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JH ILLOS

ASTRAYAEL

Astrayael are demonic prognosticators that skew probability to further infernal machinations.

AC 4 [15], **HD** 8***** [36hp], **Att** 1 x polearm (2d8 + paralysis or death), 1 x breath (8d6), **THACO** 12 [+7], **MV** 150' (50') / 300' (100') flying, **SV** D8 W9 P10 B10 S12 (8), **ML** 8, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 3400, **NA** 1 (1d4), **TT** C

• **FIRE BREATH** 2-in-6 chance per round of breathing fire. One target. **Save versus breath** for half damage. Cone of fire: end 10' wide, 50' long.
• **HEX** 2-in-6 chance of every target within 120' radius suffering a -4 penalty to all attack rolls and saving throws for 1d6 turns **(save versus spells)**.
• **MAGICAL POWERS** Each can be used as indicated below:

At Will *Invisibility*

3 x Day *Animate Dead, Dispel Magic, Fireball*

• **MENTAL RESISTANCE** Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*).
• **MUNDANE DAMAGE IMMUNITY** Only harmed by magic or silver.
• **POLEARM** On an attack roll (not result) of 17 or higher, that successfully hits the target it must **save versus paralysis** or be paralyzed for 1d6 turns. While paralyzed, they are effectively immune to damage. On an attack roll (not result) of 20, the target must **save versus death** or die. Those that pass their save are paralyzed for 1d6 turns.
• **PRESCIENT** May re-roll OR force a re-roll three times per day.
• **TELEPATHY** May communicate mentally within 60'. Those contacted are not compelled to communicate, but the monster will have an empathic sense of their thoughts regardless.
• **TRUESIGHT** Vision is unimpeded by darkness of any kind. Can detect magic, illusion, invisibility and polymorph on sight.

DESCRIPTION

You see a tall, gangly demonic creature. It has a large, bat-like wings and a crown of twisting horns atop a simian face. Beady, incandescent eyes peer from beneath the thing's heavily plated brow. It is twice the height of an average human. Its limbs are exceptionally long. It grips a weird polearm. The head of the polearm appears to be a shard of volcanic glass wrapped in a crude, bronze filigree and covered with several, animated eyes.The creature is highly intelligent and capable of communication. However, it is likely to react violently to the party unless their continued existence is somehow of import to its agenda.

LORE

These demons are known as Astrayael. They intently scry the warp and weft of reality. They seek to bend outcomes to favor the machinations of dark and infernal forces. Their polearm is an arcane focus and a potent weapon. The eyes upon it constantly whisper into the demon's mind hints at outcomes, granting them uncanny luck.

The polearm can paralyze victims, temporarily rendering them impotent shades. They temporarily become translucent, gray and are unable to interact with the physical world. It can also slay outright with a single blow and with such totality that nothing less than a Reincarnate spell or Wish can bring them back. When this occurs, the polearm has completely cut them from the timeline. They have simply ceased to exist from this point going forward.

An Astrayael may place a hex on a victim allowing the demon to skew probability surrounding that individual. The Astrayael's vision is not limited by any form of darkness and can detect any magical subterfuge or transmogrifications. It can also loose a great gout of hellfire from its fanged maw. Further, their alien minds are filled with so much raw, chaotic emotion that enchantments or other means of magical and psionic influence have little if any effect on them.

ECOLOGY

Astrayael are demons. They do not require food, drink or sleep. They also do not require air to survive.

SEEDS

1.) The party is approached by an elderly woman. She is worried about her daughter's family. They built a homestead at the foot of the mountains north of the town last year. Things had been well until the last fortnight. They were expecting a new baby. But, none of the family have been sighted in all this time. It's as if they have simply disappeared. The woman has implored the local sheriff to investigate but he believes the place is cursed and refuses. For the Referee only: The couple was warned that the place was cursed, but they settled it anyway. Several times the same land has been settled over the past few

generations and with the same result. There is an Astrayael that believes a child born there will grow to be a charismatic and powerful cult leader in service to its lord. Whenever a family that has settled the land gives birth there, the demon abducts the child and kills the rest of the family. It lairs there still waiting for the cult which serves its master to collect the babe. If the party investigates, they will hear the wailing of the infant echoing down from the mountains.

2.) The party comes upon a crossroads. Whichever way they choose, they have attracted the attention of an Astrayael. The demon lurks invisibly around the edge of the party. Perceptive characters might notice odd scents and sounds. Sudden gusts of wind as if from the flapping of great unseen wings. The Astrayael will use its hex ability to manipulate the fortune of the party members. Mounts will be disagreeable. Equipment malfunctions will become more and more common. The Astrayael is attempting to subtly steer them towards a ruined keep in the area. Once it has them inside the keep it will send in its minions. Its goal is to kill all but one. The Astrayael believes the sole survivor is destined to be instrumental in a plot to further its lord's agenda.

LOOT

All Astrayael possess the same axe. In its lair the party will likely find all manner of weird ephemera that the demon believed to be of oracular significance in addition to whatever treasure is indicated in its statblock.

AWRAHIM

Awrahim are huge and horrific monsters of malign super intelligence. They are devotees of many strange and alien sciences.

AC 4 [15], **HD** 12**** [54hp], **Att** 1 x staff (6d6), 1 x bite (2d12 + paralysis) **THACO** 10 [+9], **MV** 150′ (50′), **SV** D6 W7 P8 B8 S10 (12), **ML** 5, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 4300, **NA** 1 (1), **TT** G

• **GATE** Can open a portal to its home plane once per day.
• **MAGICAL POWERS** Each can be used as indicated below:

At Will *Animate Dead, Dimension Door, Invisibility*

3 x Day *Charm Person, Cure/Cause Serious Wounds*

1 x Day *Cure/Cause Disease, Insect Plague*

• **MENTAL RESISTANCE** Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*).
• **MUNDANE DAMAGE IMMUNITY** Only harmed by magic or silver.
• **PARALYSIS** For 1d3 days (save versus paralysis). Those that fail their saving throw appear dead to all but magical means. If they survive the encounter, they can attempt to save once every day. If they manage to succeed (and survive), they awaken and their Alignment is now Chaotic.
• **SUNLIGHT HYPERSENSITIVITY** -4 to-hit in brightly lit conditions such as sunlight or a Continual Light spell. Direct sunlight causes an Awrahim 1d6 damage per round.
• **TELEPATHY** May communicate mentally within 60′. Those contacted are not compelled to communicate, but the monster will have an empathic sense of their thoughts regardless. May also use this ability on corpses. The dead are compelled to communicate and answer truthfully.
• **TRUESIGHT** Vision is unimpeded by darkness of any kind. Can detect magic, illusion, invisibility and polymorph on sight.

DESCRIPTION

A towering thing emerges from the darkness. Its vaguely humanoid torso sprouts from a grub's body. The creature grips an ornate staff encoded with weird, esoteric symbols. A greasy aura of occult energy bleeds from the creature and its potent artifact. It stands before you in a sort of unholy glory. As if a hierophant performing rites of benediction at the fane of long forgotten and blasphemous deities. A moment later, the thing lowers its face to gaze upon you. A dread washes over you as you sense the incredible and inhuman intelligence within its dispassionate black gaze. Its mandibles begin to clack and grind in a synchronous rhythm to the cold syllables slowly oozing into your brain.

LORE

These beings are known as Awrahim. They originate from an abysmally darkened plane known simply as The Black Gulf. The Black Gulf is thought to be a shadowy region between the Astral and Ethereal. It is a place wholly subsumed in weird, entropic energies some of which are at least semi-sapient. Those of exceptionally strong will can mold the very substance of the weird plane to suit their desires.

All Awrahim are alchemists, sages, priests and wizards. They have an infinite lifespan but they are mortal beings (and very cowardly in the face of death). All of them know millennia of secrets. They are masters of many bizarre sciences and are particularly necromancy. All Awrahim will have numerous libraries and laboratories secreted across the planes. The bite of an Awrahim will place victims into a trance so deep they seem dead to all but magical means. And whilst in this state, their soul is cast into The Black Gulf. Those that return to their bodies are never the same. Awrahim will flee any encounter that does not favor them and will have numerous contingencies should things go awry.

ECOLOGY

Awrahim are mortal and must eat, drink, breathe and rest. Awrahim are thought to be carrion eaters. This is oddly supported by the half-eaten look of many zombies in Awrahim lairs. Some believe that Awrahim must make a daily pilgrimage back to The Black Gulf to replenish their energies.

SEEDS

1.) The party is in the temple of forgotten gods in the capital of a wicked empire long gone into the dust. They are chasing the rumor of a crown that can be used to scry any location in the Multiverse. Upon entry, the party smells the reek of rotting meat. Things scuttle about the detritus just out of view. But, nothing approaches. The temple is a multi-storeyed spiral around the inside of an immense cone. The structure narrows to a minaret 33 floors up. The crown is in the minaret. The party finds it on an ornate stand placed before an ornate throne. The chamber has a splendid view of the ruined city below. If the party retrieves the crown and descends, they find the stairs blocked by hordes of undead. Teleportation will not function within the temple. The Awrahim is observing invisibly now. It will use its horde to disarm the party and bind them. If this is done, it appears and offers a bargain. It wants the artifact as

well, but cannot utilize it. It will let the party leave on one condition. One of them must remain to use the artifact whilst the Awrahim reads their mind.

2.) A cult in the area has been trafficing potent and potentially necromantic narcotics. Unfortunately, the party does not know who is a cult member (or addicted to the drugs). As a Referee, try to build up the paranoia. Reinforce the seedy and licentious nature of the area. Almost every NPC is pimp, a pusher or some other sort of rogue trying to work an angle. Make it difficult for the party to get any rest or make any friends. Keep up the tension and when you do allow them rest, give them no peace of mind. Eventually allow the party to learn of a cult ritual happening soon. If the party follows the rumor they find a debased orgiastic rite. The cultists are masked and rutting in a stinking, charnel pit before an effigy resembling a giant, horned grub. They are summoning their Awrahim patron. When it appears, several cultists lay before it and commit ritual suicide. Moments later they rise as zombies and kneel before the Awrahim. What follows is a sickeningly ghoulish feast. The cult begins to haul out the chunky, rotten slurry they had been cavorting in. They present the rancid, putrescence to their master on great golden platters. The new zombies act as table servants to the Awrahim as it reclines thoughtfully before its followers.

LOOT

In addition to what is indicated in the statblock, all Awrahim will have an ornate staff (Staff of Wizardry or Staff of Power, equal chance of either), a Ring of Regeneration and several (1d6+3) scrolls on their person.

BATOS

Powerful demonic sorcerers that were once undead.

