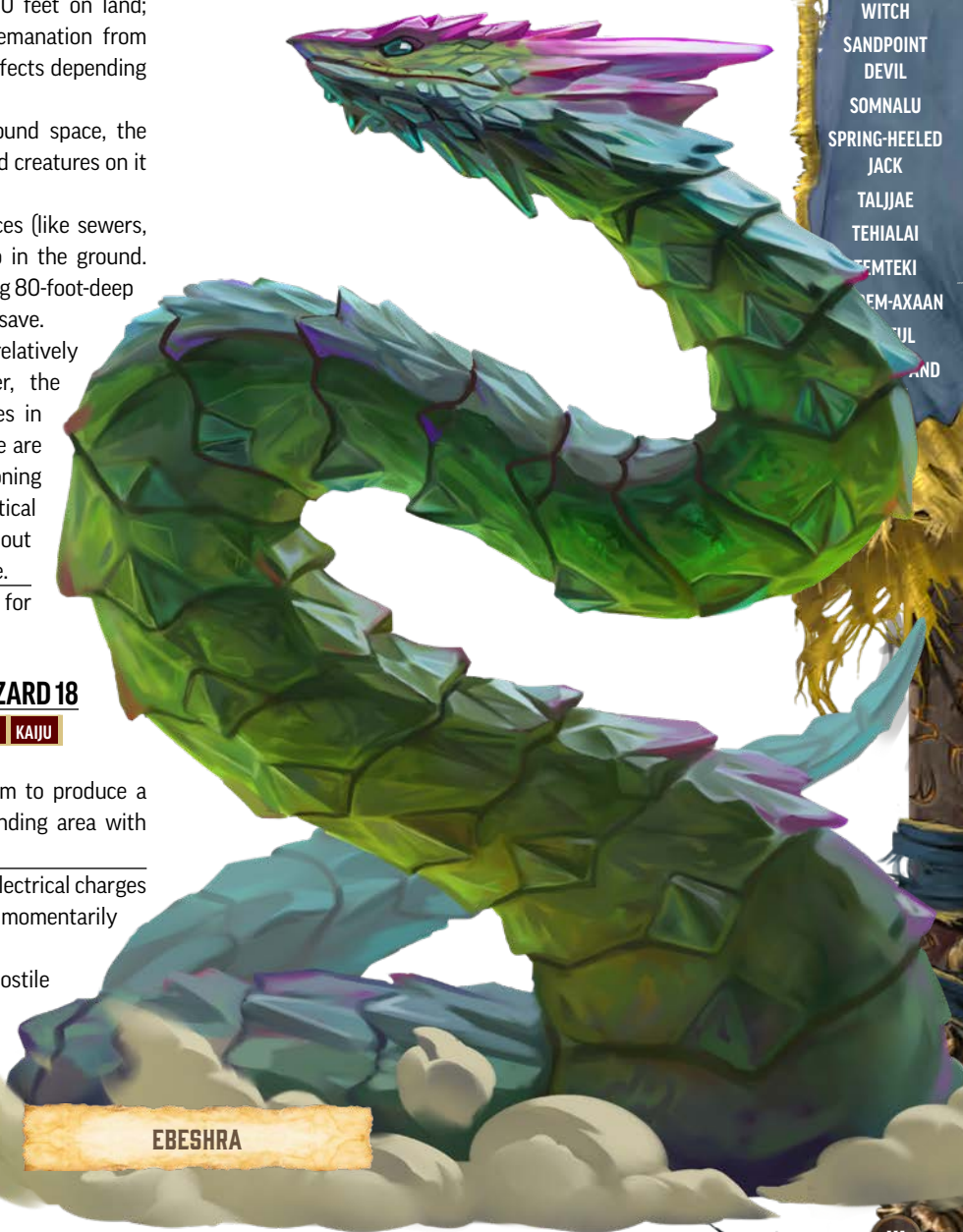
Reflex save). The electricity creates a static field in all squares that the line passed through and all adjacent squares. For 1 round, any creatures that enter a space in the static field take 4d8 electricity damage (DC 38 basic Reflex save).

Reset Ebeshra waits 1d4 rounds before another blast.

SUMMON EBESHRA

When using *summon kaiju*, you can summon Ebeshra with the following effects:

- **Ebeshra, the Winged Razor** Speed 75 feet, fly 100 feet; **Arrive** (conjunction, teleportation) *Planar Draw* Each foe in a 100-foot emanation is pulled 50 feet towards the center, unless it succeeds at a Fortitude save. Creatures that fail and reach the center take 10d6 bludgeoning damage; **Depart** (electricity, evocation) *Storm Discharge* Each foe in a 240-foot line takes 12d8 electricity damage with a basic Reflex save.



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KALLAS DEVIL

*“Molly went down to the lake
The Kallas Devil her skin did take
Now her mother weeps and cries
How many tears fall from her eyes?”*

*Bobby went into the lair
To check and see if the Devil was there
Now he’s had a big old shock
How many days until he talks?”*

—Common rope-skipping rhyme from the children of Riverton

"Perversely, the children of the town have made skipping rhymes about the Kallas Devil—telling tales of other children who were dared to catch a glimpse of the horrendous beast. The children are known to dare others to get as close to the lake as possible after dark, as a test of bravery. Every child I've spoken to has sworn that they've attempted it; however, I have yet to speak with an adult who remembers visiting the lake after dark."

—Excerpt from *Homes on the Shore: Small Towns in the River Kingdom* by Theodos Sena

"I have attempted, several times, to get an effective description of the horrid creature from locals and have, several times, been rebuffed. Whenever I mention it, the locals, in their superstitious ignorance, spit between their fingers and demand that I leave before I draw its attention. I know they have a twice-yearly grotesque sacrifice to the creature, where they skin a horse and then push the poor thing into the sinkhole outside the town. I fail to see how my questions are any more dangerous than their blasphemous rituals. "My only reliable sources for the infamous Kallas Devil have been the children of the town. Their eyes glitter gleefully as they tell me story after story of its horrific crimes. They have told me how I can make my way down the sinkhole and into the lair. I shall leave tonight to seek it out and slay the creature in Abadar's name."

—Final entry in the journal of Ciprian Mircea, cleric of Abadar

"There are several tales that travel through the River Kingdoms describing the activities of hags and fey—and all the creatures in between—and their plans for innocent people just trying to make their lives day to day, but none of them are so wicked as the tale of the Kallas Devil. It was a green hag, felled by her own kind and, in a fit to spite Pharsma herself, summoned back to life to stalk the children in Riverton. A festival is held at the beginning of spring and summer, and many hags in the area know that they can find almost-willing victims to follow them deep into the dark forests surrounding Kallas Lake. A line of thought around the temple is that the Kallas Devil doesn't exist at all, and is just a new hag each year."

—Letter from Lajara Segoi, champion of Erastil, to her sister

"She wields a mighty trident, ripped from Gozreh's hands, and plunges it into the hearts of any man that would look at her! If there is one fight I cannot turn down, Uncle, it is

this one. This Kallas Devil sleeps on a bed of women's hair and children's skins, and she seduces the men down to the lake with a glamourous form, before revealing herself as a grimstalker. A local blacksmith prepares a silver blade for me even now, and his young daughter has told me how I can swim with my full plate. By the gods, I will return to you with her head!"

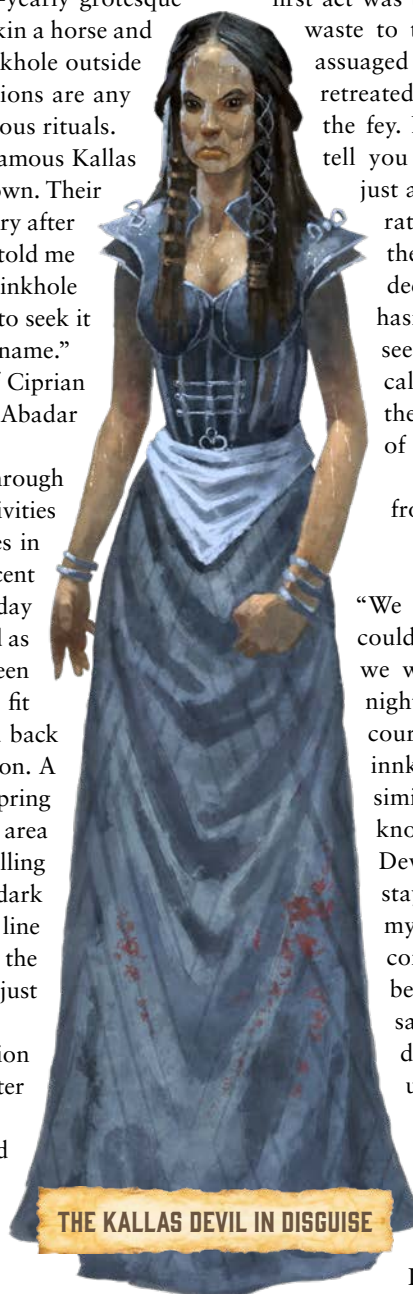
—Final letter from Sulina Pulex to their uncle

"Riverton makes a small fortune off the myth of the Kallas Devil. The locals tell a story of how the Devil used to be a beautiful woman who fell in love with a jealous fey. When her attention flickered for a moment, he flayed her alive and drowned her before returning to the First World. Her suffering apparently drew the attention of evil cultists of Lamashtu, and she was resurrected as... something. According to the tale, her

first act was to slay the entirety of the cult and lay waste to the original village. The townspeople assuaged her with a sacrifice of a horse, and she retreated to Kallas Lake to plot her revenge on the fey. Now, anyone with half a brain could tell you that the story is absolute nonsense, just a way for the villagers to charge higher rates on their inns and for ships to cross the lake. Apparently, our missing armiger decided to challenge this creature and hasn't been seen since. As they cannot seem to provide any proof of this so-called Kallas Devil, I will be returning to the lake to investigate, and will send word of any findings."

—Excerpt from a letter of investigation from Hellknight Signifier Bella Triarius of the Order of the Nail

"We arrived late last evening and almost couldn't find a room to rent. I was sure that we were going to have to spend another night in that blasted carriage, but, of course, Antony was able to convince the innkeeper to let us stay. Apparently, I look similar to the glamourous appearance of a known monster! They call it the Kallas Devil, and the only way they would let us stay the night is if I stood in a room all by myself for a half hour and then let them come in and smell me. Smell me! Can you believe it, Olivia? In any case, they were satisfied and put us up for the night. The daughter of the innkeeper helped me undress and bathe, and she told me such ghastly stories. We've arrived the night before their festival of the Skinned Hooves, and tomorrow they'll have a terrible ritual, and then lots and lots of feasting and merrymaking. I've convinced Antony to stay for the



THE KALLAS DEVIL IN DISGUISE

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excitement, as I do so love provincial ceremonies. However, I think I shall have a word with the innkeeper. He made such a to-do about how I smelled, perhaps he should smell his daughter. A pretty little thing, but definitely in need of a bath!"

—Letter from Lady Eva Ionius to her sister

"Considering all of my knowledge, dear brother, I can tell you with absolute certainty that the Kallas Devil is not a devil. If you're so convinced of your thoughts, why don't you grab Father's cold iron sword, leave your comfortable home in Yanmass, and come join me to fight it?"

—Brief missive from Lord Nico Asellus

DETAILS OF THE DEVIL

The Kallas Devil is both a murderous torturer and a cultural icon for the town of Riverton, serving as an inspiration for nightmares and festivals alike. The creature lives in a partially flooded cave within Kallas Lake, the top of which can be seen during intense low tides, but mostly remains obscured from view. The cave can be approached by swimming; however, the underwater entrance is deep within the lake, and many adventurers have met their ends at the hands of various other creatures in the water long before reaching the lair. The easiest way to approach is through the large sinkhole to the north of the town. This sinkhole winds its way to the cave and is often the site of local offerings and sacrifices to the Kallas Devil.

The locals of Riverton believe that the Kallas Devil has the ability to shapeshift and conceal its horrible form, if only for a short time. The only way to tell that the creature isn't what it appears to be is the faint smell of rotting flesh that accompanies it wherever it goes. Once the illusion has faded, it reveals an unspeakably malformed humanoid body, often riding an equally malformed horse. Both creatures, or possibly the creature as a whole, are completely flayed of skin, and have a mixture of lake water and blood dripping off their forms. There seems to be little remaining of the creature's eyes, ears, or nose, though that doesn't stop it from chasing after and hunting down its prey.

SISTERS OF THE RIVER

The true nature of the Kallas Devil is a mystery to all in Riverton and most in the River Kingdoms. While many believe the Kallas Devil to be some kind of nuckelavee, especially since her appearance resembles one of these evil fey when astride her Skinned Steed, the Kallas Devil is in fact a unique type of hag known as a sinew hag. Much like blood hags (*Bestiary* 3 130), sinew hags tend to flay the skin of their victims, using it not to disguise themselves but rather to create grisly

armor and clothing. Sinew hags also have the ability to fuse their bodies with flayed bodies of animals, taking control of the creatures to serve as mounts, servants, and spies.

The Kallas Devil is the last living survivor of a coven of sinew hags known as the Sisters of the River. This coven consisted of powerful sinew hags who claimed a number of the rivers in the region as their home. Although they were members of a coven, the sisters were especially selfish and uncongenial with each other, so the four kept to themselves, only meeting once per season to commit particularly heinous acts and vile rituals that required the entire coven to complete.

Early in the 4500s, the sisters gathered once more to sow terror and destruction along the Sellen, East Sellen, and West Sellen rivers.

In a moment of unity, the sisters used their combined might to take control of hundreds of River Kingdom creatures, creating an unnatural army of flayed animals to attack the disparate kingdoms of the region. The sisters hoped to weaken the River Kingdoms and convert the entire region into their domain, creating a powerful locus of magic that would allow the sisters to ascend into divinity.

Unfortunately, much like the sisters united to work together, so did some of the kingdoms of the region. Local trappers and scouts were quick to notice the lack of animals, and it wasn't long before the local kingdoms became aware of the coven's scheme. Acting quickly and decisively, the River Kingdoms fought back, striking the hags down before they could unite their portion of their collected flayed army. While the battle was bloody and difficult, the kingdoms prevailed, slaughtering three of the Sisters of the River in the process.

Only one sister remained. In a rare moment of fear, she fled down the Sellen River, eventually stopping at Kallas Lake. Common knowledge notes that covens always include a trio of hags, and the united armies of the River Kingdom believed their work to be done after slaughtering three of the sisters. This fact was the only saving grace for the remaining sister.

For a time, the final sister hid beneath Kallas Lake, fearing that others would come for her. During this time, the power that she gained as part of the coven slowly withered away, leaving her much weaker than in her prime, when she worked alongside her sisters. During this time, the locals of Riverton started noticing the hag's presence. She would exit the lake, seeking food and victims, earning a reputation as a local monster. The Kallas Devil was born of the sightings of this hag, and she eventually adopted the name for herself, content with the fear it struck in the hearts of locals. Today, the Kallas Devil remains in her lair near Kallas Lake, though lately, she's begun venturing further from her home. The Kallas Devil feels the presence of her dead sisters and believes that their souls may still remain trapped somewhere along the rivers of the region.

DEVIL'S TRIDENT

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

The Kallas Devil torments Riverton, and heroes of all levels could deal with her machinations.

LOW-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (1-7)

Fresh adventurers are unable to contend with the Kallas Devil directly, but saving locals from kidnapping is just the sort of feat fit for such heroes. The Kallas Devil might choose to toy with her victims, giving heroes an invaluable number of hours or days to rescue them. Doing so requires reaching the Kallas Devil's lair. PCs have two means of reaching the lair, either by swimming in Kallas Lake to reach the cave or traveling through the sinkhole outside the city. Either of these approaches comes with its own dangers.

The Kallas Lake is the home of various creatures, including reefclaws (*Bestiary* 279), river drakes (*Bestiary* 131), or even the occasional chuul (*Bestiary* 64). The immediate surroundings can also be home to boggards (*Bestiary* 44–45), web lurkers (*Bestiary* 325), and shamblers (*Bestiary* 230). Additionally, the lake itself is deep, and even if PCs avoid the dangerous creatures that live around the lake, they likely still have to secure a means to improve their swimming abilities, such as sea touch elixirs or *water breathing* spells.

The sinkhole hosts a number of subterranean creatures including basilisks (*Bestiary* 38), slurks (*Bestiary* 301), and xulgaths (*Bestiary* 336–337). The caverns beneath Riverton can be winding and labyrinthine, and travelers should be wary of the various natural hazards within the tunnels. These might include the likes of large pits and brown mold (*Gamemastery Guide* 77).

As PCs approach the lair, they might encounter previous incarnations of the Skinned Steed, the Kallas Devil's grotesque mount. When the Kallas Devil replaces the Skinned Steed, she merely abandons the mount, allowing it to roam free. These Unfettered Steeds can serve as dangerous foes for characters not yet powerful enough to face the Kallas Devil directly. A herd of Unfettered Steeds can be a particularly dangerous encounter, especially if the combat takes place in a large area that allows the steeds to take advantage of their numbers and speed.

Once at the lair, PCs need to work quickly to rescue any innocents within. They might need to sneak past the Kallas Devil as well. Once PCs reach the person, returning to Riverton can also prove difficult. Unlike seasoned adventurers, a rescued Riverton citizen would be unable to face off against the dangers beyond the lair. PCs would need to defend the individual from attackers, making combat more complicated. Additionally, PCs might need to use their resources to help a rescued citizen swim across Kallas Lake or travel through the caverns beneath Riverton.

Powerful PCs at this tier can fight the Kallas Devil directly, but this can be a difficult task. The Kallas Devil is at home in water, and facing her in her lair means she has direct access to Kallas Lake. PCs will

need to account for this fact and prepare for aquatic combat, which comes with a number of complications (*Core Rulebook* 478). When atop the Skinned Steed, the Kallas Devil can move much faster than most PCs. Finding a way to slow her down or prevent her from moving can be key, especially in keeping her from approaching Kallas Lake.

Finding the Kallas Devil is easier said than done, especially if she has disguised herself with the skin of a local. PCs might also have to contend with suspicious or even hostile locals who have been influenced by the Kallas Devil's actions. These locals can serve as obstacles to the PCs' search. If PCs are able to locate the Kallas Devil while in town, they'll have to be careful that their fight doesn't hurt any bystanders and do their best to prevent the Devil from fleeing to the lake.

MID-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (8-14)

At this tier of play, the Kallas Devil is less likely to be a direct foe. Instead, PCs might face off with local cults focused on empowering or serving the Kallas Devil. These cults could fight alongside the Kallas Devil or be the main foes for the PCs after the Devil has been slain. Stopping the cult's attempts to revive the Kallas Devil can be the main focus of several adventures, culminating with a ritual that the PCs have to interrupt. Depending on the cult's success, the Kallas Devil could return—and might be even more powerful. This empowered Devil could have some of the alternative abilities listed on page 47, or new abilities of your own design. Regardless, a more powerful version of the Kallas Devil requires unique statistics. GMs can use the existing statistics as a baseline and make use of the creature creation guidelines on pages 56–73 of the *Gamemastery Guide* to create a truly devastating version of the Kallas Devil.

HIGH-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (15-20)

On her own, the Kallas Devil is unlikely to present a challenge for high-level PCs, even when revived in a powerful form. Instead, the true danger comes in the form of the Kallas Devil's sisters. Local cults could work to revive the other hags who haunt the River Kingdoms. Once all three sisters are revived and reunited, the Sellen Coven is reborn. The reunited hags could produce dangers that threaten the entirety of the River Kingdoms. The coven would attract hags from all over the region, and this massive coven could unleash magic capable of wiping out entire towns in an instant.

PCs would need to put a stop to the river cults before they can revive the other sisters. Each sister would be a hag with her own unique set of abilities. If the PCs are unable to stop these revivals, they have a difficult task at hand. Facing a coven of dozens or even hundreds could be nearly impossible for a group of adventurers. Only by rallying the various kingdoms of the region could they produce an army capable of facing the massive coven and, eventually, the sisters themselves.

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A PUTRID NIGHTMARE

Bearing a resemblance to the flayed nuckelavee that lurks in stagnant swamps, the Kallas Devil distinguishes herself by being able to separate herself from her mount without issue, as well as with her powers of disguise and subtlety. Though her wicked trident and violent fury are enough to sear her image into the minds of the local people, it's the Kallas Devil's ability to slip unseen among her would-be victims that elevates the creature beyond the ranks of a common horror. No matter how careful the residents of Riverton are with their youth and

the vulnerable, the Kallas Devil claims her chosen target more often than not, luring the hapless victim toward doom while wearing a smiling child's face.

KALLAS DEVIL

CREATURE 9

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM AMPHIBIOUS HAG HUMANOID

Perception +21; darkvision, lifesense (imprecise) 30 feet, wavesense (imprecise) 30 feet; see *invisibility*

Languages Common, Aklo, Aquan, Hallit

Skills Athletics +18, Deception +18, Intimidation +18, Occultism +20, Stealth +16

Str +4, **Dex** +4, **Con** +3, **Int** +6, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +5

Items *Devil's Trident*, skinned cloak

Coven The Kallas Devil adds *dominate*, *false vision*, *invisibility*, and *subconscious suggestion* to her coven's spells.

Leatherwork Once a month, the Kallas Devil can spend 1 day stitching the skin of a person into her coat. This gives her skinned cloak a +1 circumstance bonus to her AC for one week.

Skinned Steed The Kallas Devil has a horse minion known as the Skinned Steed. The horse has a swim speed equal to its standard Speed and the minion trait, and it's under the control of the Kallas Devil. The Kallas Devil automatically succeeds at all checks to Command the Skinned Steed. While mounted on the Skinned Steed, the Kallas Devil fuses with the horse, causing the two to become a single being. The Skinned Steed doesn't act on its own while fused with the Kallas Devil, instead acting as the Devil's legs to move around the battlefield. The Kallas Devil doesn't command the Skinned Steed in this state and instead replaces her Speeds with the mount's speeds until she dismounts. While the two are separated, the Kallas Devil needs to Command the Steed, as normal. If the Skinned Steed is killed, the Kallas Devil can replace it by spending 1 day to prepare another horse, converting it into her new Skinned Steed.

AC 27; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +19, **Will** +20

HP 180; **Weaknesses** cold iron 10; **Resistances** fire 5

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 20 feet, DC 26

Loathsome Stench (aura, olfactory) 20 feet.

A creature entering the aura or starting its turn in the aura must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or become sickened 1 (sickened 2 on a critical failure). A creature that succeeds at its saves is temporarily immune for 1 minute.

Mount Steed ↻ **Trigger** The Skinned Steed enters a space adjacent to the Kallas Devil; **Effect** The Kallas Devil mounts the horse.

Speed 30 feet, swim 30 feet

Melee ✦ jaws +21, **Damage** 2d12+7 piercing

Melee ✦ claw +21 (agile), **Damage** 2d8+7 slashing plus Grab

Melee ✦ *Devil's Trident* +21, **Damage** 2d8+7 piercing plus sewer haze (Gamemastery Guide 119)



KALLAS DEVIL

Ranged ♦ *Devil's Trident* +21 (thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 2d8+7 piercing plus sewer haze

Occult Innate Spells DC 28, attack +20; **5th** *false vision*, *invisibility*, *subconscious suggestion*; **3rd** *haste*, *mind reading* (at will); **2nd** *invisibility* (at will); **1st** *illusory disguise* (at will), *sleep* (at will); **Constant (2nd)** see *invisibility*

Aquatic Ambush ♦

Call Steed ♦ (auditory) **Requirements** The Skinned Steed hasn't been killed and is within 60 feet; **Effect** The Kallas Devil whistles loudly and calls for her steed, prompting the creature to Stride twice toward the Kallas Devil.

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, occult, polymorph, transmutation) The Kallas Devil can take on the appearance of any Medium or Small female humanoid. This doesn't change her Speed or her attack and damage bonuses with her Strikes but might change the damage type her Strikes deal (typically to bludgeoning).

Devil's Charge ♦♦ **Requirements** The Kallas Devil is mounted on the Skinned Steed; **Effect** The Kallas Devil Strides twice. If she ends her movement within melee reach of at least one creature, she can make a melee Strike against that creature.

Play Alive ♦♦♦ (attack) **Requirements** The Kallas Devil has a creature grabbed, and it has been grabbed since her last turn. **Effect** The Kallas Devil flays her prey, dealing 2d12+17 slashing damage, and the target must attempt a DC 25 Fortitude save. On a failure, it becomes drained 1 (drained 2 on a critical failure). On a critical success, the creature escapes from being grabbed; otherwise, the Kallas Devil extends the grabbed condition until the end of her next turn.

DEVIL'S TREASURE

Heroes brave enough to face the Kallas Devil can claim her trident as a prize, if they manage to slay the terror. Local stories claim that the trident has the power to quench any fire but became corrupted in the hands of the Devil.

DEVIL'S TRIDENT

ITEM 9

UNIQUE ENCHANTMENT MAGICAL

Price 100 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

This +1 *striking returning trident* is made of an ancient black metal that glistens unnaturally and is cold to the touch. The prongs of this trident drip with metallic lake water. Strikes with the *Devil's Trident* trigger the weaknesses of any creature with a weakness to water.

Activate ⤵ Command; **Trigger** You critically hit a creature; **Effect** The target must succeed at a DC 25 Fortitude save or become infected with sewer haze (*Gamemastery Guide* 119).

Activate ♦♦ envision, Interact; **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** The trident casts 3rd-level *quench* (*Advanced Player's Guide* 223) with a DC of 25 and a counteract modifier of +15. You can Sustain the Spell as normal.

Activate ♦♦♦ envision, Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You call upon the corrupted power of the trident to stay a foe. Attempt a Strike. On a hit, the trident casts 3rd-level *paralyze* on the target (DC 25). If the Strike was

THE SKINNED STEED

As the Kallas Devil constantly replaces her mount with the latest offering from the locals, the Skinned Steed doesn't have a specific stat block. Instead, the Skinned Steed can have whatever statistics you need for the story you wish to tell or combat you wish to run. The Skinned Steed should be weaker than the Kallas Devil herself and, at most, should be a 7th-level creature. Assume the typical Skinned Steed is a war horse (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 209) with the elite adjustment (*Bestiary* 6).

a critical hit, the target is stunned 1 even if it critically succeeds at the save.

ALTERNATIVE ABILITIES

Rumors run rampant about the most mysterious and unique beings on Golarion, and any scholar who makes assumptions can easily be blindsided by reality. As the Kallas Devil takes the skin of others, she sometimes gains different abilities due to the differing natures of the souls she claims. GMs choosing to use one of these abilities can replace one of the Kallas Devil's abilities in the stat block on page 46. A GM can add two of these abilities and apply the elite adjustment (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6) to create a more powerful version of the Kallas Devil, perhaps one that has been empowered by a killing spree.

Blameless While in disguise, the Kallas Devil can attempt to keep others from noticing her Loathsome Stench by attempting a Deception check to Lie. She has a +4 circumstance bonus to this check.

Infectious Water The Kallas Devil has a vengeful streak and has the ability to infect wells and water supplies in Riverton with sewer haze (*Gamemastery Guide* 119). She can infect the water supply 1d6 days after the Festival of the Skinned Hooves if the ritual sacrifice of the festival isn't performed.

Underwater Views While underwater, the Kallas Devil can blend in with the surrounding environment and hide from other creatures by attempting a Stealth check. She has a +4 circumstance bonus for this check.

Cold Currents While the Kallas Devil is in water, she gains cold resistance 10 and electricity weakness 5.

Suffer the Children (aura, charm, emotion, mental) 20 feet. While the Kallas Devil is disguised as a child, any creature in the aura who is considered an adult by their culture takes a -2 circumstance penalty to checks and DCs opposing the Kallas Devil's Deception.

Freezing Touch When winter comes to Riverton, the Kallas Devil sharpens her claws with chunks of ice. When the Kallas Devil makes a jaws or claw attack, she deals an additional 1d6 cold damage.

Waterfall Torrent The Kallas Devil controls any water she touches. When the Kallas Devil is in water, she can cast *hydraulic push* as an occult innate spell at will.

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KOTHOGAZ

In those increasingly distant days where fire ruled the earth, we wondered if we were truly alone, abandoned to our fate by the heavens. The pestilence that coats the lands reminds us of the sacrifices we made to stay the beast's infernal advance. I hear the screams of our citizens still, haunting me night after night. The sight of families turning on one another, of soldiers slaying their brothers in arms, of the dead desecrated beyond all reason; these events burn forever in my mind. The maddening beat of the creature's heart continues still, even split into one hundred and one pieces. Its agonizing drum brings headaches that worsen with each passing day. I pray that, one day, these horrors will be no more than tall tales, that our people may live a blissful and unknowing peace. I dare not hope, but wish all the same, that those of the future may finish what we could not and end the beast for good.

—Record of the First Maharaja of Vudra, dated shortly after the defeat of Kothogaz

The people of Vudra have not forgotten the terror of Kothogaz. Even while its existence fades into myth, the stories and songs are passed down faithfully from generation to generation. It's considered a social misstep to speak its name out loud, lest it invite ill omens. Though much has been lost in the time since Kothogaz's heart was split into 101 pieces and divided among the rajahs who swore their loyalty to the first maharajah, with the ages has come renewed knowledge and wisdom. The first maharajah had three children whom he tasked with finding a way to end the Dance of Disharmony, proclaiming that the one who produced such a method would become the next maharajah.

The first child, a gifted archer with steadfast determination, ordered the gathering of holy soil from all the distant corners of Vudra to be placed in the middle of the royal court, hundreds of feet above the tomb where the sliver slept. In the soil was placed a single seed that sprouted into a tree with bone-white bark and a trunk, perfectly twisted like twin helices. He ordered the tree be cut down and used to make seven arrows. Channeling the power of Vudravati, these arrows are said to be able to stop the flow of regenerative energy, temporarily cutting Kothogaz from the divine flow of energies and rendering it mortal. The first six restrict its lifeforce, while the seventh must be used to deliver the killing blow.

The second child, born with an ear for music and companionship, could hear that the Dance of Disharmony grew more powerful with distrust, disdain, and fear. Relying on the harmony used to seal Kothogaz, they created blueprints for an instrument that could be created using the beast's own heart slivers. When played in harmony with the strength, love, and trust of the people of Vudra, their united will could force the creature's existence to stabilize long enough to kill it through conventional means.

The third child, born with quick wits and a deft hand, knew that the task was insurmountable. To defeat an impossible creature required impossible methods. The sealed records of the third child outline a method of stealing parts of the Dance of Disharmony's existence. First, one must steal the buzzing of its wings and lock them within a prison of perfect crystal, the tessellating geometry of the structure normalizing its chaotic buzz. The fear it inflicts must be distilled into a single drop and hidden within a honeybee hive, neutralized by the lockstep of the queen's walls. Then, the disharmonic dance for which it's known must be trapped within the mirror realm of the surface of a perfectly still lake. Finally, its terrible and arrhythmic heartbeat must be thrown into the ocean, the soothing of the waves and harmony of its wildlife drawing Kothogaz into an eternal slumber. These measures of order will slowly regulate its very existence, until there is no chaos remaining, at which point it will cease to exist altogether.

These methods are passed down the royal line of Vudra's maharajahs—though due to later events, it's

unknown which of the three children eventually inherited the throne.

HARMONY OF DESTRUCTION

The visage of Kothogaz, the Dance of Disharmony, seems entirely created to bring disgust to all who have the misfortune of seeing it. It is an enormous creature with the torso of a humanoid, but that is where the familiarity ends, with the rest being an amalgamation of chitinous, insectoid parts. Slick and shiny shells cover wings seemingly crafted of a delicate and oddly beautiful array of broken glass, that would surely refract the sunlight into millions of never-before-seen colors, were it not for the constant cloud of gas the



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creature emanates. Its head resembles a many-eyed spider with a distressingly human-like jaw split into mandible parts, always drooling a sickly ooze. Its four arms are jointed and covered in the same exoskeleton, and two of them end in harsh, scorpion-like pincers with all too many hairs. Those arms connect to a body that becomes increasingly slug-like the closer one looks. The Dance of Disharmony moves with a constant, errant motion, unsettlingly disconnected from any natural movement.

Kothogaz seems entirely oblivious to the plights of the creatures around it, moving to ravage and destroy without even realizing. It mindlessly gnaws and crushes all in its path, existing for the sole purpose of sowing disarray. The gases it exudes confound the senses. Its venom leaves trails of squirming undead viscera in its wake, and even the ambient beating of its hearts causes tremors in both the air and in creatures' souls, forcing them to writhe in time with Kothogaz's disjointed dance. Kothogaz propagates itself constantly, churning out undead from the creatures it consumes and leaving hives full of its corrupt magic to produce chaos spawn by draining nutrients from the earth.

However, when recognizing and eliminating a threat, Kothogaz can easily turn from mindless force of nature to formidable combatant. One of its primary features is its seemingly tenuous connection to the planes of existence, enabling it to shrug off lesser wounds and even avoid fatal ones. It's thought that this largely stems from its ability to manipulate sound, even turning into pure sound and rapidly moving short distances before emerging from sites of nearby corruption. The constant vibration of its body at high speeds makes it a challenge to properly see where to hit its flesh.

Being close enough to Kothogaz to inhale its fumes muddles the mind, leaving creatures wracked with vertigo and nausea. This makes all those subject to the disorienting gas easy prey for Kothogaz to continuously consume on its path. An incredibly potent poison drips from its mouth, which causes a disease known as many-eyed blight. The blight spreads from the point of entry throughout the entire body, carrying a searing pain that is said to be unlike any other earthly suffering—attacking the physical, mental, and spiritual senses simultaneously. For lesser creatures, this is enough to make a body spontaneously vaporize into plumes of noxious gas. Stronger entities can manage to hold their form together, but lose control over their senses.

The powerful regenerative abilities of the Spawn of Rovagug are well known, but Kothogaz is especially tenacious. Having the ability to regenerate endlessly so long as enough of its heart remains intact is only one of the many tricks it holds. The slivers can be destroyed, but if they are, they will simply reappear elsewhere in the world, usually born into one of the many corrupted hives Kothogaz leaves as it marches. These hives poison the land around them, but also cause problems due to the chaos spawn that crawl out of them. However, since

Kothogaz's power grows while more of it exists on the Material Plane, destroying these hives is a worthwhile endeavor for curbing its might. While dangerous, clearing them is a straightforward task for a properly prepared group of adventurers.

101 CURSES

The slivers of Kothogaz's heart still tremble with the evil and power of the once-living spawn of Rovagug. While known as slivers, each of these pieces is as large as a human fist. The slivers quiver as if still part of a living, beating heart, but they remain putrid and decayed.

A heart sliver constantly produces maggots, flies, and other foul insects. Unlike typical insects, these creatures seem to be filled with evil intent, intentionally biting at anyone that comes close as though trying to continuously spread destruction on Kothogaz's behalf. The rajas of Vudra need to constantly watch over the insects that the slivers produce, as an insect spawned from a heart sliver can grow to enormous size and even kill a human with its bite. The rajas maintain a suite of cleaners and exterminators to kill and clean up the masses of insects that a heart sliver can produce.

In addition to the spawning of insects, a heart sliver creates areas of corruption around it. The corruption infects the soil and plant life near a heart sliver, creating a blighted area of foul mud and stinking mounds that resemble sores and wounds. Much like a heart sliver itself, this blight produces masses of insects that escape from the ground and attack all living creatures nearby. When left unattended, the mounds of blight swell to enormous size, sometimes as large as a small home. After several weeks, these mounds burst, unleashing a giant insect most refer to as Kothogaz spawn.

When the rajas first split Kothogaz's heart, many of them were unprepared to deal with the blight and spawn born of the slivers. For a time, Vudra was covered in patches of blight and countless insects. This period was known as the Days of the Stinging Skies, but the rajas eventually learned of a way to safely contain the slivers and hold back this blight.

Today, each heart sliver resides within a magically treated coffer. Each coffer is lined with lead, but contains a small panel that slides open to allow a view inside. Once the coffer is full of insects, the raja's exterminators open the container and deal with the swarming masses within. This process takes only a few hours, which isn't long enough for any blight to take hold.

The position of royal exterminator comes with much prestige. The people of Vudra recognize the importance of this job, and many families train their children with the intent of joining the ranks of these exterminators. While not every exterminator earns a place in a raja's palace, the profession still holds a valued place in Vudra's society. Exterminators have vast knowledge on monsters, medicine, and healing techniques, making them invaluable guides for groups traveling across the wilderness of Vudra.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

A spawn of Rovagug is one of the most dangerous creatures on all of Golarion. The ramifications of Kothogaz's return can be seen at all levels of play.

Low-Level Campaigns (1-7)

The mere presence of Kothogaz or one of its heartslivers is enough to corrupt lands and create areas of blight that resemble festering wounds upon the world. These areas produce spawn of Kothogaz (page 53), which can be dangerous foes for low-level characters. These spawn are formidable, and even more powerful characters at this tier of play can become overwhelmed when facing multiple.

The areas of blight that Kothogaz creates can grow into enormous problems if left unchecked. If PCs find a Kothogaz blight soon enough, they can cleanse the area's corruption with their available resources. Cleansing one of these areas typically requires slaying all spawn of Kothogaz and completing a *consecrate* or *plant growth* ritual in the area. The PCs might not have the means of completing one of these rituals themselves, but they could act as guards, defending the casters of a ritual from spawn during the ritual's casting.

Mid-Level Campaigns (8-14)

Spawn of Kothogaz can still be dangerous at this tier of play, though such spawn would need to be enhanced with the creature creation guidelines beginning on page 56 of the *Gamemastery Guide*. Alternatively, creating a troop of spawn (refer to the troop mechanics in *Bestiary* 3) can represent a mass of spawn that still challenges more powerful PCs.

Kothogaz blights could be much larger at this tier of play and include unique hazards born of the corruption of the land. Some of these could include toxic fields of gasses, acidic mud that acts like quicksand, or even plants that have been transformed into powerful monsters like viper vines (*Bestiary* 2 287). GMs looking to create these hazards should refer to the hazard creation guidelines beginning on page 74 of the *Gamemastery Guide*. Cleansing a deep-set corruption would require using similar rituals, but cast at higher levels.

Characters at this tier of play could start the process of collecting the various heart slivers of Kothogaz and working toward the spawn of Rovagug's destruction. The process of claiming the 101 heart slivers from the rajas of Vudra is a long and challenging task. The PCs would need to prove that reuniting the slivers is a worthwhile task, and many rajas might force the PCs to prove their skill at combat before handing over even one heart sliver.

High-Level Campaigns (15-20)

Powerful characters would have an easier time gathering the heart slivers to destroy Kothogaz. These characters would most likely have proved themselves with other quests or notable feats. Once word of the heroes' skill spreads through Vudra, many rajas would likely hand

SPAWN OF ROVAGUG

The spawn are titanic terrors of immense size and strength that live only to destroy. Kothogaz, the Dance of Disharmony, is but one of Rovagug's spawn. Others include Chemnosit (the Monarch Worm), Tarrasque (the Armageddon Engine; *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #150: *Broken Promises* 80), Ulunat (the Unholy First), Volnagur (the End-Singer), and Xotani (the Firebleeder; *Broken Promises* 81).

All spawn of Rovagug can sleep for centuries and do not need to eat, drink, or even breathe while hibernating. While a spawn is hibernating, its resistances double in value. It can't be located by divination effects, and for any saving throw, it uses the outcome for one degree of success better than the result.

A spawn of Rovagug has regeneration powerful enough to revive it even if slain by a death effect. If the spawn fails a save against an effect that would kill it instantly, it rises from death 3 rounds later with 1 Hit Point. It can be banished, imprisoned, or transported away as a means to save a region, or kept in a state of dying by an effect that deals constant damage. Each spawn of Rovagug requires a unique process to permanently slay it. Details on destroying Kothogaz are found on page 53.

over a heart sliver with little hesitation. Collecting dozens of heart slivers across the region would take some time, and as the heart slivers grow closer together, they might produce greater areas of blight and produce even more powerful spawn of Kothogaz.

With the heart slivers in hand, the PCs would need to create a disharmonic instrument to complete the *Raga of Remembrance* (page 53) before facing Kothogaz directly. Once they're ready, uniting all of the heart slivers at once causes Kothogaz to appear—and the PCs are in for a challenging fight! Even with the power of the raga to supplement their abilities, the PCs must still contend with a powerful spawn of Rovagug and all of the phenomena that comes with it.

The return of Kothogaz would be heralded by the creation of massive areas of blight that unleash countless spawn of Kothogaz. These spawn would be the most powerful version yet and likely be a challenge for PCs at the lower ends of this tier of play. As Kothogaz's fury is released across the battlefield, fallen warriors would return as undead. The overwhelming number of undead this creates can quickly overwhelm armies or the PCs themselves. The PCs might stand a better chance by facing Kothogaz themselves and not having to contend with the undead it creates, but this prospect is dangerous as well.

If the PCs manage to slay Kothogaz, they achieve the impossible. The slaying of a spawn of Rovagug is a legendary task indeed, but not without consequence. Though he remains imprisoned within Golarion, this act would still gain the attention of Rovagug; the Rough Beast might direct his other spawn to destroy the PCs.

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KOTHOGAZ, DANCE OF DISHARMONY

Kothogaz is a towering horror of claws and eyes, surrounded by swarming insects.

KOTHOGAZ, DANCE OF DISHARMONY CREATURE 21

UNIQUE CE GARGANTUAN BEAST

Perception +41; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 120 feet

Languages Aklo (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +43, Athletics +41, Stealth +35

Str +10, **Dex** +10, **Con** +9, **Int** -3, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +6

AC 49; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +39, **Will** +35

HP 400 (regeneration 30); **Immunities** acid, clumsy, disease,

drained, enfeebled, mental, paralyzed, petrified, poison, polymorph, stupefied; **Resistances** sonic 20

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 300 feet, DC 41
Horrific Speed Kothogaz is permanently quickened 1. It can use this extra action to Stride or Strike.

Noxious Aura (aura, poison) 120 feet. A creature that enters or begins its turn in the emanation must succeed at a DC 41 Fortitude save or be sickened 2 (sickened 3 on a critical failure).

Reactive Kothogaz gains 3 reactions each round.

Tympanic Heartbeat (aura, auditory) 120 feet. Kothogaz's heartbeat booms like a deity's drum. A creature that enters or begins its turn in the emanation must attempt a DC 41 Will save. On a failure, its next two actions must be move actions to move at least half its Speed away from Kothogaz. A creature that critically succeeds is temporarily immune to tympanic heartbeat for 1 minute.

