

Council of Thieves





BESTIARY SYMBOLS

Creature Type

-  Aberration
-  Animal
-  Construct
-  Dragon
-  Fey
-  Humanoid
-  Magical Beast
-  Monstrous Humanoid
-  Ooze
-  Outsider
-  Plant
-  Undead
-  Vermin

Climate

-  Cold
-  Extrplanar
-  Temperate
-  Tropical

Environment

-  Desert
-  Forest/Jungle
-  Hill
-  Mountain
-  Plain
-  Ruins
-  Swamp
-  Sky
-  Underground
-  Urban
-  Water

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“Lindra followed him into that wood despite my warning, of that I’m sure—simple, romantic fool. Of course, the thing wore the mask of Rynall, and that was enough for her wounded heart. But death offers no sure returns, and none return from beyond unchanged. I can see her, blindly wading through the dark briars, terrified yet holding out a lover’s idiot hope, blind to all reason would prove. And in that dark tangle she doubtlessly was reunited with her lost love just as she so desperately wished. Yet never has the lover’s oath of an undying union seemed such a curse.”

—Ailson Kindler, “Bleak Heart”

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Beings that haunt the darkest reaches of Golarion and the planes beyond stalk this month's entry into the Bestiary. From creatures that know only the world of shadow to races from unexplored realms, these denizens of mystery and the night bring new terror and strangeness to the land.

Wandering Monsters

This month's adventure, "Mother of Flies," takes characters beyond the streets and shadows of Westcrown, leading them into the wilds and away from sight of the city's semi-comforting walls. One need not go far to find the edges of so-called civilization, even in a land as supposedly tame as Chelifax, and to chance encounters with all manner of dangerous creatures. Such is made all the more true when the PCs risk wandering into a war between rogues and the murderous denizens of a slighted hag matron.

Although the majority of creatures presented in this month's random encounter chart trend toward the deadly and unusual, such should not be taken as typical of the Chelish wilderness. The forests around Westcrown have been turned into a skirmishing ground for all types of strange creatures, many drawn from the depths of the Darklands and conjured by weird and terrible magic. Normally, the most dangerous things found in the wilds so near the city are mad dogs and the occasional stray stirge, but with the sudden assault on Hagwood, numerous dangerous beings have answered the Mother of Flies' call to arms. At the same time, agents of the Council of Thieves and the Drovenga siblings' thugs hunt the land as well (some recruited and lured to the city's immediate vicinity from as far away as the Halikarnassos Hills), seeking to put an end to the bothersome hag. While the hag's allies are likely to attack travelers from the city on sight, believing them to be trespassers and assassins, thieves who don't recognize the PCs might prove less immediately deadly than the witch's minions. Though parties who have already made a name for themselves as enemies of the Council might merely be attacked on sight, the criminals hoping to garner favor by slaying the bothersome champions could prove even more threatening, tracking the party through the darkened woods.

GMs who truly wish to make the wilderness outside of Westcrown feel like it's in the midst of a strange kind of war might combine multiple encounters, pitting monsters against rogues. In such a case, you can roll on the wandering monster table twice—if the results aren't creatures that would clash, simply ignore the second result and run the encounter with the first result as normal. If you generate two opposing encounters, though, the PCs could well find themselves witnessing a clash between

Westcrown Environs Encounters

d%	Encounter	EL	Source
1–3	1d4 gryphs	3	see page 22
4–8	2d6 human skeletons	3	<i>Bestiary</i> 250
9–12	1d6 wolves	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 278
13–14	1 barghest	4	<i>Bestiary</i> 27
15–19	1d8 warhounds (riding dogs)	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 87
20–23	1d4 biting fly swarms	5	see page 23
24–28	2d6 stirges	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 260
29–33	1d4 assassin vines	5	<i>Bestiary</i> 22
34–36	1d4 dark creeper footpads	6	see page 25
37–41	1d4 centipede swarms	6	<i>Bestiary</i> 43
42–46	1d4 shadow rat swarms	6	see page 37
47–52	1d6 thieves	7	see page 12
53–56	2d10 jinkins	7	see page 20
57–60	1d6 giant stag beetles	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 33
61–63	2d6 giant leeches	7	<i>Bestiary</i> 187
64–65	1d4 redcaps	8	see page 14
66–70	2d6 ogres	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 220
71–72	2d4 satyrs	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 241
73–76	1 dark stalker guildsman	8	see page 25
77–79	2d6 giant wasps	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 275
80–82	1d8 shadow mastiffs	8	see page 31
83–85	1d4 will-o'-wisps	8	<i>Bestiary</i> 277
86–89	1d4 hill giants	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 150
90–94	1 spirit naga	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 213
95–96	1d6 chuuls	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 46
97–98	1 giant flytrap	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 134
99–100	1 vrykolakas	10	see page 88