AC 1 [19], **HD** 15+2 [69hp], **Att** 2 x claw (2d6 + strength drain), **THACO** 9 [+10], **MV** 240' (80') flying, **SV** D4 W5 P6 B5 S8 (15), **ML** 8, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 7050, **NA** 1 (1), **TT** H

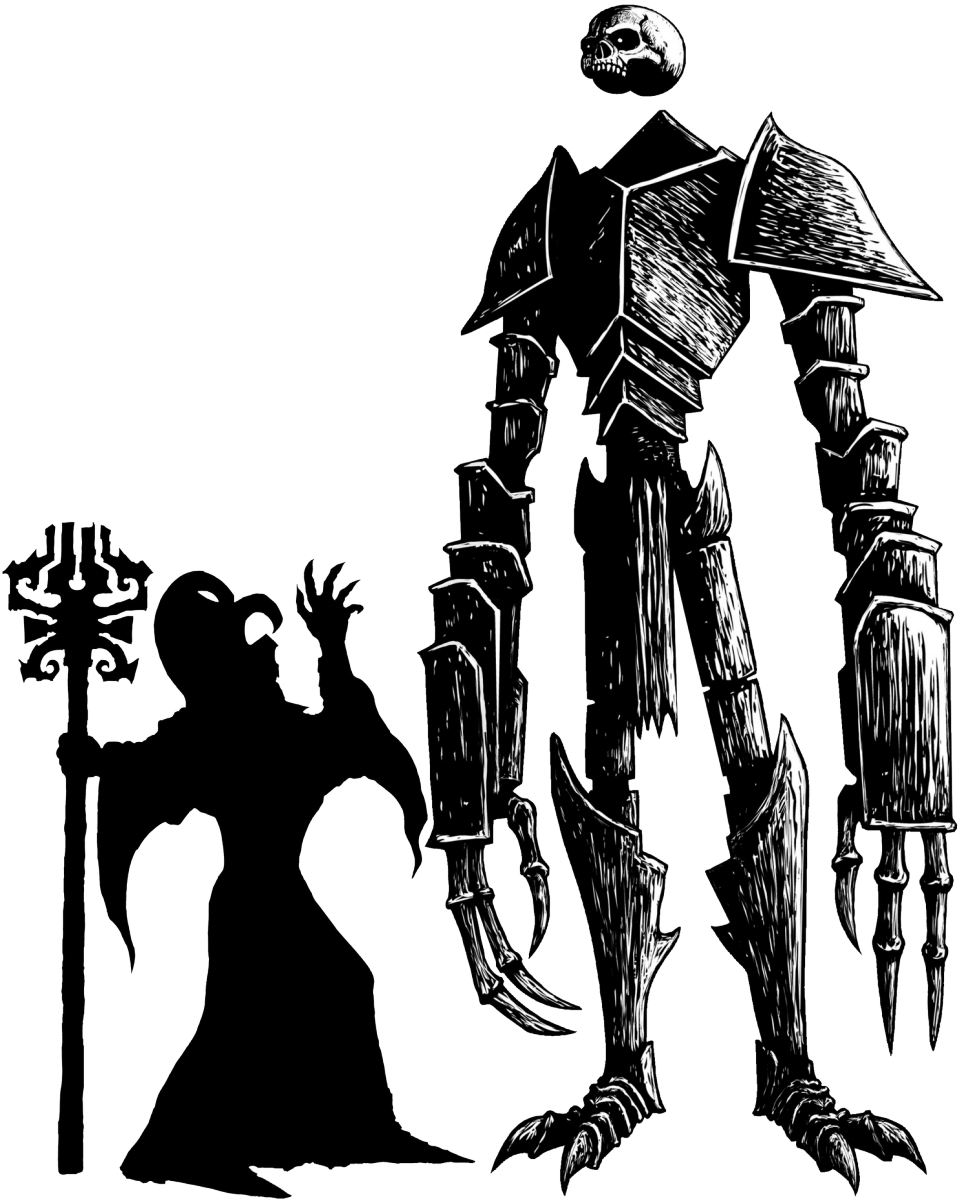
• **IMMUNITY** Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*) as well as poison.
• **GATE** Can open a portal to another plane at will.
• **MAGICAL POWERS** Each can be used as indicated below:

At Will *Dimension Door, Dispel Magic, Invisibility, Magic Missile*

3 x Day *Animate Dead, Fireball, Protection from Normal Missiles*

1 x Day *Disintegrate*

• **MUNDANE DAMAGE IMMUNITY** Only harmed by magic.
• **REJUVENATION** If killed, a Batos will reform in 3 days. Only the most powerful magics can prevent this.
• **STRENGTH DRAIN** Victims lose 1 STR per hit. Recovers after 8 turns. If reduced to 0 STR, the victim immediately becomes a Shadow under the control of the Batos that killed it.
• **TELEPATHY** May communicate mentally within 60'. Those contacted are not compelled to communicate, but the monster will have an empathic sense of their thoughts regardless.
• **TELEKINESIS** May lift and manipulate objects of up to 1000lbs. at a distance of 120'. May paralyze or crush an opponent within that range. **save versus paralysis** or be paralyzed and suffer 6d6 damage.
• **TRUESIGHT** Vision is unimpeded by darkness of any kind. Can detect magic, illusion, invisibility and polymorph on sight.



DESCRIPTION

You see a tall, gangly humanoid clad in a suit of baroque, rusted, black plate. Its head is a naked skull which hovers above the gorget of its armor. Pin-pricks of intense light illuminate the hollow sockets of its dead eyes. The being looks to be at least twice the height of an average human. Its arms are exceptionally long and somewhat insect-like, possessing several additional joints. Its movements are superhumanly fluid and seem to indicate the armor is hollow. Perhaps the creature is a spectral force animating the armor?

Upon sighting the party it levitates into the air. And then, as if standing upon empty space and it floats towards them at an alarming speed. Once it gets within 60 feet of the party it will seize the most obvious spellcaster with its telekinetic ability and begin to ascend (beyond the range of missile weapons and spells) dragging the party's spellcaster in tow. It will attempt to slay the spellcaster and then return to pluck another character from the party for a similar private, aerial execution.

The being is highly intelligent and capable of communication via telepathy. However, it is not likely to strike up a conversation with interlopers. If the party does manage to communicate with the being, it will demand they complete some task to demonstrate their worth to it.

LORE

These macabre beings are known as Batos. Although they appear to be undead, they are in fact demons. Although, there are a number of sages that insist a Batos is an example of an extremely ancient undead spellcaster that has somehow gained rank and recognition within the chaotic hierarchy of the infernal realms. These same scholars debate however, if Batos are sworn to any particular archdemon or if they are independent agents.

They possess no physical bodies, other than their skulls. And, their skulls are so heavily warded with protective magical contingencies that even if completely destroyed, they will reform in 3 days. This lends further fuel to the speculation they are advanced undead spellcasters, as there exist a few such creatures that have achieved similar states of permanence. They are able to persist beyond mere physical destruction by attaching their souls to special phylactery vessels. As to why they inhabit the weird armor, none can truly say. Perhaps the armor is the phylactery of a Batos? And, it does grant them additional melee capabilities that incorporeal creatures might not have.

Batos are powerful beings immune to mundane attacks and psychic influence. They are also highly resistant to many magical effects. All Batos have powerful telekinetic abilities and are potent spellcasters as well. They are extremely intelligent and will make tactical use of the environment to gain any possible advantage over their foes. Their ability to fly will also be used to maximum effect.

They are consummate travelers of the Multiverse able to open portals to other planes at will. They eternally search for esoteric lore and artifacts to bolster their power. Each of them possesses an incomprehensible collection of magical items and eldritch of esoterica taken from multiple planes. But, they are unlikely to carry more than a few items with them.

ECOLOGY

Batos are incorporeal demons with no internal processes. Their existence is dependent on immeasurable supernatural forces. They do not require food, drink or sleep. They also do not require air to survive. The sages that speculate they are advanced forms of undead believe Batos must consume the souls of living beings to prolong their existence but this has never been proven.

SEEDS

1.) Word has reached the party, that a novice wizard accidentally summoned a Batos a few months ago. The Batos has since taken control of the entire city and is using its inhabitants as trade goods in its dealings with various demon lords. Seers and holy men believe the Batos is bartering the innocent souls of the city for a grand artifact. A cult of degenerate sycophants has arisen in the city since its new ruler took over. Ousting the fiend and its new entourage will be no easy task.

2.) In the midst of a quest, the party comes upon the aftermath of a pitched, magical battle. Littered about are dozens of burnt and mangled bodies. The dead all seem to have been members of the same wizardly order. A clotting, acidic tang hangs in the air and an eerie silence looms about them. For DM's only, a Batos is there in the vicinity still. It is invisible and observing the party. It had been searching the bodies of the dead for a particular magical artifact until the arrival of the party interrupted it. If the party leaves the area within 10 minutes and does not disturb the bodies, the Batos will not attack.

LOOT

As mentioned above, all Batos will have immense hoards of rare and magical items hidden away in an extraplanar lair. Gaining access to the extraplanar hoard of a Batos could be an adventure unto itself. If the party does manage to defeat a Batos, they will gain at least one powerful staff, wand, or ring. Any item recovered should be of at least Very Rare quality. The armor of the Batos detects as magical but does not have any clear properties that the party could utilize. *For Referee's only, once the Batos reforms it will seek out its armor and slaughter any who possess it.*

FAMINE HOUND

Famine Hounds are undead beasts. They are the cursed remnants of those that betrayed their families and communities during a period of starvation.

AC 5 [14], **HD** 2*** [9hp], **Att** 1 x bite (1d12 + swallow whole), **THACO** 18 [+1], **MV** 150′ (50′), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (2), **ML** 10, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 35, **NA** 1d4+2 (2d6+2), **TT** T

• **BLINDSIGHT** Can "see" in total darkness; immune to sensory attacks such as blindness or deafness.
• **MIMICRY** The Famine Hound can mimic animal sounds and humanoid voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful **save versus spells**.
• **MISTY FORM** At will; takes 1 round: MV 180′ (60′) flying. Immune to all weapons. Cannot attack.
• **MUNDANE DAMAGE IMMUNITY** Only harmed by magic or silver.
• **PHANTASMAL FORCE** As the spell. **3 x day**.
• **SUMMON MIST** The Famine Hound can use its action to create a 20′ radius sphere of fog within 120′. The sphere spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. It lasts 1d6 turns.
• **SWALLOW WHOLE** A bite attack roll of 20 indicates that a human-sized (or smaller) victim is swallowed. Inside the Famine Hound's belly: suffer 3d6 damage per round (until the monster dies); may attack with sharp weapons at –4 to hit; body digested in 6 turns after death.
• **UNDEAD** Make no noise, until they attack. Immune to effects that affect living creatures (e.g. poison). Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*).

DESCRIPTION

You hear the plaintive wail of a child. The poor thing seems to be in a wretched state. Deep, wracking sobs echo from a darkened hollow in the middle distance. As you near the origin of the crying, you notice a thick and obscuring mist has begun to seep from the earth. The tearful cacophony continues unabated.

If the PCs leave the area or investigate the dark place the cries issue from, they will immediately encounter a large dog-like monster, roughly the size of a full grown man. It has an impossibly large maw, somewhat reminiscent of a leech or lamprey. That gaping, horrific mouth is its sole facial feature. Additionally, upon closer scrutiny they notice the creature's skeleton also possesses some humanoid qualities. In fact, the shape of its pelvis and shoulders indicate it is at least partially bipedal.

LORE

These things are known as Famine Hounds. They are said to be the accursed spirits of those that betrayed their neighbors and kin during times of famine. These wretched souls stole food from their community's stores and caused the starvation of many innocents. In this accursed state they are ever hungry and exist solely to consume.

They are adept at mimicking sounds and voices. They use this ability to lure victims into traps or ambushes. Additionally, they have some skill at magical deception too. They can craft simple illusions, usually to conceal some threat. They can also summon an obscuring mist which they are somehow able to merge with. The makes them effectively invisible until they attack. They are capable of swallowing human-sized creatures whole. If they manage to swallow a someone, they will soon merge with their mist to evade any attacks and safely digest their meal.

Although, they are cursed and bestial souls doomed to wander for eternity seeking only to fill their treacherous bellies. They do seem to possess a reasonable level of intelligence, but make no effort to communicate. They rarely hunt alone, a typical Famine Hound will always have at least two others of its kind in the vicinity.

ECOLOGY

Famine Hounds appear to be some form of undead. They have many traits common to corporeal and incorporeal undead. They do not require food, drink, rest or air to breathe. But, they are perpetually starving.

SEEDS

1.) The party is traveling in the wilderness. They hear the desperate cries of a woman not far off. Her screaming has begun to grow more frantic. She seems to be in great peril. The sound is coming from a hovel just a short distance from the road. As the party enters the hovel, they see a simple scene of rustic wholesomeness spoilt by gruesome violence. Broken dishes and overturned furniture are everywhere. A child's body lies broken and crumpled in the corner of the main room. Anyone with eyes to see knows with certainty the child is dead, the poor thing's head is bent at an impossible angle. The screams issue from the loft. A ladder is the only means to ascend. Several Famine Hounds are lurking in the loft awaiting fresh meat while one of their fellows mimics the cries of the woman.

2.) The party happens across a small hamlet that appears deserted, at least at first. Upon closer inspection they find emaciated corpses collapsed in their homes and on the streets. The community seems to have been overtaken by blight, famine and disease. As the party explores the tragic scene, some of them may get the feeling they are being watched. Eventually, they will encounter several recently transformed Famine Hounds. The monsters will attempt to separate the party and lure them into narrow alleys and other such confined spaces in order to better entrap them.