Attack of Opportunity

Speed 80 feet, fly 60 feet, swim 60 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +39 (reach 20 feet, versatile B), **Damage** 4d8+18 piercing plus 2d12 sonic plus many-eyed blight

Melee ♦ claw +39 (agile, reach 20 feet, versatile B), **Damage** 4d6+18 slashing plus 2d6 acid and Improved Grab

Ranged ♦ bezoar +39 (range increment 100 feet), **Damage** 4d8+8 bludgeoning plus 2d6 acid and many-eyed blight

Disharmonic Door ♦♦ (audible, teleportation) Kothogaz disappears, then bursts as a cacophonous sound from the throat of a creature within 240 feet. Kothogaz appears within reach of the creature and makes a melee Strike against it. The Strike deals an additional 2d12 sonic damage.

Many-Eyed Blight (disease, virulent) DC 44 Fortitude; **Stage 1** stupefied 2; **Stage 2** stupefied 2 and dazzled; **Stage 3** stupefied 3, confused, and blinded; **Stage 4** if you die, at the next new moon, your body splits, and your viscera become an undead under Kothogaz's control.

Pox the Land ♦♦ (poison, transmutation) Kothogaz raises a pustule from the ground within 120 feet, which erupts in a 10-foot radius, 200-foot-high cylinder of cloying filth. Creatures in the area must succeed at a DC 44 basic Reflex save or take 6d10 poison damage. On a failure, they can't fly for 1 round (1 minute on a critical failure); flying creatures fall safely to the ground.

Suppurating Passage ♦ The earth festers in Kothogaz's wake. Kothogaz Strides up to its Speed. Squares through which Kothogaz passes are greater difficult terrain until the start of its next turn, and any creature that enters or begins its turn in those squares must succeed at a DC 44 Reflex save or take 4d10 poison damage and 4d10 acid damage (on a critical failure, double damage and exposed to many-eyed blight).

Swallow Whole ♦ (attack) Huge, 4d10+18 bludgeoning plus 2d12 sonic and clumsy 1 while swallowed, Rupture 40

KOTHOGAZ

KOTHOGAZ'S SPAWN

Kothogaz's presence causes the land to sprout festering hives. Insectile, acid-drooling spawn slither from these growths as lesser versions of their creator.

SPAWN OF KOTHOGAZ

CREATURE 6

RARE NE LARGE BEAST

Perception +14

Skills Acrobatics +15, Athletics +14, Stealth +13

Disharmonious Decay (poison) When a spawn dies, its foulness seeps into the land in a 100-foot radius. Non-magical plant life in the area decays within 1 hour, and new non-magical growth can't sprout for 1 month. A creature can act on the spawn's corpse within 1 minute of its death to limit this decay to a 10-foot square by succeeding at a DC 22 Medicine, Nature, or Occultism check.

Str +4, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** -4, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +0

AC 24; **Fort** +13, **Ref** +17, **Will** +10

HP 70, regeneration 10 (deactivated by good); **Immunities** acid

Speed 40 feet, burrow 25 feet

Melee ♦ mandibles +17 (finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 2d10+7 piercing

Melee ♦ wing shard +17 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 1d6+7 piercing plus 1d6 sonic

Ranged ♦ putrid spit +17 (range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 2d8+4 acid

Fusing Spit ♦♦ (acid) The spawn retches up thick, caustic sludge and spits it at a creature within 60 feet, causing equipment and flesh to melt and partially fuse together. The creature must succeed at a DC 23 Reflex save or be clumsy 2 for 1 minute.



KOTHOGAZ'S DESTRUCTION

Many legends exist detailing methods of Kothogaz's final destruction. The most popular story is of the *Raga of Remembrance*, a performance powerful enough to summon the spirits of the millions who opposed Kothogaz so long ago. The raga's drone builds from a disharmonic instrument crafted with pieces of the beast's heart, and once the song swells, the musician becomes an anchor for the avatar of the legendary psychic Vanitapati.

HARVEST HEARTSLIVER

RARE MANIPULATE

Requirements You're inside Kothogaz's body.

You attempt to steal a section of Kothogaz's heart. Attempt an attack roll or a DC 40 Acrobatics, Athletics, Medicine, Nature, Occultism, or Religion check.

Critical Success You steal a small disharmonic heartsliver, stow it on your person, and can exit Kothogaz's body.

Success As critical success, but you can't exit.

Failure You take Kothogaz's Swallow Whole damage.

Critical Failure You take double Kothogaz's Swallow Whole damage and are deafened by its heartbeat for 1 minute.

CRAFT DISHARMONIC INSTRUMENT

RARE DOWNTIME MANIPULATE

Requirements Legendary in Crafting

You use legendary Vudran techniques to craft a disharmonic instrument that incorporates pieces of Kothogaz's heart. This is likely a tanpura, but legends mention other instruments and even voice enhancers. A disharmonic instrument is a virtuoso musical instrument (*Core Rulebook* 292).

This activity requires seven disharmonic heartslivers, the formula for a disharmonic instrument, 55,000 gp worth of rare materials, and 7 days of work. At the end of the 7 days, attempt a DC 40 Crafting check to Craft.

Critical Success You masterfully complete the disharmonic instrument. Holding the instrument grants immunity to Kothogaz's tympanic heartbeat and many-eyed blight.

Success You complete the disharmonic instrument.

Failure You don't complete the disharmonic instrument, and you contract many-eyed blight from the heartslivers.

Critical Failure As failure, and whenever you're on the same plane as Kothogaz, it can immediately teleport to you with its Disharmonic Door ability.

RAGA OF REMEMBRANCE

RITUAL 10

UNIQUE NECROMANCY

Cast 1 hour; **Cost** ceramics, incense, and pigments worth 100,000 gp; **Secondary Casters** 3

Primary Check Occultism or Religion (legendary); **Secondary Checks** Diplomacy or Performance; Nature; Religion or Society

Target the primary caster

Duration 7 hours

You scribe occult symbols on unblighted Vudran ground, laying the ceramics within them to create a ritual space. To perform the ritual, light incense in the ceramics and sit at the center of the ritual space. You then play the disharmonic instrument, drawing on musical skill, occult harmonics, or religious tradition. This establishes an underlying drone atop which the secondary casters layer their own performances. The song calls to the millions who died defending Vudra from Kothogaz, investing their power in Vanitapati, the legendary psychic.

Critical Success A towering, ethereal avatar of Vanitapati manifests around you, surrounded by swirling spirits. The avatar weakens Kothogaz's spirit. While Kothogaz is within 1 mile of you, it is frightened 2 and is permanently destroyed if reduced to 0 Hit Points.

Success As critical success, but Kothogaz is frightened 1.

Failure The dead come to your aid, but their presence is unnerving. As success, but Kothogaz isn't frightened, and the primary and secondary casters take a -1 status penalty to saving throws against emotion effects.

Critical Failure Rather than the dead, Kothogaz hears the ritual's call and immediately teleports to the primary caster with its Disharmonic Door ability. Primary and secondary casters are afflicted with many-eyed blight.

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KRAMPUS

Good little children, lay down your heads

Good little children, pray in your beds

The Krampus comes to hunt tonight

His cloven hooves on snow so white

The kind and gentle turn him 'way

But naughty ones won't see the day

—Irrisen, traditional folk song

"Ah, Krampus. It's a clever trick, isn't it? A demon— isn't he a demon? no?—who punishes the wicked and greedy. One who preys on thieves of holiday joy. Naturally, you need that sort of creature for a morality play. Naturally, there's a temptation to believe, well, I know I'm good. It's my neighbor who needs to worry.

"But that's the trap. As soon as you think that, you're the smug and spiteful one. A truly generous soul would never wish Krampus on anyone.

"Few of us are that kind. Most of us like to see the wicked suffer. We take a mean little pleasure in it. And that's why Krampus's basket will never be empty, and his chains will never lack for prey.

"We're all a bit too much like him, you see. He's in us. He is us. That's why we'll never be free."

—Sister Shelova of Morozny, in conversation

A SPIRIT OF ENVY

Winter holidays are popular in the cold northern lands of Avistan, where they provide a welcome interlude of light, warmth, and joy in a long, hard season. Nearly every culture has at least one midwinter holiday, and often people cheerfully adopt their neighbors' festivities as well. Most communities embrace any excuse to enliven the grim tide of short days and dark, hungry nights that claims the northern realms in winter. Wherever there is happiness, however—particularly happiness that comes with obligations to one's neighbors and kin, whether or not one feels kindly toward them, and which demands the sharing of scarce resources in a time of potential hardship—there are also the inseparable shadows of envy, resentment, and selfish greed.

Some say Krampus is the embodiment of these destructive emotions. Tall, goatlike, and horned, he's said to have a hideous, snarling face; a long and greasy tongue; and coarse, foul-smelling fur. He leaves cloven hoofprints melted into the snow, and is always described as male.

The oldest tales of Krampus come from Irrisen, but even in those stories, he is portrayed as a malevolent, otherworldly spirit who trespassed from some other realm to torment the towns and villages of this world. One story holds that he was accidentally summoned by druids who were trying to call a fey of the First World, but whose ritual was corrupted. Another portrays him as a fiend who broke loose from holy bindings and now trails his captor's ruined chains as a taunt.

A third tale claims that Krampus was once a human merchant, the richest man in his village, who was so miserly that he refused to contribute so much as a half-burned candle or wilted turnip to the village's

midwinter feasts. One hard winter, the entire village ran short of food—all except Krampus, who had filled his larders, cellars, and storehouse with provisions he wouldn't share. Even as his neighbors starved in front of him, he felt no pity, only resentment that they should dare to ask him for free food, and envy that everyone else had always seemed so much happier than he was. Now, he thought, he'd have the last laugh.

On the night of the winter solstice, the rest of the village gathered to light holiday candles and sing songs around tables that held pretend food made of pine cones and snow. Krampus was not there. This wasn't unusual; he never took part in the village celebrations. A little boy innocently went to his home to invite him, however, and saw that the door was wide open, the house empty and dark. Krampus was nowhere to be seen. The starving villagers cooked his food and drank his wine, and for the first time ever, had a grand feast thanks to Krampus's generosity.

One greedy boy, however, wasn't content with food and drink. This child stole a gilt ornament, simply because it was beautiful and he wanted it for his own. In that instant, the bauble turned to a lump of coal in the boy's hands. Krampus, now transformed into a terrible monster, came roaring out of the blazing fireplace, and stuffed the boy into the basket on his back. The boy was never seen again, and the monster vanished until the next winter solstice, when once more he appeared to prey upon the wicked.



A GIFT FROM KRAMPUS

COAL AND RUSHES

Although Krampus's origins and nature remain cloaked in mystery, a few things about him are known. He only appears in conjunction with winter holidays, but isn't bound to any specific tradition and can torment mortals during, or up to two weeks before, any cold-weather celebration. His visits usually occur on snowy, frigid nights, and are heralded by the clanging of his chains.

Not all Krampus stories end in death or kidnapping, however. Folk stories sometimes portray him as a mischievous figure who can be persuaded to leave villagers alone with offerings of bawdy humor or strong drink although even then his practical jokes skew toward dismemberment. His most infamous prank, however, involves tempting greedy mortals with a seemingly valuable gift offered in exchange for some minor ethical breach. Should the mortal commit the sin and claim the prize, it turns out to be a cursed lump of coal. Krampus's curse afflicts the recipient for either a year and a day, until the mortal can trick someone else into taking the coal, or until the mortal wins absolution through good deeds, depending on the story. In a few tales, the mortal even tricks Krampus into taking the cursed coal

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back, whereupon the awed Krampus offers the clever individual some great boon.

Another favorite Krampus trick is the test of the golden rods. Sometimes, Krampus offers to spare a mortal from punishment if that person accepts a bundle of gilded birch sticks or reeds and agrees to hang the bundle in their house for a year. The golden rods allow Krampus to monitor that person's behavior. If they can remain upstanding and virtuous until the winter holiday comes around again, Krampus will leave the person unharmed. But if they stray into sin, the rods animate to beat them mercilessly, and their punishment from Krampus triples. Since few mortals are able to change their behavior so completely, or abstain from wickedness for a full year, Krampus almost always wins this bet, and he only offers it to torment his victims with false hope.

Krampus prefers to torment selfish, envious, and stingy individuals, and particularly delights in seizing

naughty children, whom he stuffs into the basket on his back to eat. Many stories claim that he either can't or won't harm kind and generous souls, although this belief may rest on a mistaken interpretation of the test of the golden rods. However, it's true that open-hearted people are more likely to encounter Krampus in one of his more benign moods, whereas the wicked rarely benefit from his whims.

It's said that Krampus can't be killed. Even if someone were to destroy his physical form, he would merely return a year later, when the holiday at which he "died" came around again.

A CAVALCADE OF IMITATORS

In some regions, Krampus has inspired a tradition of masked revelers who dress up in hides, horns, and cloven-footed boots to imitate him. They parade about in towns and villages, rattling chains, flailing birch rods, and singing off-color songs in pre-holiday celebrations that often veer toward the drunk and disorderly.

Celebrants occasionally get carried away with their imitations, indulging in behavior that crosses the line from rowdiness to outright cruelty. On rare occasions, when their pranks become too harmful, such celebrants may be seized by the true spirit of Krampus, which transforms them into monstrous, horrifying figures bent on wreaking havoc among their friends and neighbors. This curse is said to last only for a night and a day. However, the transfigured celebrants are so destructive that they're frequently slain, or else destroy their villages, before it can end. Even when they survive, the consequences of their actions are often so awful that they are forced to leave their communities, never to return.

Despite these cautionary examples, Krampus celebrations remain popular among the young and foolhardy, who never believe such fates can befall them.

A KIND BEAST

While Krampus is a fearsome and merciless being, he's not without his admirers. There are some that believe that his adherence to punishing evildoers and those who stray into wickedness suggest a sense of good and morality within Krampus's heart. These Krampus enthusiasts sometimes even create art that centers Krampus as some kind of loving and misunderstood creature, simply waiting for the right person to show him kindness and love.

While Krampus might seem to only focus on harming the wicked, many are quick to note that Krampus's tests are built to intentionally lead to failure, almost as if he gains some kind of sadistic glee in giving someone hope and then brutally tearing it away.



KRAMPUS

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

Though Krampus is a powerful creature, this spirit of punishment can be part of any campaign.

Low-Level Campaigns (1-7)

Characters at this tier of play might not face Krampus directly, but can still help others who have fallen prey to his visits. The PCs can help someone undergoing the test of the golden rods to stray from wickedness. This might take a fair amount of the PCs' time; rather than play out a full year of everyday life, this process might best be represented by highlighting the moments during which the individual's morals are particularly tested. The PCs might need to use their social skills like Diplomacy or Intimidation to prevent the person from straying. Alternatively, using a skill to Recall Knowledge might help a character provide the key piece of advice that keeps the recipient on the path of righteousness.

At the higher range of this tier of play, PCs might encounter Krampus celebrants (page 58) influenced by the spirit of Krampus. Properly dealing with these celebrants can be a challenge, especially if the PCs are aware of their true nature. The PCs might wish to subdue the celebrants without harming them, which can be difficult in some cases. Using *calm emotions* or similar magic can buy the PCs enough time to capture a celebrant without violence.

Mid-Level Campaigns (8-14)

Mid-level characters can attempt to help defend a settlement from Krampus's presence. The most likely way to do this is to set up wards to keep Krampus away. According to some tales about Krampus, he was originally spawned as part of a druidic ritual, so the wards against him would need to be druidic in nature, as well.

Learning the necessary information can be a laborious task. The PCs would need to track down what information they can about the original circle of druids that called forth Krampus or learn some other kind of primal magic that can replicate this process. Finding the original druids might be impossible, as legends state that Krampus slaughtered these druids for their misdeeds some time ago. The PCs could find the original site of Krampus's calling, however, and what's left of the ritual could offer insight into the magic necessary to ward off Krampus.

Alternatively, legends also note that Krampus's spirit originated in the First World, the primal realm of the fey. Though Krampus himself is not a fey, the power of the First World could be the key to creating a proper ward. Traveling into the First World can be difficult, but the boundary between the First World and the Material Plane are thin in many places on Golarion. Reaching one of these locations could allow for easy travel to the First World, especially in places where a gate or portal leads directly to the plane. Once on the First World, the PCs would need to work with the creatures of the realm to learn about Krampus and the potential primal magic for a ward.

Krampus is a perceptive creature, however, and attempts to set up wards could draw his attention. Krampus may choose to appear and put an end to these attempts, but the fact that such wards wouldn't be inherently evil or selfish could give him pause. Krampus might empower characters close to the PCs as powerful Krampus celebrants to watch or test the PCs before he decides if he should interfere directly. Krampus might even step in and offer a deal to the PCs and people of a settlement: if they can go one year without committing evil or selfish acts, Krampus will leave that settlement alone forever. An entire settlement passing one of Krampus's tests is unlikely, but definitely possible with powerful and righteous heroes to lead by example.

High-Level Campaigns (15-20)

Particularly powerful characters are the only ones who stand a chance at facing off with Krampus. Depending on their abilities, PCs might be unable to fight Krampus directly, or they might do so with relative ease. Slaying Krampus doesn't put a stop to him, however, as he always returns after his death. When he does return, he's usually intent on seeking revenge against whoever struck him down previously. Unless the PCs are willing to fight Krampus year after year, they'll have to find some other way to put an end to him once and for all.

Much like with mid-level play, the PCs could set up some kind of wards to defend against future visits from Krampus. While these wards could keep a single settlement safe, warding every settlement on Golarion is unrealistic. PCs looking for a more permanent end to Krampus might consider imprisoning the creature. Krampus has no means to traverse the planes or magically escape bonds, making imprisonment seem like a likely solution. This approach has its flaws, however. Krampus doesn't need to physically reach other creatures to instill them with his spirit and create a Krampus celebrant. These celebrants could swarm Krampus's prison to release him, requiring a constant vigil to keep them at bay.

The most likely way to rid Golarion of Krampus is to return him to the First World. Doing so requires a powerful ritual that acts as the inverse of the ritual that first brought Krampus to the Material Plane. Such a ritual might even need to be a cooperative effort between the PCs, other druids, and even some denizens of the First World. The PCs would probably have to draw Krampus out and hold him at bay as their allies complete the ritual. With Krampus drawn into the First World, it's unlikely that he could find a way to return to Golarion.

Krampus, ever the tester of souls, might even offer to leave on his own. He could recognize the might and dedication of the PCs and put them to the ultimate test in exchange for his departure. The PCs might be subject to cruel tests that push their morals to the limits, or they might have to attempt a nigh impossible task such as redeeming an infamous figure like Queen Abrograil of Cheliaz. Of course, failure would only bring Krampus's fury and might down upon the PCs.

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CONFRONTING KRAMPUS

GMs can use the statistics for Krampus found on pages 154–155 of *Pathfinder Bestiary 3*. For all but the most powerful PCs, Krampus is an insurmountable force of nature, a being they might trap, ward away, or evade, but rarely defeat. That doesn't mean Krampus can't get involved with PCs of much lower level in different ways. The following presents several options for lower-level PCs to interact with Krampus and his mythology, allowing you to sprinkle a little bit of Krampus into your campaign during the holiday season no matter what levels your PCs might be!

LIFE IMITATES ART

Fierce as he might be, Krampus rarely has the time to be everywhere at once. He doesn't have any particular ability to teleport or make speedy, long-distance travel, but he still strikes fear in the hearts of countless multitudes due to his power and the severity of the punishments he metes out.

Due to this lack of ubiquity, most societies appreciate Krampus more as a folkloric bogeyman and less as a physical threat that they're likely to encounter during any particular year's solstice. Come winter festivals, adults delightfully dress up as Krampus, parading through the streets to carouse, spook youngsters, and wave birch switches around.

However, if taken too far, this good-natured fun can attract Krampus's attention and blessing. Of course, this "blessing" is more of a dangerous curse that transforms those well-meaning revelers imitating him into sadistic tormentors dead-set on punishing the naughty before the festivities are through.

These so-called Krampus celebrants maraud for several nights, executing ghoulish acts of terror, vandalism, and cruel justice upon those who have "misbehaved" according to Krampus's own twisted sense of decorum, before reverting to their normal forms. Those who survive swiftly throw off their bloodstained pelts and costumes, swearing to never again tempt Krampus.

The Krampus celebrant statistics below befit these revelers for a festival gone wrong, yet in a pinch, depending upon your campaign, they're also suitable for a much

less powerful Krampus who could be vanquished by lower-level PCs or a manifestation or aspect of Krampus that appears to haunt villages that Krampus himself can't reach. It could even represent a community's shared belief and paranoia in Krampus manifesting in a creature of belief similar to a brainchild. You can find more information on the brainchild on page 38 of *Bestiary 3*.

KRAMPUS CELEBRANT

CREATURE 8

RARE NE MEDIUM HUMANOID

Perception +19; darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Common

Skills Athletics +17, Intimidation +18, Stealth +15, Survival +15

Str +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +4

AC 27; **Fort** +19, **Ref** +16, **Will** +13

HP 125; **Weaknesses** good 5; **Resistances** cold 10, physical 5

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 30 feet, DC 23

Speed 25 feet; snowstride

Melee ✎ claw +20 (agile), **Damage** 2d8+9 slashing plus Grab

Melee ✎ birch bundle +20 (backswing, forceful), **Damage** 2d10+9 bludgeoning

Melee ✎ horn +20, **Damage** 2d12+9 piercing

Primal Innate Spells DC 26; **2nd** *obscuring mist*;

Cantrips (4th) *tanglefoot*

Frightful Parade ✎✎ The Krampus celebrant Strides up to its Speed and attempts a birch bundle Strike against one creature within its reach at any point during that movement.

Relentless Torment ⤵ **Trigger** The Krampus celebrant hits a frightened creature with its birch bundle Strike; **Effect** The target must attempt a DC 26 Will save to resist the effects of the fearful assault.

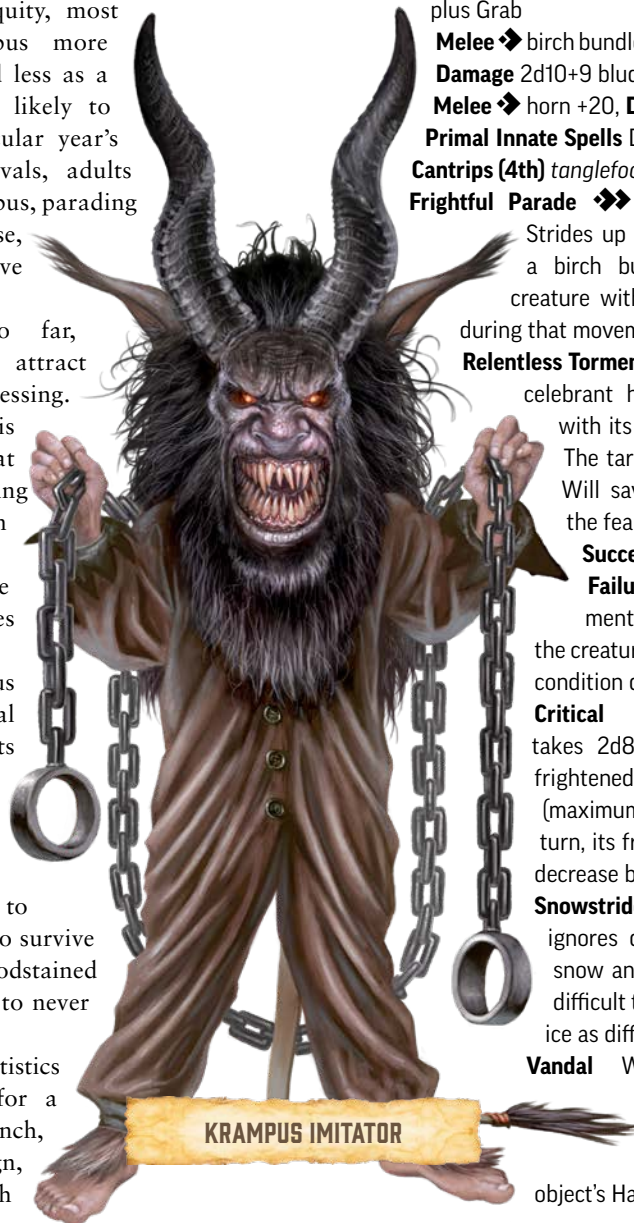
Success The target is unaffected.

Failure The creature takes 1d8 mental damage. At the end of the creature's next turn, its frightened condition doesn't decrease by 1.

Critical Failure The creature takes 2d8 mental damage, and its frightened condition increases by 1 (maximum 4). At the end of its next turn, its frightened condition doesn't decrease by 1.

Snowstride The Krampus celebrant ignores difficult terrain caused by snow and ice, and it treats greater difficult terrain caused by snow and ice as difficult terrain.

Vandal Whenever the Krampus celebrant deals damage to an object, it ignores the first 10 points of the object's Hardness.



KRAMPUS IMITATOR

THE HORNED MISER

While Krampus is most infamous for tracking and punishing the naughty, his own sins often inform his vindictive responses to others' misdeeds. An incarnation of Krampus who arose from irrepressible greed might possess abilities that better reflect his fierce miserly behavior, emphasizing less the abduction of miscreants and more the disproportionate punishment of thieves and robbers. Such a variant Krampus might arise in different cultures that tell different stories about Krampus, or Krampus's powers and nature might drift between incarnations each time he is defeated and arises anew elsewhere in the world the following year. In these cultures or incarnations, Krampus represents a remorseless yet generous spirit who's willing to grant boons to the truly worthy while tormenting any who fail his morality tests.

Unfortunately for people in regions terrorized by this Krampus, his definition of "any who fail his morality tests" tend to be nearly everyone but the most innocent and generous of people. Such a greedy Krampus lacks the Regression ability (*Bestiary* 3 155), and his Punish the Naughty ability gains the following Prerequisite: "Krampus can sense the target with his thief scent." The Horned Miser variant also gains the following abilities, in addition to the remaining Krampus abilities.

Thief Scent Krampus can perceive anyone who has ever stolen or moved one of his possessions, using scent as an imprecise sense with a range of 1 mile.

Bountiful Bag Krampus carries a large bag brimming with barely contained gifts and trinkets, including one of every common item with the consumable trait of levels 1 to 20, at least 20 *golden rod mementos*, and an assortment of food and valuables. Once every 24 hours, the bag's contents magically regenerate, replacing any of these items that have been removed. Krampus can Interact with the bag to stow or withdraw items, always finding the desired stored item at the top of the bag. The bag is an extradimensional space, so the weight of its contents doesn't count against Krampus's Bulk limit. The bag functions as a normal sack if used by anyone other than Krampus, and if the bag is stolen or Krampus is slain, the bag retains only 2d4 random common consumable items of 16th level or higher.

A creature can use Disarm or Steal to extract a consumable item from Krampus's bag. As part of the action, the creature can envision a specific item it wants to extract. On a success, the creature Disarms or Steals the object and rolls a DC 13 flat check.

Success The creature Disarms or Steals the envisioned object. If the creature didn't envision an object, it Disarms or Steals a random common consumable item of a level at least half the creature's level.

Failure The creature Disarms or Steals a random common consumable item of a level at least half the creature's level.

Critical Failure The creature Disarms or Steals a *golden rod memento* instead of a consumable item.

Crushing Avarice Krampus's greed is so great that expending any of his wealth causes him to become physically ill and potentially nauseous. Whenever Krampus uses a consumable item from his bountiful bag, or when he witnesses one of his possessions stolen, he must attempt a DC 44 Will save.

Success Krampus is unaffected.

Failure Krampus becomes sickened 1.

Critical Failure Krampus becomes sickened 2.

TEST OF GOLDEN RODS

When feeling merciful or puckish, Krampus offers a *golden rod memento* to imperfect mortals. With effort, the recipient might change their behavior and outlook with a memento, but more often the trinket transforms into a terrible burden for that creature, eventually leading to a confrontation with Krampus himself and a final punishment. When granting a *golden rod memento*, Krampus can add or remove tenets as he pleases.

GOLDEN ROD MEMENTO

ITEM 20

RARE ABJURATION CURSED MAGICAL

Usage worn; Bulk –

This coin-sized golden pin depicts a bundle of five trimmed tree branches. Once you've stolen the pin, accepted it from Krampus willingly, or carried it for at least 1 minute, its curse activates. After that happens, the pin fastens itself to your clothing, providing you an insistent empathic admonition not to be naughty and constantly informing Krampus of your location, as *status*. The pin reappears and reattaches itself within moments if discarded or destroyed. The pin constantly monitors your actions, judging you against a good-aligned champion's code of conduct (*Core Rulebook* 106), plus the following third tenet:

- You must never knowingly steal or inflict harm with the goal of stealing the victim's wealth. This tenet doesn't prevent you from looting those you harm primarily in the defense of yourself and others.

Whenever you violate this code of conduct, one of the golden branches tarnishes (and utterly egregious violations might tarnish multiple branches). During the winter following the curse activating, the pin transforms based on the number of golden branches remaining.

5 Branches: The pin either transforms into a pile of golden trinkets whose gold piece value equals your level × 25, or it grants you absolution for your misdeeds as a critically successful *atone* ritual for any good-aligned faith. You don't need to perform a special quest; your exemplary behavior over the past year qualifies.

3–4 Branches: The pin either becomes a non-magical golden pin worth 10 gp, or it grants you absolution for your misdeeds as a successful *atone* ritual for any good-aligned faith.

1–2 Branches: The pin transforms into a leering Krampus face. As long as you wear it, it grants you weakness 5 to bludgeoning damage, and you still can't remove it.

0 Branches: The pin transforms into Krampus, who appears in an adjacent space and knows of your misdeeds while wearing the pin.

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KUWORSYS

Surai,

I'm safe, but the survey failed. We found a way into the outer layer of the Tagas Labyrinth, but something stalked us the entire time. We'd see it briefly sometimes—like a massive hand, leaping between rooftops and skittering along the outskirts of our vision. On the way out, it hit Khamar and Danti with some kind of gas. The next morning, they refused to eat. All they could talk about that day was going back to the Tagas—they kept saying that they had to finish the mission. The next day, they were both feverish. I demanded that we return home, but Khamar just handed me her notes as she and Danti left. I'm sure that whatever is locked away in the labyrinth is the reason that ruins guides keep disappearing. But for now, just know that I'm coming home, and then we're leaving Duwwor until it's safe again.

*Your loving wife,
Hemra*

“Call for Adventurers, Explorers, and Researchers!”

“In light of recent events, we at the Society of Tekritanin History are choosing to redouble our efforts to reclaim key parts of Duwwor’s heritage. Though recent attempts to survey sites of Tekritanin antiquity have been met with hardship, our best chance at overcoming the obstacles before us relies on our ability to persevere in our studies of the Tekritanin legacy. Only when armed with knowledge and experience will we be able to secure a safe future for our city, and as such, we are seeking adventurers willing to take up the tradition of our best surveyors and guides. If you are interested in such an opportunity, please inquire further at our location in Duwwor. Experienced individuals will be directed to the Tagas site in the Barrier Wall, whereas more suitable locations will be provided for individuals of lesser experience.”

—Abira Uzil, Coordinator of Surveys

“Now, where Kuworsys came from exactly is a mystery to most. Some say it came from below, others say it was a weapon sent by our enemies to destroy us from within! Luckily, our family knows more than most. We were here long before Duwwor, let alone Thuvia, was even an idea, and we know the truth. The story begins like this.

“One day, rocks rained from the sky. Not little rocks, though—massive rocks, boulders, broader even than my arms stretched all the way out! These rocks landed near a small Tekritanin city. People went to investigate them, to see what they could find. But there was so much dust kicked up in the air that it stung their eyes and clung to their clothes, so they all went home coughing up a fit. And since nobody was looking, something followed them home.

“In the days that followed, the people of the little city collected all those rocks, bringing them home to break them down and see what was in them. With everything they found, they were able to make new kinds of things. You see, the rock was full of a curiously strong metal, and the people were inspired by it. In the following days, they built all kinds of new tools for working metal, and then new techniques for the new tools, and then new things with all their tools and techniques. The little city started selling weapons, armor, and jewelry that were as good as any in all the League—and our family started selling toys better than anywhere in the entire League! Everyone got rich, and every day saw the invention of some new wonder.

“Everyone was so swept up in the entertainment of it all. The people churned out endless marvels, each more complicated and overwrought than the last, as everyone just wanted to make the next best thing. When they ran out of that metal, they went back to mining around

the city, but found themselves mining at a pace they never could before. Sometimes, they thought they saw something watching them, but they ignored it, busy as they were with their work. The people tore through the mountains, leaving valleys and pits in their wake, all in their desperation to just keep making.

“But for all their work, people were enjoying themselves less and less. They stopped chatting with each other, stopped playing, stopped partying, singing, eating, sleeping. All they could do, all they wanted to do, was work and work and work. That’s when the last families that could still see reason gathered, ours included.

“Imagine it. All around those somber folks, there were people building the most beautiful, most complicated city anyone had ever attempted. It was like hundreds of years of history bottled up into a single moment, as if all the pages of a book happened in a sentence. The gathered families decided that most people should leave the city—flee, try to escape from the spell that had fallen over them, build a new life elsewhere. A lot of people did, including most of our family. The rest, though, had something they needed to do. They stayed behind.

“The people who stayed formed a big organization, like an early idea of a guild. They were builders, masons, carpenters, jewelers, wizards, and, of course, toy makers! They set to work, thinking about all the times that they had felt like something was watching them. They tried to build up the city to be like a maze, so that everywhere you turned, it was like a totally different place. The jewelers and the toy makers set about building little toys and puzzles and baubles, and scattered them throughout the streets of the city, so the whole city began to look like a giant playroom. And sure enough, they found that something was watching them work.

“As they built further and further, transforming every inch of the city, the creature finally came out of hiding.



TAGAS LABYRINTH

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It leapt from rooftop to rooftop, played with the puzzles they set out, and became totally entranced. The people led it deeper and deeper into the heart of the city, laying out all their endless little wonders for it to poke at. And then, they sprung their trap.

"All the wizards worked together to cast a great spell. They raised walls around the entire city, shutting it off entirely from the outside. They trapped the creature in those walls, trapped it inside with them, trapped themselves in, too. They gave up everything they had to save everyone they knew—including their own city. That's how desperate they were to stop the creature. They made a heroic sacrifice! But in the end, it didn't end up solving much. You see, that creature is still slinking around that city today, waiting for a chance to escape. Except, of course, that place isn't exactly a city anymore.

"It's the Tagas Labyrinth."

—"The Arrival of Kuworsys,"
as told by Forouz Ifranin to his
granddaughter, Iza

"That gas changed me. Eating only makes me hungrier; sleeping only makes my bones ache. I have to keep moving. I have to go back to the labyrinth. I know I might be lured to my death, but if I go back, maybe I can learn something. If I never make it out, hopefully this helps you. I can only prepare you for the outermost layer of the labyrinth, sadly. Even then, take it all with a grain of salt, as this is the advice of a dead woman.

"The Tagas is a disaster. There are collapsed buildings as far as the eye can see, and the ground is littered with traps magical and mundane. Many are fairly harmless: little noisemakers, floor puzzles that open and close doors, that sort of thing. I think that's how they kept track of the monster, controlled its movement. Further in, things get dangerous. There are statues that charge anything that moves, flashing lights that blind you, snares that slow you, glyphs that hurt you. It only gets worse further in, but even then, half of the landscape in there is still a crumbling, ancient city. It has everything you could expect to find: instruments centuries out of tune, totally overgrown plazas, corroded armories. It's mesmerizing.

"As for the reason the Tagas exists... that monster, Kuworsys, is an enigma. I saw it several times, but it's fast, and it likes to follow its prey. But sometimes I saw it pick things up, and sometimes I would hear it in the distance, setting off a trap or playing with a noisemaker. Sometimes I heard it just throwing a fit, like its anger all burst out at once. Not like I could blame it—imagine being trapped here for centuries?"

—From the last notes of Khamar Ghonem

THE TAGAS LABYRINTH

The Tagas of today is a completely different city from the

Tagas of ages past. When the wizards of Tagas sprung their trap on Kuworsys, they created a set of magical wards to keep the creature contained. These wards are threefold. The first creates a magical barrier specifically keyed to Kuworsys. This prevents the creature from leaving the labyrinth in any manner. This ward extends both above and below Tagas, creating a perfect sphere to contain Kuworsys. The second ward creates a number of shifting walls within the city. These walls block travel between buildings, creating dead ends, loops, and new passages with the intent to confound and trap any intruders. The city's final ward creates an almost-imperceptible tone that calls out to nearby animals and beasts. The wizards believed that by calling other creatures to the city, they could have countless additional guardians to defend their wards and possibly attack Kuworsys.

The wards are maintained by the *Tagas keystone*, a large magical stone hidden deep beneath a nondescript building within the center of the city. The wizards knew that Kuworsys's compulsion, which they believed to be a magical curse, would prevent them from properly harming the creature, so they hoped that

the wards would buy enough time for outsiders to visit Tagas

and put an end to Kuworsys. Unfortunately, constant exposure to Kuworsys's disease compelled the people of Tagas to continue working, even beyond death. As the weeks went on and the populace began to die due to a lack of food and other resources, much of the population rose as undead. These undead now wander the ever-changing streets.

The Tagas Labyrinth is made of three distinct regions. The outer walls were once home to the city's farmers and laborers. Now, they're home to dozens of undead and riddled with traps created by the risen engineers and toy makers of the region. The inner walls were the home of the city's merchants and warriors, as well as many of the city's workshops. While many of the workers lived in the outer wall district, they would travel into the inner walls to earn a living. When the wizards created the city's wards, most of the city's population was in this part of Tagas, and that's where many of them remain today. The center of the city was home to the aristocracy of the city and was also the location of much of the city's government. Tagas's center is now overrun with animals, beasts, and vermin of all kinds. While many of these creatures roam the streets throughout the labyrinth, the majority of them are found here, having created their own strange ecosystem.

Kuworsys itself has no dedicated home, instead keeping multiple lairs hidden throughout the outer and inner walls. It retreats to its nearest lair at its leisure.



SANDSTORM TOP

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

The Tagas Labyrinth holds many secrets and entices travelers of all kinds. Regardless of who visits the labyrinth, Kuworsys watches them all.

Low-Level Campaigns (1-7)

Characters who visit the outer walls of the Tagas Labyrinth can find a staggering amount of dead ends and traps. These traps run the gamut of engineering and include most of the traps found in the *Core Rulebook* and *Gamemastery Guide*, as well as traps of your own design. Many of these are complex traps that force trespassers to move to other parts of the labyrinth, potentially setting off more traps.

In addition to the traps, the labyrinth is littered with undead. Many of these undead are simple skeletons or zombies and generally pose little threat to any adventurer. These undead become particularly dangerous, however, when combined with the traps of the labyrinth. It's possible that a single undead could trigger a chain reaction of multiple traps, leading to disastrous results.

Intelligent undead like ghouls (*Bestiary* 168) and wights (*Bestiary* 332) also live within the outer edges of the labyrinth. These undead know the immediate layout of the traps in their vicinity and can use this knowledge to trick PCs into an unfavorable location. These undead can take advantage of a trap's activation to ambush the PCs.

Kuworsys can watch the PCs during their journey but is likely to leave them alone. The arrival of new outsiders presents the possibility of entertainment. Rather than risk losing its only chance at fun in years, Kuworsys might subtly guide PCs through the labyrinth for its own amusement instead. It can do so by grabbing the characters' attention with noises or presenting itself for a brief moment.

If Kuworsys finds the PCs particularly amusing, it might even try to help them through the labyrinth. Kuworsys could attack the labyrinth's undead to clear a path for the group or might even drop into a fight and help the PCs fend off their attackers before skittering back to the depths of the labyrinth.

Mid-Level Campaigns (8-14)

As they move deeper into the labyrinth, PCs can find more powerful undead, including ghosts (*Bestiary* 166) and dread wraiths (*Bestiary* 2 298). These undead are less likely to use the traps in their vicinity against the PCs. Instead, these undead can use their incorporeal state to harass PCs as they move through the labyrinth, weaving in and out of walls to reach the intruders wherever they go.

Other undead in this area are likely to pay the PCs no mind. These undead instead prefer to continue toiling away at the task that reanimated them. PCs can move past these undead without concern of attack but might find that the undead also offer interesting tasks. Many of these undead lack the supplies to continue their work, but

are unwilling to abandon their posts to move throughout the labyrinth. Without the appropriate resources, the undead just stand at their workbenches, waiting for a chance to continue their work. The intelligent undead here can call out to the PCs and notify them of the necessary materials or tools needed to continue a task. If PCs are willing to aid the undead, they can receive knowledge about the labyrinth or even a useful trinket in return.

Kuworsys recognizes that creatures able to move through the deeper portions of the labyrinth and survive are more than capable foes. Rather than risk its own safety by exposing itself, Kuworsys watches the PCs from afar. It sticks to the shadows and high walls, where PCs are unlikely to notice it. Unlike its time in the outer walls, Kuworsys avoids interfering with the PCs, knowing full well that some of the undead in the area could easily overpower it.

If PCs notice Kuworsys, they may attempt to attack it. In this case, Kuworsys does its best to find an opening and flee, using its knowledge of the labyrinth to lose the PCs. If unable to escape, Kuworsys is quick to strike back, attempting to steal weapons from the PCs. It tries to either use these weapons against the PCs or throw them over a nearby wall into an inaccessible part of the labyrinth. Kuworsys continues to seek an opportunity to escape at all times.

High-Level Campaigns (15-20)

Kuworsys is no match for characters who make into the central portion of the labyrinth, and it knows that. Instead, it angles itself as an ally for the PCs if they make it this far, hoping that by tagging along it can find a way to escape the labyrinth. While Kuworsys can't speak, it can make its intentions known with pantomime. PCs who don't attack Kuworsys on sight can use Aberration Lore to Recall Knowledge and understand that the creature is attempting to communicate. Alternatively, spells like *mind reading* can help the PCs glean Kuworsys's intentions.

As PCs reach the center of the labyrinth, they have to contend with massive cave worms (*Bestiary* 56) and powerful ghosts and other undead. Kuworsys can act as the PCs' guide, directing them through the safest paths in the area. It can even attempt to aid in combat when the PCs face off with the rest of the labyrinth's denizens. These acts could ingratiate Kuworsys with the heroes, making its escape all the more assured.

Once PCs reach the central temple, they can find the *Tagas keystone* that keeps the labyrinth's wards in place. Destroying these wards would unleash Kuworsys and the labyrinth's undead into the world, a development that many PCs would be unlikely to allow. If Kuworsys recognizes that the PCs are unwilling to destroy the wards, it lashes out in fury, likely meeting its end in combat. If released, however, Kuworsys flees into the desert and finds the nearest settlement. There, it releases spores once more in hopes of finding more entertainment among the populace.