the civilized world and the wild. Allow the PCs to decide which side to ally with—at least on a battle-by-battle basis—or how they might attempt to avoid being dragged into fights that aren't their own, leading to all manner of unusual and interesting encounters. Endearing themselves to one side might also aid the party for a short time, and potentially help them when confronting some of the challenges in Part 2 of this month's adventure.

Allies of the Mother of Flies: The following creatures from the table above owe allegiance to the Mother of Flies (or at the very least, oppose the invasion of Hagwood by outsiders): biting fly swarms, centipede swarms, giant stag beetles, giant wasps, gryphs, jinkins, redcaps, satyrs, and stirges.

Council Agents: The following creatures are allied with the Council of Thieves: dark creeper footpads, dark stalker guildsmen, hill giants, ogres, shadow mastiffs, shadow rat swarms, thieves, and warhounds.

All other creatures listed on the table above are unaligned, and could find themselves in conflict with either the Mother's allies or the Council agents.

Council of Thieves

BASILEUS

This comely young man is clad in fine silken robes and gold thread, with hair the color of sunbeams. He smiles slyly, and his eyes smolder with Hellish flames and the suggestion of power and terror beyond mortal reason.

BASILEUS

CR 15



XP 51,200

LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, see in darkness; Perception +23

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 16, flat-footed 22 (+6 Dex, +12 natural)

hp 200 (16d10+112)

Fort +12, **Ref** +18, **Will** +16

DR 10/good; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 26

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee touch +24 (1d8+8) or

5 slams +24 (2d6+8 plus grab)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.; 15 ft. with slam

Special Attacks terror, terror shape

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th)

At will—*cloudkill* (DC 22), *false vision* (DC 22), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs.), *mirage arcana* (DC 22), *persistent image* (DC 22), *scorching ray*, *tongues*

3/day—*crushing despair* (DC 21), *dimensional anchor* (DC 21), *ethereal jaunt*, *greater dispel magic*, *greater invisibility* (DC 21), *instant summons*, *legend lore*, *nightmare* (DC 22), *phantasmal killer* (DC 21), *true seeing*

1/day—*geas/quest*, *summon* (level 5, 2 bone devils, 75%), *grant 1 wish* (to mortals only)

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 22, **Con** 25, **Int** 26, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +24; **CMD** 40

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Deceitful, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive

Skills Acrobatics +22, Bluff +30, Diplomacy +38, Disguise +27, Escape Artist +22, Fly +14, Intimidate +38, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (planes) +27, Perception +23, Perform (Oratory) +23, Sense Motive +23, Sleight of Hand +22, Spellcraft +27, Stealth +25; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Diplomacy, +8 Intimidate

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Infernal, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft., *tongues*

SQ veil of forms

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Hell)

Organization solitary

Treasure double standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Terror (Su) As a standard action, Basileus can surround himself with a terrifying illusion that to all viewers appears as a unique and violent manifestation of the most terrifying thing their minds

can conjure. This horror can only be seen by each individual onlooker, with even Basileus being unaware of what his viewers see. Those within 30 feet of Basileus must make a DC 25 Will save. Those with 6 or fewer Hit Dice who fail instantly die from fear, while those with 6 or more Hit Dice are panicked and take 6d6 points of damage. Those who save are immune to Basileus's death or panic effects, but still take damage. Those who remain within 30 feet of Basileus, even after making their saves, take 6d6 points of damage every round as long as Basileus continues to take standard actions to maintain the terror. The death and panic aspects of this ability are a mind-affecting fear effect, with even creatures immune to such effects still being affected by the ability's damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Terror Shape (Su) While making use of his terror ability, Basileus can manifest one to five additional, monstrous limbs. These take on terrible appearances dictated by the terror ability, and deal 2d6+8 damage. When Basileus ceases the use of terror, these additional natural weapons vanish.