LOOT

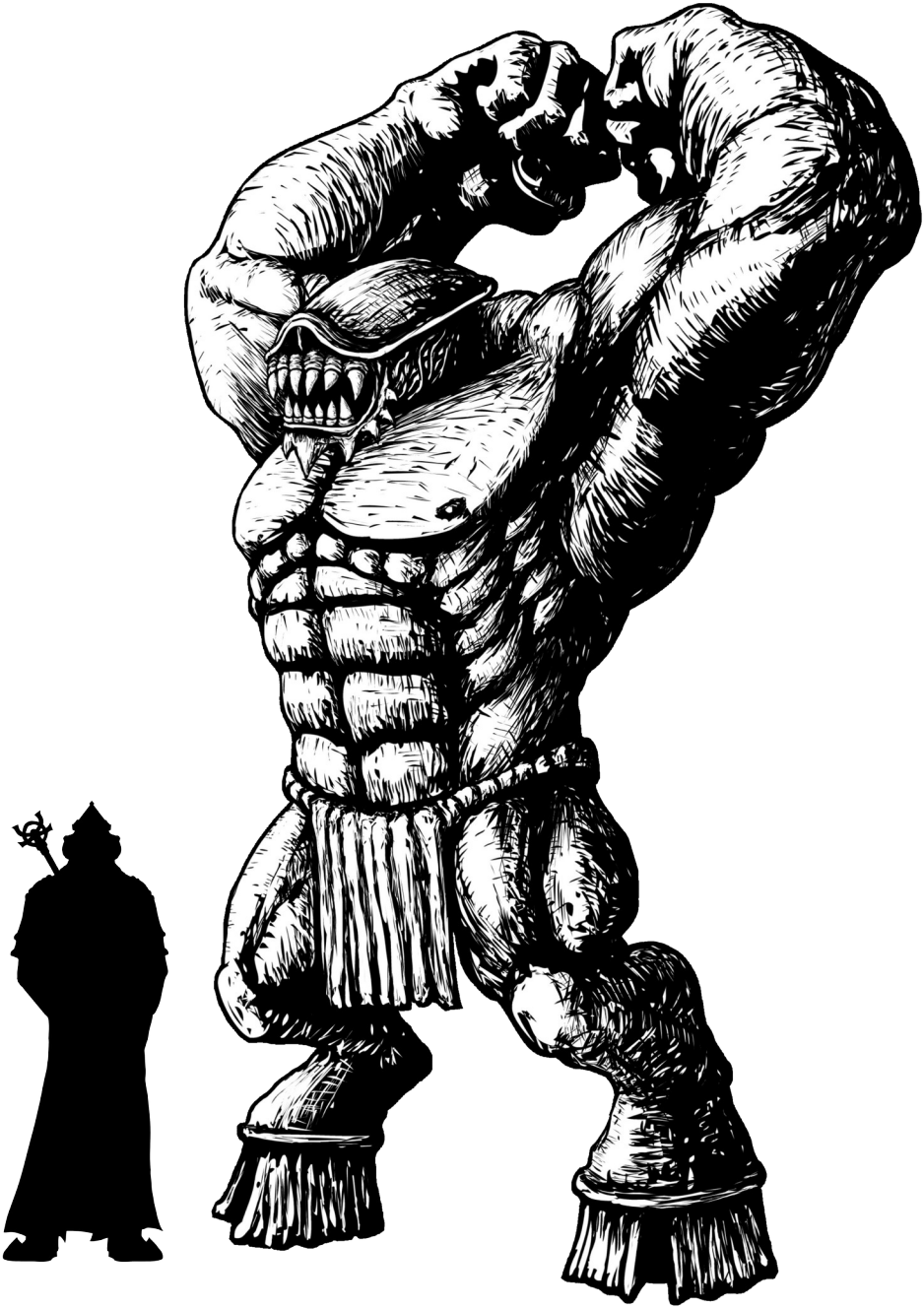
Famine Hounds have little need of anything and little interest in earthly things, except in the use of bait. Any items found upon them will likely be small trifles, such as rings and other such jewelry. Note, these items may be in the monster's gut.

GARGON

Demonic brutes used as shock troops by more powerful demons.

AC 0 [19], **HD** 8**** [36hp], **Att** 2 x fist (2d8) or 1 x bite (2d6 + paralysis), **THACO** 12 [+7], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D8 W9 P10 B10 S12 (8), **ML** 12, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 2850, **NA** 1d3 (2d6), **TT** E

• **AGGRESSIVE** Attack same size or smaller creatures on sight. Pursue until the victims are out of sight.
• **BLINDSIGHT** Can "see" in total darkness; immune to sensory attacks such as blindness or deafness.
• **FRENZY** Each round of combat, there is a 1-2 chance on a 1d6 that a Gargon will go into a Frenzy (treat as a *Haste* spell).
• **KEEN SENSES** Only surprised on a 1. May also track by scent.
• **MENTAL RESISTANCE** Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*).
• **MUNDANE DAMAGE IMMUNITY** Only harmed by magical attacks.
• **PARALYSIS** For 2d4 turns (save versus paralysis).
• **RECKLESS ATTACK** May forego any attempt at defense in melee and gain a +4 to-hit its targets. However it is also +4 to be hit as well.



DESCRIPTION

You see a large, heavily muscled humanoid. Its brutish form is somewhat larger than that of an ogre. It stands on immense goat-like legs. Its head is freakishly malformed, little more than a wolfish maw and swine-like snout tucked beneath a long and bony shell. Although the being has no visible way of perceiving its environment, it can clearly "see" quite well. It habitually swings it massive fists around menacingly. The being seems perpetually on the edge of violent outburst. If the party approaches within 120′ it will bay like some weird amalgam of dire wolf and ape to alert its kin and then charge at them.

LORE

These beings are known as Gargons. They are simple demons concerned with nothing more than slaughter and brutality. They are relatively straightforward thugs. They charge into melee at the nearest opportunity and pummel their opponents with their massive fists. Their reckless disregard for self-preservation catches most off guard. It is wise to watch out for their bite as well, it is quite poisonous and has a venom that can paralyze even the most stalwart of folk. The flesh of Gargons is incredibly dense and highly resistant to damage from mundane sources. Additionally their rage-filled, alien minds render them virtually immune to magical enchantment and influence. Their lack of eyes means they cannot be blinded. No form of darkness, mundane or magical can impede their eyeless sight. Further, their great porcine snout is also quite acute allowing them to track their prey by scent alone.

ECOLOGY

Gargons are demons. They do not require food, drink. Although, they will certainly feast on the flesh of anything they kill. They also do not require air to survive. Nor do they require any form of rest. They are manifestations of chaos and destruction manifest in an autonomous material form and given a semblance of free will. They are thought to be present on all layers of The Abyss but their numbers on the various layers is unknown. Gargons can be encountered anywhere throughout the Multiverse but if ever encountered outside of The Abyss they are likely serving a more powerful being or stranded from a previous summoning ritual.

SEEDS

1.) A mysterious and powerful warlock has summoned a host of Gargons and sent them forth into the kingdom to foment strife for his patron. The warlock aims to destroy the religions of the kingdom to make way for a cult devoted to his patron, a foul and murderous archdemon. The cult already has a few adherents within the aristocracy that will make things difficult for anyone attempting to subvert their

will. There have been ongoing attacks upon the temples of all deities within the kingdom. Additionally the trade routes in and out are routinely set upon. Supplies are running low and winter is nearing. The kingdom has sent out the call for heroes to aid them in their time of need.

2.) The party has been contracted by an isolated community to eradicate an infestation of Gargons. The creatures first appeared a month ago and since that time their numbers have grown to at least a dozen, possibly more. Since their appearance, game has grown scarce and travel is hazardous. The monsters seem to appear with greater frequency near an abandoned keep north of the settlement.

LOOT

Gargons are not wholly unintelligent beings, but they have little need of anything so they don't tend to carry treasure with them. Any treasure they do accumulate, they will usually mass in a large and tempting pile in the middle of their territory to lure in fresh meat. So, be sure to leave some gleaming armor and weapons amidst a heap of gold and gems out in an obvious location.

GURH

Degenerate mutant Dwarves that have fallen to demon worship.

AC 6 [13], **HD** 1+3** [7hp], **Att** 1 x pick (2d6 + poison), **THACO** 18 [+1], **MV** 120′ (40′), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (1), **ML** 8, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 23, **NA** 1 (2d6), **TT** S (F)

• **CELLAR DWELLER** Suffers a -2 to all to-hit rolls and saving throws cumulative, for each day it is above ground.
• **DAMAGE RESISTANCES** Only takes half damage from cold and fire.
• **FADE TO BLACK** Teleports via shadows to get close to an enemy, attack, then reappear 1d4 × 10′ away. If they have initiative, can teleport away without the opponent being able to counter-attack. If in serious danger, the Gurh can flee by entirely disappearing.
• **POISON** Those that fail a save suffer a -2 to all rolls for 1d6 turns and their movement is halved **(save vs poison)**.
• **POISON IMMUNITY** Immune to poison.
• **TELEPATHY** May communicate mentally within 60′. Those contacted are not compelled to communicate, but the monster will have an empathic sense of their thoughts regardless.
• **TRUESIGHT** Vision is unimpeded by darkness of any kind. Can detect magic, illusion, invisibility and polymorph on sight.
• **SUNLIGHT HYPERSENSITIVITY** -4 to-hit in brightly lit conditions such as sunlight or a Continual Light spell. Direct sunlight causes a Gurh 1d6 damage per round.
• **SURPRISE** On a 1–4, due to stealth.

DESCRIPTION

You spot a short, and very stout humanoid lurking in the shadows. It blends with the darkness in a very unnatural way. Were in not for the flash of its weird, beady eyes and gleaming fangs you might have missed it. It seems to be some sort of degenerate, feral dwarf but you can't be certain. It grips a vicious-looking weapon and seems intent to do you ill.

The monster will be reluctant to make a direct assault, especially if alone. Unless it has allies sufficient to outnumber the party two to one, it will slink away into the shadows. However, it will be lurking nearby and observant characters will likely catch glimpses of it as it continues its surveillance of them. It will patiently await reinforcements.

LORE

These nasty creatures are known as Gurh (in their own debased tongue). They are indeed an offshoot of Dwarves that delved too deeply and became corrupted by the weird radiations they encountered in the bowels of the earth. While they may appear feral at first, they are not. However, their culture has mutated as much as their bodies. Although, they still work metal and mine as their cousins do, these endeavors do not fill their lives as they do their kin's. The Gurh have long ago traded the pursuit of gold and honor for demon worship and dark magic.

They can all manipulate energy from the plane of shadows and use it blend with and teleport through darkness. They also have have advanced darkvision as well as telepathy. These abilities make them superb subterranean hunters. They will attempt to attack en masse and preferably from ambush. Additionally they are master trapsmiths.

ECOLOGY

Gurh are mortal beings that must drink, eat, sleep and breathe. They reproduce in the same manner as other mortal races. Somewhat surprisingly, they seem to have a much higher fertility rate than their mundane kin. One thing that is evident about the Gurh which has puzzled many sages is their evident dependency upon the weird radiations of the deep earth. If they are above ground, they will begin to weaken until they eventually die. Additionally direct sunlight blinds them and burns their weird flesh.

SEEDS

1.) The party has come upon what appears to be an ancient dwarven fortress in the depths of an underground cavern complex. The place seems abandoned. Characters with the relevant knowledge could estimate the ruin is at least two thousand years old. Whether the party explores the ruin or turns back, they have attracted the attention of several Gurh that will follow and ambush them later. If they do

decide to explore the ruin, they find evidence of further excavations in the bowels of the fortress. It appears the lord of the fortress sought to expand downward. As they trek deeper and deeper, the artifacts and architecture they encounter shifts more and more towards something less wholesome. It is advisable to sprinkle random loot to further entice the party to explore. Characters with relevant knowledge might surmise that these stout folk of old had discovered a new form of energy and their culture had begun to change because of its use. Further down still, the new energy is revealed to be a form of dark magic involving the plane of shadow and demon worship. At this point a trap should ensnare them. Massive sliding walls, a giant pit or net, etc. They are then subdued through magic or poison and brought deeper still into the labyrinthine warrens of the hidden Gurh kingdom.

2.) A settlement has begun clearing woodland for farms. They have uncovered the entrance to what appears to be a lost and forgotten mine from an ancient Dwarven kingdom. The crafty leader of the settlement has been leaking out rumors of fabulous riches contained within the mysterious hole in the ground. He has even gone so far as to charge admission fees to treasure seekers. And, some that have made the delve have returned with priceless relics. Worryingly though, an increasing number of delvers are not returning from their descent.