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WRITHING GRISTLE

At a distance, the creature known as Kuworsys might be mistaken for a crawling undead hand, possessed of two thumbs instead of one. These “thumbs” are actually the being’s hind limbs, which it can clumsily stand upon should it choose. Each of its fingerlike limbs bears a smaller hand on the end, giving Kuworsys an eerie gait possessed of too many moving joints. Wedged within the wrist-shaped tissue that makes up the creature’s head are three bloodshot eyes, glaring balefully from lids twisted into shape from ropes of flesh.

Whether part of its base nature or due to its long imprisonment, Kuworsys appears to be skinned and rotting, its body riddled with ragged holes held together by raw sinew. Despite its glistening and putrid appearance, it isn’t undead, nor does it leave any trace of blood or gristle in its wake. Those who believe its condition might slow it down are often shocked by the creature’s jittering speed, and those who believe they might be able to track it by the scent of rotting flesh

find themselves inhaling the beast’s deadly, exhausting spores instead.

When encountering another creature, Kuworsys doesn’t approach initially, instead observing the stranger while hidden or at a distance. While it might grow bolder and approach to examine or provoke another being, it prefers to avoid direct confrontation and is intelligent and stealthy enough to deftly avoid discovery. Its presence proves deadly enough, even without any further aggression, as those who Kuworsys stalks eventually succumb to a lethal lethargy.

KUWORSYS

CREATURE 12

UNIQUE LE LARGE ABERRATION

Perception +22 (+26 vs traps); infect scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Skills Acrobatics +25, Athletics +22, Crafting +25, Stealth +28, Thievery +28

Str +7, **Dex** +8, **Con** +5, **Int** +7, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +4

Items +1 *striking sling* (10 sling bullets, 3 *explosive ammunition*, 3 *freezing ammunition*)

Infect Scent Kuworsys can smell creatures infected with addictive exhaustion, as the scent ability.

AC 34; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +22, **Will** +27

HP 213; **Immunities** bleed; **Weaknesses** acid 10, fire 10; **Resistances** poison 15

Pinion **Trigger** A creature within 10 feet of Kuworsys uses an action to Fly; **Requirements** Kuworsys is Reared Back; **Effect** Kuworsys lashes out at the triggering creature, attempting to swat it to the ground. Kuworsys attempts a melee Strike against the creature. If the Strike hits, the creature’s movement is interrupted. The creature is knocked to the ground; on a critical hit, they also can’t Fly again for 1 minute.

Speed 35 feet, climb 35 feet

Melee **◆** limb +27 (finesse, reach 15 feet, shove), **Damage** 3d12+7 bludgeoning

Ranged **◆** *sling* +28 (propulsive, range increment 50 feet, reload 1), **Damage** 2d6+13 bludgeoning

Addictive Exhaustion (disease) DC 32 (page 65)

Infectious Spores **◆◆** Kuworsys releases a choking field of spores within a 30-foot radius, continuing to release them until the end of its next turn. Creatures who begin their turns within the area of the spores, or who enter the area, must attempt a DC 32 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature becomes afflicted with addictive exhaustion (page 65). Kuworsys then can’t use its Infectious Spores again for 1d4 rounds.

Gauge Potential **◆** Kuworsys studies a creature it can see, attempting to predict its actions. The creature attempts a DC 32 Will save. On a failed save, Kuworsys predicts the creature’s moves, gaining a +2 circumstance bonus to attack rolls and AC against the target creature for 1 minute.

Rear Back **◆** Kuworsys stands on its two hind limbs, bringing its other four limbs to bear on its foes. Kuworsys stays Reared Back until it uses a single



KUWORSYS

action to return to its normal stance. While Kuworsys is Reared Back, it is clumsy 1 but can use its Pinion and Yank abilities.

Yank **◆◆ Requirements** Kuworsys is Reared Back; **Effect** Kuworsys makes a melee limb Strike against a creature and, on a success, attempts to steal the creature's weapon from its hands. Kuworsys attempts a Thievery check against the target's Reflex DC.

Critical Success The creature's weapon falls to the floor in the creature's space.

Success Until the start of that creature's turn, attempts to Disarm the creature of its weapon gain a +2 circumstance bonus, and the target takes a -2 circumstance penalty to attacks with the weapon or other checks requiring a firm grasp on the weapon.

Failure The creature is unaffected.

Critical Failure The creature can use a reaction to attempt a melee Strike against Kuworsys with the weapon Kuworsys attempted to grab.

KUWORSYS ALTERNATE ABILITIES

The preceding stat block depicts how Kuworsys behaves around its targets of observation. However, rumors abound that it grows more aggressive when it has finished its observations. In battle, Kuworsys might unleash all the pent-up wrath of a creature trapped in a labyrinth for centuries. In that case, replace one or more of its abilities, especially observational abilities such as Gauge Potential, with one or more of the following abilities on a one-for-one basis.

Careless Block **↻ Trigger** A creature attempts a Strike against Kuworsys; **Effect** Kuworsys blocks the triggering Strike by snapping its sling or a stolen weapon into a blocking position. Damage is dealt to Kuworsys's weapon first. If the weapon would be destroyed, excess damage is dealt to Kuworsys.

Rain Blows **◆◆◆ Requirements** Kuworsys is Reared Back; **Effect** Kuworsys Strikes each creature within its reach, to a maximum of four Strikes (one for each available limb). It can make limb Strikes or weapon Strikes, including with ranged weapons, but can use each weapon only once. Each attack counts toward Kuworsys's multiple attack penalty, but the multiple attack penalty doesn't increase until after it makes all the attacks.

Rapid Bombardment Kuworsys's sling becomes a reload 0 weapon instead of reload 1.

Smash and Grab **◆◆◆** Kuworsys Strides up to twice its Speed. At the end of its movement, it can make a melee limb Strike. On a successful Strike, the creature becomes grabbed until the end of Kuworsys's next turn.

DISEASE

Addictive exhaustion results from exposure to Kuworsys's spores, through close proximity with the monster or in fungus-filled pits throughout Kuworsys's lair. At the onset, afflicted creatures find themselves gradually becoming disinterested in life. As the disease worsens, they become hyper-focused on a single activity.

As the disease reaches its final stages, sustenance and rest provide no relief for them.

ADDICTIVE EXHAUSTION

DISEASE 15

UNIQUE DISEASE

Saving Throw DC 32 Fortitude; creatures with addictive exhaustion can't reduce their sickened condition from addictive exhaustion while they have the disease; **Stage 1** The creature is sickened 1. One skill of the creature's choice doesn't suffer the status penalty from this sickened condition to its skill checks (1 day); **Stage 2** As Stage 1, but the creature is sickened 2 and is fatigued (5 days); **Stage 3** As Stage 2, but the creature is sickened 3 and has incurable hunger and thirst, in addition to being fatigued (1 day)

TAGAS TOYS

A few of Tagas's tragic wonders have escaped the city, brought out by explorers or blown out by chance windstorms.

GAMEPIECE CHARIOT

ITEM 11

RARE CONJURATION MAGICAL

Price 1,200 gp

Usage held in one hand; **Bulk** –

This stone figurine of a chariot pulled by two horses was used by Tekritanin adults during strategy game competitions. Sometimes, though, mischievous adolescents snatched pieces like this one for joyriding.

Activate **◆◆** Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You place the figurine on the ground and roll it forward. As the chariot begins to move, it rapidly expands to the size of a Large heavy chariot pulled by two animated stone war horses. You can board the chariot and drive it up to 80 feet in a straight line. You can move through spaces occupied by creatures of size Medium or smaller, dealing 4d8+10 bludgeoning damage to those creatures. Affected creatures must attempt a DC 28 basic Reflex save; on a failure, a creature is knocked prone. The chariot returns to its figurine form once it stops moving.

SANDSTORM TOP

ITEM 13

RARE EVOCATION MAGICAL

Price 3,000 gp

Usage held in one hand; **Bulk** L

On Tekritanin holidays, children reenacted legendary battles of deities by playing with magical tops. Though the paint on this wooden top has long since faded, its magical runes once gleamed yellow-gold and fiery orange, evoking the color of the sky during a sandstorm. To set the top in motion, wind a string around its bottom and upward along its body, and then throw it while gripping the string.

Activate **◆** Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You throw the *sandstorm top* 10 feet away from you. For 1 minute, as it spins, the top generates a magical sandstorm in a 5-foot radius. Any creature that starts its turn in the area or moves into the area takes 4d6 slashing damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save). Additionally, a creature within the sandstorm must hold its breath or begin suffocating.

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MELFESH MONSTER

“Ah, I can see you’re a brave one. Ready to venture into the wilderness outside Melfesh? Yes, yes, with all those blades, all that mighty armor... well, my new friends, if you think yourselves up to a feat of true heroism, there is a terrible monster that has long plagued our humble village. Perhaps you have heard of it? The Melfesh Monster? It has been a terror for generations here, and none among us have the prowess to brave its lair. But you...

“Why yes, as it happens, I do have a drawing of the beast, and a sketched map to its lair, besides. Don’t mind the bloodstains or the scorch marks, please. Ah, if you must know—a comrade of mine, an old friend, fell victim to the beast not two years ago. He made out these drawings in his last shaky moments as a warning for the rest of us, so we would know where to avoid the danger in the woods.

“But if you wish to seek it out... though the map is stained with my old friend’s blood, and is all I have to remember him by... shall we say, five pieces of gold?”

—Harish of Melfesh, selling his third map of the week

The sleepy Varisian town of Melfesh is a quiet, peaceful place, but centuries-old legends tell of a mysterious monster that lurks in the forest nearby. Miners working the foothills of the Fenwall Mountains and farmers in isolated reaches of countryside speak of a strange, mossy-furred creature with burning red eyes and twisted limbs that shoot jets of flame. The stench of acrid, burning dung accompanies the creature. Those who have encountered it return pale and ill, raving incoherently about a hovering monstrosity that dangles strangling vines through a haze of fiery, poisonous mist.

No two accounts are precisely alike, and corroboration between any of them is scant, leading many to dismiss the Melfesh Monster as a story made up to frighten naughty children. Many colorful and terrifying tales are, indeed, spun out at campsites and holiday gatherings, and the Melfesh Monster is a popular figure in regional lore. But there's more than a little truth to the legends, and those who dismiss the monster as a figment of locals' imaginations do so at their peril. For the Melfesh Monster is very real, very hungry, and very, very old.

TALES OF THE BEAST

Stories abound of the Melfesh Monster. Many are pure invention, and even those that hold a grain of truth seldom have more than that. Nevertheless, the stories do hold some clues about the beast's true nature.

Peleshka the Clever, a Varisian folk tale heroine, is said to have tricked the Melfesh Monster into spraying a cloud of delirium-inducing poison into her cloak, which she wrapped up and carried safely away. Later, she opened her cloak to release the poison into the hut of an evil witch, incapacitating the witch and enabling Peleshka to rescue the children she had kidnapped. Another story recounts how Peleshka, lost in the forest on a moonless night, baited the Melfesh Monster into chasing her and firing off great goutts of flame, which lit up the darkness and enabled Peleshka to find her way home.

The Melfesh Monster also features in many stories intended to frighten young children into good behavior, and to give a thrilling scare to older listeners. In most of these stories, disobedient children sneak into the woods against their parents' instructions, or shirk their berry-picking and wood-gathering to play in the forest, and get lost. The monster comes upon the stranded children and frightens them to death, leaving their little bodies behind as a grisly present to their parents. Because these children's stories are so common, adults and adolescents have learned to scoff at them. But the threat is real—and, sometimes, only other children are willing to take a disappearance seriously enough to look for help.



A CHILD'S PROOF

Finally, there are those who claim to have actually seen the beast and survived. Eyewitness descriptions vary wildly. Some say the Melfesh Monster hovers above the tree line with shaggy green vines hanging down from its body like a jellyfish's tendrils, trawling for prey to ensnare. Others claim it creeps through the underbrush or hides beneath fallen leaves to spring up from ambush when it senses a trespassing mortal. Estimates of its size range from that of a large dog to bigger than a peddler's wagon, though the latter aren't generally considered credible.

Descriptions of its attacks are just as variable, although a few commonalities do emerge. Many survivors claim to have seen the Melfesh Monster emit jets of burning gas from fibrous tendrils, or from ragged vents within its body. They consistently describe an odor of burning dung that accompanies these fiery attacks.

Another recurring detail is that survivors often experience extraordinary terror in the monster's presence. Some attribute this to spore clouds that the Melfesh Monster puffs out from protuberant growths on its body, while others say the fear seized them upon meeting the creature's burning red eyes. All agree, however, on the overwhelming, near-suffocating horror the beast creates. The charred corpses of the monster's victims are often fixed into rictuses of mind-shattered fright, confirming the truth of these tales.

LUCRATIVE LIES

In addition to the stories locals circulate among themselves, a lucrative cottage industry has sprung up in selling fake maps and reports of false sightings to monster hunters, and bits of "lucky" molten slag to souvenir collectors. Sketches of the Melfesh Monster hang in inns and taverns, where they can be sold for inflated prices to likely marks, and someone's always willing to spin a yarn to a credulous outsider about their own brush with the beast.

As adventurers tend to be a free-spending and curious bunch, some travelers' inns have built up a profitable sideline in selling maps, stories, and "authentic" scraps of vines or bark supposedly broken from the monster's body. Such inns are always willing to pay for convincing paraphernalia, whether real or fake, and may even hire an enterprising local as a "guide to the monster's lair." Of course, no one involved in these scams ever actually expects to encounter the creature—but the Melfesh Monster has a way of turning up unexpectedly.

AN ANCIENT TRUTH

Theories abound as to the Melfesh Monster's origins. Some speculate it was spawned in the horrid wastes of Abaddon, while others think it's a corrupted fey born

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of the First World, and others believe it to be some kind of alien creature originating from the stars far beyond Golarion. The truth is both stranger and more prosaic. The “Melfesh Monster” is the mobile, spore-bearing body of an ancient, enormous fungus that sprawls underneath the entire forest in which the “monster” legendarily dwells.

When it's ready to reproduce, the fungus pushes a primordium above the ground, which develops into a new Melfesh Monster that then breaks free from the mycelium. The monster hunts down living victims, which it kills and abandons on the forest floor so that the parent organism can break down their corpses for sustenance. Although the charred bodies aren't “eaten” in the ordinary sense, they're soon wrapped in cocoons of fungal threads that decompose them within days, leaving nothing but a mysterious absence and a scorched scar on the forest floor.

Because each Melfesh Monster is its own newly formed spawn, no two look exactly alike, and their abilities vary slightly each time. As the spore-bearing

“monster” reaches the end of its life cycle, it deteriorates and loses control of its flammable gases, ultimately combusting in an explosion meant to propel its spore cloud to new hunting grounds. Its slow degeneration contributes to inconsistent accounts of the beast, as its tendrils wither or burn off and it loses its buoyant flight. Additionally, because the Melfesh Monster is only a temporary spawn intended to self-destruct, heroes who manage to kill the monster rarely cause any trouble for the parent fungus, which merely waits a few years before producing a replacement.

Perhaps the most frightening possibility is that someone might accurately surmise the Melfesh Monster's true nature and deliberately use its spores to grow another fungus, potentially as massive and deeply entrenched as the first. It's even conceivable that, should someone find a way to communicate with the parent fungus, the ancient creature might offer its own profoundly inhuman bargain in exchange for such a service.

THE Melfesh Chasm

The parent fungus that creates the creatures known as the Melfesh Monster lies deep in the woods just outside of Melfesh itself. The fungus lives within an enormous, underground cavern that spans most of the length of the forest itself and is hundreds of feet deep. While this cavern was initially small, the fungus slowly carved out a larger space over the span of several centuries. The only thing keeping the forest from collapsing into the cavern is the fungus itself, which has created a support structure made up of its hundreds of feet of growth.

The air of this cavern is constantly riddled with spores that the parent fungus releases at regular intervals. Many of these spores get pulled up by air above the cavern and moved about by the wind, allowing the parent fungus to take hold in places far beyond the cavern. The spores are deadly to most animals that make their way into the cavern. Those that don't immediately die experience hallucinations, strange growths, or other unusual changes.

The widespread nature of the parent fungus makes it difficult to destroy. Unless every inch of the fungus within the cavern is completely eradicated, the hardy parent is likely to regrow over the span of decades or centuries. Even with a full destruction of the fungus within the cavern, there is still a chance the parent spore lives on, growing elsewhere where its spores have landed or even from the body of an animal ridden with the parent fungus's spores and growths.



THE TRUE MONSTER

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

The unlimited potential of the Melfesh Monster's origins allows it to be part of any campaign.

LOW-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (1-7)

The Melfesh Monster can serve as a notable antagonist for new adventurers. Tales of the monster's various abilities and terrifying acts are more than enough to entice many would-be monster hunters into searching the wilderness beyond the town. The foothills of the Fenwall Mountains and the nearby countryside are two likely places where the hunt for the Melfesh Monster might begin.

The Fenwall Mountains are infested with creatures other than the Melfesh Monster, and searching through the area can draw the attention of these creatures. Giant animals like giant bats (*Bestiary* 39) and giant scorpions (*Bestiary* 285), along with chokers (*Bestiary* 251) and the occasional troll (*Bestiary* 314), make their home among the caves of the Fenwall. Each of these could serve as obstacles for PCs on the hunt for the Melfesh Monster.

Characters traveling the Melfesh countryside have a different assortment of creatures to deal with instead. These include swarms of bloodseekers (*Bestiary* 42), gremlins of all types, and roving bands of goblins. Moving into the nearby woods, characters have to be on the lookout for hunting spiders (*Bestiary* 306), packs of wolves (*Bestiary* 334), and firepelt cougars.

The dangers of the wilderness aside, PCs might also have to deal with other groups of adventurers and monster hunters. The stories of the Melfesh Monster attract significant attention, and not all monster hunters are kind of enough to give everyone else an appropriate amount of space. Other groups could interfere with the PCs' search or might intentionally sabotage their efforts, hoping to get a leg up on the competition. It wouldn't be an extraordinary development for an opposing adventuring party to come to blows with the PCs.

PCs could also have to deal with other, less-experienced adventurers. These adventurers could cling to the PCs like a young puppy following a child, always on the lookout for a chance to offer support or learn from them. While some groups might find the new sidekicks endearing, these naive adventurers could also cause trouble for the PCs. An inexperienced adventurer might accidentally draw a monster's attention or set off a hunter's trap, causing problems that the PCs need to clean up. The PCs might even need to rescue a group of novice adventurers from danger.

If and when the PCs locate the Melfesh Monster, the fight with the creature would be a difficult one. The Melfesh Monster's abilities aren't set in stone, and PCs could quickly realize that their knowledge about the creature is either incomplete or incorrect. Preparations for dealing with various abilities might not be as effective—or even outright useless—during combat.

Capable and canny PCs can bring down the Melfesh Monster and return to Melfesh with the prize of their hunt, earning them acclaim as local heroes for a time, at least.

MID-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (8-14)

Whether or not PCs are aware of it, the Melfesh Monster will always return. When the parent fungus produces a new Melfesh Monster, the heroes of Melfesh might learn that the monster's attacks continue, even after their successful hunt. This news could prompt further hunts for the Melfesh Monster.

Although the parent fungus typically waits several years to produce a new iteration, an abundance of energy in the form of multiple victims could allow the fungus to produce a new Melfesh Monster in a much quicker time frame—potentially just after a few short weeks. Alternatively, the fungus may have already produced several Melfesh Monsters at once, leading to multiple, conflicting sightings of the creatures. The reports of the Melfesh Monster or monsters could draw out experienced monster hunters.

The parent fungus uses the Melfesh Monster as its eyes and could surmise that an increase of hunters or a group of powerful warriors pose a threat to the fungus's existence. Rather than continue to produce similar Melfesh Monsters, the fungus might instead use more energy to produce a stronger version of the Melfesh Monster. This new monstrosity is likely larger and features several of the alternate abilities found on pages 70 and 71. Rather than replace an existing ability, this monster could have two or three additional abilities that further supplement its combat capability.

HIGH-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (15-20)

Powerful characters might take the time to examine and learn more about the Melfesh Monster and eventually deduce that all the kills occur within the same general area. With some investigation, these characters could learn the truth about the Melfesh Monster's kills and realize that the corpses are used to feed some other entity.

The true Melfesh Monster, the parent fungus, is aware that skilled warriors or the occasional, random traveler could track down its home. The parent fungus is not without its own defenses, however. It can produce powerful fungus warriors to send at anyone that draws close to the lair. These warriors are more powerful than any Melfesh Monster the fungus produces, as they're a direct extension of the parent fungus itself. Rather than create bodies that act separately, the fungus just extends itself out of its lair with vaguely humanoid pods connected to the rest of its fungus body.

Though it can't move, the fungus can make use of everything in its arsenal in a fight. Characters that enter the lair would be immediately set upon by several fungus warriors, as well as a multitude of spore clouds with varying effects. The fungus mass is willing to use all of its energy to defend itself and its home.

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AVATAR OF ROT

Each Melfesh Monster is unique at any given time since the parent fungus only gives birth to a single monster at once, and each of these creations works a little differently and looks a little different from the last. However, their forms all bear similarities. A twisting mass of creeping vines creates the bulk of a Melfesh Monster's body, sculpted into a towering figure that can glide effortlessly across the ground. Mossy growths and trumpeting fungi cover the creature like matted fur, dripping from its back and shoulders in excess. A hood of dampened bark and thick moss covers its face, revealing only a crusty wooden jaw and a pair of gleaming red eyes. An acrid stench of burning manure follows the creature, often serving as the only warning that anyone gets before it attacks.

Despite their fungal nature, Melfesh Monsters are undamaged by their own jets of flame and resistant to fires set by others, often surprising hunters who paid too little attention to the legends before encountering the creature. Their terrifying spores also mean that most survivors of their attacks tend to be disoriented and delirious, relating accounts of the monster that are distorted by confusion and fear. This, along with the natural variance between different Melfesh Monsters, means that even the most diligent of researchers will come across contradictory evidence. Even if they learn from all the prior information collected over the years, they're still often caught off guard when trying to hunt down and fell the threat since the new Melfesh Monster might have an ability never seen before. The canniest researchers, when faced with the seemingly contradictory evidence, speculate that the creature might evolve or change over time, which is closer to the truth but still falls short.

MELFESH MONSTER

CREATURE 6

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM FUNGUS

Perception +14; sporesight 100 feet

Languages Aklo, Sylvan; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +11, Athletics +13, Nature +13, Survival +13

Str +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +1, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +1

Sporesight If a creature has inhaled any of the Melfesh Monster's spores, the Melfesh Monster can sense the creature at the listed range.

AC 23; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +14, **Will** +12

HP 78; **Resistances** fire 5, poison 5

Terrorspores (aura, emotion, fear, inhaled, mental, poison) 60 feet. A creature that enters the emanation must attempt a DC 21 Will save. Regardless of outcome, the creature is temporarily immune to terrorspores for 1 minute.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is frightened 1 and inhales spores that remain in its body for 1 minute.

Failure As success, but frightened 2 and the spores remain for 1 hour.

Critical Failure As success, but frightened 3, the spores remain for 1 hour, and the creature's frightened condition can't be reduced below 1 as long as spores remain in its body.

Reactive Growth **Trigger** The Melfesh Monster takes physical damage; **Effect** The Melfesh Monster shifts plant matter to blunt the attack. It gains resistance 5 against the triggering physical damage.

Speed 25 feet, fly 30 feet

Melee **◆** limb +16 (versatile P or S), **Damage** 2d12+4 bludgeoning

Melee **◆** fungal limb +16 (agile), **Damage** 2d8+4 bludgeoning

Ranged **◆** firelance +15 (range 30 feet, magical, fire), **Damage** 2d8+2 fire

Envelop **◆◆◆** The Melfesh Monster attempts to Grapple a creature within reach. On a success, the creature is pulled into the Monster's body. The Melfesh Monster is slowed 1 while it envelops a creature, and this otherwise has the effects of Swallow Whole (the Melfesh Monster's size or smaller, 1d10 bludgeoning and 1d12 poison, Rupture 15).

Fulminate **◆◆** (fire) **Requirements** The Melfesh Monster has created a spore cloud, and the cloud is within range of one of the Melfesh Monster's fire abilities; **Effect** The Melfesh Monster targets the cloud with one of its abilities with the fire trait. The spore cloud explodes, dealing 4d10 fire damage and 4 persistent fire damage in a 40-foot burst originating from a single square within the cloud (DC 24 basic Reflex).

Spore Cloud **◆◆** (inhaled, poison) **Frequency** once per minute; **Effect** The Melfesh Monster conjures a cloud of spores within 60 feet in a 20-foot burst. The cloud lasts 1 minute. Creatures that enter or begin their turn within the cloud must succeed at a DC 21 Fortitude save or take 3d8 poison damage, be sickened 2, and inhale spores that remain in their bodies for 1 minute (on a critical failure, sickened 3 and an additional 4 persistent poison damage).

ALTERNATE ABILITIES

There have been many Melfesh Monsters, and there will be many more. No two of the progenitor fungus's spawn are identical. The following are a number of alternate abilities that the Melfesh Monster might possess; GMs choosing to use one of these abilities can use it to replace one of the Melfesh Monster's abilities in the stat block above.

Smolderstench (aura, olfactory, poison) 60 feet. The Melfesh Monster emits the overwhelming stink of burning, rotting matter. A creature that enters or begins its turn in the area inhales spores and must attempt a DC 21 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature takes 2d4 poison damage and is sickened 1; on a critical failure, the creature also takes 4 persistent poison damage and is sickened 2. A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune to smolderstench for 1 minute. This ability replaces terrorspores.

Death Throes **Trigger** The Melfesh Monster dies; **Effect** The Melfesh Monster explodes in a 30-foot burst. Creatures in the area take 3d8 fire and 3d8 poison damage (DC 24 basic Reflex save). This ability replaces Reactive Growth.

Vent Flames **Trigger** The Melfesh Monster ends its movement next to or takes damage from an adjacent creature; **Effect** Rifts in the Melfesh Monster's body spew burning gas. The triggering creature must succeed at a DC 21 Reflex save or inhale spores which remain in its body

for 1 minute, take 2d6 fire damage, and become sickened 1 (on a critical failure, double damage and sickened 2). This ability replaces Reactive Growth.

Burrowing Grasp ♦♦ The Melfesh Monster Burrows twice. At any point in this movement, it can shed a temporary fungal limb to grasp a creature within 10 feet. The creature must succeed at a DC 21 Reflex save or be immobilized for 1 round (on a critical failure, 2 rounds) or until it Escapes (DC 21). This ability grants the Melfesh Monster a burrow speed of 15 feet and replaces its fly speed and Envelop.

Corpse Bomb The Melfesh Monster injects a creature's corpse with spores over the course of 10 minutes, priming it to explode. These spores last 1 day, and the Melfesh Monster can only have three corpses primed at a time; if it primes another, the oldest corpse bomb deactivates harmlessly. Creatures that succeed at a DC 21 Perception check while Seeking or Investigating notice a corpse bomb's explosive nature. Creatures can attempt to disarm a corpse bomb with a Nature, Survival, or Thievery check to Disable a Device (DC 21). A corpse bomb explodes in a 10-foot burst if a creature comes within 5 feet or if the Melfesh Monster detonates it as a single action, which it can use once per round. This deals 2d8 fire and 2d8 poison damage (DC 21 basic Reflex save) and leaves a lingering, 10-foot-radius spore cloud. A creature that enters or begins its turn within the cloud inhales spores, which remain in its body for 1 minute. This ability replaces Spore Cloud.

False Synapses ♦♦ (mental, poison) The Melfesh Monster partially controls a creature within 60 feet that has inhaled its spores. This has the effects of a *command* spell (DC 24 Will save). This ability replaces sporesight and Spore Cloud.

Flame Lash ♦♦ The Melfesh Monster sprays flaming gas in a 15-foot cone or a 30-foot line. Creatures in the area take 4d6 fire damage (DC 21 basic Reflex save). This ability replaces the firelance ranged Strike.

Mycelial Tomb ♦♦ **Requirements** A creature is within 90 feet of the Melfesh Monster and is standing on the ground; **Effect** Fungal threads burst from the ground. The creature must succeed at a DC 21 Reflex save or inhale Melfesh spores that remain in its body for 1 minute, be encased in mycelia, and be slowed 2. The mycelia have Hardness 8 and 16 HP, and the DC to Force them Open is 21. Breaking the mycelia frees the creature and ends the slowed effect. If someone other than the encased creatures breaks the mycelia from the outside, the creature is stunned 1 and takes any damage dealt by the breaking effect in excess of the mycelia's Hit Points. This replaces the Envelop ability.

Swell ♦♦ (transmutation) **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** The Melfesh Monster inflates with gas for 1 minute. It grows to Huge size, and its reach increases to 15 feet. It also gains 12 temporary Hit Points, resistance 5 to bludgeoning, and a +2 status bonus to damage rolls, but it's clumsy 1. When the Melfesh Monster takes damage while swollen, all creatures

within 15 feet inhale spores that remain in their body for 1 minute. This ability replaces terrerspores and Spore Cloud.

Torrential Advance ♦♦♦ The Melfesh Monster dissolves into a mass of fungal threads and surges forward. It Tramples (Medium or smaller, limb, DC 21), leaving a spore cloud in the squares through which it moves that last until the end of its next turn. A creature that enters or begins its turn in the cloud inhales spores and must succeed at a DC 21 Fortitude save or be sickened 1 (sickened 2 on a critical failure). This ability replaces Envelop and Spore Cloud.



MELFESH MONSTER

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MOSQUITO WITCH

“And ever since, she’s scampered on eight legs, sneakin’ into houses and drinkin’ dreams from sleepin’ children,” Ylvaine declared, spitting with derision around his broken tusk.

“Haha, nah,” challenged Eka. “Good tale, that, but the Mosquito Witch? She’s an abandoned acolyte of Deskari, drinking magic from victims, what with her demon god dead.” The gnome banged her mug with conviction like it were a gavel.

“Timelines don’t line up for Deskari,” retorted Brigurte, stabbing the campfire for emphasis and sending a swarm of sparks to die in the branches overhead. “She’s fey—I heard she’s some faun whose children died to wild beasts, and she cut a cursed deal with Ghlauder to steal back the blood stolen from her family.”

“Been pretty quiet, there, Val,” Eka cajoled with a shove. “What’s your theory?”

But Val was silent. The push caused his hood to fall back, revealing bloodless skin that wriggled as if filled with countless vermin, thumb-thick mosquitoes crawling from his mouth. The campfire cracked and cascaded sparks that briefly illuminated a hunched figure in the branches overhead, its eyes glowing like blood moons.

Decades ago, a gaggle of rambunctious teens stole away from their River Kingdoms home of Shimmerford, seeking a respite from responsibilities with their short adventure into the woods. Hours later, they emerged with ragged screams, scared witless by their encounter with a sinister spirit. The teens' barely coherent retelling of their encounter heralded a dozen other sightings over the next few years, each setting Shimmerford on edge as the so-called Mosquito Witch's appearance and origins evolved. She was a beast with a dozen legs—no, a cackling hag with wriggling vermin for teeth—or maybe a giant bug who sang sweet nothings to prey? With time, the sightings dwindled, and the panic subsided, replaced by a self-deprecating amusement as the Mosquito Witch evolved into a local bugaboo that spooked children into good behavior and attracted tourists fascinated by Shimmerford's quaint mythology.

Yet for some, the decades of annual Mosquito Witch festivals—celebrated with dances, “witch-bread,” and fanciful witch dolls made from straw—haven't blunted the terrible threat that sparked the whole phenomenon. As Shimmerford learned to laugh off the witch, the original witnesses found their warnings and trauma laughed off as well, all while swarms of fen mosquitoes and bloodseekers lurked in the woods and wetlands nearby. As the witnesses gradually drifted off, cryptid-hunters seeped in, eagerly recording townsfolk's legends of the witch into a mangled continuity that immortalizes at least a dozen conflicting origin stories. If anything, Shimmerford leaned into these myriad tales, using them as opportunities to sell adventurers a host of talismans, specially fermented lures, and other bogus tchotchkes. All the while, the River Kingdoms' bandits know that adventurers carrying silvered weapons, obscure scrolls, and other valuables gravitate to Shimmerford, making them lucrative targets to waylay.

In recent years, though, sightings have renewed amid a rash of related phenomena. Swarms of mosquitoes create sickening hazes against the setting sun, and still-twitching insect corpses choke even newly unsealed ale barrels. Biting flies harass livestock, driving cattle to witlessly rampage and demolish fences in a vain effort to escape—their bloodless bodies found days later and untouched by buzzards. Foragers return from the woods with tales of cryptic carvings inscribed high in the trees, while the ground bears deep, pointed tracks

of some unknown, scuttling creature. Nonetheless, Shimmerford perseveres. Its yearly festival involves less mirth and fewer frivolous chants, however, as if worried of drawing the Mosquito Witch's attention.

SIGNS OF A SPOTTING

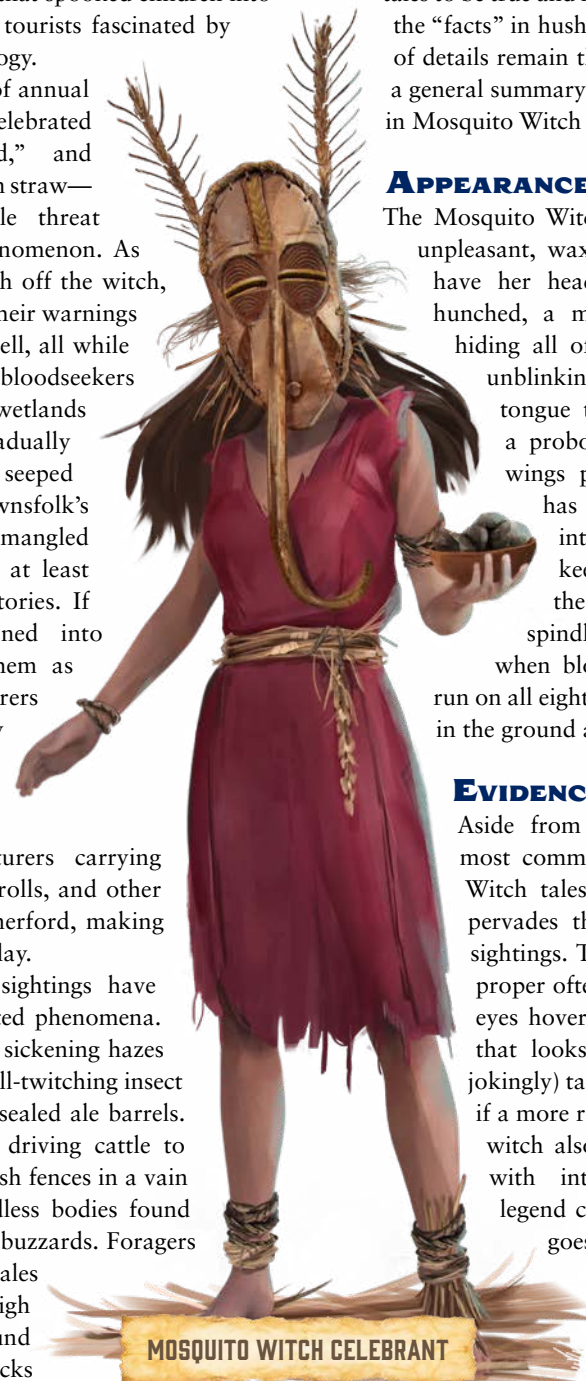
The legends and rumors of the cryptid have evolved over time and distance, constantly spun into new variants by miscommunications or the overactive imaginations of the specific tale-teller. Most of these stories are short on proof and highly contradictory; those that surge in popularity often do so for their lurid descriptions rather than any basis in a real witch encounter. Almost every Shimmerford resident assumes some variant of these tales to be true and is eager to share their version of the “facts” in hushed voices. That said, a number of details remain the same between these stories; a general summary of the most common elements in Mosquito Witch tales follows below.

APPEARANCE

The Mosquito Witch is a humanoid figure with unpleasant, waxy skin. She always seems to have her head bowed and her shoulders hunched, a mane of unkempt black hair hiding all of her face save for a pair of unblinking red eyes and a long, sharp tongue that's as stiff and pointed as a proboscis. Fleshy, ribbed mosquito wings protrude from her back. She has six handleless arms that taper into malformed points, which she keeps clutched to her chest like the legs of an insect's pupae. Her spindly legs also taper into points; when bloated from feeding, she must run on all eight limbs, which leave small holes in the ground as tracks.

EVIDENCE

Aside from the witch's appearance, the most common trait of various Mosquito Witch tales is a sickly sweet smell that pervades the entire area of the alleged sightings. Those that don't see the witch proper often claim to see red, unblinking eyes hovering in the darkness. Anything that looks pierced is often (sometimes jokingly) taken as a sign of the witch, even if a more rational explanation exists. The witch also seems to have an obsession with intricate little dolls. Popular legend claims that wherever the witch goes, she leaves cloth or woven wheat-stalk dolls; in truth, the Mosquito Witch most commonly appears near folded paper dolls.



MOSQUITO WITCH CELEBRANT

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SUPERSTITIONS

The Mosquito Witch is considered an omen of terrible events to come, though reports of misfortune that the witch supposedly caused vary wildly and seem mostly fabricated. Most people believe that the Mosquito Witch can't come out in bright sunlight, due to the fact that she has never been seen outside of murky light conditions. Some villagers believe that the witch can see through the eyes of any depiction of herself. Particularly religious people think *holy water* can ward off the witch by hiding a creature's smell, though this belief is often considered absurd. A very common belief is that the witch can drain not just the blood out of people, but also the tears, sucking both emotions and vitality alongside the liquid.

THE WITCH'S REALM

Everyone in Shimmerford insists the Mosquito Witch lives deep in the woods at Witchtop Hill, a low rise surrounded by bare-branched trees where she was first sighted. Daring locals occasionally travel here to pin a witch doll to a bare tree's bark, either to distract the witch with trinkets or, rarely, to make a wish for her ill-advised aid. Witchtop Hill hides a series of tunnels beneath its surface—mostly abandoned animal burrows and sinkholes, though a few caverns host aging support beams and other signs of intelligent excavation. Despite this evidence and the locals' insistence, cryptid hunters rarely find any life beyond indignant badgers. Instead, it seems the witch spends much time on the move, making temporary homes wherever she rests. Periodically, travelers find leafy nests, large enough for a human, set high in the branches of trees. Each nest is littered with remnants of arthropods' molting, desiccated mammal corpses, intricately folded paper dolls, and keepsakes stolen from Shimmerford.

APOCRYPHAL ORIGINS

Long dismissed as a backwater cryptid, the Mosquito Witch has enjoyed decades of idle mythmaking. However, nobody has ever claimed credit for the witch's creation, captured her for study, secured clear answers about her through divination, or even observed the witch under circumstances not distorted by darkness, distance, or terror. As a result, the Mosquito Witch's nature remains ambiguous on Golarion. These pages endeavor to pick away at possibilities rather than declare one definitive reality; even her feminine identity is more a matter of tradition than fact. Any number of these theories could be true, and some could be true simultaneously. The Mosquito Witch statistics on page 76 account for these possibilities and present myriad

abilities. In addition, *Pathfinder Society Scenario #1-02: The Mosquito Witch* explores at least one of these origins while accommodating other possibilities.

The Gossamer Bride: River Kingdoms rise and fall, often heralded by bloodshed. Modern Shimmerford stands amid the ruins of dozens other settlements, including one destroyed centuries ago. As the sole survivor clambered from the wreckage, she called for mercy, justice, anything from the gods—yet only one answered: the verminous Ghlaunder, the Gossamer King. Supposedly, he promised to restore the survivor's friends and family if only she stole for him an equivalent amount of blood. "Yes, but how—" she asked, interrupted by countless mosquitoes that poured from her mouth to do her bidding. Ever since, she has hunted, luring victims to drain. Always, Ghlaunder demands more blood, and every year, the Mosquito Witch questions whether hers was a deal made in good faith. Perhaps, if powerful allies earned her trust, she might defy her patron and end Shimmerford's curse.

Deskari's Descendant: Before Mendevian crusaders raised the *wardstone* barrier that kept the Worldwound at bay decades ago, agents of the demon lord Deskari dispersed to infest other regions with Abyssal evil. Demonic priests hid one of his larvae near Shimmerford, trusting it to metamorphose, feed, and disrupt the steady crusader reinforcements. The Mosquito Witch doesn't know that she's Deskari's brood. Abandoned to find her own way, she blended her Abyssal powers and urges with the primal magic she drinks in from the environment, becoming an ominous force of nature ever-fascinated by mortals' frailties and fears.

However, with Deskari's recent destruction and the Worldwound's closure, the Mosquito Witch began a disconcerting second metamorphosis. It's possible that without a sustained Abyssal connection, she's transforming into a less sinister guardian for Shimmerford and its surroundings. Just as likely, though, this change might be a contingency left by Deskari, causing his offspring to transform into the next Lord of the Locust Host.

Mix-Ups and Mitflits: Even in a world where magic and demons are objective fact, some cryptids simply are hoaxes or gross misinterpretations of mundane phenomena. The original witnesses might have confused a mossy, shadow-cast tree trunk for a murderous bug-demon, triggering panic and confirmation bias when others in Shimmerford attributed unrelated misfortunes to the Mosquito Witch. Although the Mosquito Witch appears fictitious, local mitflits (*Bestiary* 192) perpetuate the hoax by laying false tracks, carving menacing symbols into the trees, killing the occasional livestock, and convincing bloodseekers and other vermin to menace townsfolk. Mitflits might



enjoy trouble, but such an undertaking suggests that there's something deep in the woods they desperately want to keep hidden.

Fey of Fables: Fey embody various natural aspects, such as dryads who ward the woodland and rusalkas who represent the inherent danger of water. Some scholars speculate that the Mosquito Witch is a (or perhaps a group of) fey who represents the fearful tales told to warn mortals about nature, citing that her manifestations grow increasingly frequent, dramatic, and deadly the more that locals fear and discuss her. With this theory, the Mosquito Witch lacks a true form, instead adapting to the most prevalent myths. The more convoluted the tales, the more complex her abilities become as she reflexively transforms to affirm superstitions—developing supernatural powers, seeing through likenesses of herself, developing weaknesses, and more. If true, then not only might the Mosquito Witch's power correspond to Shimmerford's fears, but new versions of her might arise naturally wherever travelers carry stories of her, gradually infesting the River Kingdoms and beyond.

MOSQUITO WITCH (RARE WITCH PATRON)

Few in Shimmerford or elsewhere would be foolish enough to attempt to draw the Mosquito Witch's attention, but whether you're one of those foolish few or simply someone who attracted the Mosquito Witch's attention unwittingly or unwillingly, she grants you powers over insects and other arthropods.