Veil of Forms (Su) Basileus appears as a powerful and attractive member of the same race as any creature looking upon him. His appearance is always appealing, with subtle illusory alterations that differ from viewer to viewer. Basileus is not aware of the specifics of his appearance to other creatures, though he may alter specifics as per the spell *alter self*. This is an illusion that is in effect anytime he is not using his terror ability, and grants him a +8 racial modifier on Diplomacy and Intimidate checks. Should a creature be able to see past the illusion, Basileus does not gain this racial modifier on opposed checks against that creature.

An infernal paradox at once wondrous and terrifying, tempting and blasphemous, the entity called the Son of Suns, Prince of Paradises, Jadros Voax, Baphon, Vexsoul, or simply Basileus serves as the herald of Asmodeus and harbinger of Hell's will. Few who have faced the messenger of the Archfiend survive the experience unchanged, for he is the very word of Hell. Typically appearing as a youth of stunning beauty and of the same race as those who look upon him—even when appearing before those of multiple races—little in the herald's comely appearance, finery, or proud bearing sets him apart from the vainglorious princes of countless mortal nations. In his radiant eyes, though, dance hellfire flames and a hint of the power he bears himself and often offers. To encounter Basileus is to know the interest or ire of the lord of Hell himself. Like his master, the herald knows no love for mortalkind, striving only to fulfill the worlds-spanning master schemes of the Prince of Darkness and draw souls into the grip of Hell by the legion. As such, he most often serves as an envoy between Asmodeus and other deities and extraplanar figures of note, rarely deigning to set foot upon the raucous and uncouth Material Plane. When his master's will dictates he travel to the mortal realm, though, his words

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bear all the weight of Hell, and typically offer temptations few souls can hope to refuse. Occasionally his master bids him answer the summons of the few mortals who hold the Prince of Darkness's favor, but even these forays typically prove subtle steps toward some greater infernal goal.

In his humanoid form, Basileus appears as a 6-foot-tall mortal of surprising but unnatural beauty, with a languid voice like warm wine over silk. Although typically of male gender, this is not always the case, though he always appears before his lord in masculine form. Much of his form is an illusion, though, and a highly subjective illusion at that. Those who can see past Basileus's shrouds of innate deception find a human-like figure resembling the idealized form he presents, though still appearing somehow hollow. The most daring and ancient fiends have suggested that Basileus bears a resemblance to Baalzebul before Asmodeus punished the archdevil by stripping him of his angelic appearance—a rumor that leads the lord of the seventh to loathe his master's herald even more than he despises most creatures.

A Thousand Terrors

Through the millennia, dozens of immortal beings have served as heralds of the Prince of Darkness—even Baalzebul holding this position for a time before his cursed advancement to archdevil. Yet without fail, each herald has eventually overstepped his bounds and garnered Asmodeus's disfavor, facing a quiet, ignominious, and likely torturous end within Nesus's depths.

Yet even after his past heralds' march of disappointments, Asmodeus holds Basileus as the most perfect of all his emissaries, for rather than elevating the messenger from among the ranks of his diabolical legions, the lord of Hell personally crafted his servant to meet his every expectation. An infernal automaton of sorts, Hell's herald is a being zealously devoted to the Prince of Darkness, even beyond the allegiances of devilkind, archdevils, or the Pit itself. Many among Hell's infernal hierarchy have whispered of their lord's herald's true nature, suggesting that he is a terrible amalgam, drawn from the pain-wracked nightmares of the Archfiend's past emissaries; a being shaped from the deepest proto-stuff of Hell itself; or even a vaporous being distilled from a measure of Hell's collective suffering. Regardless, the

ever-changing physical nature of Asmodeus's herald and his unwavering loyalty to his master are widely known throughout the planes and beyond.