LOOT

In addition to what is indicated by the Treasure Type in the statblock, all Guhr will have a heavy melee weapon (battle axe) or a dagger that magically produces the poison indicated in the statblock. If this weapon is ever exposed to sunlight, the magic that generates the poison will be dispelled in 1d6 rounds.

HEADHAUNTER

Gruesome undead that decapitate others and steal their heads.

AC 9 [11], **HD** 9** [40hp], **Att** 2 x melee weapons (2d8), **THACO** 12 [+7], **MV** 60' (20'), **SV** D8 W9 P10 B10 S12 (9), **ML** 12, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 2300, **NA** 1 (1d3), **TT** Q

• **BLINDSIGHT** Can "see" in total darkness; immune to sensory attacks such as blindness or deafness.
• **MUNDANE DAMAGE IMMUNITY** Only harmed by magic.
• **STEAL HEAD** If the monster successfully severs a head, it may replace its current head with the newly severed head and in the process heal itself completely of all damage and conditions.
• **UNDEAD** Make no noise, until they attack. Immune to effects that affect living creatures (e.g. poison). Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*).
• **VORPAL ATTACKS** All of the monster's melee attacks (even unarmed) will decapitate on a natural 20. The target dies if it can't survive without its head. A creature is immune to this effect if it doesn't have or need a head. Such a creature instead takes an extra 6d8 damage and is stunned for 1d6 rounds.

DESCRIPTION

This monster can be encountered in two modes. With and without a head.

If the players happen upon it before it acquires a head, read them something like this: You see an emaciated headless body laying before you. The body seems to have been that of an adult male. The thing's flesh is leathery, desiccated and sunken. If they come near, the corpse animates and leaps to its feet. It then charges at the nearest living humanoid. If the Headhaunter manages to decapitate a victim, it installs the new head. The head ignites in a fiery halo, floating just above the stump of the corpse's neck.

If the players encounter it once it has installed a head, read them something like this: You see an emaciated humanoid with a flaming head floating just above the stump of a neck. Upon closer observation, it seems the body and head seem to have different origins. The weird creature charges towards you with its cadaverous, claw-like hands outstretched. Its moves are slow and jerky, perhaps due to its withered, desiccated flesh.

Once the creature is in possession of a head it can communicate. However, the intellect of the creature that once owned the head is now completely lost to insanity. Its primary concern is slaughter.

LORE

These vile things are known as Headhaunters. They are undead created with the aid of hellspawned magic. The headless corpses that are the Headhaunters' true forms were murderers that lost their head through some act of violence. In the afterlife, they struck a bargain with a powerful entity that has allowed them to persist in their current, bizarre state.

The headless body is the true form of the Headhaunter. It is driven to decapitate living humanoids and steal their heads to replace its own. Once a new head is installed, it lights up in a fiery halo. The murderous rage of the Headhaunter overwhelms the doomed soul. It drives them insane and compels them to seek out their loved ones. It will then urge them to act out vile depravities taken from the darkest parts of their soul upon these poor folk. Usually it will twist a minor grievance into a major vendetta that must be redressed with extreme prejudice. After those closest to the host are slaughtered, the Headhaunter usually seeks out a new head.

ECOLOGY

Headhaunters are undead and have no natural biological functions. They do not breathe. They do not require rest. Nor do they eat or drink. And, they are able to heal themselves through the acquisition of a

fresh head. Even a Headhaunter that is nearly defeated can be miraculously restored to its full unholy vigor simply by stealing a new head.

SEEDS

1.) The party has recently come upon an abandoned shack in the woods. As they enter the shack, they see the signs of violence all about them. All that remains now are skeletons and dust. The attackers appeared to possess terrible strength. Severed limbs and decapitations appear to have been the cause of every death. And, judging by the deep gouges in the walls, floor and bodies each blow was delivered with a terrific force. As the party examines the scene, they get the feeling this shack was once a den of thieves. And, perhaps some rival gang or a dispute over leadership went awry. What they do find extremely odd though, is that the bodies were never looted. They fell where they lay and none stripped them of equipment or coin. After exploring the room, they discover a trap door leading to the basement. Upon entering the basement they will see further scenes of violence as well as a massive strongbox at the end of the room. Near the strongbox is another corpse. It is also headless, but curiously it still has some flesh on its bones.

2.) The party is relaxing in a tavern after a recent quest. All is merry and bright. All is well. And suddenly, the tavern doors burst open revealing a ghoulish effigy of a man with a floating head wreathed in flames. The creature shouts of the name of a patron, perhaps a PC. It demands redress for some prior event. In each of its hands is a savage-looking weapon, slick with blood. As it approaches the named individual it cuts down anyone in its path.

LOOT

Headhaunters have little need of anything so they don't tend to carry treasure with them or accumulate any in a hoard somewhere. They will however, be armed with the most brutally effective weapons they can find. As such there is a 50% each that their weapons possess some enchantment.

HEARTBREAKER

Ruthless tyrants from another plane that have become trapped here.

AC 6 [13], **HD** 8+2**** [36hp], **Att** 2 x claw (2d6 + strength drain), **THACO** 12 [+7], **MV** 150' (50'), **SV** D8 W9 P10 B10 S12 (8), **ML** 10, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 2850, **NA** 1 (1d4), **TT** T(V)

• **BLOOD FRENZY** +4 to-hit any creature that does not have all its hit points.
• **INCORPOREAL MOVEMENT** Moves through solid matter at half speed.
• **HEARTBREAKER** Tears out target's heart on a natural 20 to-hit. The target dies immediately, becoming a Shadow under the Heartbreaker's control. The Heartbreaker regains hit points equal to the amount of the victim's original Strength score.
• **STRENGTH DRAIN** Victims lose 1 STR per hit. Recovers after 8 turns. If reduced to 0 STR, the victim becomes a Shadow under the Heartbreaker's control.
• **SURPRISE** On a 1–4, due to stealth.
• **TEMPORAL INSTABILITY** Each round of combat, there is a 1-2 chance on a 1d6 that a Heartbreaker will go out of phase with local time. This has two possible effects, each lasting 1d6 rounds with an equal chance of each:

Haste It moves out of phase with normal time/space (treat as a *Haste* spell).

Paralysis It steps out of normal time/space (treat targets as paralyzed).

• **TRUESIGHT** Vision is unimpeded by darkness of any kind. Can detect magic, illusion, invisibility and polymorph on sight.

DESCRIPTION

In the distance, you spot a very tall, gangly humanoid in some sort of ornate mask. The being is extremely long-limbed and wiry. Its hands and feet end in claws. Its movements are somehow jerky and indistinct. It flickers intermittently like a stop-motion film, appearing and disappearing from moment to moment. Sometimes it disappears and then reappears in a previous location. It also seems capable of passing through solid matter as it moves across the terrain towards you.

The creature will charge and attack immediately. However, it will not fight to the death. It lets loose a weird, guttural, rasping howl as it rushes towards you. The sound of its voice breaks apart and echoes from random directions as it nears you.

LORE

These strange beings are known simply as Heartbreakers. A somewhat whimsical name given them by the adventurers which first encountered them. The name is based upon the Heartbreakers' most devastating and horrific attack, they can reach into a living being's chest with their ghostly talons and tear out its still beating heart. This instantly slays most mortal beings.

The weird creatures are thought to be natives of some eldritch inbetween plane or dimension. They are never completely tethered to any reality they are encountered in. They constantly shift between them as if their physical forms were badly tuned radios. This makes their bodies essentially incorporeal and also allows them to move through time in short bursts.

Additionally those slain by the Heartbreaker are torn loose from our reality and taken to the weird in-between place the Heartbreakers hail from. They become shadowy undead remnants of themselves and are compelled to serve the Heartbreaker.

ECOLOGY

Heartbreakers are weird, extraplanar beings. They derive sustenance by draining life energy from living beings. They are immune to poisons, paralyzing effects and necrotic energy (including death magic). They do have a mortal biology, albeit an alien one, and require air to survive. The rasping sound of their voices leads many to believe the air of our plane does not suit them.

SEEDS

1.) A mysterious cult has been abducting people. No hostage demands are ever left and the bodies are rarely found. On the occasions that they are found, they have had their hearts ripped out. The party has been offered the sum of 8,000 gold pieces to rid the community of the menace.

2.) The party has been contracted by a wizard to hunt and capture a Heartbreaker. The wizard is keen to understand how the creature moves through time and space as well as slipping between dimensions.

3.) The party happens upon a public hanging in a village they are passing through. The man in the noose is about to swing for the murder of a family that gave him a place to sleep for the night. He looks a bit like a down on his luck adventurer. He repeatedly asserts his innocence and babbles about a tall, ghostly warlock that commands a coven of shadows.

LOOT

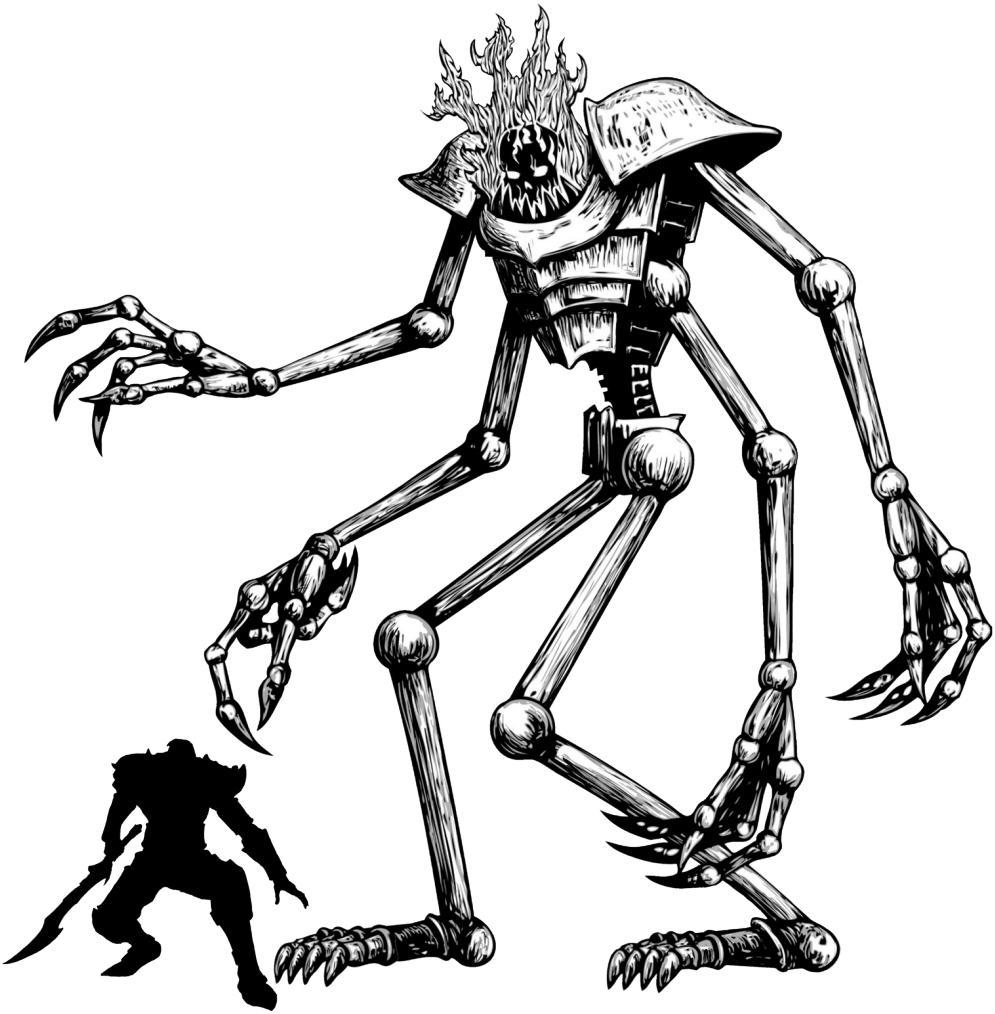
Heartbreakers do not tend to accumulate wealth. They seem to have no need of it. When they perish, only their mask remains. It appears to made of some weird ivory and is imbued with the Truesight Spell. However, the mask is sized for the head of a Heartbreaker, so some modification may be required.