Spell List primal

Patron Skill Nature

Hex Cantrip *buzzing bites*

Granted Spell *pest form*

BUZZING BITES

RARE CANTRIP EVOCATION HEX WITCH

Patron Mosquito Witch

Cast ◆ somatic

Range 30 feet; **Targets** 1 creature

Saving Throw Fortitude; **Duration** sustained up to 1 minute

You evoke buzzing and crawling insects to climb onto a foe's body and bite, dealing 1d4 piercing damage and potentially sickening the foe, depending on its Fortitude save. You deal the piercing damage initially and then again the first time each round you Sustain the Spell, starting on the round after you cast it and rolling the damage based on the target's saving throw result each time. However, the creature only attempts the Fortitude save once, when you first Cast the Spell. Once this spell ends, the target becomes temporarily immune for 1 minute.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target takes half damage.

Failure The target takes full damage.

Critical Failure The target takes double damage and is sickened 1 by the crawling insects. The sickened value can't be reduced below 1 while the spell is active.

Heightened (+1) The damage increases by 1d4.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

Stories of the Mosquito Witch can be thrilling and engaging at all levels of play.

LOW-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (1-7)

Novice adventurers are the most likely to seek out the Mosquito Witch on a whim. While initially these characters might not face the witch directly, the characters could clash with local witches that keep the Mosquito Witch as a patron. An entire coven of witches might work from the shadows both to further their patron's agenda and propagate the tale of the Mosquito Witch.

With some experience under their belts, the PCs could eventually face the Mosquito Witch. This fight could be difficult, especially for characters unable to fly. The defeat or capture of the witch would earn the heroes immense accolades and riches.

MID-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (8-14)

Though characters at this level can still face off with the Mosquito Witch, a more enticing prospect might be learning her origins. This pursuit could require the PCs to capture the Mosquito Witch, if only to earn a chance to speak with her. Depending on the Mosquito Witch's origins, the PCs might even attempt to cleanse her of any transformation or fiendish attributes.

The process of cleansing the Mosquito Witch would be a long and arduous one. The PCs would most likely need the help of allies capable of great feats of divine or primal magic. The PCs would also need to contend with locals who wish to slay the witch themselves.

HIGH-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (15-20)

The Mosquito Witch's possible origins can lead to different climaxes at upper tiers of play. If she's a being blessed by Ghlaunder, attempting to cleanse her of his gifts would only draw the attention of the Gossamer King. Ghlaunder could send Bloodbloat, his herald that takes the form of a giant, bloated mosquito, to put an end to the PCs.

A Mosquito Witch secretly descended from Deskari comes with a different set of problems. Though the demon lord died years ago at the Worldwound, his influence within the Mosquito Witch would be great. She would be overcome with Abyssal power, transforming into a more powerful version of herself. This Mosquito Witch would not only have new abilities, but also new allies in the form of demons she could call to her side to aid her in combat.

The possibility that the Mosquito Witch is merely the manifestation of stories presents a particularly tricky challenge for PCs. Rather than face a monster, they must face preconceptions and deep-seated fears. The PCs would need to travel the River Kingdoms to convince others that the Mosquito Witch is not real or no longer a threat. These PCs would have an uphill battle against local folklore, having to constantly chase down the latest rumor of the Mosquito Witch to quash the tale.

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THE ENIGMATIC WITCH

With unclear origins and even more mysterious powers, the Mosquito Witch's exact statistics and abilities might change depending upon her true nature in a given campaign. What follows is a representative rendition of the Witch and her core abilities. In addition, this article includes three variations of the Mosquito Witch, each embodying one of her enduring mythologies by providing a handful of additional abilities. Add or remove these abilities to create the Shimmerford cryptid of your imagination, and remember that the spookiest legends are often the ones the PCs barely encounter directly.

MOSQUITO WITCH

CREATURE 10

UNIQUE CN MEDIUM FEY

Perception +22; darkvision, swarmsense (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Aklo, Auran, Common, Sylvan; *speaks with animals*

Skills Acrobatics +18, Diplomacy +18, Intimidation +20, Medicine +19, Nature +21, Occultism +15, Stealth +22, Survival +21

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +3, **Int** +3, **Wis** +7, **Cha** +4

Swarmsense The Mosquito Witch receives constant updates from nearby insects and can use her touch as an imprecise sense at the listed range as long as there are insects around to guide her.

Wild Empathy The Mosquito Witch can use Diplomacy to Make an Impression on and make Requests of arthropods (insects, spiders, and similar invertebrates like bloodseekers). Most arthropods have a starting attitude of indifferent to the Mosquito Witch.

AC 30; **Fort** +17, **Ref** +20, **Will** +23

HP 180; **Immunities** disease

Haunting Gaze (aura, emotion, enchantment, fear, mental, visual) 30 feet. When a creature ends its turn in the emanation, it must attempt a DC 29 Will save. If the creature fails, it becomes frightened 1. If it's already frightened, its frightened value instead increases by 1 (maximum frightened 3) and doesn't decrease by 1 at the end of the creature's next turn. If a creature's frightened value is 3 or higher before failing its save, the creature is also fleeing for 1 round.

Speed 30 feet, climb 30 feet, fly 25 feet

Melee **◆** bite +23 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 2d12+8 piercing plus 1d8 persistent bleed damage

Ranged **◆** swarm strike +23 (range increment 30 feet), 2d10+6 piercing plus dipterid dread

Primal Innate Spells DC 29; **5th** *tree stride*, *vomit swarm* (x2); **4th** *pest form* (at will); **3rd** *animal vision*; **2nd** *animal messenger*; **Cantrips (5th)** *dancing lights*; **Constant** *speaks with animals*

Dipteric Dread (poison) **Saving Throw** DC 29 Fortitude; **Maximum Duration** 6 rounds; **Stage 1** 2d6 piercing and 2d6 poison (1 round); **Stage 2** 2d6 piercing and 3d6 poison (1 round); **Stage 3** 2d6 piercing and 5d6 poison

Terror From Within The Mosquito Witch's powers feed on fear. When taking bleed or piercing damage dealt by the Mosquito Witch's bleed and dipterid dread, a creature takes additional damage equal to twice the creature's frightened value.

THE SWARM SEER

Few have seen the Mosquito Witch, yet almost everyone has suffered her namesake vermin at some point in time. Shimmerford summer skies shimmer with flies hatching from the river and myriad creeks, and "wherever pests fly, the Witch can spy." In her Swarm Seer aspect, the Mosquito Witch is a haunting predator and verminous voyeur whose sanguineous appetites are equal to her fascination with societies. She keeps tabs on every inhabitant with parasocial glee, obsessing over their superstitions and abandoned trinkets—especially any representations of herself.

This Mosquito Witch rarely acts with outright malice or to bring direct harm to those around her. However, her haunting appearance, alien values, and tendency to express emotions with sky-blotting swarms inspires terror in her neighbors. Depending on the circumstances she might represent a fearsome and ineffable ally, a demigod of fecundity, or a terrible foe who long ago lost patience with humanity.

The Swarm Seer variant gains the following abilities.

Perception +22; darkvision, swarmsense (imprecise) 100 feet, swarmsight (precise) 20 feet

Swarmsight The Mosquito Witch can feel anything in contact with her obscuring host and can use her touch as a precise sense at the listed range.

Obscuring Host (aura) 20 feet. A thick swarm of mosquitoes surrounds the Mosquito Witch, creating concealment in the aura. A creature that begins its turn in the emanation becomes sickened 1 unless it succeeds at a DC 26 Fortitude save. The Mosquito Witch and arthropods can see through this aura and are immune to its sickened effect.

Fecund Wounds Insect larvae clog and wriggle out of open wounds within 100 feet of the Mosquito Witch. A creature that takes bleed damage in the area also becomes clumsy 1 for 1 round.

Primal Innate Spells DC 29; **3rd** *animal vision* (at will); **2nd** *animal messenger* (at will); **Cantrips (5th)** *dancing lights*; **Constant** *speaks with animals*


THE HEMOPROPHET

Already versed in several folk divinations like dowsing and reading patterns in windblown winnowed husks, Shimmerford residents swiftly attributed divinatory powers to the Mosquito Witch.

This "hemoprophet" aspect can supposedly smell conundrums, and she visits those facing difficult decisions or mysteries in their dreams. The witch offers an answer to the dreamer's deepest question, and if the dreamer accepts, the witch drinks their blood as they sleep, tastes their options, and leaves an answer nearby, written with some of the stolen fluids. This Mosquito Witch isn't necessarily malicious, but neither does she worry about draining too much or painting embarrassing blood-truths for all of Shimmerford to see. The blood's weight makes her footfalls heavy, and hunters often remark that especially deep tracks left by anyone are "heavy with answers" in homage to the Witch.

The Hemoprophet variant gains the following abilities.

Bloodbelly The Mosquito Witch steals and stores stolen blood to power her divinations. Whenever she deals piercing damage, the Mosquito Witch can gain an equal number of Blood Points, to a maximum of 100 Blood Points. She becomes clumsy 1 so long as she has at least 40 Blood Points stored, or clumsy 2 if she has at least 80 Blood Points stored.

Slurp  **Trigger** A creature adjacent to the Mosquito Witch takes persistent bleed damage; **Effect** The Mosquito Witch slurps up some of the creature's blood and gains Blood Points equal to the bleed damage dealt.

Occult Innate Spells DC 29; **7th** *retrocognition* (×3); **6th** *object reading* (×3), *scrying* (×3); **5th** *locate* (×3), *prying eye* (×3); **4th** *read omens* (×3); **3rd** *wanderer's guide* (×3)

Prophecy in Red The Mosquito Witch can't Cast an occult Spell without simultaneously expending a number of Blood Points equal to 10 × the spell's level.

THE LEGION LEECH

Mosquitoes are parasites. Like her namesake, the Mosquito Witch wanders the world before alighting in an unguarded area to drain it of life and happiness. Once sated, she withdraws to digest her stolen vitality.

This Legion Leech is associated with inexplicable wasting sicknesses, bloodseekers bold enough to carry off lambs, and ravenous mosquito swarms that cover and drain a bull dead in moments. Whereas other aspects are occasionally helpful or curious, the Legion Leech cares for little beyond snuffing out life.

This variant learns the following ritual, which she uses to create a huge area of deadly disease.

MOSQUITO BLIGHT

RITUAL 5

RARE **CONJURATION** **DISEASE** **NECROMANCY**

Cast 1 day; **Cost** amber and rare incense worth 750 gp

Primary Check Nature (expert; you must be the Mosquito Witch)

Area 1-mile-radius circle centered on you

Duration 5 days

You infest the area with tenacious, biting insects that disease and drain life from creatures in the area. Arthropods (insects, spiders, and similar invertebrates) are unaffected and instead gain a +1 status bonus to attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and Perception checks while within the area. All other creatures are harassed by insects and exposed to the disease witch's hunger when they enter the area and once per day thereafter that they remain in the area. As part of casting this ritual, you create a Tiny ritual insect hive (Hardness 5, 10 HP) that must remain in the ritual's area. If the hive is removed or destroyed, the ritual's effect ends 1 hour later.

Witch's Hunger (disease) **Saving Throw** Fortitude; **Onset** 1d6 hours; **Stage 1** enfeebled 1 (1 day); **Stage 2** enfeebled 2 (1 day); **Stage 3** enfeebled 2 and slowed 1 (1 day); **Stage 4** unconscious; **Stage 5** death

Critical Success As success, and the disease is especially deadly, with Stage 3 instead causing unconsciousness and Stage 4 instead causing death.

Success You create the ritual hive and cast the ritual.

Failure You fail to cast the ritual.

Critical Failure You fail to cast the ritual and instead cause ravenous insects to torment you, immediately exposing you to the witch's hunger disease.



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SANDPOINT DEVIL

*The Devil gallops as we dream,
And makes the grown-ups cry and scream.
It leaves behind a trail of fire
And burns the brush and grass and briar.
Its burning breath and awful brays
Will spread the smoke and fan the blaze.
So keep away from sudden flame
Or else the fiend your soul will claim!*

—Common Sandpoint child rhyme

“My dearest Gaudelyn,

“I am happy to report that Arika and her party have returned, having spent the past week lost in their foolish attempt to track down the Sandpoint Devil and confront the legend in its lair. The group got lost on their way into the Pit and wandered for days—they say their maps were useless, which is of no surprise given the maze of tunnels and caverns that riddle the Devil’s Platter. How they thought they had accurate information, I’ll never understand. Short of just jumping into the Pit, there’s no certain path down to the Devil’s supposed lair.

“And there is no way to sneak up on that dreadful beast—again, I know what they thought, but I don’t know how they convinced themselves. I shouldn’t blame them—I’m just angry. They were courageous and determined, and that was more than the rest of us.

“But they were not prepared when the beast’s horrific scream stunned them. Next came a gout of searing, sulfurous flames. These came as they were traveling through a tight tunnel and pushed them back into a larger cavern, the Devil on their heels. Arika insists that she got two solid stabs through its heart, only to have it grab her sword in its teeth and break it in two.

“She said they all fought valiantly, but there was no hope. Burned and bleeding, they fled. And she says they had no choice but to leave Olsemper’s body behind, as the beast had claimed him as its next meal. I can’t bring myself to think through that sight—I wish she hadn’t mentioned it at all, though I suppose it was necessary.

“So Olsemper is gone, and we can’t mourn him properly. We don’t even have his body to return to his Shoanti kin. For all our pain, there is so little consolation.

“In any event, the group’s encounter with the Devil confirms much of the old legends. Arika and the others only confirm what we’ve heard before—that it is something like a horse walking on two legs, with a mouth of sharp fangs, enormous wings, and a thick, winding tail. I guess the encounter didn’t really last that long, and in the dim light of their torches and its own fiery breath, it was hard to see. Arika says its foul scream will haunt her dreams until she kills that ferocious beast. She thinks she must try again, and soon, for she still imagines she can bring an end to its monstrous legacy. I remain proud of her, even though her dauntless resolve to live an adventurer’s life fills me with fear and dread. A mother shouldn’t outlive her children, as I’ve already done with poor Casp, rest his soul.

“Please take care of yourself, and make sure to close all the windows tight at night.

“Your doting aunt,
“Alma Avertin
“Sandpoint, Varisia”

The Lost Coast of Varisia has long been besieged by a mysterious monster whose fame spreads far beyond its local predations. The Sandpoint Devil strikes at night, choosing a moonless dark or a cloak of fog and mist to hide its movements and heighten the terror. Travelers along the coastal highways hurry toward shelter as the sun goes down, hearing hushed whispers and the occasional wide-eyed tale about the creature’s doings in every tavern they enter. Its fearsome scream and fiery breath often herald a fierce attack of razor-sharp teeth and thick hooves that few mortals can survive. The distant flap of loud wings is enough to send the local population indoors, where they seal windows and snuff candles while praying that their homes and lives be spared. Those whose livestock remain out in fields or paddocks know they won’t all be so lucky. In the morning light, a pair of large hoofprints, still smelling of brimstone, might greet them in place of a cherished cow or favorite pony.

Tales vary concerning both the Sandpoint Devil’s origin and its appearance, with little evidence either for or against actual devilish heritage. Regardless, to locals, there’s only one devil. Rumors favor an origin in the rites or will of Lamashtu, whether through a monstrous birth, an unspeakable ritual, or a heinous misuse of powerful magic. As for its appearance, consensus holds that the beast stands at least as tall as a bugbear and has the head and body of a muscular horse, two enormous bat wings, the tail of a dragon or large lizard, and a mouth packed with sharp, yellow teeth. Unlike a typical horse, however, it walks and even runs at an unnatural pace on its hind legs, having shortened forelegs. The devil invokes terror, not only from its frightening howl but also from its ability to move without being seen and to unleash death. That this beast has the power to create mists and noxious clouds, to travel instantly across short distances with its magic, and to even unleash phantoms conjured from your greatest fears against you would surprise few locals, as convinced as they are of the creature’s pervasive presence and diabolic power.

The Sandpoint Devil has, thus far, evaded keen observation as skillfully as it has evaded capture, in part due to it making its home at the bottom of the nearly inaccessible Pit in the center of the Devil’s



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Platter, an outcropping of sheer limestone escarpments in the central region of the Sandpoint hinterlands. The Pit, a 50-foot-wide chasm in the center of the Platter, can be navigated by a series of narrow ledges, rickety wooden bridges, and rope ladders—all rigged but poorly maintained by the various creatures that live in the caverns surrounding the Pit. More often, would-be heroes attempt to traverse the labyrinthine tunnels beneath the Platter, hoping to sneak up on the devil. But the other denizens of these tunnels include deros, gremlins, goblins, ghouls, and all manner of Darklands denizens. Suffice it to say, many of the heroes that seek to challenge the beast never get as far as the Sandpoint Devil's lair.

Every time a barn catches fire or a child goes missing, most locals immediately agree: the Sandpoint Devil is to blame. Certainly, the fame of the creature has attracted and attached story upon grisly story to its hated name. In truth, the beast clearly prefers livestock, judging from the types of charred carcasses and bones found at the bottom of the Pit, where it prefers to drag its prey to eat at its leisure. Perhaps the rumors that the monster, at times, serves the purposes of the demon lord Kabriri—as ministered through a devoted ghaist who also makes his home beneath the Devil's Platter—best explain the forays into terrorizing the local humanoid population. Stoked by acolytes at the Sandpoint Cathedral, these rumors hold that a sinister plot informs the seeming randomness of the devil's attacks and that the plot's fruition will bring down a widespread calamity on the area.

Or perhaps the local population chooses to terrorize itself. A sighting of the Sandpoint Devil is known to be

a harbinger of ill luck, and multiple sightings portend certain doom. Superstitious behaviors, ranging from whispered incantations and prayers to slaughtering a chicken under a full moon, universally prime souls who fear being cursed to find more proof of their ill fortune. Never mind that two fires, three abductions, or four verified sightings might all happen at the same time—there's no disputing a claim. Indeed, if the monster did all of the horrid acts attributed to it, a full squadron of them would need to operate from the lair in the Pit. The locals' propensity to attribute all of their tribulations to this one creature obscures what the devil could actually be doing. A few resolute souls believe the monster might actually be a new incarnation of an ancient guardian of the Lost Coast, motivated by a purpose deeper than mere mortal understanding.

THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLES

Although the Sandpoint Devil's true origins are shrouded in mystery and distorted by folktales, the creature itself is very real—a fiendish, supernatural beast of flesh and blood that feeds on flesh and has an unnatural knack for evading capture or, indeed, even being spotted in the first place. Stories told of the creature's powers run the gamut of being accurate (such as tales featuring its blood-curdling howl, its ability to slay by conjuring out a target's deepest fears, or its flaming breath that leaves painful burn scars) to extensive exaggerations and fantastical fictions (such as the rumor that the Sandpoint Devil resulted from an ancient union between Lamashtu and the demon lord Pazuzu, or the legend that it formed from the vengeful souls of the Varisians who were slain during Sandpoint's tumultuous foundation several decades ago).

While these false yarns certainly bolster the Sandpoint Devil's frightening legacy, they haven't themselves resulted in additional danger to the locals—with one notable exception. One story associated with the rumor that the Sandpoint Devil is the child of Lamashtu and Pazuzu claims that a spark of their unholy divinity passed on to the creature, and that with each soul it consumes, it grows one step closer to godhood. This legend claims that the Sandpoint Devil needs to consume no fewer than 66 different souls, each harvested from a creature with a specific physical or emotional trait, to absorb those elements into its blasphemous flesh and emerge as a god of fire, rebirth, and ruin.

Sandpoint's own scholar, Brodert Quink, has proven that the origin of this particular legend was born from a drunken rant during one of the first competitive local storytelling contests known as "Yarnings," held at a local tavern called "The Hagfish"; however, the legend nevertheless lodged in the mind of one impressionable observer, who became obsessed with the idea. This individual was a visiting



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bard named Jordus Munt, and he left Sandpoint the next day with a new purpose in life: to verify this tale and, if he found it to be true, to become the first disciple of the Sandpoint Devil—to aid it in its unholy apotheosis and to be rewarded by a newborn god for his part in its divine ascension.

Upon returning to his hometown of Korvosa, Jordus spent years researching the Sandpoint Devil, during which time he fell into a deep well of confirmation bias and conspiracy theories. He became an expert at self-delusion and reading facts into context that were born wholly from his imagination. When he finally emerged from these years of maddening research, he had fully convinced himself that not only were the legends true, but that the Sandpoint Devil was a mere 11 souls away from reaching its goal.

Jordus spent the next few years recruiting like-minded (and easily convinced) disciples to his burgeoning cult. Among their growing beliefs is that, when the Sandpoint Devil consumes its 66th soul, the emerging god will reveal to the cultists its true name, granting them immense power as its first worshippers. Until this name is revealed, Jordus and his followers have taken to calling themselves the “Devil’s Disciples,” and they’re now ready to return to the west, infiltrate Sandpoint and its hinterlands, and begin the task of seeking out the final 11 sacrifices needed to satiate their nascent god’s hungers. Jordus keeps a journal stuffed with an increasingly large number of loose pages as his ideas and notions expand, including his list of traits that must be found among the living. He and his disciples believe that these 11 victims are either already living in Sandpoint or are soon to come to the town and that all they need to do is lie in wait, watching for the right chance to harvest these victims in the Sandpoint Devil’s still-unrevealed name.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

While the Sandpoint Devil itself is an 8th-level creature, themes associated with it can supply content for all levels of play.

Low-Level Campaigns (1-7)

The Sandpoint Devil itself makes for a great climactic monster to encounter during a low-level campaign set in the town of Sandpoint, but not as the sole focus of the campaign. Instead, the PCs might spend most of their time for the first several levels dealing with other threats to the town, be they unruly goblins, bandits preying upon travelers coming and going from town, or a sudden recurrence of ghouls infesting nearby graveyards. *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Sandpoint, Light of the Lost Coast* provides dozens of ideas for a sandbox-style campaign set in and around this coastal town.

As the party adventures, though, they should continue to hear rumors about the Sandpoint Devil. Tall tales overheard in taverns, farmers’ descriptions of

sightings in the hinterlands, rhymes sung by children playing in the streets, or graffiti or other works of art mysteriously placed on back-alley walls are all great ways to work the Sandpoint Devil’s presence into your game. Additional rumors of people supposedly worshipping the Sandpoint Devil as a god might pop up, but the direct results of those mysteries work better for a mid-level campaign (below). The natural climax of this sandbox game would be, of course, to have the Sandpoint Devil make an uncharacteristically visible and devastating attack on Sandpoint itself, with the PCs having to step up to defeat the monster before it can burn down the town.

Alternately, you could focus your early campaign on an exploration of the Pit, the sprawling dungeon complex found not far from Sandpoint on the rising escarpment of stone known as the Devil’s Platter. The Sandpoint Devil’s lair is said to be located in a cave at the bottom of the Pit, so having the PCs work their way down through the dungeons lining the Pit’s walls and then confronting the Sandpoint Devil itself can make for a memorable climax to a long, dungeon-themed campaign.

MID-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (8-14)

Once the Sandpoint Devil has been defeated, your campaign need not abandon it. Particularly, if the PCs had to save Sandpoint from the monster’s attack, they could make an unnerving discovery in its aftermath—that a mysterious cult calling itself the Devil’s Disciples was responsible for triggering the attack. At the start of this campaign, the PCs should spend time investigating the cult and learning about its beliefs that only a few more souls are needed to trigger the monster’s transformation into a deity. The PCs also learn that the Sandpoint Devil’s attack on the town was an accident triggered by the cult, who had hoped to lure the Devil to the town to consume someone they identified as an ideal victim.

The Sandpoint Devil’s death doesn’t end the threat posed by the Devil’s Disciples, it only galvanizes them. Now, though, the gathering of the final souls falls to them alone, and they might have moved on to other cities to seek their victims. In this campaign, the PCs pursue the cult, saving victims and slowly tracking the cult down to confront its leader, Jordus Munt, in their headquarters hidden in some remote part of Varisia.

HIGH-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (15-20)

Once the PCs defeat the Devil’s Disciples, you can continue the campaign into the very highest levels by having them learn the awful truth. While the Sandpoint Devil isn’t the direct child of Lamashtu and Pazuzu, it comes close, for the devil chose its lair at the bottom of the Pit due to the presence of these two demons’ actual child, a deadly monstrosity known as Uvagrul who, as a result of the Devil’s Disciples’ work, is about to awaken into the world!

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THE SPECTRAL DEVIL

The Sandpoint Devil is a terrifying fiend resembling a bipedal horse with large, bat-like wings. It sports a draconic tail, deadly fangs, and milky eyes. The Sandpoint Devil haunts the town of Sandpoint and its surrounding hinterlands, ever elusive and yet popping up repeatedly to terrorize the locals, earning it a reputation as a living legend. Though many children who grow up in Sandpoint believe the devil to be just a story, the people of Sandpoint each have their own anecdotes of sightings or direct encounters, and over the years, one thing became clear: the Sandpoint Devil is a very real threat.

The Sandpoint Devil's stat block is featured on page 230 of *Pathfinder Bestiary 2*, and you can use that stat block to create an epic encounter between Sandpoint's mysterious monster and the PCs. In the end, this clash will likely result in the Sandpoint Devil's defeat and death at the PCs' hands, possibly after a difficult battle, depending on the PCs' level.

However, evil as legendary as the Sandpoint Devil doesn't simply vanish when the creature is slain. As a fiend, the Sandpoint Devil's body is forged of raw spiritual essence connected to evil, malice, and hate—fertile ground for the corrupting touch of undeath, as negative energy intermingles with its dying spirit. Once the Sandpoint Devil is defeated, perhaps by your PCs or another group of adventurers, a unique spectral undead is quite likely to rise from its remains to carry on its legacy. Unbound from its physical body, the Sandpoint Devil becomes something else that is even more powerful, a being that comes to be known as the Spectral Devil.

One option is to use the Spectral Devil as a sitebound spirit, doomed to forever haunt the Pit where the Sandpoint Devil once made its home, where it twists and changes the area into a haunted death trap from which few adventurers could escape. Alternatively, the Spectral Devil might not be bound to the Pit at all—it could become a roaming menace that stalks the region's moors or ambushes travelers on road or river. A group of adventurers who defeat the Sandpoint Devil could find their accomplishments called into doubt when the devil's torments on the region only increase in number, scope, and area in the wake of its reported death.

The following statistics present an undead, spectral version of the Sandpoint Devil for use against PCs who think that their first fight against this local legend was their last. It's important to gauge your PCs before deciding to use the Spectral Devil in your campaign. While many groups are likely to enjoy the twist and callback to their old foe as it returns from the grave, for some groups, this kind of plot element can detract from their sense of accomplishment or make it feel like what they've done was ultimately meaningless. Use the Spectral Devil in the way that's right for your group.

SPECTRAL DEVIL

CREATURE 10

UNIQUE NE LARGE FIEND INCORPOREAL SPIRIT UNDEAD

Perception +19; greater darkvision, scent (imprecise) 30 feet

Languages Abyssal, Varisian

Skills Acrobatics +22, Intimidation +23, Stealth +22, Survival +19

Str -5, **Dex** +7, **Con** +5, **Int** +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +3

AC 28; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +19, **Will** +16; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 140, negative healing; **Immunities** disease, fear, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious; **Resistances** all damage 10 (except cold iron, force, *ghost touch*, or positive; double resistance vs. non-magical)

Rejuvenation (divine, necromancy) Destroying the Spectral Devil releases its pure, evil essence into the world, where it can find a new body and re-form. When the Spectral Devil is destroyed, its essence finds the remains of a dead



SPECTRAL DEVIL

horse and rebuilds its physical body over the course of 1d10 days. Only completing a *consecrate* ritual heightened to at least 6th level, which consecrates the site of the Spectral Devil's destruction to a good deity, can prevent the Spectral Devil from returning and haunting the world once more.

Attack of Opportunity ➤ ghostly hoof only

Speed fly 50 feet

Melee ♦ ghostly jaws +23 (finesse, versatile P), **Damage** 2d12+13 negative

Melee ♦ ghostly hoof +23 (agile, finesse, versatile B), **Damage** 2d8+13 negative

Occult Innate Spells DC 26, attack +18; **4th** *dimension door*, *phantasmal killer*; **3rd** *fireball*; **2nd** *obscuring mist*; **1st** *gust of wind* (at will); **Cantrips (4th)** *produce flame*

Accursed Shriek ♦♦ (curse, evocation, occult, sonic) The Spectral Devil unleashes a terrifying whinny in a 30-foot cone that deals 5d10 sonic damage. Each creature in the area must attempt a DC 29 Reflex save. The Spectral Devil can't use Accursed Shriek for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes half damage.

Failure The creature takes full damage and is frightened 2 by the eerie noise.

Critical Failure The creature takes full damage, is frightened 2, and becomes cursed. The victim's mind echoes with the sound of the whinny, impairing concentration. The cursed creature is stupefied 2 until the curse is removed.

Trample ♦♦♦ Medium or smaller, ghostly hoof, DC 26

THE DEVIL'S ORIGIN

The origins of the Sandpoint Devil remain shrouded in mystery, with arguments started and bets wagered on the topic in taverns throughout Varisia and beyond. While some insist that the Devil comes from the Abyss, others believe that some magical experiment gone horribly wrong brought the menace to life. Some point to evidence in far-flung corners of Golarion—from sightings in Darkmoon Vale to statues of similar creatures in Wat Krypt, a ruin deep in the Mwangi Expanse—to the existence of other such entities.

Still others credit Lamashtu or her worshippers with birthing and unleashing this creature upon the Lost Coast. Perhaps Lamashtu herself arranged for its siring upon a favored disciple or an unwitting local woman, as some rumors hold. Perhaps Lamashtu's followers carried out a fiendish scheme to transform an ordinary stallion by fusing it with some lesser devil through ritual magic. Whatever the Sandpoint Devil's actual origin, it's so heavily regarded among Lamashtu's most fanatical devotees that the following ritual has emerged, an open homage to a being decried by most as hideously monstrous. Such a transformation would indeed enshrine an everlasting devotion to the Mother of Monsters.

FORM OF THE SANDPOINT DEVIL

RARE EVIL POLYMORPH TRANSMUTATION

Cast 1 day; **Cost** igneous stones and gems worth 1,500 gp,

bat wings, horse hooves, and at least one lizard; **Secondary Casters** 4

Primary Check Religion (master); **Secondary Checks** Arcana, Occultism, Religion

Duration 3 days

You infuse yourself with incredible amounts of pure evil, subsuming your consciousness into malevolence and giving yourself a monstrous form resembling that of the Sandpoint Devil.

Beginning at dawn, you and your accomplices lay out a fire directly on loose earth, layering the igneous rocks and gems into the fire pit. When the fire is hot enough, you roast bat wings, horse hooves, and lizards over it until they're tender enough to eat; for the hooves, this could take hours. Throughout this time, you meditate and recite passages of texts holy to Lamashtu, ruminating on the beauty and necessity of the monstrous and twisting your mindset into a monstrous shape, the better to hold the evil that will come to possess you.

Once the wings, hooves, and lizards are cooked, you and your accomplices eat these items in their entirety, tearing them only with your teeth, and you must eat more than anyone else involved. You then scoop out a trench at the location where you previously lit the fire, folding the hot rocks into the earth. Your accomplices then bury you shallowly in the trench—you should be able to breathe but not necessarily able to see. Your accomplices then recite the correct texts and draw upon the power of transmutation while you infuse your mind further with the power and beauty of the monstrous. This stage continues for hours, until the setting of the sun. With the departure of its final ray and in accordance with your faith and occult power, you'll rise transformed.

Critical Success You sprout enormous bat wings, a lizard-like tail, pointed teeth, hooves, and an equine head. You gain darkvision; if you already had darkvision, you instead gain greater darkvision. You gain jaws and hoof unarmed melee Strikes, which are the only attacks you can use. You're trained with them. Your attack modifier is +23 or your unarmed attack modifier, whichever is higher. Your jaws Strike deals 2d10+6 piercing damage, and your hoof Strike deals 2d6+6 bludgeoning damage with the agile and versatile S traits. These attacks are Strength-based (for the purpose of the enfeebled condition, for example). You gain a fly Speed of 40 feet. You also gain a version of the Sandpoint Devil's Accursed Breath: once per hour, you can breathe a 30-foot cone of flame that deals 10d6 fire damage. Your mind transforms, subsuming your own personality with that of the Sandpoint Devil. Unlike many polymorph spells, you can't Dismiss this spell.

Success As critical success, except your fly Speed is 20 feet, and you can use your breath weapon once per day.

Failure You fail to transform yourself.

Critical Failure Not only do you fail to transform yourself, but the ritual's secondary casters all transform into Sandpoint Devils for 1 minute, and they immediately attack you.

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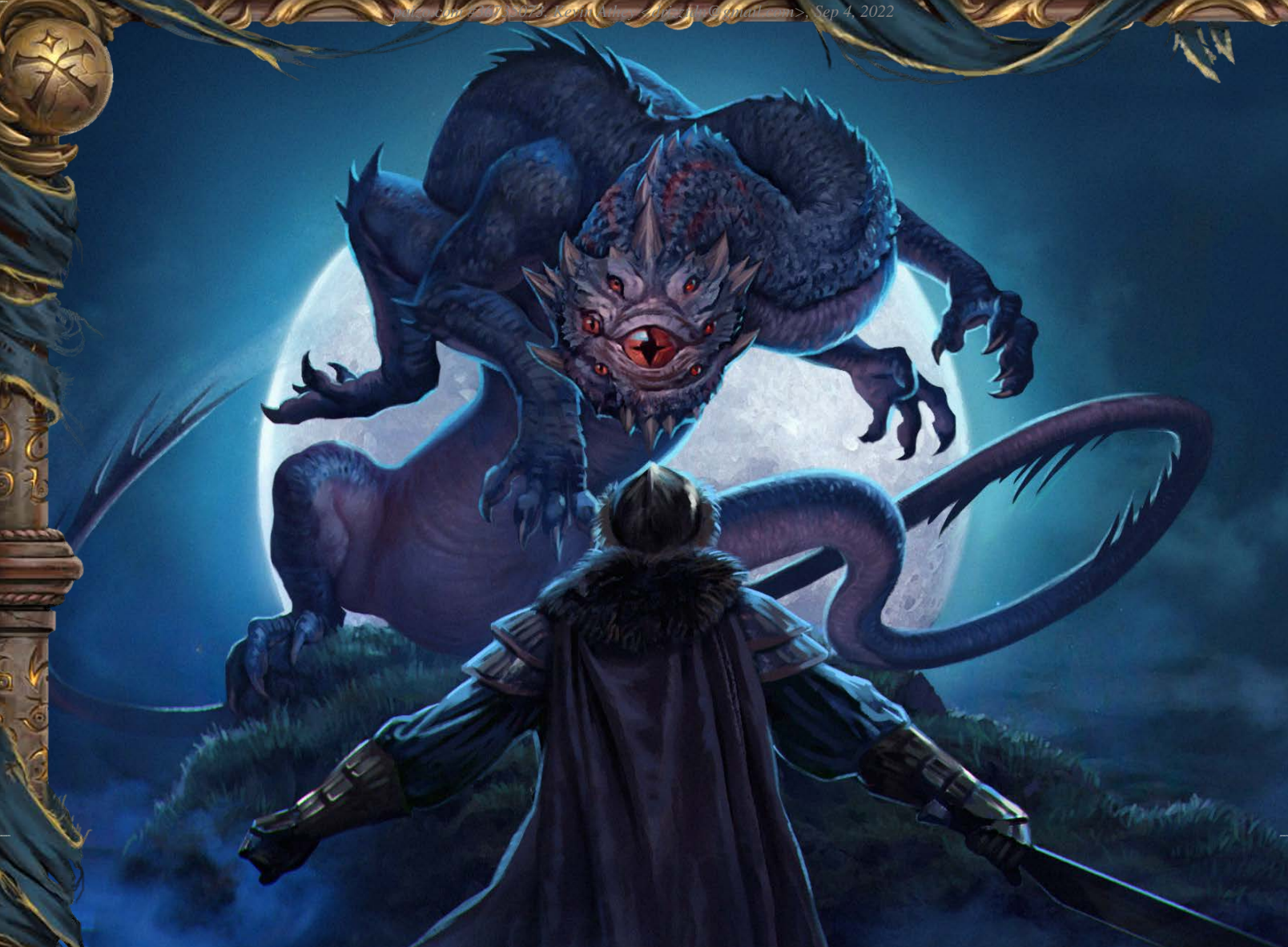
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SOMNALU

“One time, there was this knight who needed my mom’s help. The knight, she was hurt, and my mom saved her. It was late, and my mom didn’t know I was there, but I heard the knight say she saw a red eye in the desert. She was on watch, so she tried to tell her friends, but she couldn’t move once it saw her. She said that it felt like her nightmares were really happening.

“Once the eye got closer, she could move again, so she ran to her friends to wake them up. But no matter how much she shook them, they wouldn’t get up. When the knight turned around, the eye was closer. And then it blinked again, and then she saw six more eyes in the dark. It attacked her, and she got burned and her armor melted, but she got away. She said she just kept running until she saw the light of our town.”

—Uraisa Ibuk, local child

“The scholars of Ezida won’t support me, but I can make my own arrangements. I know they’re afraid of what I’ll find in the Windswept Wastes. Centuries ago, the heretics that were cast out of Ezida went to the Wastes, to the bottom of the Utukri Valley, where those old, ruined forts are. Listen—that’s the same valley from the myth; that’s where Namzaruum fought the Somnalu! There’s more to that myth than what the Ezidan clergy knows, and even if it is considered heresy, that’s where I’ll find the knowledge that we all need to drive Somnalu from our land. That’s where you come in. I just need adventurers to protect me on the journey there, and to hunt Somnalu once we have what we need. As a reward, I can offer payment and a favored weapon of the heretics—one designed to combat Somnalu.”

—Akeli Gur, researcher of Ninshaburian history

“In those days when the highest of kings had works yet unfinished, petty lords surveyed the realms to divide them among themselves. In arrogance they drafted their maps, issuing claims as if the world and the movements of all creatures within could be curbed by word on stone. But for the disunity of the people, they succeeded. The lesser lords sent their servants deep into the earth to cut away at it, spilling their sweat to mine, to move, and then to manufacture blocks to be raised as walls for ramparts, upon which the blood of conscripted soldiers would be shed.

“In the sun-drenched court of Ezida, high Namzaruum heard of the ills that the lesser lords worked. Furious, Namzaruum departed Ezida for the valleys of the lesser lords, that he might liberate all those pressed into their service. A procession of his devoted flowed from the city, following Namzaruum as he went into the valleys. But in his desperation to liberate the conscripts, Namzaruum made foolish haste. Each of his strides could only be matched by three strides of a mortal, condemning his retinue to fall behind. In this way, the lesser lords’ conscripts fell upon Namzaruum’s devoted, who cried out to their liege to deliver them. Namzaruum turned back upon hearing their lamentations, but with the enemy’s blades at their backs, he was compelled to surrender.

“The conscripts of the lesser lords set out, having bound the arms of Namzaruum and the arms of all his devoted. Ashamed, Namzaruum lowered his star-crowned head as he marched, one more captive amid his devoted. The earth wept at this piteous sight. Clouds and rains obscured the paths ahead until heaven’s sun had fallen from its appointed heights, forcing the conscripts to halt the procession.

“They separated Namzaruum from his devoted, binding him to a post set upon a small hill. From that hill, Namzaruum saw with despairing eyes what evil the mortals had devised for themselves. That stomach-wrenching anguish followed Namzaruum to his sleep. The mortals had made for themselves a world of instability, where each waking could bring

new clashes, new claims, new kings. This fear, born of the machinations of mortals and inflicted upon one heaven-sent, reverberated through all the cosmos. A drop of darkness shook free from the treacherous moon, birthing a horror to herald the new mortal age.

“All the people in that valley fell asleep at once. The conscripts collapsed where they stood, weapons falling from their hands, as did all the devoted of Namzaruum. From the deepest pit of the valley arose the vile beast, slick with skin-burning slime, many-armed and slaving for its prey. All those asleep were beset by nightmares so ghastly their bodies were paralyzed, a trick played by the monster so that it could feast upon them without resistance. It fixed its seven-eyed gaze upon its prey, then skittered forward on six scaled legs.

“Namzaruum, having borne witness to the terror’s birth, swore a holy vow of destruction upon its sand-speckled head. Heaven’s inimitable powers



NAMZARUUM

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overcame Namzaruum, and flexing his great arms, he broke from his restraints and surged forward, snatching up fallen weapons as he ran. He took his foe by the foundation, curling his arms beneath its languid body and heaving upward. But the monster, bathed in acid, burned Namzaruum. He leapt back, drawing a mighty bow of wood and horn, and loosing falcon-feathered shafts at the terror's mouthless head. They bit deep into the monster's form, but as they pierced its hide, it spewed roiling clouds of gas, thus obscuring itself and stifling Namzaruum. But he breathed deep, taking the sickening fumes into himself, that he could blow a mighty breath to scatter the noxious vapors.

"With the way cleared, Namzaruum saw that the skin of his foe had ceased its vile discharge. He lunged, gripping the terror by its legs. With his own legs firmly planted on the earth, Namzaruum heaved, and heaved, and heaved, until he tossed the creature, which tumbled until it came to rest belly-up. Relentlessly Namzaruum pressed his attack, slicing and cutting at its underbelly until the wriggling horror kicked the blade from his hand. Disarmed, Namzaruum grappled the monster once more, and back and forth they wrestled, landing blows upon each other that could have felled citadels, until the earth was set to shaking and the dunes to tumbling. But Namzaruum endured, that he might yet deliver his devoted from the perils surrounding them. As the moon danced its way across the skies, Namzaruum gouged at his foe's many eyes, and with each one blinded, a star fell from above, to give light to bloodied Namzaruum. And so, in the hours before the dawn, Namzaruum vanquished his foe, tossing its body back into the lowest pit of the valley.

Triumphant Namzaruum knelt at the cliff, howling his victory to the heights of heaven, before turning his attention to his devoted..."

—Excerpt from the Ninshaburian epic *The Age of Namzaruum, Heaven's Liege*

"Long after Namzaruum's vanquishing of his foe, the steward of mortals held close to his heart a newfound contempt for his wards. They had grown possessive of the gifts given to them by heaven, and in spite of this ultimate generosity shown to them, had become hard and cruel. Scorn festered in Namzaruum's divine heart, and the trickster moon fed upon it. It drew the ire from his dreams and dripped it down once more as darkness into the deepest pit of the valley, watering the corpse of the slain terror.