On the Material Plane, Basileus has become a legend in his own right. Although rarely visiting the worlds of the mortal realm, wherever he treads he takes the form of the greatest terror of the age. Such leads to highly varied reports of the herald's form and nature, even among Asmodeus's worshipers, and the confusion and apprehension seem to please both Basileus and his master greatly. Among the Prince of Darkness's enemies, Basileus is a thousand horrors known by a thousand names. Tales of his appearance across Golarion have granted him a dozen terrible names: the Bleeding Oliphant, Baphon Reborn, and the Seventh Spawn being among those most often heard in fearful whispers. Each of these titles and countless more have been recorded by scholars of the divine outside the church of Asmodeus, with such disparities, though inaccurate, still capturing the deceit inherent in the herald's form and a measure of the horror that is Basileus.



Council of Thieves

CALIKANG

With sudden motion, this blue-skinned, six-armed giant lurches to life, the sparkling gems on his golden bracers and bejeweled headdress competing with the glittering edges of his immense swords for attention as he silently adopts a war stance.

CALIKANG

CR 12



XP 19,200

LN Large monstrous humanoid

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 11, flat-footed 25 (+2 Dex, +12 natural, +4 shield, -1 size)

hp 157 (15d10+75); fast healing 5

Fort +12, **Ref** +11, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities defensive slam, energy absorption, suspend animation, **Immune** electricity, mind-affecting effects, negative energy; **SR** 23

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *longsword* +18/+13/+8 (2d6+8/17-20), +1 *longsword* +18 (2d6+8/17-20), 4 *slams* +16 (1d6+3)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks energy blast

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +15)

Constant—*air walk, magic weapon, true seeing, water walk*

3/day—*lightning bolt* (DC 16)

1/day—*chain lightning* (DC 19)

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 15, **Con** 20, **Int** 8, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 35

Feats Critical Focus, Double Slice, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (*longsword*), Improved Initiative, Staggering Critical, Two-Weapon Fighting, Vital Strike

Skills Intimidate +21, Perception +20, Use Magic Device +18

Languages Common, Giant

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate or tropical hills

Organization solitary, gang (2-4), or tribe (5-12)

Treasure standard (2 +1 *longswords* plus other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Defensive Slam (Ex) A calikang is adept at blocking and parrying blows with its bony, muscular forearms. Each hand that does not wield a manufactured weapon in combat grants the calikang a cumulative +1 shield bonus to its AC to a maximum of +4 (a calikang who doesn't wield any weapons does not gain a bonus for the last two free hands). Many calikangs wear decorative bracers on their arms, but the presence or lack of bracers does not aid or impede the creature's defensive slam ability. An actual shield used by a calikang does not stack with this ability. A calikang can make slam attacks with these arms without losing the shield bonus granted from its defensive slam.

Energy Absorption (Su) Whenever a spell effect that normally inflicts energy damage (whether acid, cold, electricity, fire, or

sonic) fails to penetrate the calikang's spell resistance or its immunity to electricity, the calikang absorbs that spell's energy into its body. This heals the calikang an amount of damage equal to the absorbed spell's caster level, and grants it an additional daily use of its energy blast ability.

Energy Blast (Su) Once per day as a standard action, a calikang can direct a beam of energy out of its eyes and mouth. This creates a 60-foot-long line of energy of any kind (the calikang chooses from acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic when it makes its attack) that inflicts 14d6 points of damage on all creatures caught in the blast. Calikangs are particularly adept at using electricity in this manner, and if one chooses to inflict electricity damage, it inflicts 1 additional point of damage per energy blast damage die. A successful DC 22 Reflex save halves the damage done. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Suspend Animation (Su) As a full-round action, a calikang can enter a state of suspended animation, freezing in place and becoming completely motionless. A calikang in suspended animation remains completely aware of its surroundings. It does not age, breathe, grow thirsty or hungry, or move at all. In this state, a calikang can still be harmed, but is immune to disease, inhaled toxins, poison, starvation, and thirst. It receives a +4 bonus on all Fortitude saves while in suspended animation. A calikang can exit its suspended animation as an immediate action—if it does so to attack a foe or initiate combat, it gains a +4 circumstance bonus on its Initiative check. Often, a calikang leaves its suspended animation as soon as it perceives any foe about to attack it, hoping to achieve the first action in combat.