HOLOCAUST ENGINE

Tortured and insane souls bound to devastating construct bodies.

AC 0 [19], **HD** 14**** [63hp], **Att** 4 x claw (2d10 + heat), **THACO** 9 [+10], **MV** 150′ (50′), **SV** D4 W5 P6 B5 S8 (14), **ML** 12, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 5150, **NA** 1d4 (2d4), **TT** None

• **DEATH THROES** When the Holocaust Engine dies there is 1-2 chance in 1d6 that, it explodes, and each creature within 30′ must make a **save versus death** or take 14d6 damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The explosion ignites flammable objects in the area.
• **GRAPPLING** Claws grab and restrain after a hit. Each constricting claw inflicts 1d10 automatic damage per round, plus a –1 penalty to attacks. A successful save is required to break free **(save versus paralysis)**.
• **HEAT** A Holocaust Engine emits intese heat. Anything within a 10′ radius will take 1d10 damage.
• **MUNDANE DAMAGE IMMUNITY** Only harmed by magic.
• **TELEPATHY** May communicate mentally within 60′. Those contacted are not compelled to communicate, but the monster will have an empathic sense of their thoughts regardless.
• **UNDEAD** Make no noise, until they attack. Immune to effects that affect living creatures (e.g. poison). Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*).



DESCRIPTION

You see a large, gangly, four-armed humanoid construct with a flaming skull in place of a head. The being has a hunched posture but looks to be easily twelve to fourteen feet tall. It moves about nimbly on its spidery legs and thrashes about itself menacingly with its four arms, each of which end in rending talons about the length of a long dagger.

A blistering heat emanates from the macabre thing. It cannot communicate but may moan or bellow as necessary. Its voice is clearly that of a soul trapped in unending agony and maddened with rage. The being will attack immediately.

LORE

These things are known as Holocaust Engines. They are a form of undead bound to a golem body. It is said that the doomed souls that inhabit the golem body once belonged to victims that were cruelly tortured for extended periods of time, sometimes even years. All sorts of deprivations and injuries were inflicted upon them until finally they were driven mad and then burned alive. But, before their souls could escape they were bound to these metal shells. Their madness and rage fuel the supernatural fire which engulf their undead forms, which in turn fuel the mechanisms within the golem body. The unholy, undead amalgam of rage, madness and nigh unbreakable metal create a formidable servant for those vile and skilled enough to work the necessary rituals.

The undead consciousness that drives a Holocaust Engine is utterly maddened and as such is immune to mental influence or illusion. The golem body is nigh invulnerable to mundane damage and highly resistant to most forms of magic. Needless to say, they are completely immune to fire. When a Holocaust Engine is defeated there is a good chance that it will explode in massive conflagration that utterly destroys its body and sets fire to the immediate area, quickly turning most environments in to raging infernos.

ECOLOGY

Holocaust Engines are accursed amalgams of undead flesh and mechanical artifice animated through dark magic. The undead spirit within the construct body burns perpetually with supernatural fire and fury. This constant, unholy inferno of rage in turn fuels the mechanical form. The fusion of the two creates a perpetual machine bent on the total annihilation of any living thing it encounters. Holocaust Engines do not require food, drink or sleep. They also do not require air to survive.

SEEDS

1.) A mysterious and vile tyrant has laid claim to an abandoned monastery in the mountains to the north. Rumors abound regarding the fiend's origins and source of his power. However, all the tales concur that

the tyrant is a powerful spellcaster greatly enamored with the necromantic arts. At all times he is accompanied by a small squad of Holocaust Engines. What other horrors and minions might the party encounter? Throughout the quest to destroy the evil wizard, the party comes to realize his forces are reinforcing the defenses of the old monastery. But, to what end?

2.) The party has been contracted by a religious order known throughout the kingdom for their good works. They are chiefly known for their efforts to assist the downtrodden of the community. They heal the sick, feed the hungry and clothe the destitute. None in the kingdom can speak ill of the order, they are bastions of benevolence and philanthropy. And so, when the word goes out that a series of abductions from the church's orphanages has occurred, the common folk demand an investigation. As the party pieces together clues in their hunt for the missing children, they will eventually discover the children were taken by an evil wizard that hopes to use them to create Holocaust Engines. The wizard has tried and failed with adults, so this time her plan is to start with children in hopes that the necessary torture will be more effective on them.

LOOT

Holocaust Engines are not wholly unintelligent beings, but they have little need of anything so they don't tend to carry treasure with them. Should the party manage to defeat one (and it does not explode), the mechanical body would probably be of great value to certain people.

LUCRETUS

Demons that lurk invisibly. Their whispers inspire bloodthirty greed.

AC 2 [17], **HD** 9**** [40hp], **Att** 1 x dagger (1d12), **THACO** 17 [+2], **MV** 90' (30'), **SV** D8 W9 P10 B10 S12 (9), **ML** 8, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 5150, **NA** 1 (1d3), **TT** None (G)

• **DEMONIC RESILIENCE** Lucretus only take half damage from acid, cold, fire and lightning. Additionally, they are immune to poison.
• **INCITE GREED** The Lucretus targets one humanoid it can see within 120'. The target must succeed on a **save versus spells** or be overcome with greed and paranoia. The victims are compelled to hoard wealth, especially gold coins, which they obsessively count and stack. Any interference with their attempts to count their coins or gather more will throw them into a murderous rage for 1d6 rounds. Once this occurs all glass within 120 ft. shatters. Victims can repeat the saving throw once a day, but at -4 if the Lucretus is within range. The Lucretus can only influence a single victim at a time. *The Lucretus can use this ability without revealing itself.*
• **INVISIBILITY** Can become invisible at will.
• **MUNDANE DAMAGE IMMUNITY** Only harmed by magic or silver.
• **SURPRISE** On a 1–5, unless target can detect invisibility.
• **VAMPIRIC BLOW** The Lucretus is healed by half the amount of damage it causes with its dagger.

DESCRIPTION

Typically this demon will remain invisible. Usually the only indication the party will have of it, is when the individual the demon is influencing becomes enraged. If this happens, the glass within 120 feet of its host will crack and blood will weep from any treasure in the same area.

If the demon is somehow revealed, the party will see a large horned and fanged creature roughly the size of an ogre. Its movements are deft and lightning quick. Despite its formidable stature, its craven nature is clearly writ in the hunched and leering mien. It is armed with a large, wavy dagger that is very reminiscent of what one might expect from a cultist or an assassin. The demon will attempt to return to its invisible state as soon as possible and will not hesitate to flee. Once it has succeeded in becoming invisible again it will return to attack the party or perhaps change its host.

LORE

These demons are known as Lucretus. They inspire mortals to hoard and covet wealth. They will drive their victims to all manner of violence and conspiracy in pursuit of further profit.

Sages and priests speculate these demons originate from the accursed souls of assassin cults. They inspire greed and bloodlust in equal measure but take no share of their victim's ill gotten gains so it is assumed the Lucretus feed upon the dark emotions generated by the activity. Those who hunt the Lucretus and other such creatures point out that the demon often invisibly aids its enraged victims in violence and are able to vampirically drain energy through their weird dagger.

ECOLOGY

Lucretus are demons. They do not require food, drink or sleep. They also do not require air to survive. They are manifestations of chaos and malice somehow coagulated into material form and given independent will. The Lucretus are thought to originate from the particularly loathsome spiritual energies created by murderous and conniving folk, such as greedy assassins and the like. While they do not technically require sustenance, they seem to derive pleasure through the perpetuation of the same negative emotions that spawned them.

SEEDS

1.) A normally mild-mannered money lender has taken to a life of crime. And according to all accounts is quite talented at it. He has quickly risen through the ranks of the Thieves' Guild. But, not all are happy with his meteoric rise. Many local thieves are indeed quite envious of his ruthless acquisition of wealth, power and infamy. So much so, that they intend to depose and dispose of him. However, they are also a

bit leery of his reputation for incredible luck and brutality. As such, they have hired the party to kill him. If there are any Good aligned PCs in the party that might be reluctant to conduct an assassination. As a Referree, you might want to build up the vile reputation the money lender turned head of the Thieves' Guild has acquired. The man is truly without honor and has done wicked things to innocent people. Of course, what the party will not know is that a Lucretus is always with him, lurking invisibly, whispering into his mind and dispatching his enemies.

2.) A hireling has fallen under the influence of a Lucretus. The influence is barely noticeable the first few days. The individual grows more and more fond of gold and takes to counting it obsessively. Any chance they get to form their coins into neat stacks they will. Within a week they will be complaining about their share of the loot. Not long after they will turn on the party. Likely this will happen in the form of silent knife in the back when the rest of the party is sleeping. The Lucretus will invisibly aid its host in any fight. However, if its presence is revealed, it will flee.

LOOT

Lucretus do not accumulate wealth, but they do inspire their hosts to gather huge amounts of it. The host of a Lucretus will be especially fond of gold. So, in terms of actual coinage assume that the host will usually have at least three times the amount of gold coins that is appropriate for Treasure Type indicated in the statblock.

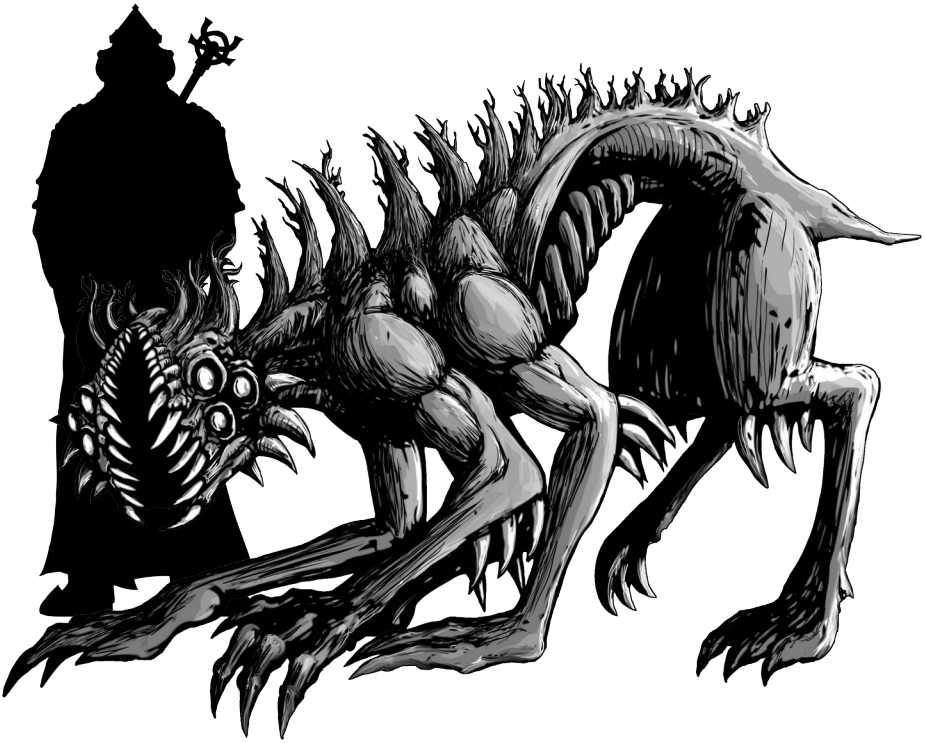
The Lucretus itself, will leave behind its dagger if slain. The dagger will retain the same life draining properties but is sized for the Lucretus. However, it may be possible to repurpose into another weapon (such as a sword or glaive) by a skilled smith.

MAKDUL

Bestial, extradimensional predators drawn to magic, especially wizards.

AC 3 [16], **HD** 4*** [18hp], **Att** 4 x claws (1d6) or bite (1d6 + paralysis), **THACO** 15 [+4], **MV** 150' (50'), **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14 (4), **ML** 8, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 225, **NA** 1d6 (1d10), **TT** S

• **CANNOT BE SURPRISED** It is impossible to surprise a Makdul.
• **GASEOUS FORM** May become gaseous at will; cannot attack or be attacked in this state, can enter any area that is not airtight.
• **INVISIBILITY** May become invisible at will.
• **KEEN SENSES** May track by scent, even across planar boundaries.
• **PARALYSIS** For 1d6+2 rounds **(save versus paralysis)**.
• **SURPRISE** On a 1–5, unless target can detect invisibility.
• **TRUESIGHT** Vision is unimpeded by darkness of any kind. Can detect magic, illusion, invisibility and polymorph on sight.