"Namzaruum's righteous contempt, thus transformed, coaxed a spirit from the broken corpse, a spirit of retribution fit to instill terror. It emerged in the

form of a blood-eye wreathed in smoke and starlight, seeking vengeance upon all the wicked of the mortal realms. The vengeful spirit roamed the lands, ensnaring its victims in tendrils of mist and piercing them with bolts of light-eating shadow. It pulled upon the powers of divinity itself, blinding and terrifying all those who witnessed it, and twisted reality such that mazes arose where previously only air had flowed. It reached into mortal minds, calling forth horrors each had imagined and dreamed, giving them corporeal form. So the spirit meted out the justice of heaven, until the valley, once fair and once rich, was left a husk of civilization.

"Upon seeing that its work was done and was yet in accord with the punishment of mortal transgression, the rulers who dwelt in heaven bestowed upon it a name: Somnalu, the spirit-nightmare. It drew dreams into itself until all its legs and eyes grew back, until it was as mighty as it once had been. Thus restored, Somnalu continued its vengeful purpose..."

—Excerpt from "The Wrath of Namzaruum," a scroll consigned to apocrypha after its authors were deemed heretics



VALLEY OF BURDENS

West of the city of Ezida in central Casmaron lies the Valley of Burdens. The valley is a site of a thinning of planar boundaries where the Dreamlands, a dimension of the collective dreams of mortals, overlaps with the Shadow Plane and the Material Plane. The valley is home to living nightmares, creatures that manifest from the dreams of the people of Golarion. These creatures range from more well-known dream creatures like animate dreams and nightgaunts, to unique manifestations from the minds of dreaming individuals that exist only until the dreamers wake.

Somnalu lives here, among the shadows and nightmares of the valley. The other dream creatures within the valley pay Somnalu no mind, allowing it to move through the valley with impunity. The valley's unique planar state allows Somnalu to travel into the Shadow Plane or the Dreamlands almost anytime, though Somnalu avoids doing so, as it's aware that returning directly to the Valley of Burdens can be difficult.

Although it has little need to stay there with any regularity, Somnalu does have a lair within the valley. This lair is within a remote cavern where the valley's planar boundaries are at their thinnest. The lair is riddled with dream creatures, which Somnalu keeps around as guardians of sorts. If ever Somnalu is in true danger, it retreats to its lair and keeps a planar escape as a contingency.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

Somnalu can unleash nightmares that affect PCs at all tiers of play.

LOW-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (1-7)

PCs on the hunt for Somnalu will need to travel into the Valley of Burdens. The valley can host a number of different shadowy creatures that function as suitable enemies for low-level characters. While the likes of animate dreams (*Bestiary* 2 18) and nightgaunts (*Bestiary* 3 186) rank among the more common dream creatures of the area, any creature could become a dream variant and a suitable foe.

GMs looking to convert a creature into a dream variant can decrease the damage dice of a given creature's Strikes and add 1d4 negative damage as additional damage to these Strikes. In cases where decreasing a damage die would reduce it to 1d4 or can't be reduced further, the creature deals 1 additional negative damage instead. A dream creature could even be a more powerful version of the living creature. These powerful dream variants are creatures with the elite adjustment (*Bestiary* 6); they gain light blindness (*Bestiary* 343), deal additional negative damage as noted above, and gain resistance to one physical damage type (bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing) equal to their level. GMs who wish to create more unique dream creatures should follow the creature creation guidelines on pages 56–73 of the *Gamemastery Guide*.

Regardless of the statistics, each dream creature has a similar appearance: dream creatures appear to be made from solid shadows, though they might have unusual or fantastical features to denote their connection to a dreaming mind. These features might include distorted bodies, additional limbs, exaggerated features like large eyes or extremities, strange coloration, or humanoid faces and voices. Essentially, the dreams of a person can shape the appearance of a creature, and these appearances can run the gamut from childish and friendly to terrifying and monstrous. Even with these fantastical exaggerations, however, a dream creature should still resemble its original variant somewhat, allowing PCs to identify the abilities of the typical creature.

Somnalu is too powerful for low-level PCs to face directly, but it might watch as they travel through the valley. Somnalu is likely to perch atop a high cliff to observe any intruders. PCs who catch a glimpse of the monster can get a hint of its appearance and true nature to prepare them for a direct engagement when they're ready to face it.

MID-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (8-14)

As with play at low-level tiers, adventures through the Valley of Burdens include a variety of dream creatures. These creatures are deadlier—likely the result of the dreaming minds of particularly powerful creatures, such as skilled warriors, great spellcasters, or even mighty creatures like dragons. As before, feel free to use any

suitable creature and apply abilities and adjustments to create a dream version of the creature. These powerful dream creatures might even have unique abilities to showcase their nature.

PCs who eventually track down Somnalu will have a difficult time facing the creature. Somnalu knows the entirety of the valley and can use its knowledge to hide in dark crevices or remote portions of the area. In addition, Somnalu can move about without disturbing the dream creatures within the valley, but PCs aren't so lucky. They'll have to be careful as they move to avoid drawing the attention of dream creatures. Other dream creatures can be simple obstacles or even dangerous additions to a chase or combat, depending on the creature. Somnalu is aware of this fact and is likely to draw characters into unfavorable or dangerous locations.

Once they face off with Somnalu, PCs can quickly learn that defeating the creature is not the end. The Somnalu Oculus (page 88) is sure to rise after its body's death. Though Somnalu is weaker in this state, its additional magical abilities and regeneration can make it a hardy foe. The oculus continues to use its knowledge of the valley to elude its attackers, retreating toward its lair for safety. Characters need to chase down the oculus and destroy it to be truly rid of Somnalu. Otherwise, the oculus flees into the Dreamlands once it reaches its lair, hoping to buy enough time to restore its body.

HIGH-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (15-20)

At this tier of play, Somnalu is unlikely to present a real challenge for PCs, but a further exploration of the Valley of Burdens can still provide interesting adventures. The darkest recesses of the valley are home to the most powerful dream creatures. These are creatures that escaped their imprisonment within the Dreamlands and fled here. GMs should represent these creatures with unique statistics, abilities, and backstories.

As for Somnalu, it's likely to realize that it's no match for high-level PCs and retreat to its lair to avoid a confrontation. If the PCs follow, Somnalu can retreat into the Dreamlands; if they follow further, PCs find a cluster of unique dreamscapes where unique night hags (*Bestiary* 202) and other dangerous creatures block their path to Somnalu. More information on the Dreamlands can be found on page 145 of the *Gamemastery Guide*.

Once in the Dreamlands, it's possible that Somnalu grows in power. Exposure to mortals' direct nightmares and fears can empower Somnalu, granting it the elite adjustment or even greater abilities. This Somnalu is likely to have the means to travel between dreams and use the power of the dimension to create its own servants in the form of dream creatures. The possibility of this nightmare Somnalu is even more likely if the Somnalu Oculus flees to the Dreamlands. As it rebuilds its body, it uses the power of the Dreamlands to gain greater control over dreams and shadows.

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SINISTER VISION

With its lithe, sinuous body and a flexible, twisting spine, Somnalu bears a resemblance to a giant lizard, save for its striking visage. Spiny frills run down the creature's mottled black back, interlaced with dull red stripes that streak from head to tail. Its two sets of forelimbs are bound to each other by small webs of skin. Its distinctive face lacks any visible mouth, nose, or ears, instead possessing only a huge red eye surrounded by six smaller, secondary eyes.

SOMNALU

CREATURE 15

UNIQUE NE HUGE ABERRATION DREAM

Perception +29; greater darkvision, sleep scent (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Aklo (can't speak any language), telepathy 60 feet

Skills Arcana +27, Athletics +27, Dreamlands Lore +33, Occultism +30, Survival +25

Str +9, **Dex** +6, **Con** +6, **Int** +8, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +4

Sleep Sense Somnalu can smell creatures that are asleep, as the scent ability.

AC 37; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +25, **Will** +29

HP 290; **Immunities** acid; **Weaknesses** cold 15; **Resistances** mental 10, poison 15

Corrosive Wounds The acid that coats the skin of Somnalu eats away at a weapon that Strikes it. As long as Digestive Secretions is active on Somnalu, whenever a creature hits Somnalu with a metal or wooden weapon, the creature must succeed at a DC 33 Reflex save or else the weapon takes 2d8 acid damage (after dealing damage to Somnalu as normal). Thrown weapons and ammunition take this damage automatically with no saving throw.

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 30 feet, DC 33

Baleful Gaze **Trigger** A creature within 100 feet makes a ranged attack or uses an action that has the concentrate trait; **Effect** Somnalu fixes its central eye upon the triggering creature in an attempt to frighten it, jolting it and disrupting its action. The creature must attempt a DC 36 Will save; on a failure, Somnalu disrupts the triggering action and the creature is frightened 1.

Speed 30 feet, burrow 25 feet, climb 25 feet

Melee **◆** claw +30 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d12+17 slashing plus Improved Grab

Melee **◆** tail barbs +30 (agile, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d8+17 piercing

Occult Innate Spells DC 36; **8th** *hypnopompic terrors* (page 89); **6th** *lure dream* (x2; page 89), *vibrant pattern* (x2); **5th** *strange geometry* (x3; *Pathfinder Advanced Player's Guide* 226); **4th** *darkness* (at will), *silence* (at will), *sleep* (at will)

Acid Spew **◆◆** Somnalu jets acid from its skin, dousing all creatures in a 15-foot-wide, 60-foot-long line. Each creature in this area takes 10d8 acid damage (DC 33 basic Reflex save). It can't use this ability again for 1d4 rounds.

Caustic Trench **◆◆◆** Somnalu Burrows three times. It digs a trench along its path, filling the trench with acid pumped from its skin. The trench is hazardous terrain, and any creature that moves into it takes 4d6 persistent acid damage. While Burrowing, if Somnalu would move through

a space occupied by another creature, that creature must attempt a DC 36 Reflex save to avoid falling into the trench and taking the acid damage. The acid remains for 1 minute.

Digestive Secretions **◆** Somnalu secretes acid for 1 round. Whenever it makes a melee Strike, it deals an additional 2d8 acid splash damage. Like most splash damage, this damage applies to the target and adjacent creatures and applies even on a failure, though not on a critical failure.

Drain Nutrients **◆◆** Somnalu targets a creature with a claw Strike. On a success, Somnalu drains the creature's life through its skin. The creature must succeed at a DC 36 Fortitude save or become drained 2 (drained 1 on a success, no effect on a critical success). Somnalu gains temporary Hit Points equal to the amount of Hit Points the creature loses from this Strike.

Vent Fumes **◆◆◆** Somnalu blasts poison gas in a 30-foot radius. The gas lingers for 1 round, and all creatures that begin their turn in the gas or enter the gas take 4d8 poison damage (DC 36 basic Fortitude save). Any creature in the gas is concealed, and other creatures are concealed to all creatures in the gas. However, Somnalu can see through this concealment.

SOMNALU OCULUS

When Somnalu is defeated, its central eye abandons its dying body to create an ethereal body from the wisps of dreams. Over centuries—or sooner, if it can find a powerful source of nightmares—it can re-form a full body and return to its corporeal self.

SOMNALU OCULUS

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM ABERRATION DREAM

Perception +26; greater darkvision, *true seeing*

Languages Aklo (can't speak any language), telepathy 60 feet

Skills Arcana +23, Occultism +26

Str +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +3, **Int** +7, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +5

AC 28; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +21, **Will** +24

HP 240, regeneration 10 (deactivated by mental); **Weaknesses** piercing 10

Scrutinizing Presence (aura, mental) 60 feet, DC 34. The Somnalu Oculus scrutinizes creatures around it, causing them to falter with nervousness and self-doubt. Upon entering the emanation, a creature must attempt a Will save. On a failed save, the creature is stupefied 2 for 1 round. Regardless of the result of the saving throw, the creature is temporarily immune to scrutinizing presence for 1 minute.

Clearing Blink **Trigger** The Somnalu Oculus would be affected by a condition; **Effect** The Somnalu Oculus rapidly blinks, using dream wisps as an eyelid. The Somnalu Oculus attempts to counteract the source of the condition with a counteract modifier of +24 and a counteract level of 8. It can't use Clearing Blink again for 1d4 rounds.

Speed fly 40 feet

Melee **◆** dream tendril +22 (finesse, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d10+9 bludgeoning

Ranged **◆** dream bolt +22 (magical, range 60 feet), **Damage** 2d12+7 piercing

Occult Prepared Spells DC 34, attack +26; **6th** *lure dream*

(×2; see below), *repulsion*, *vibrant pattern* (×2); **5th** black tentacles (×2), *strange geometry* (×3; *Advanced Player's Guide* 226), *synaptic pulse*; **4th** dimension door, *nightmare*, *phantasmal killer*, *rebounding barrier* (×2; *Pathfinder Lost Omens Legends* 37); **3rd** agonizing despair (×2; *Advanced Player's Guide* 214), *paralyze* (×2); **2nd** animus mine (×2; *Pathfinder Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 106), *dispel magic* (×2); **1st** fear, *phantom pain* (×2), *sleep* (×2); **Cantrips** daze, detect magic, *mage hand*, shield, telekinetic projectile

SPELLS

Any creature that sees or experiences Somnalu casting the spells below can attempt to learn them. To learn *hypnopompic terrors*, attempt a DC 34 Occultism check, with a +4 circumstance bonus if you were previously a target of the spell. To learn *lure dream*, attempt a DC 28 Occultism check, with a +4 circumstance bonus if you were attacked by an animate dream summoned with the spell.

HYPNOPOMPIC TERRORS

SPELL 8

RARE **EMOTION** **FEAR** **ILLUSION** **INCAPACITATION** **MENTAL**

Traditions occult

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range 30 feet; **Targets** up to 10 creatures

Saving Throw Will

You send a wave of nightmarish visions crashing over your targets, leaving them paralyzed by fear. These visions inflict real wounds on vulnerable targets, dealing 6d12 mental damage. If you target a sleeping creature, it wakes up as it attempts the save but takes one degree of success worse than the result it rolled on its save.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target is frightened 2 and takes half the mental damage.

Failure The target is frightened 2, is paralyzed for 1 round, and takes the full mental damage.

Critical Failure The target is frightened 2, is paralyzed for 2 rounds, and takes double the mental damage.

LURE DREAM

SPELL 6

RARE **CONJURATION** **DREAM**

Traditions occult

Cast ♦♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range 30 feet

Duration sustained up to 1 minute

You reach out to the dream realm, beckoning an animate dream to your side. This works like *summon animal*, except you summon an animate dream (*Bestiary* 2 18).

SACRILEGIOUS RELICS

Acknowledging Somnalu's continued existence was declared blasphemy against Namzaruum, but some heretics still built weapons to fight the terror. Sought out

and destroyed by agents of Ninshabur and claimed by the ravages of history, very few of these weapons have survived into the modern day.

GODSBREATH BOW

ITEM 15

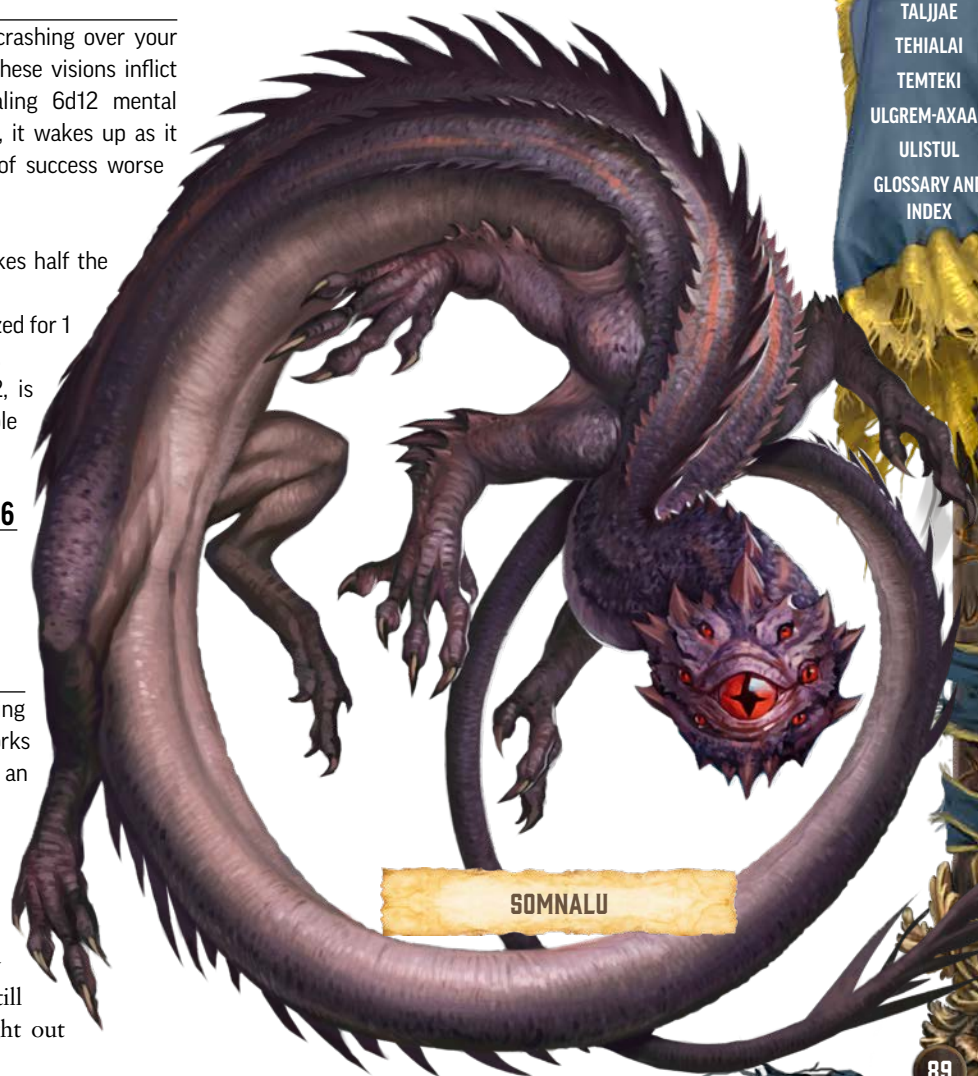
RARE **EVOCATION** **MAGICAL**

Price 6,500 gp

Usage held in one hand; **Bulk** 1

This +2 greater striking composite shortbow is made from wood, horn, and sinew. Once wielded by Ninshaburian heretics, it's carried in a leather case etched with images of Namzaruum in combat with Somnalu. On a successful Strike, it deals an additional 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

Activate ♦♦ command; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You make a ranged Strike. On a hit, a vortex of air trails the arrow as it travels. When the arrow strikes its target, the vortex expands to a 30-foot radius from its point of impact. The arrow deals an additional 1d8 bludgeoning damage against its target. For the next 3 minutes, any physical ranged attacks that would strike a target within the vortex deal an additional 1d8 bludgeoning damage. The vortex is difficult terrain, and creatures attempting to fly through the vortex using a move action must attempt a DC 34 Fortitude save, losing its move action on a failed save. Any gases within the vortex are cleared by the winds.



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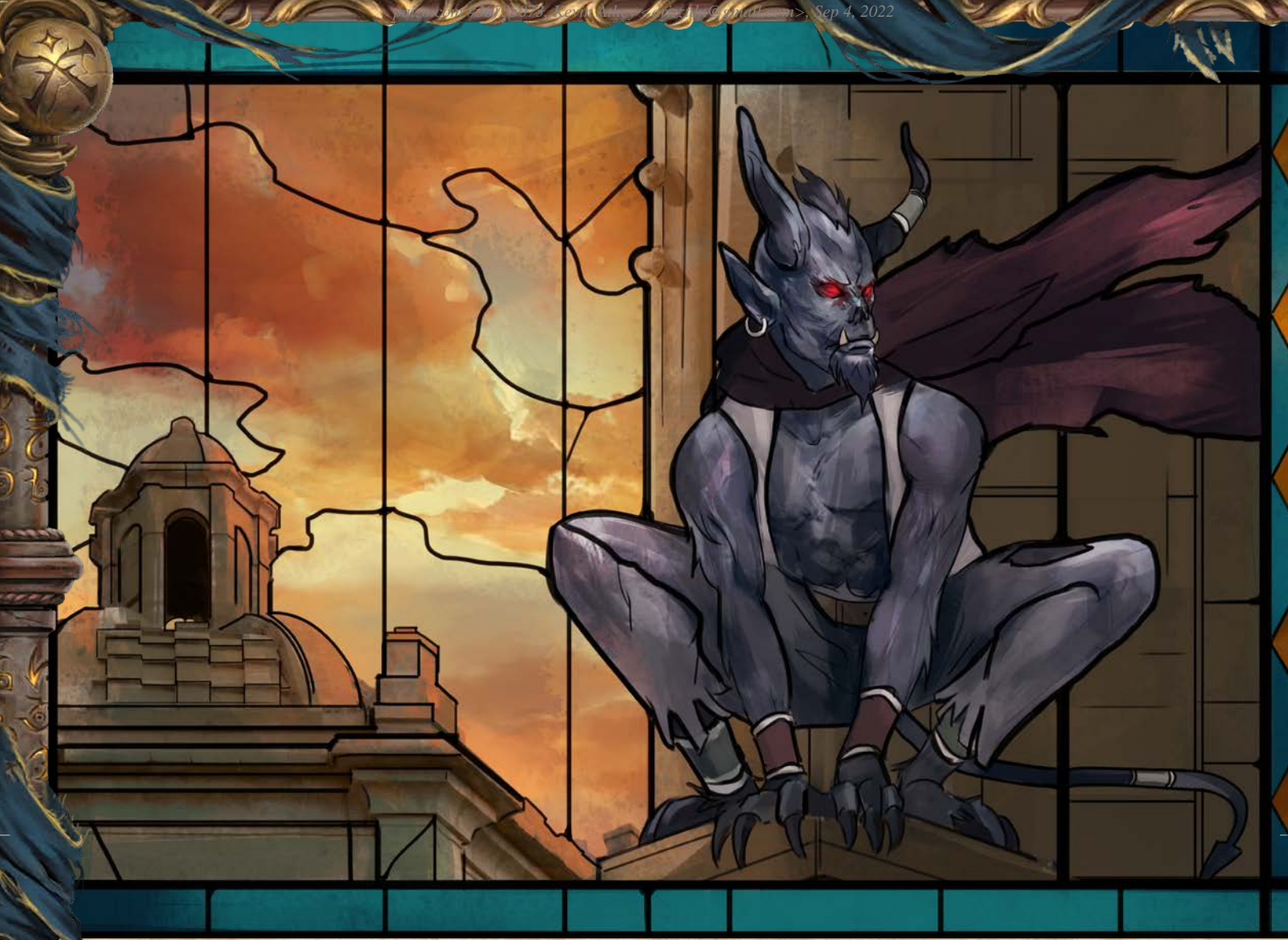
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SPRING-HEELED JACK

“I’m not going to the authorities, Coskin! What do you think they’ll do when I show up insisting that a man shaped like a little devil cornered me near the market, took my signet ring, and leapt to the top of a two-story counting house? There were dozens of people around, in broad daylight, but not one of them saw a thing. The devil timed his robbery and escape to perfection. I have no witnesses, no corroboration. They’d send me to Havenguard for certain. I don’t know what mischief that cretin is planning with the seal of the Hollendar family, but I worry it won’t be the last I’ve seen of that spring-heeled fellow.”

—Bradelphus Hollendar, Caliphas merchant lord, to his assistant

Sleepless Agency Case File Number: 2880-9-9-4721-A
Reported by: Larlin Shrook, Senior Detective
Subject: Caulmar Sisters; "Spring-Heeled Jack"
Cross-indexed from Case File No. 1213-8-14-4721-C regarding the deaths of Alayna Caulmar and Estissa Caulmar, sisters. Cause of death confirmed to be immolation; witnesses outside the building (including one Jomas Bootleby, farrier) described a flash of blue flames before the Caulmars and their second-story sitting room went up in fire; burn pattern of initial fire is a cone shape with a point of origin near the room's armoire.

Supernatural arson seems certain; *burning hands* creates fire of the appropriate shape but doesn't account for the blue flames. The armoire isn't big enough to conceal a human, but a smaller figure could hide there until the time came to strike. This puts me in mind of the fables of old "Spring-Heeled Jack," a malevolent mischief-maker who creeps around in hiding and breathes blue fire.

Sleepless Agency Case File Number: 2880-9-9-4721-B

Reported by: Anders Dolanno, Junior Detective

Subject: "Spring-Heeled Jack"
Response to research request by Detective L. Shrook. "Spring-Heeled Jack" refers to a disparate collection of legends about a horned troublemaker (or, in some accounts, murderer). Jack's name stems from his ability to leap dozens of feet horizontally or vertically at once, although this skill alone doesn't account for his ability to disappear after his crimes. Legends say he can pass through walls, leave no tracks, and turn invisible, along with other supernatural abilities. These disparate records span centuries, so the subject seems impressively long-lived.

"Spring-Heeled Jack" seems, at best, an urban legend. Records about him are rare, far more so than those of genuine killers like the Hammerhanded Vagabond or even devious monsters like faceless stalkers. In short, I can't find any evidence that "Spring-Heeled Jack" exists. Respectfully, this appears to be a tangent, and a fruitless one at that.

Sleepless Agency Case File Number: 2880-9-9-4721-C

Reported by: Larlin Shrook, Senior Detective

Subject: Jomas Bootleby; "Spring-Heeled Jack"

Interview with the farrier Jomas Bootleby confirms Spring-Heeled Jack hypothesis. He was

tending to a horse just up the road from the Caulmars' manor at sundown on the day in question. His attention was drawn to the second-story window by a flash of blue fire. He had little more to say until I mentioned Spring-Heeled Jack, at which point he added in a conspiratorial whisper, "It was that little devil, all right. Moments after that fire started, I saw a shadowy man in a tattered cloak leap from the window to the roof of the coach house, then another great leap across the darkening road to the rooftop across the way. I wouldn't have seen him but for the flickers of the fire he'd started." When I pressed Bootleby about why he didn't report the fire immediately, he insisted that "Jack knows those who blab, and he goes after them with his Love, the knife he keeps with him always."

Before I departed, Bootleby warned me "not to go giving that rhyme" because it calls Spring-Heeled Jack's notice. I don't know what rhyme he's talking about; I'm a detective, not a nursery-rhyme chronicler.

Sleepless Agency Case File Number: 2880-9-9-4721-D

Reported by: Larlin Shrook, Senior Detective
Subject: "Spring-Heeled Jack"

My daughter Cambriana knows the rhyme. She says all the children know it, but none are brave enough to speak it aloud in its entirety. She told me it begins: "Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, Jack's little Love goes snick-snick-snick." She refused to say more, even upon the threat of an early bedtime without supper. Such reticence doesn't befit an 8-year-old, certainly not as precocious a girl as my Cambriana. I shall insist.

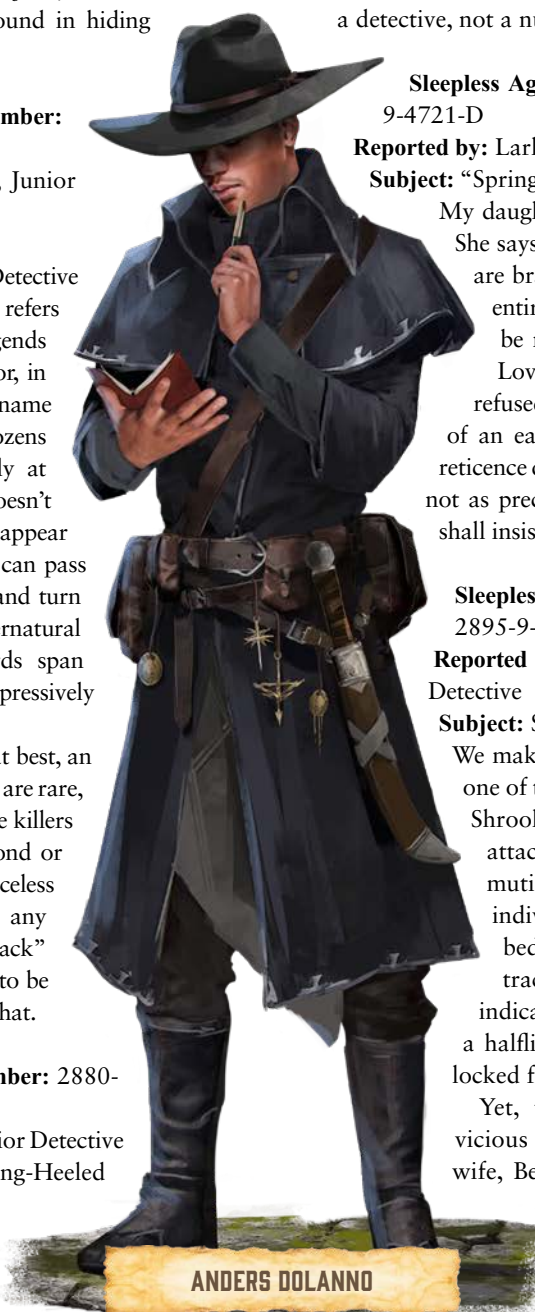
Sleepless Agency Case File Number: 2895-9-12-4721-A

Reported by: Anders Dolanno, Junior Detective

Subject: Shrook Murders

We make many enemies in our work, and one of them has caught up with Detective Shrook. The entire Shrook family was attacked last night in their beds, mutilated by a single knife-wielding individual who went from bed to bed, presumably in total silence. No tracks present. Review of the wounds indicate the attacker was no larger than a halfling. Doors and windows were all locked from the inside.

Yet, the killer didn't complete their vicious work. Against all odds, Larlin's wife, Bellina, survived her serious facial injuries, though she's been rendered comatose and may never recover. The Pharasmin we paid to tend her says her



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gravest injuries are spiritual, not physical—she saw something so terrifying that her mind simply shut her body down. Her mind echoes, he says, with the words “little love,” so we take solace that she must be referring to the love she feels for her murdered family.

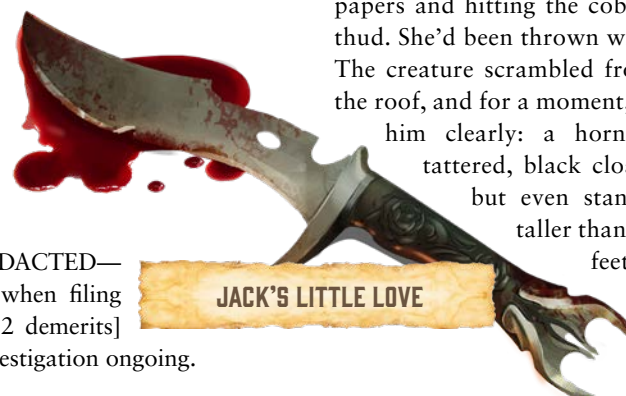
You were one of the brightest among us, Larlin, and we’ll find out what monster did this.

Sleepless Agency Case File Number: 3101-7-05-2157

Reported by: Braffin Thomplin, Junior Detective

Subject: Agency Break-In

This is a report of a break-in into the agency’s third floor. Window on the southeast side of the building, third window from the east when looking out from inside, shows clear signs of damage. Window is broken, the latching mechanism showing clear signs of tampering. Spread of glass on floor suggests a blow used to break window glass. No signs of footprints along floor, though there are signs of pressure along desks, as if trespasser walked across the tops to avoid walking on floor. Desks are spaced eight feet apart. Trespasser either had expansive gait or was jumping across desks. Signs of movement end at Detective Shrook’s desk. Signs of rummaging, though it’s unclear if anything was taken. Chief Detective [REDACTED—Agent, remember protocol when filing your reports in the future; 2 demerits] asked that I file a report. Investigation ongoing.



Sleepless Agency Case File Number: 2895-9-12-4721-B

Reported by: Anders Dolanno, Junior Detective

Subject: Shrook Murders

A follow-up search of the Shrook household turned up a surprising clue: the signet ring belonging to a merchant named Bradelpus Hollendar. I interviewed Hollendar, but he has no connection with any of the Shrooks whatsoever and was previously unaware of the murders. I asked him about a missing signet ring, and he immediately went pale and insisted he had other business. I allowed him to usher me out but returned to his office window unseen. He began raving at an assistant or subordinate, talking about how “Jack got his ring,” “Jack’s done some killing,” and so on. It’s clear Hollendar is indeed connected, through some “Jack” character. It all brings to mind again that “Spring-Heeled Jack” nonsense—perhaps some demented individual became obsessed with the legend and now attempts to bring the old myth to life? In any event, I shall return to his office this evening to follow him discreetly.

Sleepless Agency Case File Number: 2895-9-12-4721-C

Reported by: Anders Dolanno, Junior Detective

Subject: Shrook Murders; “Spring-Heeled Jack”?

Hollendar left his office long after dark and cut through an alley, presumably to reach home more quickly. There was a figure in the alley’s shadows; I saw it before Hollendar did. It wasn’t quite as tall as a human, with a dark cloak and short horns. Moments later, I saw Hollendar start with surprise; he’d noticed it. Perhaps it said something to him? The figure suddenly exhaled a breath of blue fire, bright enough that I saw spots. I can’t be certain I correctly saw what happened next. I saw the figure lunge forward, jagged knife in hand, and draw it across Hollendar’s midsection. It then jumped up to a balcony overlooking the alley, and from there leapt into an attic window. It was gone before I could blink the flashes from my eyes.

Yet the figure’s grim work wasn’t done. The attic was apparently inhabited, perhaps by some scribe or writer toiling away in the late hours. I heard a cry of alarm from the attic window and a clear shout, “A devil!” I only had time to rush beneath the attic window when the scribe was propelled out of it, trailing scrawled papers and hitting the cobblestones with a sickening thud. She’d been thrown with great and sudden force. The creature scrambled from the attic window onto the roof, and for a moment, the moonlight illuminated

him clearly: a horned, clawed man with a tattered, black cloak. He was hunched over, but even standing upright, he’d be no taller than three feet high. His clawed feet found easy purchase on the roof shingles. I know he saw me looking; the fiery pits of his red eyes were unmistakable. Just before he raced off, he held

up a single clawed finger and shook it from side to side, as though chiding me “no, no, no.”

Was this Spring-Heeled Jack? Is he, a malevolent figure of myth, truly active on the streets of Caliphaz?

Sleepless Agency Case File Number: 3111-9-16-4721-A

Reported by: Quinta Teldew Palder, Senior Detective

Subject: Havenguard Lunatic Asylum—Preliminary Report
Full report to follow on interviews with Havenguard patients. I’m exhausted. I want to note for the record that Anders Dolanno was assigned to aid me with these interviews, but he hasn’t deigned to come into work for the last three days. Havenguard admissions have significantly increased this month—most muttering an inane nursery rhyme—and damnable Anders is somewhere shirking and leaving me to do all the work.

Sleepless Agency Case File Number: 1234-5-6-789-0

Reported by: Mssr. S. H. Jack

Subject: Those Who Blab

Nosy detectives should keep their faces out of other people’s business if they want to keep them affixed to their heads. How did I add this file? Because I go where I please, nosy detectives!

Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, Jack's little Love goes snick-snick-snick.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

Spring-Heeled Jack's presence is suitable for campaigns of all kinds.

LOW-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (1-7)

Spring-Heeled Jack is suitable for even brand-new adventurers, but he should remain an unknown foe, at least at first. Attempting to use Spring-Heeled Jack as an enemy right out of the gate robs the creature of his allure and mystery, making him just another fey and ignoring his mythical status. Instead, you should consider building up his presence a bit to allow characters to learn about his deeds and abilities. The PCs might learn about Spring-Heeled Jack sightings or even investigate one of his attacks directly. You can use these moments to seed the idea of Spring-Heeled Jack before eventually unleashing him on the PCs.

While Spring-Heeled Jack would be a suitable foe for PCs at 1st level, be careful when sending him against a party. His Breath Weapon is capable of taking out multiple PCs at once, and his extra precision damage can make quick work of a character caught unawares. While it can be tempting to have Jack leap in and ambush the party, this sneak attack can make quick work of a single PC. GMs are advised to use such tactics with caution.

Once the PCs are 2nd level, Spring-Heeled Jack becomes less deadly but remains dangerous. Without the threat of seriously injuring or outright killing a PC, except in the most exceptional of cases, Spring-Heeled Jack can be used to better effect. Ambushes and hit-and-run tactics allow Jack to take full advantage of his mobility and combat abilities. Spring-Heeled Jack might not be as dangerous on his own, and GMs who want to avoid a fight with just a single creature could include some other weak creatures as part of the same encounter, such as a mitflit (*Bestiary* 192) or a giant rat (*Bestiary* 276). In fact, Spring-Heeled Jack might be most effective as an interruption to some other encounter. PCs facing local thugs or some other monsters are in for quite a surprise when Spring-Heeled Jack decides to jump in and take advantage of the chaos of combat.

The PCs will likely defeat Spring-Heeled Jack, but the existence of other Jacks allows him to remain part of a campaign for some time. Rather than face Jack after Jack at this tier of play, give the characters some time where they believe everything to be safe, only to have Spring-Heeled Jack return at an unlikely moment. Rather than just face him again, the PCs might face off with a Greater Jack (page 94). The use of a Greater Jack allows enough time between the "conclusion" of Spring-Heeled Jack's presence in the campaign and his return while still keeping him a suitable challenge for the heroes.

MID-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (8-14)

Once characters reach this tier of play, Spring-Heeled

Jack is no longer a suitable challenge and even a Greater Jack is of no consequence to the characters. Rather than attempt to continue using Spring-Heeled Jack as a direct foe, consider using him to hint at the presence of some greater force instead. There could be some group within the campaign that makes use of Spring-Heeled Jacks as servants or minions. These Spring-Heeled Jacks might not even realize they're being subtly directed to attack locals or sow chaos within a particular settlement. The PCs would need to determine the connection between the various Spring-Heeled Jack attacks, perhaps noting that Jack only seems to strike against members of a local guild or citizens within a certain neighborhood. From here, the PCs could follow the clues and trail of Jacks to the true mastermind behind the attacks.

If a Spring-Heeled Jack learns of this influence, he's likely to be upset at the development. PCs that track down a Spring-Heeled Jack and present him with proof of manipulation could cause the Jack to seek revenge for the deceit. Jack might even attempt to team up with the PCs in hopes of completing his vengeance. While most characters likely won't accept a Spring-Heeled Jack's aid, a character can take advantage of the Jack's temperament to learn more information about the Jack's "master" or even have the Jack lead the group directly to this foe.

HIGH-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (15-20)

At the highest levels of play, Spring-Heeled Jacks are of no threat to the characters whatsoever, but their presence can still force the PCs to take action. While the PCs likely won't need to interfere with a single Spring-Heeled Jack attack, repeated attacks or even simultaneous attacks might get the PCs to investigate, especially if they're particularly fond of the people or location that has become the Jack's latest target. The PCs should have no trouble tracking down Spring-Heeled Jack and stopping these attacks, but increasingly frequent Spring-Heeled Jack sightings and attacks can eventually inspire the PCs to put an end to Spring-Heeled Jack once and for all.

These PCs likely learn everything they can about Spring-Heeled Jack, and they might eventually venture into the First World and find the origin of all of the Spring-Heeled Jacks that plague their home. Once in the First World, the PCs can find some powerful force or entity that managed to gather Spring-Heeled Jacks to work together. This entity could be some kind of powerful fey like a vilderavn (*Bestiary* 3 287) using the Spring-Heeled Jacks to help sow discord and eventually incite war.

Alternatively, there could be some kind of powerful variant of Spring-Heeled Jack that has gathered the rest of the Jacks under his banner. This Spring-Heeled King could be a unique, powerful creature bordering on the might of a demigod. The PCs would need to make their way into the Spring-Heeled King's domain and vanquish this murderous fey once and for all. Without

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IMPISH CRUELTY

The greatest secret of the murderous trickster known as Spring-Heeled Jack is that he isn't a unique creature. Instead, he's one of a rare type of fey native to the First World who enjoy causing bloody mayhem in the Material Plane. These fey are so rare and so distrustful of one another's company that two have never been seen together; the mistaken assumption that only a single Spring-Heeled Jack exists is therefore entirely understandable. The fact that sightings occur across Ustalav (and beyond) and across centuries of time is ascribed to the trickster's long lifespan and mysterious ability to travel quickly, or to the belief that there's no such creature, merely an urban legend that twisted minds attempt to bring to life through costumes, magic, and a series of murders and mayhem. Even in fear-drenched Ustalav, no one has yet guessed that multiple Spring-Heeled Jacks exist or postulated that some future event might drive them to overcome their mutual disdain and gather into a murderous cabal, far more powerful than the sum of its parts.

Spring-Heeled Jacks are cruel-eyed, hairy fey with vaguely humanoid shapes and extra features that cause them to be easily mistaken for demons or devils. Glowing eyes, cloven hooves, menacing horns, and a pointed tail combine to create the mien of a wicked imp; his love of sudden and sadistic violence completes the impression. Almost all have jet-black skin and fur, though a few exceptions might exist.

Spring-Heeled Jacks typically hide their features in tattered cloaks, appearing as a hunched elder or a youth in the nighttime conditions they enjoy. Such a disguise rarely holds up to any scrutiny, but that doesn't matter much to the Spring-Heeled Jack, who only needs something that offers just enough doubt for their target to move within striking distance, which can be from much farther away than most other creatures even realize. Once close enough, the Spring-Heeled Jack leaps startling distances in the blink of an eye to easily slash at a victim who had, until that moment, considered themselves safe.

A Spring-Heeled Jack has drastically more treasure for his creature level than usual, so even though Jacks aren't unique, be mindful of how much wealth you've added to your group. On top of giving too much treasure, fighting multiple encounters with several Spring-Heeled Jacks is anti-thematic for the creature's lore. Instead, you should consider balancing an encounter with Spring-Heeled Jack with encounters that give a little less treasure to keep in line with the expectations.

SPRING-HEELED JACK

CREATURE 3

RARE CE SMALL FEY

Perception +10; low-light vision

Languages Common, Sylvan

Skills Acrobatics +9, Athletics +10 (+14 to High Jump or Long Jump), Deception +8, Intimidation +10, Stealth +11, Thievery +9

Str +3, **Dex** +4, **Con** +1, **Int** +0, **Wis** +1, **Cha** +3

Items *Jack's Tattered Cape* (below), *Little Love* (below)

AC 18; **Fort** +6, **Ref** +13, **Will** +8

HP 45

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 15 feet, DC 17

Attack of Opportunity ⤴

Speed 40 feet

Melee ♦ *Little Love* +12 (agile, finesse, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+5 piercing

Ranged ♦ *Little Love* +12 (agile, thrown 10 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 1d4+5 piercing

Breath Weapon ♦♦ (evocation, fire, primal) Spring-Heeled Jack exhales a gout of bright blue fire that deals 4d6 fire damage in a 15-foot cone (DC 20 basic Reflex save). He can't use Breath Weapon again for 1d4 rounds.