The wondrous and mysterious calikang is a much sought-after guardian of treasuries, harems, and fortifications—not only because of its great strength and ability to place itself in suspended animation (thus removing the need for regular feedings), but because the monster's very nature often makes it seek out such roles among other races. Legend holds that, an untold number of eons ago, one of the thousand deities of Vudra failed at a task. This deity was Vineshvakhi, god of guardians and defender of the celestial troves and harems. When he failed to prevent an invasion of an important site (in some legends this is another god's harem, while in others it is a treasury) by a small army of asuras, Vineshvakhi cut off the six fingers of one of his hands and cast them down upon the world in shame. When these fingers struck, they caused great devastation upon the world below, but at the core of these six craters rose a new race of being—the calikangs.

Today, the calikang race is a rarity, its members having been driven into isolation and seclusion after a long history among certain rulers of securing calikang guardians for their palaces. The few calikang tribes that survive dwell in the remote temperate and tropical

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foothills of Vudra's great mountain ranges, often sheltered from the outside world by dense jungles, trackless swamps, or vast deserts. A typical calikang stands 14 feet tall and weighs 4,000 pounds.

Ecology

Since their creation so long ago, the calikangs have long sought to pay back the inherited debt of their creator's failure. A newborn calikang's first cognizant thoughts are to guard and defend its mother and home, and as it grows, its instincts and obsession grow as well. A newborn calikang learns to speak within hours, and within days grows to maturity during a painful series of skin moltings and torturous nightmares. Calikangs are not fecund, and the event of a calikang birth is one to be celebrated. And since the week-long process of growing to maturity leaves the young one in a state of peril, an entire calikang tribe assumes guardianship over the nursery for that week. Fully half of these calikang young succumb to the pain and turmoil of this rapid growth and die before reaching maturity, but those who survive emerge from their nurseries fully grown and ready to join the tribe during a hedonistic feast and celebration, the cornerstone of which is the public consumption by the entire tribe of the cast-off flesh and bones of the new member's moltings. At the end of this feast, the tribe's oldest member often leaves the tribe to wander into other lands to offer its services as guardian to another (see *Habitat & Society*), which tends to artificially limit the size of these ancient tribes.

Once a calikang matures, it can live for 200 years—although many extend their lives immensely through the use of their ability to suspend animation.

Habitat & Society

Although calikangs can place themselves in suspended animation at will, they remain alert and aware of the passage of time, and thus only do so when commanded to, or in times of distress (such as during a famine or other natural disaster where “waiting it out” is an option for survival). They prefer to spend their time hunting,

exploring their territories, and patrolling the edges of these territories on the constant watch for intruders.

Yet all calikangs carry in their soul a powerful sense of guilt and shame over Vineshvakhi's ancient failings, and among their kind is the shared belief that if enough calikangs protect worldly holdings from robberies, invasions, or destruction, this inherited sin will someday be wiped clean and the calikang race will ascend as a whole into the heavens to rejoin their finally redeemed lord and master. As such, each calikang is expected before its death to leave its holding and enter other realms to offer its services as guardian for a predetermined time (usually a period of service equal to a hundred years). Very few calikangs are lucky enough to find a commander honest enough to honor these terms, and once a calikang enters servitude, the unique mental mindset and guilt of its kind make it nearly impossible for the creature to escape its assignments voluntarily.



Council of Thieves

DEVIL, POSSESSION (GIDIM)

An impression of unmistakable malice pervades the area, the vague yet undeniable sensation of looming malevolence and faint foul breath.