DESCRIPTION

A wiry, hissing, chattering, cat thing about the size of a horse. It is like some furious, spitting, mutant grimalkin ejected from a madman's nightmare and then made whole in the real world. The thing is clearly some form of eldritch abomination. Its bizarre jaws are lined with innumerable gleaming teeth and hinge vertically, bisecting its skull. Its eyes shine like baleful lanterns. But the weirdest aspect of its eyes are their number and arrangement, for they have six eyes which are placed in a roughly triangular pattern on each side of its skull. And each of the luminescent orbs seems capable of swiveling and tracking independently of the others. Framing its weird, grotesque face are numerous spiky barbs. Each of its six limbs possess similar barbs.

Beginning with what might be its ears and running down its back, somewhat akin to the dorsal fins of aquatic animals or reptiles, are numerous fleshy growths with long, root-like tendrils. These organs appear very active, they can be seen quivering and twitching. Perhaps, in some bizarre manner they function like the antennae of an insect or a feline's whiskers.

The creature's body appears to be composed of a roiling, gray, semi-solid smoke.

LORE

These bizarre creatures are known as Makdul. Scholars believe the Makdul are a pack hunting predator native to the ethereal plane. They are drawn to all magic, but especially arcane magic, like moths to a flame. Most encounters with Makdul result from planar travel within or near the ethereal realm. But occasionally, they catch the scent of magic from afar and are drawn to it as a shark is drawn to blood in the water.

Makdul possess the keen senses that one might expect of any predator. Additionally, their senses are adapted to tracking across planar boundaries as well as avoiding other horrific transdimensional predators like themselves. It is said, their damnable glare can pierce any darkness and cannot be misled by illusion or transmogrification of any sort.

Makdul appear to exist simultaneously in the material and ethereal planes, and as a result are preternaturally stealthy. They can become invisible on a whim and shift into a gaseous state instinctively. They can move with near absolute silence and access any room that is not airtight. Makdul can be fearsome opponents to the unwary, especially if they attack in numbers. Their multiplicity of limbs and razor sharp claws are dire enough, but their bite transmits a paralytic toxin as well.

ECOLOGY

Makdul are natural creatures from a very unnatural place. They are natives of the ethereal plane and can shift between the material and ethereal realms at will. They require sustenance and rest as we do, but seem to draw much of their nourishment from arcane magic. So much so, that they always target users of arcane magic. To use a somewhat crude analogy, wizards are like catnip to them.

SEEDS

1.) The party has been contracted to aid a wizard that has recently occupied a tower at the edge of the kingdom. The wizard has had enough of adventuring and struck a bargain with the local lordling. In exchange for the wizard's defense of a nearby hamlet, he has been given permission to occupy the old tower and begin teaching students.Unfortunately for the wizard, an old rival has laid a cursed item in the deep earth beneath the tower. The item shines brightly in the ethereal plane. Like a beacon, it has been drawing packs of Makdul. The wizard and his apprentices have been under near continual harassment from Makdul the past few days. They have been able to combine their strength to keep a system of wards and alarms going, but they have been unable to rest sufficiently and their collective defense is wavering. So far, the wizard and his students have only had to fight Makdul, but perhaps other loathsome predators are on their way as well. The cursed item is warded from detection by the wizard and his students. However, there is a chance that others might be able to find it.

2.) In the midst of a quest, the party comes upon the aftermath of a pitched, magical battle. Littered about are dozens of burnt and mangled bodies. The dead all seem to have been members of the same wizardly order. There is no indication of who or what they were fighting. A clotting, acidic tang hangs in the air and an eerie silence looms about them. A pack of Makdul will arrive in 1d6 rounds. One is in the vicinity now, lurking invisibly and observing the party. It was drawn by the massive discharge of arcane energies and has summoned several of its kin.Within the carnage the party can find numerous magic items: a single Staff of Power (13 charges), 1d3 Wands of Fire (54 charges each), 1d3 Wands of Lightning (54 charges each) and 1d8 Wands of Magic Missile (45 charges each). 1d6 Scrolls of Protection from Evil. 3 functioning Bracers of Armor (+1, +2 and +7).

LOOT

In addition to what is indicated in the statblock, there is a 15% chance of 1d3 small magical items such as rings, in the creature's stomach.

NARAM

Strange beings from an unknown dimension. They transmit magical knowledge and sow chaos everywhere they manifest.

AC 7 [12], **HD** 3** [40hp], **Att** 2 x claw (1d10) or 1 x sting (poison), **THACO** 17 [+2], **MV** 120' (40'), **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (3), **ML** 12, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 65, **NA** 1d4 (1d4+1), **TT** None

• **ASTRAL PROJECTION** At will the Naram may leave its current body and enter the astral plane. From the astral plane it may enter another plane that touches upon the astral. When it arrives on the new plane a new body is created for it.
• **IF KILLED** Returns to plane of origin.
• **MENTAL RESISTANCE** Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*).
• **POISON** Victims enter a trance and are paralyzed for 1d6 rounds **(save vs. poison)**. If they accept an alignment shift towards Chaotic they can learn a random spell (this would allow even non-spellcasters to use magic) which they will be able to cast once per day. They may continue to trade an alignment shift for a new random spell until their alignment is Chaotic. Once their alignment is Chaotic, the PC may trade 1d4 points of a random Ability Score to learn another spell. The PC will not know the cost of this trade. Once Ability Scores are being traded, the character must succeed on a **saving throw vs. spell** to resist further exchanges. If an ability drops below six, the victim will mutate (the Referee is urged to be creative). Also, the Referee may want to rule that Ability Scores below a certain threshold render a character an NPC.
• **TELEPATHY** May communicate mentally within 60'. Those contacted are not compelled to communicate, but the monster will have an empathic sense of their thoughts regardless.

DESCRIPTION

Stepping into the pool of your torchlight you see a large humanoid creature. Its flesh is slate gray and greatly resembles finished stone. It stands about eight and a half to nine feet tall, easily head and shoulders taller than a large man. Its head is a bizarre amalgamation of some form of arthropod and an octopoid. Its elongated head is crowned with a heavy, segmented carapace from which juts glistening mandibles and long grasping tentacles. The tentacles look to be used primarily for feeding and appear to be equipped with barbed stingers as well.

The thing's hands and feet end in thick talons. Its arms are overly long and could easily brush the floor. They lend a sort of hunched and somewhat quadrupedal aspect to the being, making it appear almost ape-like. The taut, wiry musculature of the thing indicates a remarkable agility although so far, its movements are rather slow and deliberate.

Despite the creature's fearsome, brutish and alien mien, it is clothed in a simple girdle and does not appear immediately hostile.

LORE

These creatures are known as Naram. They come from an unknown plane and can traverse the astral at will. The Naram are legendary figures of worship within degenerate esoteric schools. They bring knowledge with a steep price. Their sting triggers an intense psychedelic trance that reveals hidden secrets. In this state, the victim's senses are thrown askew. They taste sound, feel color and a tapestry of mutating geometric forms fills their vision while throbbing, mesmerizing pulse fills the totality of their being. Within the delirium they sense a morsel of wisdom there for the taking, If they accept the bargain they can learn magic but they may not be able to resist further degeneration once they taste the knowledge the Naram offers. In this way, the Naram have fostered the growth of many degenerate cults across countless worlds.

ECOLOGY

The Naram are an alien race from some far flung plane of existence. They travel the multiverse via means of astral projection. Upon entering a new plane, a new physical form materialises for them to inhabit. However, none know of the original plane that houses the creatures' true forms. It is believed that a Naram must be summoned to each new plane that it appears on. Some scholars suggest the Naram have very little in the way of free will, and may in fact simply be vaguely sentient conduits through which knowledge of magic is transmitted.

The body of a Naram encountered is almost never its original form. As such, slaying the body of one accomplishes little. It may simply be summoned again at a later date. The Naram are assumed to be mortal beings, albeit highly alien in body and mind. The form in which they materialize seems to have no

need of nourishment or hydration or even respiration. In fact, they can remain motionless for centuries and are often mistaken for statues.

SEEDS

1.) The party discovers a large and exquisitely appointed secret meeting hall. It might be hidden in some unexpected place for added mystery and drama, perhaps under a bustling town hall or a revered abbey. The place appears to be a drug den and occult library in equal measure. A tripartite throne on a raised dais in the distant corner holds three grotesque statues of alien creatures. The statues are in fact Naram. They are the guests of honor in this decadent place. The Naram themselves will not attack or indeed, even show any interest in the party. They will remain motionless unless the party touches them. The Naram will defend themselves and will never flee. The longer the party investigates the hall, the greater the likelihood that they will encounter some degenerate and mutated seekers of the sort of knowledge the Naram provides. These individuals will attempt to disable the party and then ask the Naram to sting them.

2.) The party has been contracted by a holy order in the kingdom to root out a debased cabal. Apparently a young noble was cast out of his wizard's college for less than savory conduct. However, that novice wizard was so hungry for power and knowledge that he summoned a Naram a few months ago to complete his tutelage. The Naram has been dutifully offering magical knowledge to the young wizard as well as his acquaintances ever since.The spreading corruption has resulted in a debased cult of heretics and mutants numbering at least twenty or so. However, it is feared by the order, that their taint may have also extended deeper into the power structure of the kingdom, especially the nobility.

LOOT

The Naram need nothing and therefore do not accumulate treasure. But, there is a 75% chance they have 1d12 scrolls of random spells. However, the Naram scribes its scrolls with its barbed tentacles and its venom is the ink. So, any that touch the paper must roll a saving throw or endure the same 1d6 rounds of delirium as if they had been stung. If the party manages to have an amicable interaction with the Naram it may be convinced to scribe a scroll for them. A Naram can scribe spells at an incredible pace, estimate one turn per level of the spell.

SUNGSINGER

Sungsingers are cursed druids that made pacts with dark archfey.

AC 1 [18], **HD** 9***** [40hp], **Att** 1 x bite (1d10 + energy drain) or 1 x fist (1d10 + grapple), **THACO** 12 [+7], **MV** 180' (60') flying, **SV** D8 W9 P10 B10 S12 (9), **ML** 10, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 4400, **NA** 1 (1), **TT** G

• **ENERGY DRAIN** Those struck by the Sungsinger's bite also suffer an Energy Drain, permanently losing one experience level (or Hit Die). This incurs a loss of one Hit Die of hit points, as well as all other benefits due to the drained level (e.g. spells, saving throws, etc.). A character's XP is reduced to halfway between the former and new levels. A person drained of all levels immediately becomes a Wight, under the control of the Sungsinger that killed them.

• **GRAPPLE** Succeed on a **save versus paralysis** or be grappled and suffer an automatic 1d10 per round, a -1 to-hit rolls, and be unable to move until passing saving throw.

• **MAGICAL POWERS** Each can be used as indicated below:

At Will *Animal Growth, Darkness, Plant Growth, Speak with Animals*

3 x Day *Charm Monster, Hold Monster, Sleep, Speak with Plants*

1 x Day *Animate Dead, Insect Plague*

• **MUNDANE DAMAGE IMMUNITY** Only harmed by magic.

• **TELEKINESIS** May lift and manipulate objects of up to 1000lbs. at a distance of 120'. May paralyze or crush an opponent within that range**. save versus paralysis** or be paralyzed and suffer 6d6 damage.

• **TELEPATHY** May communicate mentally within 60'. Those contacted are not compelled to communicate, but the monster will have an empathic sense of their thoughts regardless.

• **UNDEAD** Make no noise, until they attack. Immune to effects that affect living creatures (e.g. *poison*). Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*).

DESCRIPTION

A six-armed skull faced humanoid with long antlers floats into view. It hovers about a foot above the ground. Upon seeing you in floats closer. As it nears you can see its sunken eyes are a glossy black devoid of pupil or iris. You also note it has a densely muscled, square jaw and several rows of short, sharp, triangular teeth. It will attempt to communicate with the party. It cocks its head at a weird angle with a loud crunch of several vertebrae and begins to speak in an eerie sing-song fashion. What makes it all the more disconcerting is the fact that the being's smooth melodious tones seem to be reversed. That is to say, it's language sounds familiar but it is in reversed speech. If the party attacks, it will defend itself. If they do not attack it, it will follow them speaking in the same weird way. If they do not drive it off or destroy it, it will attack them after 10 minutes or so.