Primal Innate Spells DC 20; **5th** *passwall*; **1st** *feather fall* (at will); **Constant (2nd)** *pass without trace*

Malicious Stab Spring-Heeled Jack deals an additional 1d6 precision damage to flat-footed or frightened creatures (2d6 precision damage to creatures that are both flat-footed and frightened).

Vault ♦ (move) Spring-Heeled Jack jumps up to 20 feet in any direction, including vertically. This movement doesn't trigger reactions based on movement.

JACK'S ITEMS

Each Spring-Heeled Jack carries a jagged knife that he calls his "love," and many also wear a cape with a bit of illusion magic. If either item is stolen from a Spring-Heeled Jack, its owner stops at nothing to recover it and enact bloody vengeance upon the thieves.

JACK'S TATTERED CAPE

ITEM 2

RARE ILLUSION INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 30 gp

Usage worn cloak; **Bulk** –

This ragged, mud-stained cape closes with a single black button engraved with a leering devil's face. When you Leap, High Jump, or Long Jump (or Vault, if you're Spring-Heeled Jack), you gain a +1 item bonus to Stealth checks to Hide or Sneak until the start of your next turn.

LITTLE LOVE

ITEM 3

RARE MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION

Price 60 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

This steel +1 *dagger* is chipped and worn but no less deadly for its much-used appearance. When you critically succeed at an attack roll with *Little Love*, you can activate the dagger to spring away from your foes.

Activate ♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per 10 minutes; **Trigger** You critically hit a creature with *Little Love*; **Effect** You Leap (or Vault, if you're Spring-Heeled Jack).

GREATER JACKS

Spring-Heeled Jack isn't unique, and more powerful versions of these malevolent terrors certainly exist. Adding one or two of the following abilities to

Spring-Heeled Jack, along with the elite adjustment (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6), is the fastest way to create a greater Spring-Heeled Jack. You can also add one of these abilities to an ordinary Spring-Heeled Jack to distinguish them from others, hinting to the players that more than one of these wicked creatures exist.

GENTLEMAN'S GUISE

Some greater Spring-Heeled Jacks can take on a magical disguise to pass more easily among commonfolk.

Change Shape ♦ (concentrate, polymorph, primal, transmutation) Spring-Heeled Jack takes on the appearance of a Medium humanoid dressed in exquisite finery. This doesn't change his Speed or his attack and damage modifiers with his Strikes. When in this form, Spring-Heeled Jack gains a Diplomacy modifier equal to his Intimidation modifier.

RESONANT TERROR

Instead of merely startling foes with his appearance, a greater Spring-Heeled Jack can plant his terrifying visage deep in a target's subconscious. This ever-present reminder of his ghastly face echoes long after in the mind. This ability replaces Frightful Presence.

Resonant Terror ♦ (concentrate, curse, emotion, enchantment, fear, mental, primal) Spring-Heeled Jack glares at a creature he can see within 30 feet. The target must immediately attempt a Will save (DC equal to the DC of Jack's Breath Weapon) or become frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure), and it can't reduce its frightened condition below 1 for 24 hours or until this curse is removed. After attempting its save, the creature is temporarily immune to this ability for 24 hours.

VANISHING LEAP

A greater Spring-Heeled Jack can disappear into thin air just as soon as he touches down after a mighty leap.

Vanishing Leap ♦ (illusion, primal) **Trigger** Spring-Heeled Jack uses Vault; **Effect** Spring-Heeled Jack becomes invisible for 1 round.

THE REAL JACK

"Spring-Heeled Jack" isn't a Pathfinder invention, but rather an urban legend from Victorian England. A gangly man who resembled a ghost or a devil terrorized the people of suburban London, typically those traveling or living alone. Descriptions of this assailant varied; some people claimed he was an unusually tall figure who moved and spoke like a gentleman, while others described a smaller figure with an animalistic aspect. In some encounters, he spoke English, while in others, he merely growled or cackled. All agreed that Spring-Heeled Jack wore a dark cloak and had horns, claws, and a devilish appearance. He breathed blue fire, often to startle victims rather than burn them. By far, his most distinguishing and common

feature was his ability to leap great distances; he either jumped in the way of carriages to scare the drivers into crashing or leapt atop high fences or tall buildings to escape after performing mischief.

According to contemporary reports, Spring-Heeled Jack appeared so terrifying that a mere glance caused seizures or death. Spring-Heeled Jack became a veritable craze, appearing in sensationalist newspaper articles, penny dreadfuls, and cheap plays across England and beyond. Copycat criminals and mass hysteria almost certainly fueled the Spring-Heeled Jack rumors that persisted into the 20th century, but that doesn't mean some sort of frightful monster wasn't actually loose on London's streets.



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TALJJAE

When the clattering of bells signaled the height of the celebration, it came. As if by sorcery, the puppet that once danced its many-limbed dance roared to life, displacing performer and audience alike. Soldiers surrounded it, but one swipe of its mighty claw rendered them unconscious. A remaining soldier struck it, staining its immaculate white coat with sanguine terror. A terrible laughter arose, like so many witches in chorus, and the creature danced among the flames until all had fled or fallen.

Only I remained, paralyzed until it slithered over. In its hollow eyes, I recognized the face of my mother and began to weep. I wept as though my heart were being pulled through my eyes and deep into the earth, until I, too, succumbed to a fading consciousness. This was the first and, hopefully, last time the creature ever graced the Emperor's Steps.

—Record of a court official

A temperamental and mercurial spirit referred to as Taljjae dances its inexorable dance around the villages of Hwanggot in Tian Xia. Those who have laid eyes upon it tell of a large, lithe body wearing a shimmering cloak of white and red tassels made of an unknown material, culminating in a wooden mask carved into grotesque parody of human expression. Witnesses can't seem to come to a conclusion about its body shape; some claim it has two arms and two legs like a humanoid, while others claim it has many legs like a centipede. It moves with an errant rhythm—unexpected and altogether inhuman, but unsettlingly familiar—as if a half-step off one's own heartbeat. The creature's masks are said to be a mirror of human emotion, some representing joy and grief, while others represent greed and kindness. If these traits become imbalanced, Taljjae begins to rampage, cutting a path of destruction through the land until calmed. Looking deep into the eyes of these masks is said to bring forth memories corresponding to the mask's emotion, no matter how deeply buried, invoking an experience intense enough to leave most incapacitated following the occurrence.

Taljjae is worshipped as a deity—or sometimes a set of self-contained deities—in Hwanggot, with tributes of rice and gold given freely during various celebrations. It supposedly gathers these gifts and takes them to a cave in the mountains, where it resides. Celebrations often revolve around wearing replicas of its various masks and dancing, which is said to keep its personalities in balance. Locals often use Taljjae masks as protective charms against evil or as symbols for protest against injustice. One of the most well-known masks, referred to as the Nobleman, is a mockery of the aristocracy, much to the chagrin of those in power. Many a foolish ruler has, in anger, called upon their troops to hunt and kill Taljjae, only to be easily overwhelmed by its power. Those that have succeeded in killing it find that it seemingly returns as quickly as it was dispatched.

Though drawn to strong emotion, particularly strong negative emotions, Taljjae is almost never found near Hwanggot's crowded cities, only in the less-populated villages surrounding them. Thus, the village folk tend to shoulder the burden of Taljjae's destructive tendencies. That being said, a village currently occupied by the spirit rarely ever seems to go hungry, even when all their crops have been trampled. Angry officials sent to investigate the sudden stop in food supply rarely return unscathed, if at all. Most rulers have, over many generations, learned from these incidents and have treated the farmers of the land with more respect and dignity.

Legends tell of Taljjae's prowess in combat. It's said that each mask brings out a different personality, changing both the movement of its steps and the way it acts. This rapid shift can be incredibly jarring to those expecting a straightforward fight, though one who has studied its various moods can more readily anticipate its movements. Taljjae's constantly changing movements and ability to wield most weapons effectively make it remarkably difficult to fight, even for a seasoned group of warriors.

Taljjae wears three masks at any given time and has the ability to rapidly switch between them. Every time it's encountered, it wears a different set. The seven recognized masks are associated with its differing personalities: the General, disciplined and skilled with weaponry; the Hermit, cautious, patient, and hiding a suite of magical abilities; the Beast, wild and unpredictable, able to overpower nearly anything in its way; the Nobleman, thieving, languid, and gluttonous; the Grandmother, wise and nurturing; the Wanderer, quick and free; and the Hero, brave and precise.

In rural folklore, Taljjae's presence is heralded by glimmering motes of blue flame. Some tales note that these flames are shards of souls that follow Taljjae as it moves through the countryside, while others state these are embers from the creature's invisible heart. Regardless of their true nature, Taljjae wields some control over these flames, and uses them to defend itself and prank others.

Many stories claim to tell about Taljjae's potential origins, but most exist in the realm of mythology. Some believe that Taljjae simply came to be from the collective emotions of the people in the area, while others believe it has inhabited the buckwheat fields for as long as they've existed. A certain story tells of an old man who dedicated his life to carving masks, one every day from his coming of age to the day of his death. It's said that, on his deathbed, the masks came to life and carried him to heaven. Not able to enter alongside their creator, the masks returned to earth to watch the lands where he lived. Some even claim the creature came from the moon to learn of the lives of those that dwell the earth. Whatever the case, the people of Hwanggot owe much reverence to Taljjae, its image nearly ubiquitous in the many celebrations throughout the land. Its movements are immortalized in the traditional dances of the people, said to dispel evil and invite good luck.

The mountains are said to be its sacred home, and people



THE NOBLEMAN

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gather and store offerings in numerous caves around them. This practice does, on occasion, invite other creatures or people attracted by the potential riches in abandoned stashes, though there's always the risk of Taljjae returning and rampaging. While referred to as Taljjae's Domain, the mountains also host regular people who make their homes there and live by cutting down wood or foraging. Those who grow up in the mountains often find an affinity with the spirit and are taught to always pay their respects as they move through the shaded groves. Some who live on Taljjae's Domain construct small temples where they routinely leave offerings of buckwheat jelly, a reported favorite of the creature. These people might be considered priests and are sometimes requested to come to areas where the creature might be rampaging to attempt to calm it.

One story tells of a priestess who came upon Taljjae's injured body and danced to rouse its spirits. She left and returned with freshly cooked rice, tending to the creature every day for a week. On the seventh day, it regained its health and disappeared, only to return days later with medicine to cure her father's failing body.

In extremely rare cases, Taljjae might grant one of its masks to another creature. Its masks can supposedly confer superhuman ability to those who wear them. Understandably, such occurrences are nigh-unheard of, and the reasons for it bequeathing a mask are never clear. Those that try to predict and understand Taljjae's behavior seemingly become worse at discerning its patterns. Legends tell that only 12 of these masks have ever been distributed in the long history of Taljjae's existence, but the whereabouts and abilities of these masks are both hotly contested, and some claim them simple folktales. If one could succeed at slaying Taljjae, they might be able to pry one of its masks off. There's no record of this feat ever being accomplished, so the validity of this rumor remains in question.

FACES OF THE PEOPLE

Records and stories of Taljjae date as far back as the Age of Anguish. These earliest accounts of the creature note that it had but a single mask: a featureless visage with only a set of hollow eyes and a blank expression. Later accounts eventually note a mask resembling a laughing child, though it's unclear if this mask was brand new or a transformation of the original, blank mask.

Taljjae's assortment of masks constantly changes throughout histories and tales. Many believe these masks draw upon the existing feelings of real people. The laughing child, or *The Infant* as many tales refer to it, is associated with a young emperor from ages past. Ancient stories state that the mask depicts the first child in Hwanggot born after the end of the Age of Darkness.

The clearing of the dark skies brought a collective relief to the area's people. Stories note that this child was born with smile and laughter in their throat, bringing the first joy to the world after a terrible period.

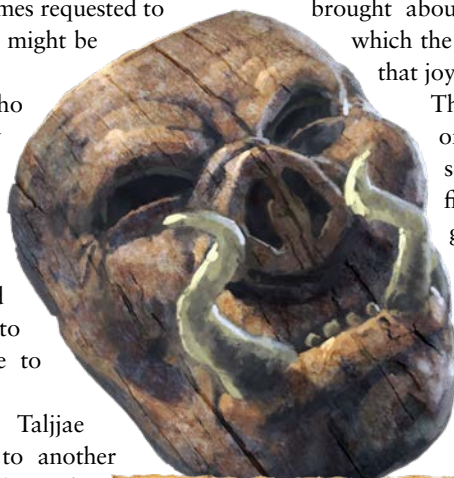
Stories conflict about the mask's purpose. Some tales note that Taljjae created this first mask in celebration of the new age for the people of Hwanggot. Others claim that the mask wasn't seen until the child grew to take the role of emperor. The new emperor was still young and concerned with taking the position, only for Taljjae to appear wearing the child's face. The mask was a reminder to the emperor that their own joy and the joy of the people was most important. With this reminder, the emperor brought about a golden age for Hwanggot, during which the emperor always focused on maintaining that joy for the people above all else.

There seems to be no pattern to the changing of Taljjae's masks. Sometimes a new mask seems to herald the arrival of an important figure in Hwanggot's history, such as a great hero, wise sage, or even terrible warlord. Tales of these masks note that the mask's appearance usually happens before the figure rises to prominence in Hwanggot. The existence of the mask seems to mark that figure as someone of note, creating a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy that distinguishes the person as important because of the mask's existence. Whether the creation of the mask represents Taljjae's

understanding of events to come or Taljjae thrusting a new destiny upon the person is unclear.

Taljjae's masks seem to depict ideals and archetypes common to tales in Hwanggot. Anyone that's encountered Taljjae can clearly tell you which mask the creature was wearing, but the exact details of the mask's appearance differs between accounts. Those who have seen the Grandmother describe the mask as a variety of kind women, not all of them elderly, but still the type that evokes the love and feelings associated with a grandmother. Others note that the mask is an exact depiction of their own grandmother, but again, these accounts vary between viewers, suggesting that most who encounter Taljjae see a mask as the person that best fulfills the mask's role.

Children's stories in Hwanggot say that Taljjae chooses small details from the land's people to make a mask, such as a single wrinkle or the shape of a nose. Children who are kind earn Taljjae's attention, and the creature rewards this kindness by replicating a small detail in one of its masks. These stories also warn that if Taljjae deems someone as cruel, the creature makes a mask look clearly like the offender so others know about the person's misdeeds. Telling someone that they've "earned a mask" is a common thanks or compliment, while troublemaking children are warned that Taljjae will "make a mask" if they don't put an end to their mischief.



TALJJAЕ CHARM

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

Taljjae is a mysterious creature, and its enigmatic nature makes it well suited for all types of campaigns.

LOW-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (1-7)

Though confronting Taljjae is beyond the capabilities of characters at this tier of play, Taljjae can still serve as inspiration for characters and adventures. In particular, *Taljjae's masks* are powerful symbols among the working class of Hwanggot; the discovery of one of its masks could spark rebellion. Whether or not the mask truly comes from Taljjae is irrelevant—so long as the local populace believes the mask to be real and believes in the passion it inspires, it can be the key to change for an oppressed village or other small settlement.

If a PC finds a mask, local authorities might question them about the mask's origin. The authorities could use the mask as an excuse to punish the PC, even when the character has done nothing wrong, or use the mask's existence as an excuse to impose further restrictions and laws upon the settlement. Afterward, the PCs might be inspired to push back against an unfair authority, committing the first act of rebellion.

If a local NPC finds the mask, the NPC might begin their rebellion independently. The PCs could be around for the first act of rebellion, which eventually comes to blows. This event gives the PCs the opportunity to jump in and help the new rebels and pick a side in the conflict. Afterward, the rebel group could recruit the PCs to help with liberating the settlement.

Once a rebellion is underway, the PCs might become key members of the group, working to push out the cruel authorities. The rebels could reproduce the mask for all of the members, rallying behind the visage of Taljjae as a sort of mascot or icon for the rebellion. The repercussions of a rebellion could be high, with local authorities countering with additional troops and weapons, or could also lead to the authorities cutting off basic supplies from the local populace. Eventually, a notable authority figure like a local lord or lieutenant might act as the head of the opposing force. The PCs can liberate the settlement by defeating this figure and running the oppressive authorities out of town.

Alternatively, rather than incite a rebellion, the discovery of *Taljjae's mask* could mark the start of a journey. Whoever finds the mask could recognize that Taljjae might search for its missing mask. Returning the mask would be the best course of action, rather than risk the creature's ire. This task requires traveling across the countryside and up into the mountains where Taljjae's supposed domain lies. The journey would be fraught with dangers as monsters, bandits, and local authorities block the way.

MID-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (8-14)

If the characters reach the mountains, they must then track down Taljjae's domain. This process is difficult, as the creature's fickle nature means it never stays in one

place for too long. The PCs could be chasing stories and sightings of Taljjae for some time, sending them deep into the mountains, where greater dangers live.

Of course, the PCs wouldn't be the only ones searching for Taljjae. While local farmers, fishers, and laborers are always seeking Taljjae's blessing, local rulers strive only to destroy the creature. These rulers might dispatch squads of soldiers to search the mountains, and if one such squad crosses paths with the PCs, it could lead to a confrontation, especially if the soldiers know the PCs are searching for Taljjae as well. These squads could be made up of individual soldiers of note, or they could be a large group that forms a troop.

Once the PCs track down Taljjae, they need to prove their trustworthiness. An offering of food and gifts might be enough to win over the creature. Depending on how the PCs find Taljjae, however, their actions up to that point might be enough to show their worth to Taljjae. If Taljjae is under attack, the PCs could intervene on the creature's behalf, fending off soldiers or bounty hunters. With Taljjae safe and willing to meet with the PCs, they can attempt to speak with the creature or return its mask. Taljjae is an enigmatic being, and it's just as likely to allow the PCs to keep the mask as it is to take it back. The PCs might have never even had a true *Taljjae's mask* to begin with. In this case, Taljjae could give a true mask as a reward for the PCs' efforts.

HIGH-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (15-20)

Unless they have a specific need to do so, the PCs probably won't fight with Taljjae directly, even if they're capable of besting it in combat at this tier of play. PCs that wish to gain one of *Taljjae's masks* likely have other methods to try to earn a mask before resorting to violence. Instead, some other powerful figure, such as a local ruler or evil adventurer, could possibly slay Taljjae and lay claim to the masks afterward. With these masks in hand, this figure could become a dangerous foe.

The masked figure can use their newfound power to supplement their existing abilities. A powerful warrior lord with additional support from *The General* or *The Hero* masks could be nigh-unstoppable in direct combat. Alternatively, *The Hermit* and *The Wanderer* masks could augment a warrior's abilities, granting them crucial magic that allows them to shore up their weaknesses. A spellcaster with *The Beast* and *The Grandmother* masks suddenly becomes a more adept foe in direct combat. This masked figure could even have masks of your own design, providing abilities that no one has ever seen.

Stopping the masked figure is a difficult task, especially if the PCs are unaware of the abilities the newfound masks provide. The PCs' best bet might be in an unexpected alliance with Taljjae. If the PCs can track down Taljjae after it returns, they can attempt to convince it to aid in the fight. Working together, the PCs and Taljjae can be a whirlwind in combat, putting an end to the masked figure and becoming even greater legends in the eyes of the local populace.

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SHAPELESS DANCER

The form of Taljjae's body can vary from visit to visit or even moment to moment, but it's easily recognized due to its signature cloak and masks. So long as Taljjae's mood is placid, it can be approached safely, but its mercurial temperament can be hard to predict.

TALJJAE

CREATURE 18

UNIQUE CN LARGE FEY

Perception +33; darkvision, jelly sense 120 feet

Languages Hwan, Senzar (can't speak any language)

Skills Acrobatics +35, Athletics +31, Performance +38, Society +31

Str +8, **Dex** +9, **Con** +7, **Int** +6, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +9

Jelly Sense Taljjae has scent as a precise sense out to 120 feet,

but only to detect buckwheat jelly, the only food Taljjae loves more than flesh.

Items *Taljjae's masks* (see below)

AC 43; **Fort** +27, **Ref** +33, **Will** +30

HP 400; **Weaknesses** jelly gluttony

Jelly Gluttony If Taljjae detects buckwheat jelly with its jelly sense, it becomes fascinated by the food and the creature possessing it (if applicable) and flat-footed to all other creatures for 1d4 rounds, or until it uses an appropriate number of Interact actions to consume the jelly (generally 2: 1 to take the jelly, and another to eat it). If there's more than one helping of jelly, the condition ends once Taljjae consumes the jelly once.

Exit Stage ⚡ (conjunction, primal, teleportation) **Trigger** Taljjae is reduced to 0 Hit Points; **Effect** Taljjae retains 1 Hit Point and teleports to an empty space within 30 feet. One of its masks remains behind and is broken.

Speed 50 feet, swim 30 feet

Melee ♦ whirling sash +35 (agile, magical, reach 10 feet, versatile B), **Damage** 4d6+18 slashing

Ranged ♦ goblinfire +35 (fire, range 60 feet), **Damage** 4d6+18 fire

Change Characters ♦ (stance) **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Taljjae removes its current mask and dons a new one. The change refreshes Taljjae, restoring 25 Hit Points. Once Taljjae has removed a mask, it can't Change Characters back to that mask until it has worn all of its unbroken masks at least once, after which the cycle starts again. Taljjae can't don a broken mask.

Prop Master Taljjae has access to the critical specialization effects of any weapons it wields from one of its masks.

Second Act ♦ **Trigger** Taljjae's turn begins; **Requirements** Taljjae has 200 or fewer Hit Points; **Effect** Taljjae's dance reaches a frantic climax, allowing it to change personas rapidly. Taljjae Changes Characters.

TALJJAE'S MASKS

Taljjae carries three masks at any given time. While countless masks have been documented over the ages, the seven listed on page 101 are among those best known.

In Taljjae's Possession: When Taljjae Changes Characters, it gains access to the listed abilities. Any items (such as weapons) associated with its previous mask immediately disappear and are replaced by fresh ones for its new mask, but the effects of any mask abilities it has active persist. Removing a mask and later reapplying it doesn't restore any limited-use abilities.

As Player Items: Those who gain one of *Taljjae's masks*, either by defeating Taljjae or some other means, are known as its understudies and gain a fraction of its power. Each of *Taljjae's masks* is an 18th-level unique item with the invested and magical traits; if broken, they're automatically repaired to full HP when invested during daily preparations. The effect of a mask on a PC is noted in the mask's Understudy entry. Wearing one of *Taljjae's masks* also imposes Taljjae's jelly sense and jelly gluttony on the creature as long as it wears the mask.



TALJJAE

THE BEAST

With this mask, Taljjae assumes a low stance and gathers power.

Melee ♦ jaws +35 (deadly 3d12, magical, reach 10 feet),
Damage 4d10+18 piercing plus Knockdown

Melee ♦ claw +35 (agile, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage**
4d6+18 slashing

Rend ♦ claw

Understudy *The Beast* brings out its wearer's feral nature, granting it a claw melee unarmed attack that deals 1d4 slashing damage and has the agile trait, or increasing the damage die of their claw unarmed attack from 1d4 to 1d6 damage if they have a claw unarmed attack that deals 1d4 damage.

THE GENERAL

Carved scars mark the face of this severe mask, which gives Taljjae the skill at arms of a veteran commander.

Attack of Opportunity ↻ Taljjae disrupts actions on any hit, not just a critical hit.

Melee ♦ glaive +35 (deadly 3d8, forceful, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 4d8+18 slashing plus 1d6 chaotic

Masterful Engagement ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Taljjae maintains the perfect distance between itself and its foe. It Steps and Strikes, in any order.

Understudy ♦ **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** *The General* grants its wearer a +3 status bonus to attack rolls with polearms for 1 minute.

THE GRANDMOTHER

The kind eyes of this mask sap any attackers' will to fight while granting Taljjae powerful supportive magic.

Gentle Facade (aura, emotion, mental) 60 feet. Serenity and a sense of ease blot out all other emotions. Creatures in the emanation must succeed at a DC 37 Will save or become unable to be affected by beneficial emotion effects while within the aura and for 1 minute after leaving it. The creature is then temporarily immune for 10 minutes.

Divine Spontaneous Spells DC 37, attack +29; **9th** *energy aegis*, *heal*, *heroism*, *spell immunity*, *true seeing*; **8th** *regenerate*, *repulsion*, *searing light*; **7th** *breath of life*, *outcast's curse*, *vital beacon*

Understudy *The Grandmother* allows its wearer to cast 8th-level *heal* and 7th-level *breath of life*, each as a divine innate spell, once per day.

THE HERMIT

This wizened male face draws upon the powers of a true sage.

Flexible Counterspell ↻ **Trigger** A creature Casts a Spell of the same or lower level as one of Taljjae's unexpended spell slots; **Effect** Taljjae expends any prepared spell of the same or higher level, losing a spell slot as if it had Cast the triggering Spell. Taljjae then attempts to counteract the spell with a counteract modifier of +27.

Divine Prepared Spells DC 37, attack +29; **9th** *dispel magic*, *finger of death* (×2), *weapon of judgment* (war only); **8th** *spirit blast* (×3), *spiritual epidemic*; **7th** *blade barrier*, *dispel magic*, *flame strike*, *spellwrack*; **Cantrips** (8th) *detect magic*, *divine lance*, *forbidding ward*, *produce flame*, *shield*

Understudy *The Hermit* allows its wearer to cast 8th-level *spirit blast* and 7th-level *flame strike*, each as a divine innate spell, once per day.

THE HERO

The eyes of this female face seem to glint with determination.

Ranged ♦ longbow +35 (deadly 3d8, magical, propulsive, range increment 100 feet, volley), **Damage** 4d8+14 piercing

Cometfall Arrow ♦♦ Taljjae fires an arrow that could shoot a star from the sky. All creatures in a 120-foot line take 10d12 piercing damage (DC 37 basic Reflex save); on a critical failure, the target falls to the ground without taking falling damage, and it can't Fly, Leap, levitate, or otherwise leave the ground until the end of Taljjae's next turn. Taljjae then can't use Cometfall Arrow for 1d4 rounds.

Double Shot ♦ Taljjae fires two shots, making two Strikes, each against a separate target and with a -2 penalty. Both attacks count toward its multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after it makes both attacks.

Understudy ♦ **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** *The Hero* grants its wearer a +3 status bonus to attack rolls with bows for 1 minute.

THE NOBLEMAN

This twisted mask mocks members of the nobility for their parasitic greed.

Parasitic Healing ↻ **Trigger** A creature within 60 feet regains Hit Points; **Effect** Taljjae takes what should belong to another. The triggering creature regains only half the number of Hit Points, and Taljjae regains the full amount.

Covetous Confiscation ♦♦ Taljjae holds out a hand and attempts to take something that doesn't belong to it. It telekinetically attracts an unattended, unsecured object of up to 5 Bulk within 100 feet. If the object is in a creature's possession, Taljjae must critically succeed at an attempt to Disarm that creature, but it can't critically fail.

Understudy ♦♦ **Frequency** once per 10 minutes; **Effect** *The Nobleman* allows its wearer to use Covetous Confiscation.

THE WANDERER

The slightly upturned smile of this mask depicts a sense of joy and wonder at travel and new experiences.

Melee ♦ staff +35 (magical, reach 10 feet, two-hand 1d8),
Damage 4d4+14 bludgeoning

Divine Innate Spells DC 37; **Constant** (8th) *air walk*, *freedom of movement*, *haste*

Circling the Kingdom ♦♦ Taljjae Strides twice and makes two quarterstaff Strikes at any point along its movement.

Sneak Attack Taljjae deals an additional 2d6 precision damage to flat-footed foes.

Waypoints Taljjae leaves behind images of itself as it travels. Whenever it makes a Strike, it leaves behind a ghostly image of itself that lasts until the beginning of its next turn. These images block movement for Taljjae's enemies, and they provide flanking to Taljjae and its allies.

Understudy *The Wanderer* allows its wearer to cast 7th-level *air walk* and 8th-level *freedom of movement*, each as a divine innate spell, once per day.

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TEHIALAI

*Once, the ocean was darker
Once, the ocean was deeper
Once, the ocean of times past begot the creature
Tehialai-in-Crushing-Depths
She of stars known, born knowing the path of stars
She of winds known, born knowing the path of winds
She of waves made incarnate, born shaping the path of waves
But her knowledge, her power, stolen by the first of Okaiyo's wayfinders
She drifts, diminished in power and name
Tehialai-Thief-of-Ships
She gives chase, weakened yet still stronger than the tide
With claws as boiling waves, as many legs as stars in the southern fishhook, and armor
of stolen koa
She gives chase, she gives chase
The ocean divides, the ocean connects
—from Taotake version of “Upon Receding Tide,” Okaiyan shared genealogical chant*

The invocation finished, Pua's teacher laid out his mat on a nearby rock and sat facing the waves, polished gourd in hand. Pua walked past him, her steps steady, and placed a small bundle, wrapped in green ti leaves, down at the water's edge. The winter night was moonless and as cold as the tropics of the Okaiyo Ocean could get, the only light coming from the burning candlenuts of a single torch speared into the black sands. Pua dug her feet down into the grains as she stood ready, searching for the last bits of warmth from the day's sunlight, before her teacher let out a call.

He began to drum on his gourd, and as he did, Pua began to dance.

*On this longest, darkest night
We give praise and offering
To our oldest teacher and enemy
To Tehialai, Thief of Ships*

Pua loved this story. The crustacean had once been an egg no bigger than a coconut, drifting aimlessly in the primordial ocean. By the time she hatched, she had long seen how the stars moved overhead, how the winds blew, and how the currents flowed. With her shell as her boat, she could go anywhere connected to the water, and none equaled her skill at navigation. At least, until—

*A boy of Taumata
Gave home to the floating creature
Learning of sea and wind and star
From Tehialai, in Crushing Depths*

The leaves of Pua's skirt flared as she spun across the worn rocks. Kolea the Wanderer, then just a fisher in a mythical continent to the west, found Tehialai and let her rest in his fishpond, offering her the fish that flocked to it. In turn, she shared her knowledge with him, teaching him how to recognize an island on the horizon by the clouds that hung low, to see a gust coming by the way the surface of the water shimmered. She taught him how to braid the tides to make a magic fishhook, and she inked into his skin every road across the sea she had observed. Each new moon, Tehialai grew a little larger, and each new moon, Kolea dug out his fishpond a bit more, turning earth into sea so she could have room. And for a time, things were well.

But, Pua let the chant guide her, it was not to last. The astronomers had seen it in the heavens: a great cataclysm was soon to fall upon Taumata, of falling stars and burning sky. Kolea went to Tehialai, now grown massive in size, and asked for her help—surely, she could carry his

people on her shell, carry them across the sea, far from Taumata. But what did she care? She'd grown bored with her time in the pond, and no matter how dark the sky became, she could just retreat beneath the waves. She refused to help, turning instead to gorge herself on fish. Kolea realized Tehialai's callousness, and he made a choice.

*Stealing shell from teacher and making a canoe
Kolea gathered his people and fled to the east
From burning sky that rent Taumata
From Tehialai, in Crushing Depths*

As Tehialai was deep in slumber after her feast, Kolea crept up and



KOLEA THE WANDERER

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stole her shell. He broke it into pieces, hollowing each out that could be used as a canoe, and gathered as many of his people as could fit into this fleet. He held his hand to the stars the way his teacher had taught him, and far over the horizon, he saw one that shone green like no other. Flinging his fishhook far into the sky, Kolea saw it catch on the star. "When this star is overhead, we will be in a new home," he told his fleet, and he pulled with all his might. The sky would not budge. He enlisted the help of his four strongest chiefs, and together, they pulled at the fishhook, as a village pulling a net close. The star came a little closer, and the fleet began to move to the east, leaving their soon-to-be-ruined homeland behind in search of another.

She soon followed, enraged.

***East the canoes sailed
Guided by star and cloud
But the slowest were crushed
and worn
By Tehialai, Thief of Ships***

As her teacher's chant turned to Tehialai's attack, Pua flicked her wrists, dropping two smooth stones into each palm, and she struck them to the beat as snapping claws. Tehialai had brought a terrifying variety to bear against the fleet as she chased them across the sea, molting a new claw each time the warriors found a way to defend against her last. One claw speared any prey, hooking it on barbs and reeling it back to Tehialai's mandibles. One claw spun a cutting disk that sheared ships in half, the better for Tehialai to wear. One claw struck so powerfully it set fire to the water itself, a miniature sun blossoming through just the force of her impact. But all were powered by Tehialai's command of the sea—compressing seawater to unbelievable pressures in the base of her arms, and then releasing it to strike as only a wave could.

Tehialai pursued the fleet across the ocean, catching whatever ships she could and patching them together to re-assemble her shell, but it was never enough—Kolea had stolen not just a mass of chitin, but the power that dwelled within it, and Tehialai found herself growing slower, smaller. Worse, her student was now her equal in navigating the hidden paths of tide and wind. Tehialai's power spent, she receded into the depths, cursing Kolea and his people and vowing to destroy any ship she saw crossing the sea. Finally safe, Kolea taught to the four chiefs who had helped him pull the fleet the art of wayfinding, and sent them out to each found a great nation in this new sea.

***So ends this story
Of a journey across the sea
Yet all would forever be pursued
By Tehialai, Thief of Ships***

Pua stood, head bowed, as the dance ended. Her teacher stood wordlessly, pulled his torch from the sand, and headed back to the village. As Tehialai had come to be, drifting in the darkness with no company but the sound of the waves, so too would Pua complete this offering.

She picked up the ti-wrapped bundle and waded into the surf, untying a leaf with each step. By the time she was waist-deep in the warm water, her feet at the last ridge before the sand dropped off, a miniature canoe—hull whittled from koa, sails woven of lauhala, and outrigger lashed on with a lock of Pua's own hair—sat in her hand. "Tehialai, take this ship and be satisfied with it, that you steal no others this year." Pua set the boat in the water to drift out with the tide.

She watched the little boat grow distant. Tehialai was powerful, but like any being, she could grow only as great as her surroundings allowed. If her shell was kept small, she'd remain small. But she couldn't be given nothing at all, for if she were, her hunger for a larger home would surely lead her to actively hunt the voyaging canoes that crisscrossed the sea. No sailor was hasty to return to the era where every expedition could mean ambush from their ancient enemy. Instead, with these small offerings every harvest year, all the nations of Okaiyo—the descendants of

Kolea and the four chiefs that had crossed the sea—banded together to give her just enough. Enough that the lazy creature would patch her shell and sleep in the depths.

Once the little boat disappeared around the point, the offering was complete. Pua allowed herself the small reward of a few extra minutes to float weightlessly in the bay, unburdened of her duties, before catching a wave to shore and gathering her things. Tomorrow there would be feasting and games, and the great voyages could commence, knowing that in whatever far corner of the depths Tehialai crawled, she would be content for the next year. The trade winds shifted slightly, carrying delicious smells from the underground ovens of the village to Pua's nose. Her stomach growling in anticipation of the holiday to come, the dancer walked back across the sands before climbing the cliff home.

If she had spared a last glance at the ocean instead of racing onward, she might have seen it. A flotilla of toy canoes, borne by wind and waves, had gathered offshore, one for each of the great nations and countless islands in



TIDAL FISHHOOK

the Okaiyo Ocean. Almost. One was missing, though no one would know of it for some time.

The little ships drifted before a single ring rippled out and then in, fragmenting the faint winter starlight atop the water. The offerings plunged below the surface without a sound, but in the depths, chitin creaked.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

The ocean is vast, and each wave can bring a new adventure to heroes. Those who travel the ocean's currents are likely to catch sight of Tehialai, or at least, the aftermath of her journeys.

LOW-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (1-7)

Low-level heroes of the Okaiyo should avoid encountering Tehialai directly, but they can still come across clear signs of her presence. Shipwrecks and churned up seabeds are likely to disrupt ocean travels and could be appropriate obstacles for sailing PCs. The challenge of dealing with these obstacles could supplement travel between adventuring locations or even be a series of chained encounters all their own.

As Tehialai replaces the ships that make up her shell, she discards them, leaving them at sea or to wash up onto nearby land. The discovery of a relatively intact shipwreck could serve as the catalyst for a new adventure. Depending on the ship and how long it's been abandoned, it could be full of sea creatures like giant crabs (*Bestiary* 2 55), grindylows (*Bestiary* 2 138), sea devils (*Bestiary* 286), and more. Alternatively, the crew of the ship could have risen as undead like draugr (*Bestiary* 2 102), ghosts (*Bestiary* 166), or skeletons (*Bestiary* 298) that now haunt the ship.

Tehialai's displacements could also lead to marooned or shipwrecked travelers and crew that require aid. PCs looking to help these characters would need to offer support in the form of supplies, medical care, and transportation. This could be a difficult prospect, however, especially if the PCs only have enough resources for themselves. The PCs would need to make use of their survival skills to scavenge for food while still braving dangerous waters.

MID-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (8-14)

Once the PCs are more experienced adventurers and sailors, they're likely to run into some of the more dangerous elements of the ocean. Massive storms, powerful currents, and more can all provide thrilling set pieces for characters out at sea; some of these could even be the creation of Tehialai herself. Massive waves formed in Tehialai's wake could crash against the PCs' ship and lead to disruptions during their travels.

As with play at lower levels, the destruction that Tehialai causes could lead to encounters for PCs. Her movement could displace other dangerous sea creatures like giant octopuses (*Bestiary* 250), giant squids (*Bestiary* 2 254), and sea serpents (*Bestiary* 288). These creatures are likely to attempt to attack the PCs' ship, and the PCs would need to manage their vessel while also fending off

the creature. Such an altercation might even attract the attention of powerful water creatures like marids, which can serve as quest givers.

Tehialai might decide to attack the PCs' ship directly, either in an attempt to claim a new ship for her shell or to fend off the annoyance the PCs present. While lower-level characters are unlikely to survive such an attack, characters at this tier of play are hardier and more capable. These characters would be left adrift at sea and be forced to find a way to return to the safety of land. Along the way, they would attract the attention of sharks and other sea creatures.

PCs that look to face off directly with Tehialai are in for an almost-insurmountable task. If they set out alone, it's likely that Tehialai capsizes or outright destroys their ship early in combat, leaving the PCs to fight from the water, which would be an enormous disadvantage. PCs looking to fight from a ship are better off doing so with a large fleet. The increased number of ships gives the PCs enough chances to fight Tehialai while she's occupied with other ships. Convincing others to join this cause will be difficult, however. Most people who know of Tehialai are content with leaving her be and avoiding risking the loss of a ship or worse. The PCs will need a suitable argument and silver tongues to win over a single ship, let alone a fleet.

The PCs might instead choose to fight within the water. They could use magic and equipment to improve their swimming speed and aid them with attacking under the waves. Tehialai is a master of the water, however, and can use her speed and knowledge of the ocean to outmaneuver PCs at almost all times. If she believes herself to be in danger, Tehialai retreats to the depths of the ocean. Following her can be extremely dangerous, as the water pressure alone could be more than PCs could manage. Additionally, the deeper they go, the more likely PCs are to find even more dangerous creatures.

HIGH-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (15-20)

If Tehialai claims a large enough ship for her armor, she could grow tremendously in size and might. This larger version of Tehialai could pose a threat to water-dwelling populations that only powerful heroes could stop. In this case, PCs are likely to have more support in recruiting a fleet to stop this empowered version of Tehialai. The battle would be legendary one, with dozens, if not hundreds, of ships lost in the battle.

Rather than fight Tehialai directly, powerful heroes might be able to convince Tehialai to abandon her massive ship armor and return to a smaller ship. Convincing Tehialai would be a monumental task; along with convincing her that her current form is not the best state for her, PCs would also have to account for the grudges she still harbors from ages past. Uniting the people of the Okaiyo ocean to offer apologies and make amends is the most likely way to convince Tehialai to relinquish power. Doing so would require the PCs to travel the lengths of the ocean and recruit the aid of thousands or even millions of people.

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BEHEMOTH IN THE DEPTHS

Though her current form is but a small and pale shell of her former glory, Tehialai is a legend even in her waning days. The titanic crustacean wears the hulls of ruined ships as her shell, ripped into shape by vessel-rending claws, as nothing else in Golarion's oceans is large enough to shield her body—or perhaps nothing else will satisfy her. Few ships can withstand her might, and fewer still are prepared for her appearance. Those who don't know of the thief of ships won't know to watch for her coming, and those who do know Tehialai offer her tribute to ward off her predation.

TEHIALAI-THIEF-OF-SHIPS

CREATURE 13

UNIQUE **CN** **GARGANTUAN** **AMPHIBIOUS** **AQUATIC** **BEAST**

Perception +26; darkvision, wavesense 60

Languages Aquan, Okaiyan

Skills Acrobatics +27, Athletics +28, Ocean Lore +30, Stealth +24, Survival +27 (+30 to navigate)

Str +8, **Dex** +5, **Con** +4, **Int** +4, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +4

Exoskeletal Armory At the beginning of each day, Tehialai can molt to change the morph of her two massive striking claws. She chooses two morphs (page 106) and adds their Strikes and Release Claw effects to the stat block presented here. Tehialai can molt two different claws or two copies of the same claw.

AC 36 (32 when ship armor is broken); **Fort** +26, **Ref** +20, **Will** +23; +2 status to all saves vs. water

HP 200, **Hardness** 10; **Resistances** ship armor

Ship Armor Tehialai hides within a shell made of all the ships she has stolen. This ship armor reduces any damage Tehialai takes by an amount equal to its Hardness. Once Tehialai is reduced

to fewer than half her Hit Points, or immediately upon being damaged by a critical hit, her ship armor breaks, removing her Hardness and reducing her Armor Class to 32.

Speed 30 feet, swim 60 feet

Melee ♦ mandibles +27 (magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 4d8+10 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ water spit +25 (magical, range 120 feet, water), **Damage** 4d6+10 piercing

Capsize ♦ (attack) Tehialai attempts to capsize an aquatic vessel of her size or smaller that she's adjacent to. She must succeed at an Athletics check with a DC of 33 (reduced by 5 for each size smaller the vessel is) or the pilot's Sailing Lore DC, whichever is higher.

Move Home ♦♦♦ (manipulate) **Requirements** Tehialai is adjacent to a broken ship, and her ship armor is broken; **Effect** Tehialai claims nearby ship pieces to rebuild her home. She destroys the adjacent ship and rebuilds her ship armor, restoring her Hardness and increasing her AC back to 36.

Pressurize Claw ♦ **Requirements** Tehialai's claw isn't currently Pressurized; **Effect** Tehialai draws water into the base of one of her claws, building immense hydraulic pressure as she prepares to attack. The claw remains loaded until she Releases that Claw or 1 minute has passed, whichever comes first. While the claw is Pressurized, Tehialai can't use that claw to Strike. If Tehialai isn't at least partially within a body of water when she Pressurizes her Claw, she takes a -2 penalty to any attack rolls and DCs when she Releases that Claw.