LESSER GIDIM

CR 6



XP 2,400

LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, incorporeal, lawful)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +15

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 13 (+3 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 59 (7d10+21)

Fort +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities incorporeal; **DR** 5/good; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 17

Weaknesses sunlight weakness

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 claws +10 touch (1d4+3), bite +10 touch (1d6+3)

Special Attacks dread, malevolence

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

Constant—*greater invisibility*

At will—*bleed* (DC 13), *ghost sound** (DC 13), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *knock** (DC 15), *levitate** (DC 15), *open/close** (DC 13), *prestidigitation** (DC 13), *mage hand** (DC 13)
 3/day—*animate rope** (DC 14), *dancing lights** (DC 13), *ethereal jaunt* (Ethereal Plane to Material Plane and vice versa), *minor creation*, *plane shift* (self only; to Ethereal Plane, Hell, or Material Plane only), *produce flame** (DC 14), *silent image** (DC 14), *suggestion* (DC 16), *unseen servant** (DC 14)
 1/day—*summon* (level 4, 1 lesser possession devil, 40%)

* causes dread

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 15, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 24

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Acrobatics +13, Bluff +13, Disable Device +13, Fly +11, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +15, Sense Motive +15, Stealth +13

Languages Aklo, Common, Infernal

SQ nourished by negativity, otherworldly

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Hell or Ethereal Plane)

Organization solitary

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Claws (Su) A gidim's natural attacks inflict real wounds when they rake against physical objects they strike. A gidim's natural weapon damage is modified by its Charisma bonus.

Dread (Su) Gidims are adept at using their spell-like abilities to terrifying effect. At will, and while remaining invisible, a gidim can choose to make any of the spell-like abilities noted in its stat block particularly frightening. Any creature that witnesses

and is within 10 feet of the effect of one of these spell-like abilities must make a saving throw or be shaken for 1 minute. This effect can potentially increase the severity of other fear effects. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

Malevolence (Su) Once per day, a gidim on the Material Plane can merge its body with another creature's. This ability is similar to a *magic jar* spell (CL 10th or the devil's HD, whichever is higher), except that it does not require a receptacle. To use this ability, the devil must be adjacent to the target. The target can resist the attack with a successful DC 16 Will save. A creature that successfully saves is immune to that same devil's malevolence for 24 hours. While using this ability, the gidim is not affected by its otherworldly ability. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Nourished by Negativity (Su) Gidims seek out volatile mortals to aid them in entering the Material Plane. At the most basic level, negative emotions occur when a creature is dying, raging, or subject to a fear effect. At the GM's discretion, negative emotions might also include non-rules-related effects, such as extreme feelings of anger, betrayal, frustration, hate, or sorrow. Anytime a gidim witnesses a creature affected by negative emotions, it may choose to gain a +1 bonus on its next Will save made to enter the Material Plane, so long as it attempts to enter the plane within 30 feet of that creature and within 24 hours. If within 12 to 24 hours of gaining this bonus the gidim witness the same creature again being affected by negative emotions, it gains an additional +1 bonus on its Will save which stacks with the original and increases the duration of the bonus by an additional 24 hours. Thus, a gidim may gain a stacking +1 bonus to its Will save in this manner once every 12 hours. The devil loses its entire accumulated bonus if it attempts and fails to enter the Material Plane, if 24 hours pass without it witnessing its target creature being affected by negative emotions, or if it takes a bonus from another creature affected by negative emotions. Once on the Material Plane, this bonus applies to a gidim's Will saves made to resist being expelled from the plane. The bonus decreases by 1 every minute until it reaches 0. A gidim that leaves the Material Plane before this bonus reaches 0 retains any remaining bonus.

Otherworldly (Ex) Gidims find it difficult to enter the Material Plane. To do so by any means, a lesser possession devil must make a DC 30 Will save, failure meaning it is barred from entry and cannot access the plane again for 12 hours. In addition, after every minute of being on the Material Plane, the devil must make a DC 30 Will save or be expelled, returning to the plane it traveled from. Additionally, as a free action a number of times per day equal to the gidim's Charisma modifier, the devil can empower one of its spell-like abilities to extend out from the Ethereal Plane and affect a target on the Material Plane.