LORE

These frightening creatures are undead nature spirits known as Sungsingers. The name was first coined by elves and has since been translated into the Common tongue. It's said the true Elvish name for them is much more descriptive and terrifying. The elves have records of them going back millennia. They are cursed nature priests who delved too deeply into darkened, forbidden woods and made pacts with the maleficent fey that dwell there.

The Elves say that Sungsingers speak an archaic version of their own language in reverse. This elder Elven language focuses on natural harmony. Sungsingers speak it in reverse because they are cursed to unmake the world. This peculiar speech is indicative of the fundamental wrongness of Sungsingers. They are perpetually out of synch with the natural flow of life and represent autophagy turned to entropy. In other words, they have become an unnatural perversion of nature's tendency to consume itself. All things within nature have a beginning and an end. For all prey there is predator. And somehow Sungsingers were manipulated into throwing the natural balance askew. Instead of merely preserving the cycle of life and death they seek to unravel it. And, tragically enough in their weird twilight state of undeath they seem unaware of what they do to the world they once preserved.

Sungsingers have a myriad magical abilities they employ through incanting the sacred words of making in reverse. Additionally, these malignant spirits have powerful telekinetic abilities. At all times they are surrounded by a bubble of telekinetic force which shields them from harm and allows them to fly. In fact, they never seem to touch the ground. They can lift up to 1,000 pounds at a distance of 120 feet. They may use this ability to crush, immobilize, rend or otherwise harm a target. Like other undead, Sungsingers have no functional organs and are unaffected by a variety of conditions and effects that would target such mortal frailties. Further, they are highly resistant to nonmagical attacks.

ECOLOGY

Sungsingers are undead creatures. Their biological functions have ceased. They have no need to eat, drink, sleep or breathe. Although, they no longer require food they seem to have a great desire to consume the internal organs of mortal creatures. It is said they can crack bones and skulls with their powerful bite to get at the brain and marrow as well.

SEEDS

1.) An elven settlement is seeking to retake one of their ancient sites. The whole site is an immense megalithic runestone roughly half a mile in diameter. It was lost to them centuries ago when its chief caretaker foolishly trusted an evil archfey. The unfortunate priest was twisted into a Sungsinger which has haunted the site ever since. Out of respect for their cursed kindred, the Elves abandoned the site and placed arcane wards around it to contain the blight and keep others from blundering into certain doom. Now, a once in a thousand years celestial alignment is coming soon and the Elves believe they can retake the site and lift the curse from the Sungsinger. But, to do so they require the assistance of competent adventurers.

2.) The party has been tasked by a high conclave of nature priests with recovering a potent magical staff (combines the powers of a Staff of Commanding and Withering) and a bronze crown from a Sungsinger's lair. The staff is a potent ritual item for their council which they require for an upcoming ceremony. And, they believe they may be able to disrupt the curse upon the Sungsinger if the party can bring them the bronze crown. The priests themselves are unable to enter the Sungsinger's lair due to certain wards. They ask the party to recover the items by subterfuge and not slay their cursed brother.

LOOT

Although Sungsingers have little craving for material gain. The do amass a sizeable hoard throughout their essentially immortal existence. However, they are quite insane and the things they hoard may not be of much value to adventurers. Regardless, a typical Sungsinger will have one magical staff (Command, Healing (reversed in the hands of a Sungsinger), or Withering), a small idol symbolizing some evil archfey, a split bronze crown with blasphemous runes scrawled in archaic Elven and whatever additional treasure is indicated in its statblock.

XATHRAXUS

Tyrannical demonic slavers from a storm-wracked hell.

AC 2 [17], HD 20****** [90hp], **Att** 2 x sword (4d12), **THACO** 6 [+13], **MV** 150′ (50′), 300′ (100′) flying, **SV** D2 W2 P2 B2 S4 (20), **ML** 12, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 8900, **NA** 1 (1), **TT** None

• **DELUGE** All ranged attacks are -2 to-hit. In 1d6 rounds movement is halved. If the Xathraxus rolls a natural 17+ on any attack, it also opens a portal to its home plane and a target of its choice must **save versus wands** or fall through. If the Xathraxus is defeated, the target returns in 1d6 hours.
• **DEMONIC RESILIENCE** Only take half damage from acid, cold, and fire.
• **GATE** Can open a portal to its home plane once per day.
• **MAGICAL POWERS** Each can be used as indicated below:

At Will *Darkness, Dimension Door, Dispel Magic*

3 x Day *Animate Dead, Hold Monster, Lightning Bolt*

1 x Day *Insect Plague*

• **MAGGOT BLOOD** Any creature making a successful attack with a slashing weapon must make a **save versus wands** or be hit by a spray of demonic maggots. They will burrow into the target's flesh the next round if not burnt with fire inflicting 2d6 damage per round.
• **MUNDANE DAMAGE IMMUNITY** Only harmed by magic and gold.
• **IMMUNITY** Unharmed by gas and poison; unaffected by charm, hold, and sleep spells. Totally immune to lightning or other electrical attacks.
• **SUNLIGHT HYPERSENSITIVITY** -4 to-hit in brightly lit conditions such as sunlight or a Continual Light spell. Direct sunlight causes a Xathraxus 1d6 damage per round.
• **TELEPATHY** May communicate mentally within 60′. Those contacted are not compelled to communicate, but the monster will have an empathic sense of their thoughts regardless.
• **TRUESIGHT** Vision is unimpeded by darkness of any kind. Can detect magic, illusion, invisibility and polymorph on sight.

DESCRIPTION

You see a huge demonic thing in the near distance. It is well over 20' tall. Its horse-like head has multiple horns. Its wings are membranous and bat-like. Its flesh is ashen grey with bluish-white mottling, twitching and writhing things can be seen beneath its skin. The thing has eight eyes beneath its horned brow, they are a bright, incandescent blue. It grips a massive, curving sword in one hand. The horrific thing seems to somehow be affecting the weather. An isolated thunderstorm appears to be centered upon it and torrents pour down, quickly turning the earth into a sloppy mire. As the demon approaches, some characters might notice the reflections in the spreading puddles do not match the environment. The reflections show a bizarre and storm-wracked hellscape. A flock of crows accompanies the demon. Some wheel overhead surprisingly comfortable in the gusting winds of the storm. Others perch upon the demon itself. The demon will not attack the party immediately. It will first offer the party a chance to surrender and become its servants. The demon's words can be heard in their minds, but the words will also be echoed by the crows.

LORE

These demons are known as Xathraxus. They are from some storm-wracked nether realm where no sun has ever shone. It is a bleak and warped place overrun by fungal growth and loathsome vermin. They come to our plane to seek slaves.The Xathraxus are able to probe the minds of mortals with ease. In addition to their mental powers, the Xathraxus have several magical powers. They can open a portal to their home plane via a pool of water. They use this ability to travel between their plane and ours as well as utilizing it to entrap the unlucky. The demon's flesh is highly resistant to mundane weapons through some bizarre and mystical alchemy, weapons forged from gold are able to harm the demon as well. Some alchemists contend that gold is a manifestation of the solar emanation upon our plane and thus this vulnerability is merely logical.Voracious, grubs infest the flesh of a Xathraxus. If anyone lands a cutting blow upon the flesh of a Xathraxus, there is a strong chance that some of these grubs will spread to the attacker of the Xathraxus. If this does indeed happen, then the grubs must be removed with all haste. They can be easily burnt with fire, however the constant rain that accompanies the Xathraxus might make this difficult. If the grubs are not removed quickly enough, they will burrow into the victim's flesh and seek out their heart. Once the grubs reach the victim's heart, death soon follows.

ECOLOGY

Xathraxus are demons. They do not require food, drink or sleep. They also do not require air to survive. They are manifestations of chaos and destruction somehow coagulated into material form and given independent will. They hail from a storm-wracked layer of The Abyss. It is thought that every Xathraxus maintains a gloomy keep upon their plane that they keep staffed with mortals. The mortal staff needs constant replacement however, due to the harsh conditions of the plane.

SEEDS

1.) An eccentric nobleman has acquired the sword of a fallen Xathraxus. He has hired a wizard to enact a ritual that will allow them to travel to the demon's lair within The Abyss. The nobleman is looking for a specific set of 13 enchanted hourglasses. The party has been hired to provide muscle on the quest. Each of them is offered 5,000 gold in advance and another 5,000gp gold upon completion. Unbeknownst to the party, the lair of the Xathraxus has been taken over by a motley group of slaves. Once upon a time, they might have been reasoned with, but that time is long past. The corrupting influence of living in the infernal realms has driven them totally mad. So, in addition to the usual demonic and undead creatures they would likely encounter, the party will also have to contend with fairly high-level (because they survived this long) NPCs with evil alignments and murderous intent.

2.) One of the party's spellcasters has acquired a tome that describes a fabulous library deep inside the infernal realms. The library is a vast repository or lore and contains artifacts from across The Multiverse. The tome claims to have the necessary rituals to open a portal to enter the library stealthily.

LOOT

Xathraxus do not carry wealth or treasure with them. However, if the Xathraxus is defeated, its massive blade can be used in a ritual to enter the demon's lair on its home plane. Within its lair much loot can be found. These demons are highly intelligent and tend to amass great libraries of arcane and divine lore.

ZAKHVAT

Zakhvat are demons notorious for abduction. They lurk invisibly, waiting for any opportunity to stuff the unwary into their magical bag.

AC 4 [15], **HD** 6*** [27hp], **Att** 2 x claw (1d10) or 1 x bite (1d8 + paralysis), **THACO** 14 [+5], **MV** 150′ (50′), **SV** D10 W11 P12 B13 S14 (6), **ML** 8, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 950, **NA** 1 (1d4), **TT** C

• **BAG** A claw attack roll of 20, or 4 or more than the target number required, indicates that a human-sized (or smaller) victim is shoved into the Zakhvat's bag **(save versus paralysis)**. The target must succeed on a **save versus spells** each round it is in the bag or be sent to 10′ x 10′ x 10′ unique pocket dimension. Once a victim is sent to the pocket dimension, only magical means can return them.
• **GATE** Can open a portal to its home plane once per day.
• **IMMUNITIES** Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells
(e.g. *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*). Also immune to poison.
• **INVISIBILITY** Can become invisible at will.
• **MUNDANE DAMAGE IMMUNITY** Only harmed by magic or silver.
• **PARALYSIS** For 1d6+2 rounds **(save versus paralysis)**. *Paralyzed targets cannot resist being shoved into the Zakhvat's bag.*
• **SURPRISE** On a 1–5, unless target can detect invisibility.

DESCRIPTION

In the middle distance, you spot a very tall and very gangly figure. It appears to be a horned, demonic humanoid. It is lean and hunched with a long neck and longer limbs. It grips a large bag in one of its taloned hands and reaches towards you with the other. A sinister leer creeps across its wizened face as its beady, luminescent eyes bore into you. A moment later the ghastly thing seems to have disappeared but a lingering scent of sulphur remains.

For For Referee's: only: The creature is still there but has simply turned invisible. A telltale odor of brimstone may betray its presence to more perceptive characters. Generally the demon will remain within 50 feet of at least one member of the party. If the party splits or there are any stragglers in their formation, the demon will attempt to attack from hiding. Typically it will try to debilitate with its poisonous bite and then stuff the victim into its sack once they are weakened. The demon is not in a rush. It is content to harry the party to exhaustion if necessary. If ever forced into melee and outnumbered it will turn invisible and flee at the nearest opportunity.

LORE

These beings are known as Zakhvat. The name comes from some foreign kingdom where, according to legend, an old and bitter wizard first summoned one. These demons are infamous for their predilection to kidnap folk. And that was exactly what the bitter old fool had in mind. A fair maiden had spurned his romantic overtures. So, he resolved to summon a Zakhvat to steal the maiden away. Unfortunately for both the maiden and the wizard, the demon never released her. It is said that she still lingers in one of the pocket dimensions the demon's sack leads to. As for the wizard, he died alone and resentful over his failure to retrieve the girl.