Release Claw ♦ **Requirements** Tehialai has Pressurized a Claw; **Effect** Tehialai lashes out with the force of the sea. See each claw for its released effect; the DC for any effect is 33. After Releasing a Claw, the claw depressurizes.

TEHIALAI-THIEF-OF-SHIPS

TEHIALAI'S EXOSKELETAL ARMORY

Upon Receding Tide notes several weapons Tehialai has refined in her predations on the ships of the Okaiyo Ocean. The least terrible ones are detailed below.

Barbed Spear This long claw comes to a fine point, with barbs that can grip onto flesh and cloth alike.

Melee ♦ barbed spear +27 (magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 4d8+12 piercing

Release Claw ♦ Tehialai's spear shoots out, impaling prey and reeling them back. All creatures in a 40-foot line take 8d6 piercing damage (basic Reflex save); creatures that critically fail are grabbed until the end of Tehialai's next turn.

Boiling Club The head of this short, blunt claw has a pattern not unlike a human face.

Melee ♦ boiling club +25 (magical, reach 5 feet), **Damage** 4d12+12 bludgeoning plus 1d6 fire

Release Claw ♦ (fire, sonic) The impact of Tehialai's claw begets a burning vacuum. Tehialai makes a boiling club Strike against one target within 15 feet. If she hits, a shock wave booms out, dealing 3d6 fire damage and 3d6 sonic damage to all creatures except her within 15 feet of the target, including the target itself (basic Fortitude save). If the Strike was a critical hit, the target uses the degree of success one lower than it rolled on its save. Unlike most fire abilities, this ability can be used underwater, and the typical 5 fire resistance for being underwater doesn't apply.

Salt Darts A cluster of jagged salt crystals break off and regrow constantly as they draw salinity from the sea.

Ranged ♦ salt dart +26 (magical, range 120 feet), **Damage** 2d8+12 piercing plus 2d8 acid

Release Claw ♦ Tehialai launches a flurry of darts. She makes two salt dart Strikes against two different creatures. Both attacks count towards her multiple attack penalty, but she doesn't increase her penalty until after she has made both attacks.

Tidal Gourd This spherical, transparent growth sprouts vesicles of frigid water that detach and fly like sling stones.

Ranged ♦ tidal gourd +36 (magical, thrown 60 feet, water), **Damage** 2d8+4 bludgeoning plus 2d8 cold splash

Release Claw ♦ (water) Tehialai atomizes the water in her claw to create a mist that fills a 40-foot emanation centered on her and that lasts until the end of her next turn or until dispersed by a strong wind. All creatures within the mist become concealed, and all creatures outside the mist become concealed to creatures within it. Wavesense functions through the mist and ignores the concealment.

Toothed Shredder This chitinous disk bears numerous serrated protrusions, like a wheel of sharks' teeth.

Melee ♦ toothed shredder +27 (fatal d10, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 4d6+12 slashing

Release Claw ♦ Tehialai's claw whirs and spins to cut through armor and ship hulls. Tehialai makes a toothed shredder Strike. On a hit, the target becomes flat-footed

until the end of Tehialai's next turn and takes 2d12 persistent bleed damage.

TEHIALAI'S GIFTS

The legendary Okaiyan navigator Kolea the Wanderer gained much from his studies under Tehialai, learning how to create magical tattoos and fishhooks. You can find more details on magical tattoos on page 164 of *Pathfinder Secrets of Magic*.

STAR CHART TATTOO

ITEM 10

RARE DIVINATION INVESTED MAGICAL TATTOO

Price 900 gp

Usage tattooed on the body; **Bulk** –

This tattoo consists of numerous asterisks at regular intervals along the fingers of one hand, perfect for measuring stars against the horizon. When used against a clear night sky, the tattoo grants a +2 circumstance bonus to Survival checks to Sense Direction and counts as a compass for the purpose of that action.

Activation ♦ Interact (divination, metamagic); **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The dots of the tattoo turn to points of light and fly above the head of a creature within 30 feet, where they form a three-star constellation that guides your spells further than they could normally travel. The constellation sheds dim light and remains visible even if the creature hides, aiding in locating it. Furthermore, while the constellation lasts, if you Cast a Spell that has a range and that spell would affect only the marked creature, the spell's range is increased by 30 feet. As is standard for increasing spell ranges, if the spell normally has a range of touch, you extend its range to 30 feet. Each time you use this benefit, one of the stars above the creature's head winks out; when all three have winked out or after 1 minute has passed, the effect ends.

TIDAL FISHHOOK

ITEM 12

RARE MAGICAL TRANSMUTATION WATER

Price 1,700 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

This +2 *greater striking returning combat grapnel* (*Lost Omens Pathfinder Society Guide* 81) takes the form of a fishhook made of scavenged bones and stone with a cord of braided water. Attacks with a *tidal fishhook* don't take any of the normal penalties for fighting underwater. A broken (but not destroyed) *tidal fishhook* can be fully repaired by submerging it in an ocean for 1 minute.

Activation ♦♦ Interact (teleportation, water); **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** A *tidal fishhook* can travel between bodies of water to strike distant foes. You throw the fishhook into a 5-foot square that's fully covered with water, and it emerges to Strike or Grapple a target from another such square within 60 feet; the squares can be part of the same body of water or different ones. The distance between the bodies of water doesn't count toward the fishhook's range increment. If you successfully Grapple the target as part of this Strike, you can pull yourself along the fishhook's line, teleporting to the secondary body of water.

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TEMTEKI

I call to my siblings to share their strength with me so that I might not bear this alone.

I call to the animals to serve as my eyes so that I don't stand guard alone.

I call to the spirits to empower this seal so that it may hold.

I call to the Brother and the Sister so that his winds keep others away and her waters wash away the signs of Golokango's evil.

I call to the earth and the plants and all who would hear so that they know I serve them in this effort.

Each of you who listen and each of you who see, I call for you to forget me, so that this seal is left unnoticed until the end of days.

May these wards hold.

—Silang-Sefa's prayer before completing the ritual that bound her to Golokango's prison

"On the thirteenth day, at the thirteenth hour, Kgalaserke and her tree sages came near the grove. The cypress trees were young then, thin and tall, yet sturdy—home already to the birds and snakes, the tree frogs and tree dassies, whose songs graced the grove, be it day or night.

"The grove stood solemn, a perfect circle, guardians around the stone. The tree at the center held, in its trunk, a great stone at its center, black and solid basalt: Golokango's prison. The rough stone pierced the trunk, sapped it of life force, dragged it toward death, dooming the tree. Once a proud arboreal, this druid-guardian, this hero, to contain Golokango, sacrificed its life power, day and night.

"Kgalaserke and her tree sages sought the wisdom of the trees, sought their legacy, sought the druids who planted them, years before. The proud druids of the Jambala Jaeg, to protect the jungle against the fierce Golokango, gave their prowess in magic, gave their hearts. Weaving their magic all together, giving rise to the grove, bringing up the guardian circle of trees: a place of peace, a place of protection. Those who abide there fear no evil, fear no predators. They abide in safety, in the warding circle, in the protection of the trees, be it day or night.

"Kgalaserke and her tree sages made their camp within the circle, Ranage's circle, its strong ward giving them protection against the night. But Kgalaserke trusted the magic more than the wisdom, not recalling the teachings of the seer. The seer Mese'adse spoke with Jatembe's wisdom, saw the circle in her vision, knew its secrets and its power. The words she gave Kgalaserke should have guided, could have helped her. The words are these, my lordlings and my children. Listen, should you need them, be it day or night.

"When you travel, you grow weary, you seek magic far afield.

"When you near the sacred place, the place of magic, the magic prison, you grow tired, you grow heavy, you must sleep.

"Your fire will not stay burning. Your arrow will not fly true. The jungle does not love you. The jungle seeks your doom. Its protector knows your movements. Its protector does not rest."

"That night, Kgalaserke and her tree sages lit a fire, a dinner fire, to cook their food and soothe their hearts, to boil their tea. But the circle would not abide a fire. The earth rose up and swallowed it. Again, the tree sages used their tools. Again, the tree sages used their magic. Again and again, the earth swallowed their fire, made dust of their tools. They ate their food cold as the mists closed in. They lay down to sleep, but the earth pushed them up, would not leave them to sleep. In the morning, over their firepit, an earthen shape stood, a cypress tree in shape, made of earth. Kgalaserke acted with anger, cut through the earth, cut it down, her axe heads flashing through it. Always the axes would fly to her hands, her first thought, her instinct, be it day or night.

"But her anger did no good this day. The guardian had left the earth behind, and she could not harm it. And then, cracking, her axes fell to pieces, the heads of the axes turning to dust. And again, it vexed them, blocking their fire, bending their arrows, troubling their sleep. Tired and hungry, almost despairing, Kgalaserke and the tree sages repented, using their magic to ask the trees—for the cypress grove stood vigil, ever watching, ever guarding, keeping Golokango's prison, be it day or night.

"From the trees there came the knowledge, quietly moving on the air, impressed upon their ears in the quietness of thought. They learned another guardian made its home in the grove, in Ranage's circle—another guardian made of stone, made of earth, made of spirit, to protect the jungle there: all the jungle, tree and soil, animal and air, be it day or night.



KGALASERKE

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"The fire angers the guardian. Temteki is its name: protector, fierce protector against the fires and storms, against the arrows and axes, against the will of creatures who would tear and break and crush. Temteki trusts the magic of the circle, of the trees, of the seal that keeps Golokango's prison closed. Temteki keeps the jungle safe and stable against all comers, be it day or night.

"Kgalaserke and her tree sages made appeasement to Temteki, forswore their fires, bound their weapons, put their camp at circle's edge. And the branches came to the ground, lifted the heroes up in their arms, and brought them safe within. The tree sages learned the magic, listened to the whispers, opened up all their eyes. For thirteen days, the trees held their communion, cocooned the heroes, and brought them to knowledge, through the day and through the night.

"Then they departed, but Kgalaserke's lesson did not leave her: that her axes were not always her best friend."

—Excerpt from *The Epic of Kgalaserke*

Temteki is a unique magical creature bound to the protection of Ranage's Circle (*Pathfinder Lost Omens: The Mwangi Expanse* 157). Its ferocious protection and surprise tactics have given rise to many stories and tales, especially because—even when seen in its simplest entirety, which is rare—its form is so unique that it doesn't seem to be a creature at all.

Legend has long held that, a thousand years ago, a powerful arboreal named Silang-Sefa joined with druids of the Jambala Jaeg people (a subgroup of Zenj) to imprison Golokango, a demonic jungle spirit, in a chunk of black basalt. Silang-Sefa sacrificed her

liberty and much of her life force to engulf the stone in her own trunk while the druids planted and nurtured a circular grove of cypress trees around her. The place became known as Ranage's Circle, an oasis of powerful wards and protective magic deep within the Mwangi Expanse. For those able to find it, the Circle is said to provide a safe refuge for weary travelers, with protections against all manner of evildoers and even the jungle's fierce predators.

The powerful magic of the Circle had an additional and quite unintended effect. As the arboreal struggles, ever so slightly over the long years, to keep the stone solidly within her grasp, the stone twists deeper and deeper into her trunk. Centuries ago, a fragment split from the basalt prison, falling to the ground. There, it lay immersed in baths of life-giving, protective magic until, gradually, it fell apart into tiny fragments that mixed with the soil. That infused soil then, unexpectedly, gained sentience. With that sentience came a single and categorical imperative: protect the jungle.

The new creature named itself Temteki after the sounds it had long heard from the creatures nestled in the cypress boughs. It knows itself to be of a substance similar to the ground and so has focused its own nascent magical powers on the ground. Through this focus, it has learned to shape earth and to glide in and out of it. In its preferred shape, it pulls the earth up into roughly the shape of a very young cypress tree, so that it looks like a small earthen sculpture honoring the massive living cypresses of its home.

When no threats are near, Temteki happily stays in its cypress form. Temteki understands itself to be an additional guardian of Ranage's Circle as a whole, not just of the prison stone. Temteki sees all interlopers who make any changes to the trees, earth, or animals as a threat. The creature can meld into and glide through the earth, using this power to ambush its adversaries. It will suddenly douse a fire when travelers camp inside the ring or overwhelm hunters just as they're about to take down their prey. Knives, axes, stakes, and the like are particularly unwelcome, and Temteki has learned to direct its primal energy on these and all such tools to force them to shatter. Torches and any other fire are also alarming, and Temteki will attempt to smother all open flames with earth. Those interlopers in the Circle who wield any such horrific devices are likely to be harried by Temteki until they depart.

An unflinching protector, Temteki is not in the least malicious or evil and may even be reasoned with. Although it can't speak, it can understand both Sylvan and Terran. A party that can explain their presence and purpose within Ranage's Circle is likely to negotiate a truce with Temteki, so long as they also hide their weapons and forswear any fires for the duration of their stay.



GOLOKANGO'S SEAL

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

Temteki knows no fear and is willing to stand between characters of all kinds and its ward within Ranage's Circle.

Low-Level Campaigns (1-7)

Ranage's Circle stands deep in the center of the Mwangi Jungle. PCs traveling through the area have plenty of dangers to occupy their travels. GMs looking to include the Mwangi Jungle or Ranage's Circle can read more about the region on pages 154–159 of *The Mwangi Expanse*. The book also includes a list of creatures fitting for the region on page 289. This information can help GMs populate journeys through the Mwangi Jungle as they see fit.

Whether or not PCs are searching for Ranage's Circle, there's a chance that it draws their attention. The clearing is very out of place among the dense jungle, and as they near Ranage's Circle, PCs might notice a lack of animal calls and other signs of animal life. This anomaly alone might be enough to grab the PCs' attention. With further investigation, it's likely that they eventually reach Ranage's Circle.

Temteki quickly springs to life as anyone enters the clearing, which might surprise the PCs. Unless they speak Sylvan or Terran and immediately call out for peace with Temteki, it begins to attack, hoping to push the PCs out of the circle. Temteki uses its magic to put out any fires the PCs have and attempts to destroy their weapons. When attacking, it chooses to make nonlethal attacks, taking penalties as appropriate.

Unless the PCs are brand-new adventurers, Temteki is unlikely to be a very serious threat. PCs can attempt a DC 20 Perception check to Sense Motive against Temteki to recognize that it's intentionally holding back and avoiding using lethal force. Recognizing this might be enough for PCs to recognize that they're unwanted in the circle. If they continue to press further into the circle or choose to repeatedly attack Temteki, it changes up its tactics, using its Earth Glide for hit-and-run tactics and switching to lethal strikes, fighting to the death. If the PCs slay Temteki, the power of Ranage's Circle causes it to return and re-form after 1 week.

PCs who want to learn more about Ranage's Circle need to convince Temteki that they're trustworthy. If a character speaks Sylvan or Terran, this is as simple as using Diplomacy to Make an Impression with Temteki. PCs that don't speak the appropriate languages can still use magic to aid them. In particular, *Speak with Animals*, *Speak with Plants*, and *Stone Tell* enable a character to communicate with Temteki, as the animating magic of the circle brought all parts of nature into Temteki's creation. This magic allows Temteki to serve as a suitable target for all of these spells.

In the case where PCs have no other means of communicating with Temteki, they still have a chance to earn its trust. PCs who intentionally lay down

their weapons and obviously surrender give the elemental pause. The PCs can then stand still and wait for Temteki to observe and analyze them. Given enough time, Temteki can determine their intentions and allow them into the circle. Beyond this, the PCs can try to sneak past Temteki, but doing so is difficult, and it attacks immediately upon noticing them.

Mid-Level Campaigns (8-14)

Once characters have access to Ranage's Circle, they're likely to see Golokango's prison in the center. Low-level PCs are unlikely to be able to discern the true nature of the prison, instead believing it to be some strange druidic shrine or other structure. PCs who succeed at a DC 30 Nature or Occultism check can recognize the true nature of the basalt stone and prison, though not the contents within.

Silang-Sefa is unable to speak or react to the arrival of the PCs, as she's constantly dedicating much of her life force to maintaining the prison. At best, a PCs that speaks at her can receive simple responses in the form of a shaking tree branch. PCs that can make use of *mind reading* or telepathy are able to directly communicate with the arboreal. She recognizes that anyone Temteki allows into the circle is likely virtuous, and she's willing to explain the entire reason for the circle's existence and her current state to any who earn the guardian's trust.

Unfortunately, removing the stone and destroying Golokango is beyond the capabilities of PCs at this tier of play. These characters can instead help strengthen the wards that bind Golokango through their own primal abilities or by contacting druids within the Mwangi Expanse. Reinforcing the wards can empower Temteki, allowing it to act as a more capable guardian. Supplementing wards also return some life force to Silang-Sefa, which gives her the ability to speak with visitors once more.

High-Level Campaigns (15-20)

PCs that wish to defeat Golokango are in for a difficult task. Cracking the prison stone requires striking it with an adamantine weapon. Once struck, Golokango escapes into Silang-Sefa's body and takes over the arboreal's form, attacking the PCs immediately. If the heroes can slay the possessed Silang-Sefa, Golokango is defeated, its form destroyed by the direct exposure to Silang-Sefa's life force upon her death. Unfortunately, the melding of Golokango's spirit and Silang-Sefa's soul causes the two to become intertwined and fully destroyed upon her death, making it impossible to revive the arboreal.

With careful work and powerful magic, the PCs can remove the basalt stone from Silang-Sefa's body before releasing Golokango. Once free, Golokango manifests as a powerful demonic spirit with deadly abilities. Luckily, Silang-Sefa and Temteki can both join the PCs in this fight to put an end to the malevolent spirit once and for all.

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TIRELESS GUARDIAN

Though it superficially resembles a cypress tree and is easily mistaken for an arboreal or other similar plant creature, Temteki is actually an earth elemental, a creature of living earth and stone. In normal situations, Temteki is content to remain still and blend into the jungle when observing other creatures, using its natural camouflage to assist in harrying those it considers interlopers disturbing its home. Temteki usually dissuades such intruders with a combination of surprise attacks and nonlethal snares; the elemental is more interested in getting them to leave than in dealing them any permanent harm. However, to those who prove determined to harm Temteki or its home, Temteki can be an implacable foe. Temteki's asymmetrical gait and appearance often alarm and confuse creatures who aren't expecting to spot it, especially since it's surprisingly stealthy for its size and appearance.

TEMTEKI

CREATURE 5

UNIQUE LN MEDIUM EARTH ELEMENTAL

Perception +13; darkvision, tremorsense (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Sylvan, Terran (can't speak any language)

Skills Athletics +12, Intimidation +14, Nature +11, Stealth +11 (+15 in forests)

Str +5, **Dex** +0, **Con** +4, **Int** +2, **Wis** +2, **Cha** +5

Imposing Mien Temteki can use Intimidation to Coerce or Demoralize up to four targets instead of one, rolling separate Intimidation checks against the Will DCs of each target. In addition, since Temteki Demoralizes using its appearance alone, it doesn't take a penalty to Intimidation checks to Demoralize for not speaking a language.

AC 21; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +9, **Will** +13

HP 80; **Immunities** bleed, paralyzed, poison, sleep

Interposing Earth ➤ **Trigger** Temteki is targeted with a melee or ranged attack from an attacker it can see; **Effect** Temteki raises earth to block, gaining a +2 circumstance bonus to AC against the triggering attack.

Speed 30 feet, burrow 30 feet; earth glide

Melee ♦ spike +15 (magical), **Damage** 2d10+5 piercing plus Push 5 feet

Primal Innate Spells DC 19, attack +11; **3rd** *earthbind*, *quench* (*Advanced Players Guide* 223), *shatter* (×3, see *Toolbreaker*); **Cantrips (3rd)** *acid splash*, *detect magic*, *tanglefoot*

Earth Glide Temteki can Burrow through any earthen matter, including rock. When it does so, it moves at its full burrow Speed, leaving no tunnel or sign of its passing.

Earthen Cypress ♦ (stance) **Requirements** Temteki is standing on the ground; **Effect** Temteki draws up the earth around itself into the shape of a cypress tree. While in this stance, Temteki's reach for spike Strikes increases to 15 feet, but Temteki can't move except to Burrow into the ground using Earth Glide. Doing so causes Temteki to leave this stance and creates a heap of earth in the square Temteki left, making the square difficult terrain.

Toolbreaker Temteki can only target worked or crafted items with *shatter*, not natural objects.

SNARES

Rangers and trapsmiths who have studied Temteki's tricks to inconvenience intruders (or who have experienced them firsthand) have been inspired to craft several unusual snares. These snares aren't designed to kill or even do much harm, but they nevertheless make plain to anyone who triggers them that they aren't welcome in the area.

APPETIZING FLAVOR SNARE

SNARE 1

RARE CONSUMABLE MECHANICAL SNARE TRAP

Price 3 gp

You construct this snare around a sealed bladder containing substances that local predators find delicious, such as scent glands from prey animals or fresh carrion. The first creature to enter the square must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save or be doused with the substances. For 1 hour, animals attracted to the flavor (such as most predators, at the GM's discretion) can smell the creature from double the usual distance of their scent and are likely to approach to investigate the smell. A creature can wash away the appetizing flavor with 1 minute of vigorous scrubbing.

EXPULSION SNARE

SNARE 2

RARE CONSUMABLE MECHANICAL SNARE TRAP

Price 6 gp

You conceal a rounded board or thin metal plate just beneath the ground, concave side down. The first creature to enter the snare's square finds it unexpectedly springy and is bounced back out of the square when the flattened board springs back into place. The triggering creature must succeed at a DC 17 Fortitude saving throw or be moved into an adjacent square (chosen by you when you craft the snare). This is forced movement. On a critical failure, the creature falls prone in that square.

FIRE-DOUSE SNARE

SNARE 4

RARE CONSUMABLE MECHANICAL SNARE TRAP

Price 15 gp

You carefully pack rare, heat-absorbing powders into a specially prepared clay vessel, then bury the vessel in the ground up to its neck. When a creature enters the square, the vessel's neck shatters, dispersing the powders into the air. The powder instantly douses non-magical fires the size of a campfire or smaller within 10 feet of the snare. The creature triggering the snare must attempt a DC 20 Reflex save to avoid getting powder in its face. A creature blinded or dazzled by the powder can use an Interact action to attempt a DC 10 flat check; on a success, it removes the condition. On a failure, it can try again, with a DC of 5 on the next Interact check. If it fails a second time, it automatically removes the condition with a third Interact action.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is dazzled for 1 round.

Failure The creature is blinded until the end of its next turn and dazzled for 1 minute afterwards.

Critical Failure The creature is blinded for 1 minute and dazzled for 10 minutes afterwards.

GREASE SNARE

SNARE 5

RARE CONSUMABLE MECHANICAL SNARE TRAP

Price 30 gp

This snare releases a stream of grease that coats the area, making movement difficult and potentially making the target slippery and clumsy. The square with the snare, as well as three adjacent squares you determine when you set the snare, become difficult terrain when a creature triggers the snare. The triggering creature must attempt a DC 22 Reflex saving throw. A creature can use three Interact actions to wipe away the grease from a single square or from the triggering creature; removing the grease from the triggering creature ends the effects on it.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is clumsy 1 for 1 round.

Failure For 1 minute, the creature is clumsy 1 and must roll twice and use the worse result whenever attempting a Thievery check. If the target rolls a failure at a Thievery check, it gets a critical failure instead. This is a misfortune effect.

Critical Failure As failure, but the effects last for 1 hour instead of 1 minute, and removing the grease from the triggering creature requires a 1-minute activity instead of three Interact actions.

PIERCING WHISTLE SNARE

SNARE 6

RARE CONSUMABLE MECHANICAL SNARE TRAP

Price 45 gp

This snare forces air through several high-pitched, whistle-like pipes or reeds. The shrill noise can be heard clearly up to 2 miles away but is most intense near the snare's trigger. The snare deals 4d6 sonic damage (DC 22 basic Fortitude save) to creatures within 10 feet; a creature that fails this save is deafened for 1 round (1 hour on a critical failure). The triggering creature is deafened for 1 minute on a failure, or 1 hour on a critical failure.

RUSTING SNARE

SNARE 8

RARE CONSUMABLE MECHANICAL SNARE TRAP

Price 75 gp

This snare emits puffs of oxidizing chemicals that rapidly degrade metal items; skymetals and most precious metals are immune. The chemicals affect a non-magical metal item of up to 1 Bulk that the triggering creature is holding or openly wearing (determined randomly if the creature is holding or wearing more than one). The triggering creature must attempt a DC 25 Reflex saving throw. The snare deals 2d6 damage to the item; this damage ignores the item's Hardness and might deal persistent damage on a failed Reflex save. The creature, or an adjacent creature, can attempt to scrape off the chemicals as an

Interact action to prevent the persistent damage; doing so reduces the DC of the flat check to end persistent damage to 10 and grants an immediate flat check. Thin iron or steel items, such as weapons, typically have 20 HP and a Broken Threshold of 10, and thicker iron or steel items, such as most suits of armor, typically have 36 HP and a Broken Threshold of 18. Other materials' statistics can be found on pages 577-579 of the *Core Rulebook*.

Critical Success The object is unaffected.

Success The object takes full damage.

Failure The object takes full damage as well as 1d6 persistent damage.

Critical Failure The object takes double damage as well as 2d6 persistent damage.



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ULGREM-AXAAN

It came with the snow.

We made camp near Ghoulfang Pass. It was cold but clear. Vecarri allowed the prisoners a campfire to keep their quick blood warm. Two of the weakest were culled for food. An ordinary day, until the storm blew up from nowhere. In its midst, icy claws and red eyes—a thing enormous but impossibly fast, faster than Vecarri. Fast enough to disembowel a vampire.

It destroyed all who were dead, then all who were living. Only I, the recorder, was left. Like most beasts, it did not understand my nature, and it did not care what became of me. It had no interest in things.

But to the undead, it was devastation, and to the quick, no savior.

—From the journals of Iphix XI, necrophidic scribe

Centuries ago, the creature that would become Ulgrem-Axaan lived in the mud beneath the northern reaches of the Axanir River in Geb. It might have been a black-plated crocodile, or an enormous shock-toothed eel, or some other, stranger creature now lost with the river's death. That it was ancient among its kind, and a powerful predator, are the only things known for certain.

When the blood farms of Geb began imprisoning the living for consumption by the growing undead elite, they dumped their waste and byproducts into the Axanir River. The drained husks of corpses, zombies too rotten or broken to be of further use, and the other inevitable effluvia of a mass-processing operation were simply thrown into the water to be carried away. Hundreds upon hundreds of bodies went into the Axanir, along with a constant flow of raw sewage and feed waste.

Over time, all the wildlife that had once lived in the river either fled or died. The polluted waters suffocated fish, fouled waterbirds' nesting sites, and mired plants in festering, blood-soaked mud. Predators starved, smothered, or succumbed to disease.

Within a few years, Ulgrem-Axaan was alone. Its prey were gone. Its mate and children were dead. Only Ulgrem-Axaan, oldest and wiliest of an old and wily species, survived.

Yet it, too, was dying. The corrupt magics of undeath permeated the water, air, and soil, clouding the creature's gaze and coating its tongue in filth. As Ulgrem-Axaan sank into miserable solitude, it could feel the taint working deeper, threatening to transform it into the same hated undead who had destroyed its entire world.

Seeking escape, Ulgrem-Axaan abandoned its ancestral home in the Axanir River, heaving its mud-crusted bulk onto land in a desperate retreat. But it was too late. The sick and devastated creature succumbed not long after it left the water, expiring in the foreign harshness of dry land.

Even then, its sufferings were not over. It had swallowed too much of the poisoned river's corruption. After five days and five nights, Ulgrem-Axaan rose as undead, white-eyed and bloated with decay.

It continued its journey away from the river. No longer did it chase a doomed dream of survival.

Now, it wanted only revenge.

A HUNTER IN THE SNOW

For hundreds of years, Ulgrem-Axaan has roamed the high reaches of the Shattered Range and the mountains west of Graydirge. Driven by an endless thirst for vengeance, it has relentlessly hunted and slaughtered all the undead it can find.

Over the many centuries, Ulgrem-Axaan has developed a level of cunning far beyond that of the natural animal it once was. When its foes

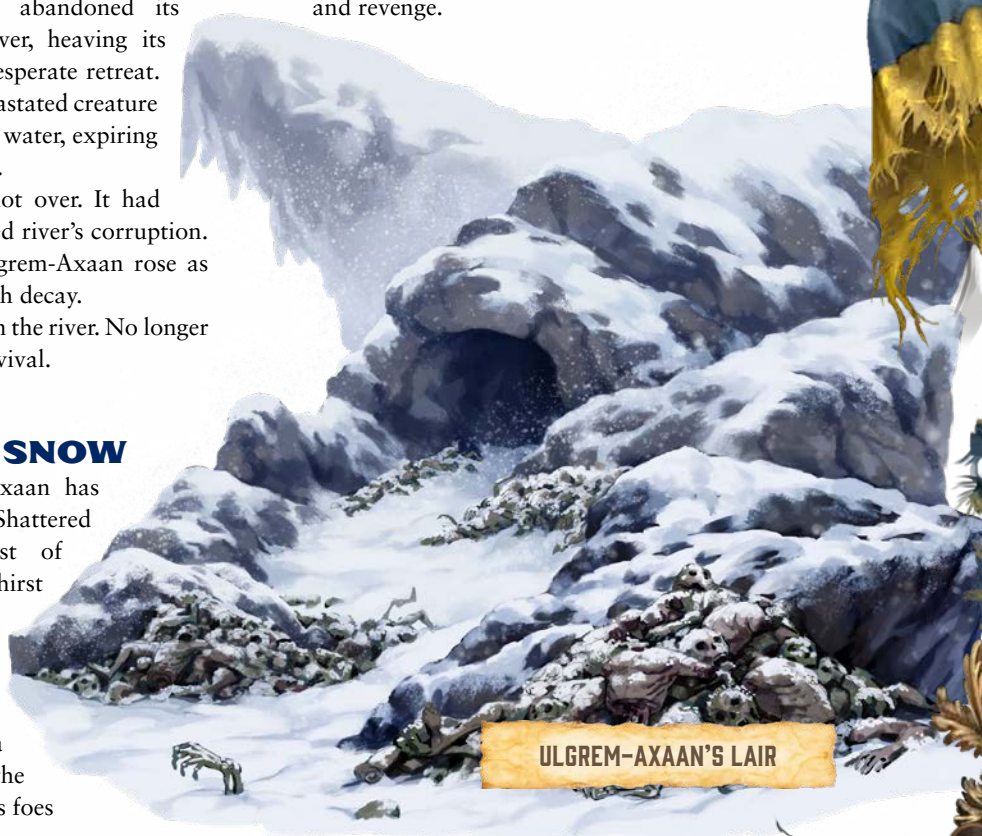
are too powerful or numerous to overcome in a direct assault, Ulgrem-Axaan varies its tactics, using the harsh terrain to set ambushes with avalanches and rockfalls, harrying its quarry with strike-and-retreat attacks to weaken undead over time, or even luring other enemies toward its prey so they, too, can join the assault.

Long experience has taught Ulgrem-Axaan that adventurers can be particularly useful pawns. It has learned to use bits of shiny treasure, cryptic clues, and blood trails to coax them into confrontations with targeted undead. However, as Ulgrem-Axaan is unable to read and has only a limited ability to distinguish genuine valuables from glittery but worthless baubles, its set pieces are sometimes more confusing than compelling.

Other than using them as tools against undead, the monster is largely indifferent to living mortals. It cares nothing for their suffering and never intervenes to help the lost or wounded, unless it perceives that they might be useful in killing undead. It also seldom bothers to hunt them, unless it sees them raising undead or considers them to be defiling nature. In that case, Ulgrem-Axaan has been known to slaughter entire mining camps and hunting expeditions that were insufficiently respectful of their surroundings. None are spared in such attacks.

The one exception to Ulgrem-Axaan's indiscriminate belligerence is that the monster won't voluntarily attack druids or other protectors of the wilderness. At times it may even help them, although it's hardly a reliable or consistent ally.

Ulgrem-Axaan doesn't appear to consume its victims, although it often makes macabre displays of its kills. If anything sustains the beast, it is pure hatred and revenge.



ULGREM-AXAAN'S LAIR

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THE FACE OF THE BEAST

Few have seen Ulgrem-Axaan and lived to speak of it, for the behemoth rarely reveals itself except in the final moments of an attack. The sparse accounts that exist, however, describe a serpentine or crocodilian hulk covered in armored scales and a maze of cracked ice, with inky fluid seething beneath its icy plating like the waters of a half-frozen lake. Its massive head is a knot of gristly, rotted muscle and discolored bone crowned by pronounced, bony ridges and icy spikes. Tiny eyes burn in the shadows of those serrated ridges, afire with unnatural intelligence and hate.

Scholars of the undead hypothesize that Ulgrem-Axaan retreated to the high mountains because its body is so thoroughly corrupted by pollution and disease that it might fall apart if thawed. Only by staying frozen can Ulgrem-Axaan retain any semblance of its mortal form and numb the pains of the many afflictions that plague its tormented flesh. While it's highly unlikely that thawing would destroy Ulgrem-Axaan—the curse of undeath is seldom so easily ended—it would almost certainly cause some drastic change in the creature's physical composition, and perhaps in the very nature of its curse. What the result of that transformation might be, none can say, but plainly Ulgrem-Axaan has gone to great lengths to prevent it.

Another proposed explanation for Ulgrem-Axaan's frozen state is that the creature was female in life and now harbors one last clutch of fertilized, unlaidd eggs. If those eggs could somehow be purified of undead corruption and hatched, they might renew the creature's long-extinct species. Under this theory, Ulgrem-Axaan restricts itself to the icy heights because it understands, on some level, that thawing its body will destroy this fragile hope.

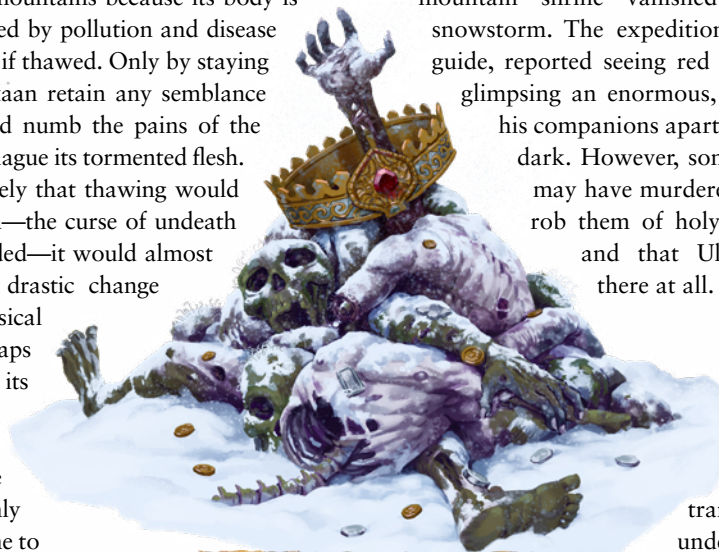
A HISTORY OF SLAUGHTER

Several notable encounters with Ulgrem-Axaan have been recorded. In 4552 AR, the vampire captain Lechanne lost her entire company to repeated ambushes by Ulgrem-Axaan, only surviving herself by abandoning her corporeal form and retreating as vapor. Lechanne reported that the creature lured her minions into high, treeless reaches of the mountains and blockaded their retreat with avalanches, stranding them in terrain that froze the zombies and ghouls solid and allowed Ulgrem-Axaan to destroy them easily once their firewood ran out. The stragglers succumbed to hunger, as they had no humans to consume, and were again easily hunted down. Lechanne herself nearly starved before happening upon a caravan of mortal pilgrims, whom she hungrily devoured.

The massacre and burning of the village of Three Loaves is widely believed to have been part of this attack. Ulgrem-Axaan may have destroyed the village and killed dozens of innocents simply as a tactical measure to prevent Lechanne's forces from finding shelter or sustenance there.

Beremache of Mechitar, a scholar fleeing the enmity of a powerful Blood Lord, vanished in the Shattered Range after seeking Ulgrem-Axaan out for study. Opinions differ as to whether Beremache met his end in the beast's jaws or merely used this as a ruse to evade the Blood Lord's murderous grudge.

In 4619 AR, pilgrims traveling to an Iroan mountain shrine vanished during an unnatural snowstorm. The expedition's sole survivor, a local guide, reported seeing red eyes in the blizzard and glimpsing an enormous, ice-sleeked form tearing his companions apart before vanishing into the dark. However, some believe that the guide may have murdered his charges in order to rob them of holy artifacts and valuables, and that Ulgrem-Axaan was never there at all.



A GRISLY CLUE

LAST OF ITS KIND

What Ulgrem-Axaan lived as before its death is unclear. Its transformation into an undead was a lengthy process. During its death,

Ulgrem-Axaan's body accumulated additional mass from the other dead creatures within its home. Scales and hide floated about the river, fangs and claws became lodged into its decaying flesh, and the bones of so many dead mixed in with Ulgrem-Axaan's own. What eventually awoke in undeath was an amalgam of flesh, bone, and fury, not quite a single type of creature anymore.

Ulgrem-Axaan has enough flesh and mass for five creatures, and its undead state seems to constantly shift between the multiple masses that make up its body. The portions of multiple creatures seem to die and be reborn again at irregular intervals. This is heralded by spasming flesh, the sounds of cracking bones, and other physical signifiers. As a result, Ulgrem-Axaan's appearance and abilities seem to change. Most times, Ulgrem-Axaan appears crocodilian in form, but other times it resembles a slithering creature not unlike a massive snake or a bloated, spined fish. These changes seem to last weeks or even months at a time, but eventually Ulgrem-Axaan returns to its crocodilian appearance. The prominence of the crocodilian state suggests it to be Ulgrem-Axaan's original form, but the fact that Ulgrem-Axaan tends to go into hiding when another transformation occurs hints that the creature's true form might be something it doesn't wish to show the world.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

Ulgrem-Axaan can feature as a part of any campaign.

LOW-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (1-7)

Characters in Geb can encounter Ulgrem-Axaan or signs of it during their travels. At early levels in this tier of play, Ulgrem-Axaan can leave behind clues that lead characters to dens of undead near the foot of a mountain. While Ulgrem-Axaan could likely destroy these undead on its own, the warmer weather makes it difficult for Ulgrem-Axaan to remain in the area for moderate lengths of time, let alone fight undead there. These clues are probably inscrutable at first, but after encountering additional anomalies, the PCs might notice a pattern or that the clues are forming a trail worth following.

The undead that PCs fight can vary, but Ulgrem-Axaan is probably intent on drawing attention to notable or powerful undead like shadows (*Bestiary* 289), skeletal giants (*Bestiary* 299), and vampires (*Bestiary* 318). Depending on where these are located, Ulgrem-Axaan can even assist in these fights, creating hazards such as rock slides or even joining in an attack directly.

Characters that encounter Ulgrem-Axaan directly are likely to attempt to destroy it. Ulgrem-Axaan's undead nature is obvious, and good-aligned PCs, especially champions and followers of Pharasma, are bound to attack the creature immediately. Ulgrem-Axaan reacts in kind, fighting until destroyed. If the PCs find Ulgrem-Axaan near its lair, the creature fights with an intensified ferocity. GMs who wish to represent this can apply the elite adjustment (*Bestiary* 6) to Ulgrem-Axaan. PCs who investigate the creature's body might locate Ulgrem-Axaan's clutch of eggs within (see page 118), but unless the PCs take the time to research the nature of the eggs and the undead corruption that affects them, there's likely nothing they can do with the eggs.

If a druid is among the ranks of the PCs, Ulgrem-Axaan hesitates when first encountering the group. Characters that don't attack immediately have a moment to notice this hesitation with a successful DC 25 Perception check to Sense Motive; druids gain a +2 circumstance bonus to this check. On a success, a PC can realize that Ulgrem-Axaan is hesitating due specifically to the presence of a druid. Characters that speak Druidic or Necril can attempt to communicate with Ulgrem-Axaan; while the creature can't speak, it can show signs of understanding and even answer simple questions with grunts and hisses. PCs can also make use of *Speak with Animals* to communicate with Ulgrem-Axaan, but its undead nature prevents it from speaking, even with magical assistance, and it replies with sounds as well.

After some investigation, a character can attempt a DC 27 Medicine, Nature, Occultism, or Religion check to Recall Knowledge and determine the magically corrupted and poisoned nature of Ulgrem-Axaan's form. This revelation is enough to earn Ulgrem-Axaan's trust, and the creature leads the PCs to its lair and attempts to inform them of the clutch of eggs that remain. The corruption has

taken hold in the eggs as well, but Ulgrem-Axaan makes it clear that there is a possibility of saving the eggs. PCs that attempt to do so need to find a means of cleansing the corruption.

MID-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (8-14)

Learning how to cleanse Ulgrem-Axaan's corruption is no simple task. The PCs need to locate the information among the knowledge of Geb, potentially traveling to a prominent city to gather what information they can. The most likely location is the capital city of Mechitar; not only is the city the home of the nation's most prominent spellcasters and researchers, it also lies along the Axanir River and was exposed to same corruption and poison that created Ulgrem-Axaan. While most of the city's undead citizens are unconcerned with the corruption, cleansing the waters is still useful to help keep the city's non-undead denizens alive.

The encounter with the water's corruption likely produced a fair amount of research for cleansing the river. Details on this research might be held within the libraries of Mechitar. Traveling through the city is easier said than done, however, as a fair number of undead might see the PCs as new servants or a potential meal. The PCs will need to maneuver carefully through the city to avoid becoming the focus of local undead aristocrats. Depending on how they do, the PCs could attract the attention of a notable ghoul lord or vampire and need to fight off the undead's attempts at claiming their lives.

Rather than locate the information on cleansing research in Mechitar's libraries, the PCs might instead go directly to a Mechitar local to gain the information. A notable Mechitar necromancer or powerful undead could have the information the PCs seek. In this case, the PCs will need to deal with intrigue in the city of Mechitar, finding a way to gain audience with the figure and convince them to share what they know. This figure might task the PCs with a quest that could test their morals, as aiding an undead could lead to a conflict with a champion's code or require the PCs to commit unscrupulous acts.

HIGH-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (15-20)

If the PCs manage to acquire the *mother's blessing* ritual (page 118), they can save some of Ulgrem-Axaan's children from the grip of undeath. The new children need a safe home away from the dangers of the Axanir River. The existence of the creatures could draw the attention of powerful figures, especially ones that notice the PCs' actions in Mechitar. The PCs would need to fend off monster hunters and others looking to take the creatures for their own nefarious purposes. Additionally, the PCs could even try to cleanse a portion of the Axanir River to create a safe home for the newborns. As for Ulgrem-Axaan, the only way to restore the creature would be a more powerful variant of the ritual. Cleansing the corruption destroys Ulgrem-Axaan, as it loses its undead form. Once dead, the PCs could use resurrection magic to restore Ulgrem-Axaan to life, leaving it to watch over

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VENGEFUL ENDLING

Whatever Ulgrem-Axaan looked like in life, undeath has revealed a rotting, crocodilian skeleton encased in a jagged hide of ice crystals. Steam rises from the creature's mouth and back as its icy skin melts in the sun or from the heat of the electricity it cycles through its body.