Sunlight Weakness (Ex) Gidims' powers are weakened in natural sunlight (not merely a *daylight* spell), reducing the DCs of their special abilities by -4. In addition, gidims attempting to enter the Material Plane into an area of sunlight take a -4 penalty on their Will save.

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GREATER GIDIM

CR 15



XP 51,200

LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, incorporeal, lawful)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +27

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 24, flat-footed 15 (+5 deflection, +8 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 187 (15d10+105)

Fort +16, **Ref** +19, **Will** +12

DR 10/good; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 26

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 claws +19 (1d4+5), bite +19 (1d6+5)

Special Attacks dread, malevolence

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

Constant—*greater invisibility*

At will—*bleed* (DC 15), *ghost sound** (DC 15), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *knock** (DC 17), *levitate** (DC 17), *major image** (DC 18), *prestidigitation** (DC 15), *unseen servant** (DC 16)

3/day—*animate dead*, *animate rope** (DC 16), *bestow curse* (DC 19), *contagion* (DC 19) *dancing lights** (DC 15), *ethereal jaunt* (Ethereal Plane to Material Plane and vice versa), *gust of wind** (DC 17), *major creation*, *plane shift* (self only; to Ethereal Plane, Hell, or Material Plane only), *produce flame** (DC 16), *stinking cloud* (DC 18), *suggestion* (DC 18)

1/day—*summon* (level 5, 1d4 lesser possession devils, 40%)

* causes dread

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 26, **Con** 24, **Int** 17, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 39

Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Iron Will,

Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Stand Still

Skills Acrobatics +26, Bluff +23, Diplomacy +23, Disable Device

+26, Fly +16, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (planes) +21, Perception

+27, Sense Motive +27, Stealth +26

Languages Aklo, Common, Infernal

SQ nourished by negativity, otherworldly

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Hell or Ethereal Plane)

Organization solitary

Treasure none

Diabolically clever and immortally creative, the legions of Hell use all the tools at their disposal to undermine and corrupt the souls of mortalkind. Among these tools are the souls of unabashedly depraved and hateful mortals sentenced to Hell in punishment for lives of sin. The foulest of these souls occasionally find themselves plucked from their torments and reforged in infernal crucibles, etched with bindings of hellish magic, then set loose upon the living. These evil souls bear many of the powers of devils, but fall outside the normal infernal hierarchies, not being considered true devils by their

fiendish peers. Rather, they are gidims, Hell-bound souls made weapons of the Pit.

More than mere souls yet less than fiends, gidims find themselves barred from the mortal plane by the laws of existence. Their minds and memories linger on half-forgotten lives, however, and upon emotions and sensations long lost to fiends. Thus, they endlessly seek ways to infiltrate the paths of the living. Traveling to the Ethereal Plane, they peer into the Material Plane, seeking out hapless mortals and drawing power from their hatred, their violence, their sorrow, and especially their fears. Continued feeding upon and encouragement of such emotions grants them greater ability to invade the mortal realm and potentially steal new bodies, through which their foulness might live again.

Two breeds of gidim exist, lesser possession devils and greater. Both appear nearly identical, but greater possession devils are created from spirits of extraordinary, near-legendary evil beings. These foulest of souls are granted even more powerful diabolical abilities and are often loosed by their infernal masters to torment, unhinge, and ultimately destroy the mortal enemies of Hell.

Lesser possession devils are typically left to their own devices, using their abilities to sow fear, torment innocents, spread mistrust, and ruin lives.



Council of Thieves

GHORAZAGH

A globular mass of oozing carapace and thick, weeping tentacles floats unnaturally through open space. From the base of its silently twitching bulk glitters an arch of fathomless alien eyes, all staring from above a broad maw filled with saw-like ridges and a pair of reaving, serrated claws.