All Zakhvats can become invisible at will. They also possess many of the same abilities common to such hellish abominations. Their flesh is supernaturally durable rendering them extremely formidable to those wielding only mundane weapons. Additionally their alien minds make it difficult to influence them via magical means.

They all possess sharp slashing talons and their gangly limbs grant them prodigious reach with the filthy things. The bite of a Zakhvat is poisonous as well, and will weaken even the stoutest folk almost immediately. But the thing's wretched bite is usually only a prelude to the beast's most well known and feared attack, its bag. Every Zakhvat possesses a bag large enough to contain a Medium-sized creature. And, anyone or anything placed within the bag is magically shifted to a pocket dimension. Once it has stuffed someone into its bag, the Zakhvat will usually turn invisible and flee to eat its victim in a more convenient place.

Although difficult to control, Zakhvats make excellent assassins, hunters, kidnappers and spies. In addition to their ability to become invisible, their vision can penetrate all darkness, illusions and magical transmogrifications. Those that would make bargains with such creatures as these had best make sure the contract is struck rightly as they are known to be a capricious lot even amongst other demonkind.

ECOLOGY

Zakhvats are demons. They do not require food, drink or sleep. They also do not require air to survive. They are manifestations of chaos and malice coagulated into material form and given independent will. The Zakhvats are thought to originate from the particularly loathsome spiritual energies created by avaricious and conniving folk, such as greedy assassins, kidnappers, spies and the like.

SEEDS

1.) As the party approaches a crumbling ruin that may have once been a wizard's tower, they come to the attention of a Zakhvat that has been lairing here. Its former acquaintance has expired as mortal beings tend to do. The Zakhvat will proceed to harass the party as described in the first section.

2.) The party has been contracted to seek out and slay a particular Zakhvat by an NPC. Perhaps the NPC is trying to recover a lost acquaintance or item? The NPC warns the party of the demon's powers and last known location, but little more can they offer. Half of their reward will be held back if they do not return with the demon's accursed sack.

LOOT

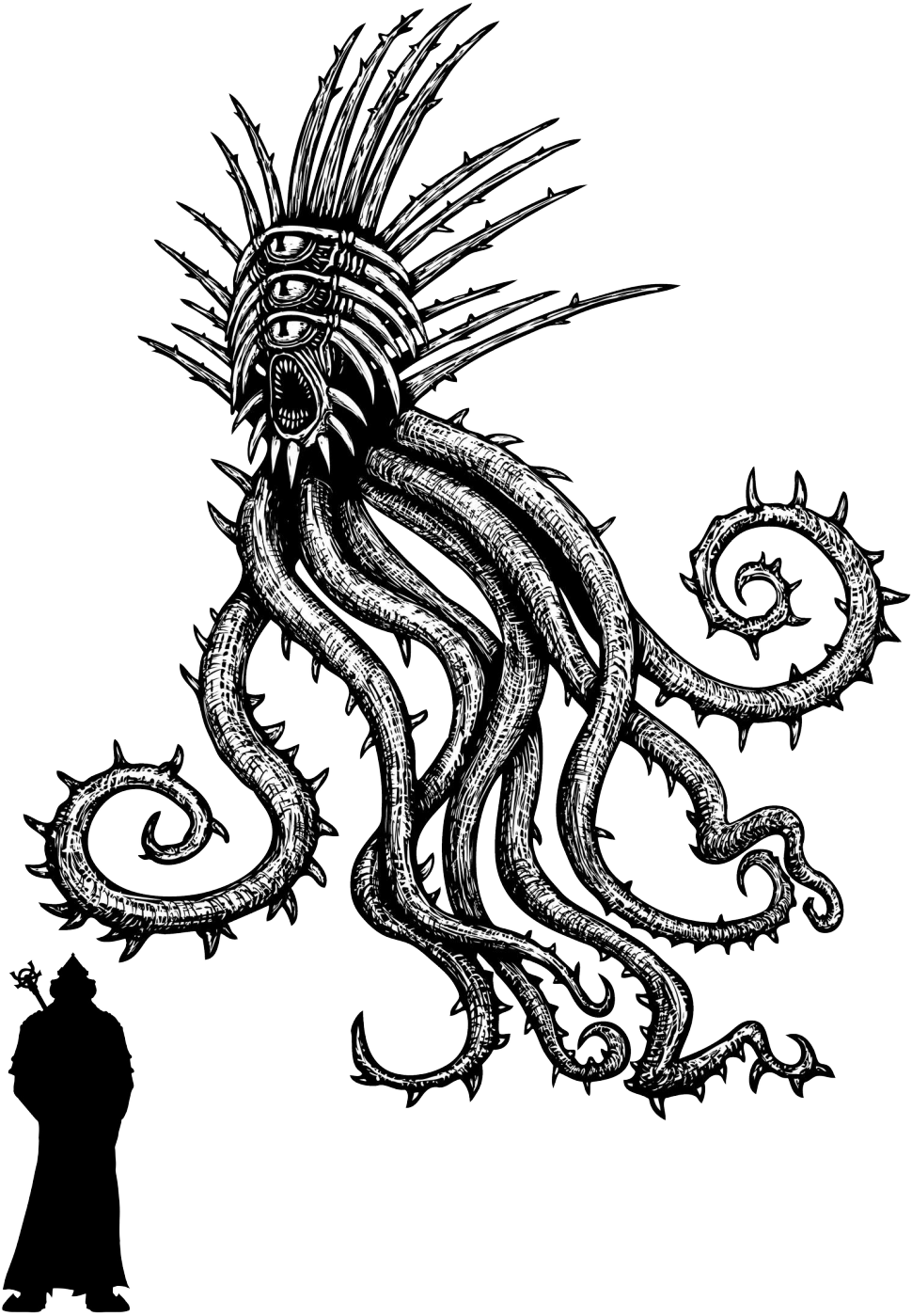
All Zakhvats possess a large leather bag. It always appears empty but will detect as a powerful magic item. Accessing the hoards and prisoners within the bag of a Zakhvat may be possible with the proper rituals. How the party gains access to these rituals may be another quest altogether.

ZANARA

Enigmatic beings from a lost and forgotten civilization.

AC 6 [13], **HD** 3*** [13hp], **Att** 3 x tentacles (1d12 + poison), **THACO** 17 [+2], **MV** 150' (50') flying, **SV** D12 W13 P14 B15 S16 (3), **ML** 6, **AL** Chaotic, **XP** 80, **NA** 1d4 (2d6), **TT** T(M)

• **CHARM MONSTER** Three times per day.
• **CLAIRSENTIENCE** The Zanara is able to psionically perceive the world through the senses of any previously charmed victim as well as read their thoughts so long as they are on the same plane of existence.
• **MAGIC RESISTANCE** +4 bonus to all saving throws vs. magic.
• **MENTAL RESISTANCE** Immune to mind-affecting or mind-reading spells (e.g. *charm*, *hold*, *sleep*).
• **POISON** Victims become passive and lethargic **(saving throw vs. poison)** for 1d6+1 turns. All of their to-hit rolls, damage rolls and saving throws have a -2 penalty. Additionally their movement is halved and they cannot apply their Dexterity or shield bonus to AC.
• **PSYCHOMETRY** The Zanara is able to psionically perceive the history and future of objects it touches.
• **TELEPATHY** May communicate mentally within 60'. Those contacted are not compelled to communicate, but the monster will have an empathic sense of their thoughts regardless.



DESCRIPTION

A fierce-looking, alien creature. It floats above the ground and strongly resembles some sort of squid. The central mass of the creature appears somewhat chitinous and has three large eyes with hourglass shaped pupils. The eyes are placed in a vertical row above a down turned and fanged mouth. Several long barbs radiate from behind the face of the thing, like a wide and sinister collar. Beneath this frightful visage several long, barbed tentacles dangle and twist.

The creature does not seem immediately hostile. It will communicate with any that make an effort to do so.

LORE

These creatures are known as Zanara. They were named by the southern desert tribes that first happened upon them in an ancient ruin nearly a century ago. They remain quite enigmatic to this day.

Sages that have studied the creatures describe them as an incredibly ancient and alien race. They speak the Primordial tongue and possess vast knowledge of all manner of topics. This aspect is especially perplexing as the Zanara are rarely encountered outside the blasted desert waste they were first encountered in. Yet they have shown tremendous understanding of the world beyond their arid domain, even to the extent of current fashion in kingdoms several continents distant.

What few know, is that the Zanara are highly psionic with incredible intelligence and fortress-like minds. They are able to work a subtle yet powerful charm upon victims. This enchantment causes the victims to benevolently acquiesce to the Zanara. Those of utility or quality are brought into Zanaran society. They are regarded as the property of whichever Zanara charmed them. They are in most regards somewhat akin to treasured pets. These charmed individuals are often traded amongst the Zanara and form a large part of their economy. A Zanara cannot have more than three actively charmed pets in its retinue. Further, once the enchantment has ended a seed of the Zanara's consciousness forever resides hidden in the victim's mind. The Zanara are able to perceive the outside world through these individuals who are often sent back out into the wider world as hapless spies.

The Zanara also possess a powerful psychometric ability that allows them to view the past and future of an object. Depending on their skill, they can glean tremendous knowledge from a mundane object's significance throughout history. This ability has been used to further their knowledge of realms far beyond their own. It also makes them great hoarders of all manner of things from inconsequential ephemera to powerful artifacts. While Zanara are not prone to wanton violence, they are aliens and regard other beings as useful tools and advisors at best or food and entertainment at worst. Generally speaking they should never be trusted.

ECOLOGY

Zanara have only been encountered in the vicinity of an ancient ruin in the vast desert of the southern continent. There are rumors of a subterranean city inhabited by the Zanara beneath the ruins. Zanara are mortal but their biology is mysterious. Some evidence suggests they are carnivores, but this is also unconfirmed. They are highly resistant to heat and cold.

SEEDS

1.) A disheveled old woman happens across the party's campsite. She is slightly malnourished but other than that seems healthy. She had been part of a group exploring some ruins in the wilderness not far from here. What she does not recall is her two decades spent living amongst the Zanara. She has a strong desire to return to the ruins and find her companions. Perhaps the Zanara released her to lure fresh playthings to their kingdom? Perhaps she became lost in their weird subterranean realm and somehow found her way to the surface? Irregardless, she wants to return to the ruins and she assures the party it holds many treasures.

2.) A wealthy merchant family lost a caravan in the desert to the south. No survivors or witnesses have appeared and the caravan is a fortnight overdue. They are recruiting able-bodied and competent adventurers to brave the desert and recover their property. They are offering 500gp each and will provide all the necessary materials for the trek as well as a small complement of guardsmen. The caravan ran afoul of some Zanara who were quite pleased to find new potential pets as well as the myriad curios they were transporting. How many survive? What happened to those who did not? Can the loot be recovered, and if so how much?

LOOT

Zanara tend to hoard things in their lair and carry very little with them. When calculating treasure multiply their lair's contents by three and divide their personal loot by a third. However, despite their lack of interest in traditional wealth, they are very interested in magical items and will always have at least 1d3 wands, a staff or a magical ring on them (in addition to the TT of their statblock). Much of their hoard will be confusing to those that lack the Zanara's psychometric abilities. The party is likely to find coins, crowns and other finery placed alongside bent nails, soiled handkerchiefs and broken bottles.

APPENDIX:

MONSTERS BY HIT DICE

HD1	GURH
HD2	FAMINE HOUND
HD3	ZANARA
	NARAM
HD4	MAKDUL
HD6	ZAKHVAT
HD8	ASTRAYAEL
	GARGON
	HEARTBREAKER
HD9	HEADHAUNTER
	LUCRETUS
	SUNGSINGER
HD12	AWRAHIM
HD14	HOLOCAUST ENGINE
HD15	BATOS
HD20	XATHRAXUS

DESIGNATION OF PRODUCT IDENTITY
The ASTRAYAEL, AWRAHIM, BATOS, FAMINE HOUND, GARGON, GURH, HEADHAUNTER, HEARTBREAKER, HOLOCAUST ENGINE, LUCRETUS, MAKDUL, NARAM, SUNGSINGER, XATHRAXUS, ZAKHVAT, ZANARA and their likeness and description are the sole property of the artist and author Jeremy Hart and deemed Product Identity.

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