ULGREM-AXAAN

CREATURE 7

UNIQUE CE LARGE AMPHIBIOUS BEAST UNDEAD

Perception +18; darkvision, wavesense (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Druidic, Necril (can't speak any language)

Skills Athletics +17, Deception +15, Intimidation +17, Stealth +16 (+20 in water)

Str +6, **Dex** +4, **Con** +4, **Int** -2, **Wis** -1, **Cha** +4

Frozen Contemplation Being frozen stops the constant pain Ulgrem-Axaan has experienced since its death. Ulgrem-Axaan has fast healing 5 while in severe cold or colder environments, or for 1 round after taking cold damage.

AC 24; **Fort** +18, **Ref** +15, **Will** +12; +2 status to all non-primal emotion effects

HP 130 (negative healing); **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, unconscious; **Weaknesses** fire 5; **Resistances** cold 10, electric 5, piercing 5

Baleful Glare (aura, emotion, fear, visual) 15 feet. Creatures entering or starting their turn in the emanation that can see Ulgrem-Axaan must succeed at a DC 22 Will save or be frightened 1 (frightened 2 on a critical failure). A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune to baleful glare for 1 minute.

Ferocity

Territorial Rage **Trigger** A creature comes within melee reach of Ulgrem-Axaan while it's burrowed underground or underwater; **Effect** Ulgrem-Axaan lunges and makes a jaws Strike against the creature, which is flat-footed against the attack and takes an additional 1d6 damage on a hit.

Speed 25 feet, burrow 10 feet, swim 30 feet

Melee **◆** jaws +18 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d12+8 piercing plus Grab

Melee **◆** tail +18 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d8+8 bludgeoning plus Grab

Aquatic Ambush **◆** 30 feet

Swallow Whole **◆** (attack) Medium, 1d12+8 bludgeoning, Rupture 18

Unnatural Vengeance Ulgrem-Axaan gains a +1 circumstance bonus to attack and damage rolls against undead.

Voltaic Blow **◆** (electricity) **Requirements** Ulgrem-Axaan has a creature grabbed with its tail; **Effect** An electric shock passes through Ulgrem-Axaan's tail, dealing 2d4+8 electricity damage to the creature (DC 25 basic Fortitude save).

ALTERNATE ABILITIES

Rumors run rampant about the most mysterious and unique beings on Golarion, and any scholar who makes assumptions can easily be blindsided by reality. The following are a number of alternate abilities that Ulgrem-Axaan might possess; GMs choosing to use one of these abilities can replace one of Ulgrem-Axaan's abilities in the stat block above.

Crocodile Tears Ulgrem-Axaan can mimic the sound of a wounded prey animal by attempting a Deception check to Lie. It has a +4 circumstance bonus to this check.

Befouling Odor (aura, olfactory) 15 feet. Creatures entering or starting their turn in the emanation must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save or be sickened 1 (sickened 2 on a critical failure). A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune to befouling odor for 1 minute.

Ichor Coating (disease) Beneath the plates of bone and ice on Ulgrem-Axaan flow the viscous remains of its vital fluids. Creatures coming into physical contact with this fluid must succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save or become infected with ghoul fever (*Bestiary* 168).

Crushing Weight **◆** **Requirements** Ulgrem-Axaan has a creature grabbed with its tail; **Effect** Ulgrem-Axaan's tail clamps down around the creature, dealing 2d4+8 bludgeoning damage (DC 25 basic Fortitude save).

Fallen Victim **◆◆** (attack) **Requirements** A creature in Ulgrem-Axaan's reach is prone, and Ulgrem-Axaan isn't currently grabbing another creature; **Effect** Ulgrem-Axaan attempts a jaws Strike against the creature. If successful, Ulgrem-Axaan immediately Grabs the creature, and the creature takes an additional 2d10 bludgeoning damage.

Ichor Trail Any square Ulgrem-Axaan moves into is coated in melting liquids from its body and becomes difficult terrain. After an hour, the ichor dries and the effect ends.

THE BEAST REBORN

It seems unlikely that the theories of Ulgrem-Axaan's final clutch of eggs are true, and unlikelier still that the eggs could still be saved after all this time. Yet hope, much like undeath, is a lingering curse that's hard to destroy. Should an adventurer somehow win the trust of the resentful beast, a tiny shard of something long lost might be revived.

CLEANSING UNDEATH

Druids who earn Ulgrem-Axaan's trust can learn this ritual. There are initially 20 eggs.

MOTHER'S BLESSING

RITUAL 5

RARE BEAST CONSECRATION NECROMANCY POSITIVE PRIMAL

Cast 1 day; **Cost** at least 1 gallon of clean river water;

Secondary Casters 3

Primary Check Nature (expert); **Secondary Checks** Crafting, Medicine, Survival

Target Ulgrem-Axaan's eggs

You attempt to purify and stabilize the life inside of Ulgrem-Axaan's last remaining clutch of eggs. With its blessing, you wash the eggs clean from the filth of undeath and bury them in warm sand by the banks of a river in Garund.

Critical Success The ritual is successful and the eggs hatch, giving life to an ancient species brought to the brink of extinction by the destruction of their home.

Success As critical success, but only half of the eggs hatch (rounded up). You can try again with the remaining eggs.

Failure No effect, and you must wait a week to try again.

Critical Failure 90% of the eggs shatter (rounded up). You must wait a month to try again.

REBUILDING THE ULGREM LINE

Ulgrem-Axaan has a limited ability to respond to magical telepathy with a handful of words in Necril. The name Ulgrem-Axaan originally comes from the creature itself, and the rough approximation in Necril suggests that Ulgrem was its species with Axaan noting it as the last of its kind. Characters capable of cleansing Ulgrem-Axaan's eggs can watch the hatchlings grow into creatures resembling Ulgrem-Axaan, save that they lack any kind of undead touch. Upon seeing these young for the first time, if Ulgrem-Axaan is able to do so, it grants them the name "Ulgrem-Lurann." Through the same rough approximation, Ulgrem-Lurann means something akin to "Children of Ulgrem."

ULGREM-LURANN

CREATURE 3

RARE CN LARGE AMPHIBIOUS BEAST

Perception +12; darkvision

Languages Druidic (can't speak)

Skills Athletics +10, Deception +8, Intimidation +11, Stealth +10

Str +4, **Dex** +3, **Con** +3, **Int** +1, **Wis** -2, **Cha** +2

Bump in the River An Ulgrem-Lurann can pretend to be a floating log while in water by attempting a Stealth check. It has a +2 circumstance bonus to its checks and DCs to do so. While using Stealth this way, creatures see the log but don't realize it's an Ulgrem-Lurann.

AC 18; **Fort** +12, **Ref** +10, **Will** +5

HP 55; **Resistances** electricity 5, piercing 5

Attack of Opportunity 2

Speed 20 feet, swim 25 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +13 (reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d8+6 piercing plus Grab

Melee ♦ tail +13 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 1d6+6 bludgeoning plus Grab

Nurtured Loathing An Ulgrem-Lurann gains a +1 circumstance bonus to attack and damage rolls against creatures with the undead trait.

Sparkling Bite ♦♦ (attack, electricity) **Requirements** The Ulgrem-Lurann has a creature grabbed with its jaws; **Effect** Electricity courses through its body and mouth, dealing an additional 1d4+6 electricity damage to the grabbed target with a DC 20 basic Fortitude save.

Swallow Whole ♦ (attack) Small, 1d6+6 bludgeoning, Rupture 9

AN UNLIKELY COMPANION

Heroes that help raise Ulgrem-Axaan's offspring might find that one of the young beasts becomes attached and chooses to join as a companion.

ULGREM-LURANN

RARE

Your companion is one of the few surviving members of a formerly lost species, hatched from the last clutch of Ulgrem-Axaan. As it's so young, its intelligence hasn't developed yet, but some day, it will become a highly intelligent creature. An Ulgrem-Lurann has the beast trait instead of the animal trait but otherwise functions normally as an animal companion.

Size Medium

Melee ♦ jaws, **Damage** 1d8 piercing

Melee ♦ tail, **Damage** 1d6 bludgeoning

Str +3, **Dex** +2, **Con** +2, **Int** -4, **Wis** 0, **Cha** +1

Hit Points 6

Skill Intimidation

Senses darkvision

Speed 20 feet, swim 25 feet

Special The Ulgrem-Lurann has the amphibious trait.

Support Benefit The Ulgrem-Lurann grabs at your foe and zaps it. Until the start of your next turn, each time you hit a creature in the Ulgrem-Lurann's reach with a Strike, the creature takes an additional 1d4 piercing damage and 1d4 electricity damage from the Ulgrem-Lurann. If the Ulgrem-Lurann is nimble or savage, the piercing damage and electricity damage each increase to 2d4.

Advanced Maneuver Snatch and Zap

SNATCH AND ZAP ♦♦

The Ulgrem-Lurann bites down hard and unleashes an electrical discharge. It makes a jaws Strike. If the Strike hits, the target creature automatically becomes grabbed by the Ulgrem-Lurann and takes 1d4 electricity damage (2d4 for a mature Ulgrem-Lurann or 3d4 for a specialized companion). The grabbed condition lasts until the end of your next turn, though the Ulgrem-Lurann can use Grapple to attempt to extend the duration as normal.

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ULGREM-AXAAN



ULISTUL

A bust of Grandmother in her alchemical regalia accompanied me to university, inspiring me to surpass her own lofty accomplishments. Through the hardest coursework, she supported me in spirit, sometimes more than I dared admit—I heard her encouraging voice guiding me through homework, and on occasion the statue seemed to twist its head to look at me directly! Weekly, I returned to find my chalkboard filled with diagrams and calculations unknown, each one a puzzle that unlocked new discoveries. This week, before graduation, I returned only to find a cryptic map.

My colleagues chortled in statue-filled halls when I showed them a copy, teasing me that the Widow of the Wastes had taken a fancy to me, yet their jests belied nervousness; our school had lost students like this before. Still, I cannot shake the thought that Grandmother is reaching out to me from the Boneyard, pointing me to her unfinished work. Tomorrow, I set out to uncover the truth.

—Raj Yokoloum, last known journal entry

From the ashes of Earthfall along the newly formed Inner Sea, the visionary Arustun united the scattered peoples of northern Garund to rebuild civilization, giving rise to the Jistka Imperium 9,000 years ago. Although the Imperium's earliest accomplishments stemmed from rediscovered Azlanti lore, the Jistkans swiftly innovated and adapted these vestiges to make technology all their own. Most famously, their artificers mastered construct craft, binding elementals into lifeless statues to create unfathomably powerful animated servitors. For centuries, Jistka expanded and traded, conquering many lands and exercising political and economic dominion over many others. However, two insurmountable factors spelled Jistka's decline. The Imperium had long suffered the infighting between its artificer-priests and its magistrates, creating irreparable rifts exacerbated by assassinations and succession crises. Meanwhile, to the east, the young kingdom of Osirion swiftly grew into a deadly rival, and the two kingdoms engaged in a centuries-long conflict that devastated Jistka.

As they watched their homeland waste away, a coalition of Jistka's most scrupulous and brilliant innovators united to secure the tools, allies, and philosophies that could save the Imperium and its people, preserving its grandeur for ages to come. Known as the Artificer Conclave, they swiftly realized that the enormity of the task would outlast their bodies, and so they created a new type of construct powered not by elementals but by mortals themselves. Each of the conclave sealed their life force into one of these automatons and recruited hundreds more Jistkan paragons to join them, creating a small army of immortal sages, warriors, and craftspeople to scour Golarion and even the multiverse for solutions.

But Jistka was beyond saving. Dejected, most of the automatons left to pursue their own goals. In the eight millennia since, attrition has destroyed some, while the weight of ages has eroded the memories and mental health of many survivors, none of whose mortal minds were ever expected to shoulder so many lifetimes. Yet at least one automaton never abandoned the cause: Ulistul.

Trained as an artificer-priest, Ulistul commanded such a mastery of constructs that the Artificer Conclave quickly recruited her to perfect the automaton creation process. She subsequently helped build scores of the new constructs, granting her colleagues immortality so that they might preserve Jistka forever. But as her allies traveled, Osirion's armies encroached on Ulistul's forges, at last overwhelming her defenses. She fled with a handful of assistants and a fraction of her research, relocating again and again as Osirion hounded the survivors. Ulistul ultimately escaped and watched Osirion grind

Jistka to dust. All the while, she waited for the conclave to return with their promised aid. They never came.

Eventually, Osirion abandoned its hunt, though scarce little survived to chase. Ulistul's automaton body had sustained irreparable damage, her associates' artificial bodies littered the badlands, and the once-great artificer-priest carried a mere fraction of her civilization's construct lore.

While some historians and construct experts know of Ulistul's origins, early innovations, and tragic retreat, there's little consensus or evidence as to her deeds in the centuries that followed. Sparse Shory and Mwangi records hint at the artificer-priest studying with the aeromancers and Magaambyan arcanists of old. An unpopular Taldan legend tells of an ancient construct visiting Taldaris's court to weigh his worth, ultimately departing in disgust. Explorers mapping Garund's Barrier Wall mountains have uncovered at least half a dozen caves decorated with Jistkan mathematical graffiti, most also containing forgotten apparatuses associated with smithing or advanced inorganic alchemy. Collectively (if they can be attributed to her at all), these suggest Ulistul wandered the Inner Sea region for millennia, vacillating between learning from each age's greatest minds and retreating to perform forgotten experiments.



AUTOMATON CORE

ULISTUL TODAY

In the modern era, Jistka survives as a mythologized memory, its greatest innovators' names—including Ulistul's—largely forgotten outside academic works. However, as Ulistul has haunted Rahadoum and Thuvia over the past 300 years, becoming bolder with each century, locals have invented their own names for the rarely glimpsed artificer: "Widow of the Wastes," "Envious Effigy," "Steel Muse," and even "Safusaiik," the last one blending her legend with that of a different bedtime-story bogeyman known for its asymmetrical appearance and abducting disobedient children.

Facts are hard to come by. Eyewitnesses lost in dust storms report being stalked by an angular giant with a glowing cyclopean eye barely visible through the haze, though the storytellers inevitably reach serendipitous shelter as if having been herded there by the wasteland wraith. Others report hearing voices of encouragement while deep in academic or magical studies, citing this strange muse for guiding them to personal breakthroughs. Yet the tales aren't all hauntingly wholesome. The steel cyclops occasionally appears to family members as a grim herald, mere days before a tragic death. Entire flocks of goats disappear overnight only to be discovered days later, their bodies all carefully dissected and left to

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cure in the sun, strangely untouched by buzzards. Most infamous of all, the “Widow of the Wastes” supposedly lost her brilliant spouse to tragedy and craves a new partner, and those who study too hard sometimes vanish into the badlands forever, following her siren call.

The reality informs the myths. Ulistul never abandoned the Jistka Imperium. Although the Artificer Conclave effectively abandoned their homeland, she’s ready to rebuild a new immortal council to usher in a new golden age of Jistkan enlightenment and prosperity. However, much of her research and institutional knowledge vanished during Osirion’s conquest that destroyed her old labs and colleagues. Even after millennia of magical study, she hasn’t re-perfected the most crucial technology of all: creating new automatons.

It won’t stop her. What follows are several possibilities for Ulistul’s motivations and machinations, which cast her as a tragic antagonist, a dangerous patron, or both.

Garundi Muse: To rebuild the Artificer Conclave, Ulistul requires intellectual paragons whose consciousnesses will inhabit her newly built automatons. To this end, she monitors Rahadoum’s and Thuvia’s finest institutions of engineering and magic to identify upcoming talent she might mold and recruit. Most often, she negotiates for her targets’ participation, whispering promises and forgotten secrets through telepathic missives and momentarily animated statues. Those who spurn her invitations often vanish, abducted for her experiments anyway.

Ulistul still struggles to recreate her automaton technology. Even her willing subjects often perish messily when she transfers their consciousnesses into construct bodies; only a handful every decade awaken as automatons with their minds intact, for reasons Ulistul hasn’t puzzled out (though she finds grim optimism in their success). Several remain as her assistants, either infiltrating cities as spies, helping in her several hidden labs, or personally abducting other recruits. Many others experience shattered memories or utter horror toward their maker before fleeing, and dozens of these automatons wander Golarion—perhaps even as adventurers (see the automaton ancestry on pages 36–43 of *Guns & Gears*).

Perhaps these new constructs aren’t alone in fearing Ulistul. Though scattered, the Artificer Conclave survives across many planes, and should another ancient automaton identify Ulistul’s obsessive experimentation, they might seek champions to help stop her.

Construct Chimera: Each automaton’s mortal consciousness resides in its *automaton core*, yet that sentience gradually imprints on (and even echoes within) the rest of the construct’s body over time, even if its original core is destroyed. Any new core swapped into a previously used body can pit the two personalities against each other in a contest of wills, with the more powerful one taking control. Rarely, two equally matched beings might meld into a united whole, resulting in an automaton sharing both sets of thoughts and memories.

In her flight from Osirion’s armies, Ulistul sustained countless injuries, including some that surpassed her mending magic. Without access to her forges, the artificer repurposed and integrated the shattered remains of her fallen colleagues’ automaton bodies into her own. While most of these bodies’ mental echoes submitted before Ulistul’s willpower, it’s possible one or more fused with her consciousness to create a chimeric oversoul that houses both unfathomable knowledge and conflicting values. This might explain Ulistul’s apocryphal history of alternating collegial collaboration and paranoid isolationism.

The extent to which Ulistul and these other fragments recognize and communicate with each other is open to interpretation. Perhaps, over the millennia, their presence has shifted or solidified Ulistul’s own priorities. Giving these identities their own bodies—and in the process, removing them from herself—could even be Ulistul’s true motivation for rediscovering how to create an *automaton core*. Alternatively, these fragments might be too fused with Ulistul’s own identity at this point to ever separate. The ancient artificer would likely need the help of stalwart heroes to discover and come to terms with such a revelation.

THE MASTER AUTMATONS

The Artificer Conclave comprised the most brilliant minds of the Jistka Imperium. Ulistul reported directly to the heads of the Artificer Conclave. These leaders most pose a threat to Ulistul’s existence, while also representing the greatest potential for Ulistul to accomplish her goal of rediscovering the means to create new automatons.

Fearing that others would use their new automaton forms to rise up against the conclave or attempt to steal the secrets of automaton creation for themselves, the Artificer Conclave created a powerful automaton form reserved only for high-ranking members. These automatons, known as master automatons, were more powerful versions of the forms given to the volunteers that became hunters and warriors among the automaton ranks. While the form of a master automaton is faster, stronger, and more capable than others, the main feature of these forms is the master automaton’s ability to destroy *automaton cores*.

The arcane resonance of a master automaton matches that of a core, which allows the master automaton to destroy a core and end the life of another automaton. Ulistul is aware of the nature of the master automatons; if she were to be able to study one of their frames, she might be able to rebuild the knowledge to create new *automaton cores*. Unfortunately, the master automatons each went their own way after the fall of Jistka, with many of them traveling the planes. Even worse, destroying a core grants a portion of that energy to the master automaton, and many of them now seek to empower themselves as much as possible by destroying what automatons they can find. If Ulistul were to encounter a master automaton, it’s likely that they would simply destroy her rather than let her continue her research.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGNS

Ulistul can fit into most campaigns.

LOW-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (1-7)

Characters in the Golden Road region of the Inner Sea might encounter imperfect automatons (see page 125) on their journeys. These automatons could be performing reconnaissance on behalf of Ulistul, searching for knowledge or materials that Ulistul can use in her research. Many of the automatons know to avoid capture and are willing to fight until destroyed to do so.

Encountering an imperfect automaton can be the first step toward recognizing the existence of Ulistul. PCs who hear stories of Ulistul might believe one of these imperfect automatons to be Ulistul herself. Destroying the automaton might seem like enough to bring an end to Ulistul's story, and the PCs might move on to further adventures. At this point, Ulistul could deploy more automatons to track down the PCs and determine if they pose a threat. The increase in automaton spies or attackers can be enough to grab the PCs' attention.

Tracking down Ulistul is a difficult task, as she can move between a number of personal workshops within the region. PCs who reach one of these workshops could encounter a stronger version of an imperfect automaton that guards the workshop. The PCs can follow an imperfect automaton, but the chances that they find a workshop are just as likely as the chances that they walk into a trap. If Ulistul is aware of the PCs, she can set up an ambush to either capture or rid herself of them altogether.

MID-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (8-14)

Depending on Ulistul's true nature, her first meeting with the PCs could have several outcomes. If she's intent on harming others in her search for knowledge, Ulistul is likely to come to blows with the PCs. In this case, Ulistul attempts to buy time, both to try to learn about her attackers and to find a means of escape. If Ulistul manages to escape, she retreats to one of her other workshops and sends her automaton minions to deal with the PCs. If retreat seems unfeasible, she attempts to plea with the PCs, asking for their aid in rebuilding her people and lost empire. If they agree, Ulistul is quick to ambush the PCs when she gets an opportunity, hoping to use them for new automatons. Only when all of her options fail does she fight until destroyed.

If Ulistul is instead dealing with the presence of other automaton souls within her body, she might try to explain and convince the PCs to help, either subtly or overtly depending on her internal relationships. If Ulistul herself is unaware of these presences, she's likely to come across as contradictory or jarring; the PCs might have to see past her strange requests to help her uncover the truth. How she responds to learning

such knowledge is up to the GM—attacking the PCs out of frightened confusion or, alternatively, dismissing such claims until otherwise convinced are equally likely responses.

HIGH-LEVEL CAMPAIGNS (15-20)

Master automatons still roam the Great Beyond, and it's only a matter of time until they learn of Ulistul's existence. One or several master automatons might descend upon Ulistul's workshop, attempting to claim her and her research for their own purposes. In this case, the PCs need to work with Ulistul to fend off the powerful automatons. Whether the PCs destroy Ulistul or help her hide, the master automatons could set their gaze upon the PCs, hoping to extract what knowledge the PCs collected about Ulistul or her whereabouts.



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THE STEEL MUSE

Having replaced over half her body with scavenged and rebuilt parts, Ulistul is a patchwork juggernaut and stubborn survivor. Her pieces are in various colors, making it obvious even from a distance that not all her parts come from the same source.

Her golemcraft in mortal life and millennia of practice since grant her intuitive understanding of constructs, including ways to subvert or sabotage those machines' programming. When she does fight, it's most often to abduct a scholar or artificer whose talents she craves. In preparation for battle, she replaces her left hand with a long claw that resembles a hooked sword.



ULISTUL

ULISTUL

CREATURE 11

UNIQUE LE LARGE AUTOMATON CONSTRUCT

Perception +22; darkvision, statuesense (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Auran, Common, Jistkan, Osiriani, Tekritanin, Terran, Utopian; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Arcana +24, Athletics +21, Crafting +24, Diplomacy +18, Jistka Lore +24, Stealth +19

Str +6, **Dex** +5, **Con** +5, **Int** +7, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +3

Statuesense (arcane, divination) Ulistul built herself components granting her enhanced senses that can detect the location of other constructs and similar objects. She's aware of any constructs or inanimate statuary at the listed range.

AC 31; **Fort** +22, **Ref** +18, **Will** +24; +2 status to all saves vs. effects created by constructs

HP 165; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious; **Resistances** physical 10 (except adamantine)

Speed 30 feet

Melee ♦ claw +23 (lawful, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d12+12 slashing plus 1d8 fire

Melee ♦ fist +23 (agile, lawful, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d10+12 bludgeoning plus Grab

Ranged ♦ energy beam +22 (fire, lawful, magical, range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 2d12+12 fire

Arcane Innate Spells DC 30, attack +22; **6th** *cloudkill*, *slow*, *summon construct*; **5th** *secret chest* (Advanced Player's Guide 226), *sending*; **4th** *fly*, *resilient sphere* (x2), *shape stone*; **Cantrips (6th)** *message*, *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*; **Constant (6th)** *detect magic*

Artificer's Command (verbal) ♦ **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Ulistul directs one construct within 60 feet that can perceive her and has a level lower than hers, delivering helpful commands that improve its capabilities. The construct gains a +1 status bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws.

Artificer's Eye (arcane, divination, scrying) ♦ Ulistul chooses one construct or statue she can currently perceive with a precise sense or with statuesense; usually, her only precise sense is vision. After choosing her target, she begins to perceive the target's surroundings as though she occupied its space. If the target is either an inanimate statue or a mindless creature, she can also verbally interact with nearby creatures (including issuing Artificer's Commands) or cause the target to move subtly, such as moving its mouth. This ability can be sustained indefinitely as long as Ulistul can perceive the target, though her visual stimuli from her own body are harder to process; she's dazzled when using her own senses for the effect's duration.

Dismantler Ulistul's attacks against constructs and objects gain the deadly d12 trait and ignore up to 10 of the target's Hardness and resistances.

Ivory Dictum (arcane, enchantment, incapacitation) ♦♦ Ulistul takes control of a construct within 30 feet. This has the effects of *dominate* (DC 32 Will) but can affect mindless creatures and ignores the target's golem antimagic, if any.

FAILED CREATIONS

For every true automaton Ulistul has created since Jistka's fall, at least a dozen more were utter failures. Perhaps worse still are the near misses: *automaton cores* that captured only a fragment of the mortal's mind, resulting in physically powerful constructs with gaping holes in their memories, reasoning, or ethics. Haunted by the certainty that something isn't right, each of these constructs responds to its predicament in different ways. Those craving purpose often work with Ulistul or wander off in search of some other mentor, sometimes scavenging materials to rebuild themselves into some more complete, idealized version of what they were meant to be. Others spiral into the delusion that reality is an illusion, testing this hypothesis repeatedly through atrocities in a vain attempt to validate their own existences. A few simply lose faith in their own self-awareness, gradually acting more mindlessly until inspired back to lucidity by some extraordinary act or person.

Ulistul periodically dispatches imperfect automatons as spies, couriers, or enforcers when she pursues simultaneous objectives. Encountering such constructs could be a community's first exposure to Ulistul's machinations, allowing heroes to trace automatons back to Ulistul's closest lab, uncover her broader schemes, or secure an audience to negotiate her aid. In addition to the imperfect automatons below, which represent the mechanical constructs that house damaged consciousnesses, Ulistul periodically recycles the now-lifeless bodies of the mortal donors into flesh golems. Little goes to waste in her quest for perfection.

IMPERFECT AUTOMATON

CREATURE 6

RARE N MEDIUM AUTOMATON CONSTRUCT

Perception +12; darkvision

Languages Common, Osiriani, one language depending on its mortal life; telepathy 30 feet

Skills Arcana +11, Athletics +13, Crafting +13, Intimidation +12, Society +11, Stealth +10

Str +5, **Dex** +3, **Con** +4, **Int** +3, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +2

AC 23; **Fort** +16, **Ref** +11, **Will** +14

HP 85; **Immunities** bleed, death effects, disease, doomed, drained, fatigued, healing, necromancy, nonlethal attacks, paralyzed, poison, sickened, unconscious; **Resistances** physical 5 (except adamantite)

Unsubstantiated Consciousness When an imperfect automaton succeeds at a Will save, it gets a critical success instead. When it fails at a Will save, it gets a critical failure instead.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ fist +17 (magical), **Damage** 2d8+8 bludgeoning plus Grab

Ranged ♦ energy beam +17 (cold, magical, range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 2d10+3 cold

Empty Wail (auditory, emotion, mental) ♦♦ The imperfect automaton utters a mournful cry in a 30-foot cone. The cry deals 4d6 mental damage to all creatures in the area (DC 22 Will save). The imperfect automaton can't use its Empty Wail again for 1d4 rounds.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature takes half damage.

Failure The creature takes full damage and is stupefied 1 for 1d4+1 rounds.

Critical Failure The creature takes double damage and is stupefied 1 for 1d4+1 rounds and stunned 1.

Impassioned Strikes While the imperfect automaton is affected by an emotion effect, its fist Strikes deal 1d6 additional mental damage.

Mortal Reflection (emotion) ♦ **Requirements** The imperfect automaton has a creature grabbed or restrained; **Effect** The imperfect automaton draws upon the target's emotions to recall a semblance of mortal feeling, gaining a +5-foot status bonus to its Speed for 1 minute. If the grabbed or restrained creature has an ongoing emotion or mental effect with a counteract level of 4 or lower, the imperfect automaton can gain a copy of that effect that lasts for 1 minute.

IVORY BATONS

From construction overseers to field marshals, Jistka's workforce and military deployed golems extensively to build and expand its empire, yet only the elite artificer-priests could command those golems unaided. Others relied on a host of control focuses, the most extravagant and powerful of which were *ivory batons*. A handful of these objects still survive intact in Jistkan ruins, especially those in present-day Cheliox. Infamously, the morlock inhabitants in the ruins of Rachikan along Cheliox's western coast have unearthed several of these batons, using them to mobilize the buried forge-city's stone golems in fighting off invaders and, rarely, in launching devastating surface raids.

IVORY BATON

ITEM 13+

RARE ENCHANTMENT MAGICAL

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk 1

This white, slender rod bears intricately carved reliefs of magnificent animals that bow and dance to some unseen commander. The baton enables you to command constructs.

Activate ♦♦ command, Interact (enchantment, incapacitation);

Frequency once per day; **Effect** You take control of a construct. This has the effects of *dominate* with a DC of 30, but it affects only constructs. It lacks the mental trait and functions on mindless constructs. It also ignores any golem antimagic the target might have. The effect's duration ends if the baton is destroyed or leaves your possession for at least 1 minute, and you can issue commands to the target only while holding the baton.

Activate ♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** You closely direct the actions of one construct you control and can see within 60 feet. That construct gains a +1 status bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws (except saving throws against the *ivory baton*).

Type *ivory baton*; **Level** 13; **Price** 2,500 gp

Type *greater ivory baton*; **Level** 19; **Price** 35,000 gp

When you activate the baton, it has the effects of a 9th-level *dominate* with the adjustments above. The DC is 39.

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GLOSSARY AND INDEX

This appendix contains brief explanations and page references for the content presented in this book, including new rules, locations, deities, organizations, and so on. New rules content is marked with an asterisk (*).

Abadar Lawful neutral god of cities, law, and wealth. Known as the Master of the First Vault. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 12–13

Abaddon A vast wasteland plane that is the source of the river Styx and home to the fiends known as daemons. The plane is neutral evil. *Gamemastery Guide* 142

Absalom Reckoning The most commonly used calendar in Avistan and Garund, consisting of 52 weeks across 12 months. The current year is 4721 AR.

Age of Anguish The age ranging from –4294 AR to –3502 AR taking place after the dust from Earthfall settled. The age was full of conflict as the peoples of Golarion struggled to rebuild and survive. *Lost Omens World Guide* 6

Age of Creation The age in which Golarion came to be, before the emergence of mortals. *Lost Omens World Guide* 6

Age of Darkness The age following Earthfall, ranging from –5293 AR to –4294 AR. *Lost Omens World Guide* 6

Age of Lost Omens The age brought about by the death of Aroden, ranging from 4606 AR to the present day. *Lost Omens World Guide* 8–9

animal companion* 119

Arazni Neutral evil god of the abused, dignity, and unwilling undeath. Known as the Unyielding. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 54

Arcadia One of Golarion's continents, lying west of the Inner Sea region past the ruins of Azlant. *Lost Omens World Guide* 6–7

armor* 35

artifact* 16, 29, 94

Avistan One of Golarion's continents. It makes up the northern half of the Inner Sea region. *Lost Omens World Guide* 7

Azanti The people of the ancient empire of Azlant. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 10

Barrier Wall A large mountain range spanning across southern Osirion, Rahadom, and Thuvia. *Lost Omens World Guide* 50–51

Belkzen A region in northwestern Avistan. Known for being the home of several orc holds. *Lost Omens World Guide* 38–40

Boneyard A plane where the souls of the dead travel in the afterlife. Home to the monitors known as psychopomps. The plane is neutral. *Gamemastery Guide* 142–143

Casmaron One of Golarion's continents. Located immediately east of the Inner Sea region. *Lost Omens World Guide* 7

Cheliah A nation in southwest Avistan. Known for its ties to diabolic rule. *Lost Omens World Guide* 98–100

Crown of the World The northernmost of Golarion's continents. Connects Avistan to Tian Xia. *Lost Omens World Guide* 7

Darklands The immense area of caverns, vaults, and passages beneath the surface of Golarion. *Lost Omens World Guide* 7–8

dhampir The immortal offspring of a vampire and a member of another ancestry. *Advanced Player's Guide* 32–33

Earthfall A cataclysmic event in –5293 AR, in which a rain of meteorites fell upon Golarion and caused massive destruction.

Eldest A group of deities that keep their attention on the First World.

Erastil Lawful good god of family, farming, hunting, and trade. Known as Old Deadeye. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 22–23

Erutaki A common human ethnicity in the Inner Sea region spanning the Crown of the World. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 6

Ethereal Plane A transitive plane that overlaps with the planes of the Inner Sphere. It allows for travel within the Inner Planes. *Gamemastery Guide* 141

First World A plane that overlaps the Material Plane and is said to be a “rough draft” of existence. Home to vibrant, impossible landscapes and fey. *Gamemastery Guide* 141

Garund One of Golarion's continents. Its northern portion makes up the southern half of the Inner Sea region. *Lost Omens World Guide* 8

Garundi A common human ethnicity in the Inner Sea region spanning the nations of northern Garund. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 6

Geb A nation in eastern Garund that's a haven for undead. *Lost Omens World Guide* 76–77

Golden Road The region of northern Garund and part of southeastern Avistan that includes Katapesh, Osirion, Qadira, Rahadom, and Thuvia. *Lost Omens World Guide* 48–59

Gozreh Neutral god of nature, the sea, and weather. Known as the Wind and the Waves. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 26–27

Great Beyond The collective name for all of the planes of existence of the known multiverse. *Lost Omens World Guide* 9–10

grisantian pelt (material)* 34

Hallit The language of the Kellid people of the far north.

Heaven A plane that embodies order and compassion and is home to the celestials known as archons. The plane is lawful good. *Gamemastery Guide* 143–144

Hellknights A set of knightly orders with a strict focus on maintaining order and upholding the law. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 76–85

Inner Sea This sea cradled between Avistan and Garund was created by the reshaping of the region during Earthfall.

Inner Sea region The collective name for the continent of Avistan and the northern portion of Garund, surrounding the Inner Sea.

Iobarian A human ethnicity located primarily in Iobaria. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 9

Irrisen A nation in northwestern Avistan known for its constant winter and its rule by winter witches. *Lost Omens World Guide* 110–112

Jistka Imperium The ancient empire that ruled northern Garund around –3600 AR.

Jotun The language of giants and related creatures.

Lands of the Linnorm Kings A region in northwestern Avistan known for its harsh environs and fierce leaders. *Lost Omens World Guide* 112–113

Maelstrom The collective term for the uncharted and chaotic areas on the metaphysical borders of the planes of the Outer Sphere. Home to the monitors known as proteans. The plane is chaotic neutral. *Gamemastery Guide* 144

magic item* 35, 59, 65, 94, 100–101, 107, 125

Material Plane The plane that encompasses the known universe, including Golarion and its solar system. Located within the Inner Sphere. *Gamemastery Guide* 138–139

Mwangi Expanse The area of northern central Garund consisting of most of the regions in and around the Mwangi Jungle, including the nation of Vidrian. *Lost Omens The Mwangi Expanse*

Necril The language of ghouls and other intelligent undead.

Numeria A nation in northeast Avistan known for its unique technology salvaged from a fallen starship. *Lost Omens World Guide* 29–30

Okaiyo Ocean One of Golarion's oceans. Located between Arcadia and Tian Xia. *Lost Omens World Guide* 9

Osirion A nation in northeastern Garund boasting countless tombs and temples from the great empire of Ancient Osirion. *Lost Omens World Guide* 53–54

pactbound archetype* 10

Pharasma Neutral goddess of birth, death, fate, and prophecy. Known as the Lady of Graves. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 38–39

Rahadom A nation located in northwest Garund, known for prohibitions against religious practice of any kind. *Lost Omens World Guide* 55–56

Razatlan A nation located in central Arcadia and the seat of what remains of the former Razatlani Empire.

ritual* 53, 77, 83, 118

River Kingdoms A region in northeast Avistan made up of dozens of small kingdoms struggling for dominance. *Lost Omens World Guide* 31–32

Rovagug Chaotic evil god of destruction, disaster, and wrath. Known as the Rough Beast. *Lost Omens Gods & Magic* 40–41

Runelord One of seven powerful wizards that ruled in ancient Thassilon. Each runelord is tied to an aspect of sin magic.

Saga Lands The region in northwest Avistan consisting of Irrisen, the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, New Thassilon, the Realm of the Mammoth Lords, and Varisia. *Lost Omens World Guide* 108–119

Sellen River A major river that flows through the Broken Lands and Shining Kingdoms regions. *Lost Omens World Guide* 33

Shadow Plane A plane located on the far side of the Ethereal Plane

that forms a twisted reflection of the Material Plane. *Gamemastery Guide* 141

Shoanti A human ethnicity common across the Storval Plateau, the frontiers of Varisia, and beyond. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 8

Shory An ancient empire prominent in central Garund around -2500 AR, famous for its flying cities.

snares* 112-113

spells* 89

tattoo (trait) A type of item that is drawn or cut into a creature's skin, usually in the form of images or symbols. *Secrets of Magic* 164-165

Thuvia A nation located in north-central Garund, known for its production of the sun orchid elixir. *Lost Omens World Guide* 56-57

Tian Xia One of Golarion's continents. Located far to the east of the Inner Sea region, past Casmaron. *Lost Omens World Guide* 9

Ustalav A nation located in northern central Avistan. Countless terrors

roam the region. *Lost Omens World Guide* 45

Varisia A region in northwestern Avistan. Known as a frontier land and home to ancient Thassilonian ruins. *Lost Omens World Guide* 116-117

Verduran Forest A large forest in southeast Avistan, nestled between Andoran, Galt, and Taldor. *Lost Omens World Guide* 129

Vudra A vast peninsula in southeastern Casmaron. It is home to the Vudrani people.

weapon* 16, 29, 47, 89, 94

witch patron* 75

Worldwound An enormous rift that opened in the nation of Sarkoris, allowing the demonic hordes of the Abyss to spill forth and destroy the region. It has since been closed, and the demon-blighted land is now known as the Sarkoris Scar. *Lost Omens World Guide* 26, 32

Zenj A major Mwangi ethnic subgroup that can be found throughout the Mwangi Expanse. *Lost Omens Character Guide* 7

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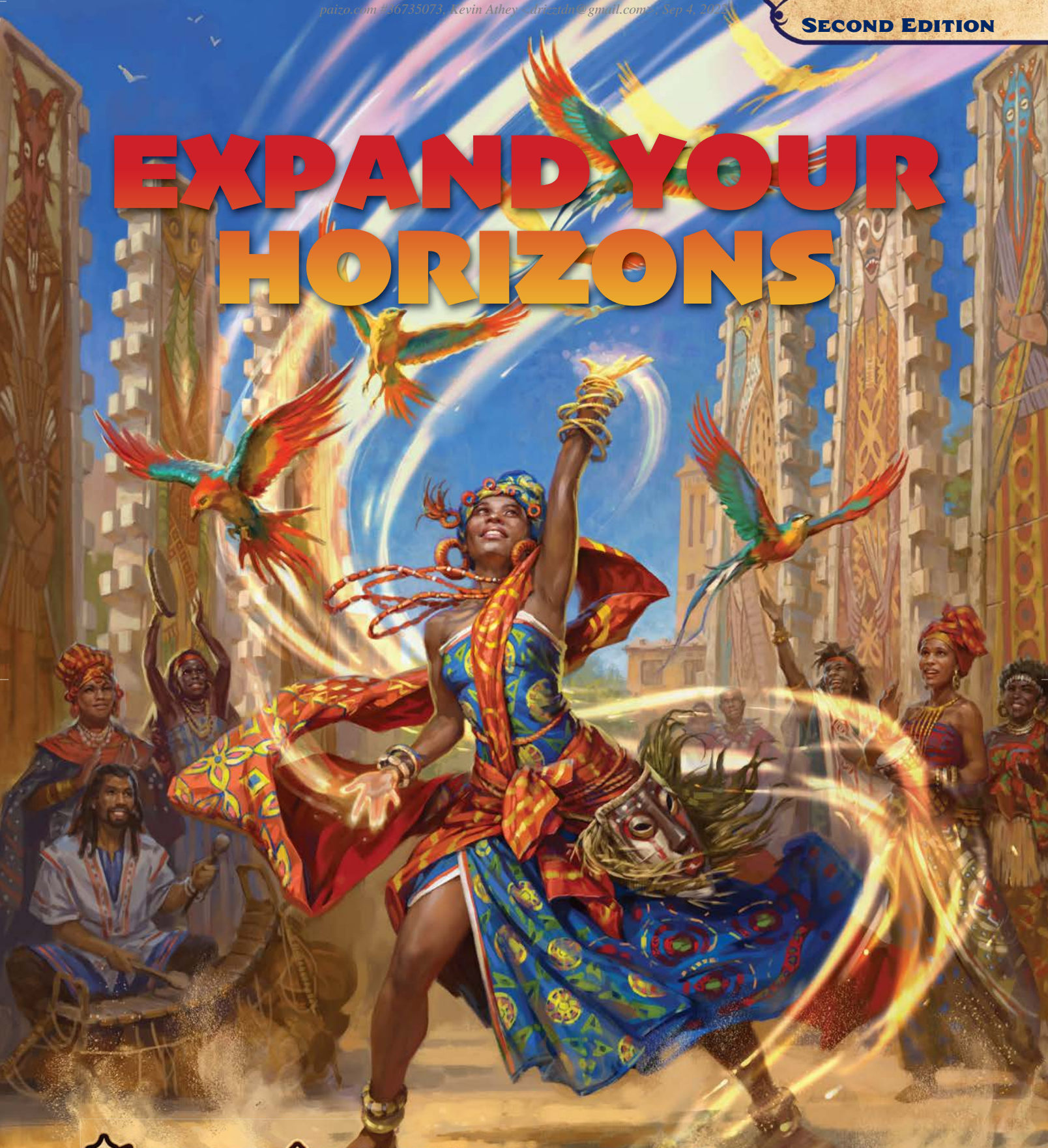
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