GHORAZAGH

CR 13



XP 25,600

NE Large aberration

Init +3; **Senses** bloodsense 60 ft., darkvision 30 ft.; Perception +21

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 12, flat-footed 23 (+3 Dex, +14 natural, -1 size)

hp 202 (15d8+135)

Fort +15, **Ref** +8, **Will** +12

SR 24

Weaknesses vulnerable to sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 claws +16 (1d8+6 plus shape blood), 4 tentacles +14 (1d6+3), bite +16 (2d6+3)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks attach, blood drain

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 17, **Con** 26, **Int** 15, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +18 (+28 when attached); **CMD** 31

Feats Bleeding Critical, Critical Focus, Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Multiattack, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Bluff +18, Climb +14, Fly +27, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +20, Perception +21, Stealth +17, Survival +21

Languages Aklo; chemical sense

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary, pair, colony (3-9), or hive (10-40, including 6 brood guards of 17 HD and a hive lord of 21 HD)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Attach (Ex) If a ghorazagh hits a single target with all four of its tentacles, it latches onto it and automatically grapples. The ghorazagh loses its Dexterity bonus to AC, its limbs invading its target's body and each tentacle dealing damage each round. A ghorazagh has a +10 racial bonus to maintain this grapple on a foe once it is attached. An attached ghorazagh can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself—if its prey manages to win a grapple check or Escape Artist check against it, the ghorazagh is removed.

Blood Drain (Su) A ghorazagh drains blood at the end of each turn it is attached, inflicting 4 points of Constitution damage.

Bloodsense (Su) A ghorazagh notices and locates living creatures within 60 feet, just as if it possessed the blindsight ability.

Bloodspray (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, a ghorazagh can unleash a 20-foot cone of compressed blood and eldritch enzymes. Any living creature struck by a ghorazagh's bloodspray must make a DC 25 Fortitude save or be affected as per the spell *slow*. A

slowed creature struck by a ghorazagh's bloodspray a second time must make an additional save or be paralyzed. These effects last for 2d6 rounds. *Neutralize poison* and *remove disease* have no effect on this effect, though *freedom of movement* removes the effect. A ghorazagh can also consciously alter its enzymes, producing a spray that removes the effects of this ability. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Chemical Sense (Ex) Ghorazaghs at rest in their hive structures can communicate chemically with all other ghorazagh's attached to the same structure. This is a silent and nearly instantaneous mode of communication that only ghorazaghs understand.

Ghorazaghs—or gore weavers—float like tumorous specters through the depths of Orv, the deepest, most alien cavities of the Darklands, preying upon the wretched vermin of those nighted abysses. Cunning, with minds and drives unknowable and obscene to those of lands above, the gore weavers only recently became aware of the fertility and bounty of the surface world and slowly turn their ebon eyes upward.

When last the ghorazaghs gazed upon Golarion's surface, they found but a wasteland scoured by cosmic flame and blasted by cataclysmic weather. Retreating to their vast vault-hive of Orlvagras, far below Casmaron, they sealed themselves within their realm, desiring to protect themselves against the ruin above. Ever since, they have brooded and warred among themselves, slowly depleting their lands of space and food. With the passage of another age, the ghorazaghs would have likely perished in the belly of the earth—mistakenly believing themselves the waning masters of a rotting world—had Aroden not died.

Detecting shifting and great happenings in the realms above, curious ghorazaghs ventured forth from their prison empire, and for the first time in ages discovered things greater than their homeland's herds of blood worms, things that thought and screamed and sated the terrors' ancient hungers. Carefully, they prowled farther from the absolute depths, discovering tribes of charda, ghouls enclaves, and the frontiers of drow lands, heedful not to reveal themselves yet quick to gorge upon these strange new creatures and drag survivors back to their expanding hives. Although few ghorazaghs currently venture from Orlvagras, already these vanguards have paved the ways for daring hive lords to spread new colonies beyond their land's heart. And among the deepest-dwelling races of the Darklands, dreadful rumors arise of hungry eyes rising from abysses thought to be bottomless, and great maws that devour all they discover.

A ghorazagh's body is roughly spherical, measuring 9 feet in diameter, yet weighs merely 250 pounds. Heavily armored ghorazagh brood guards typically grow to 13 feet in diameter and weigh over 400 pounds, while the rarely glimpsed hive lords are rumored to be truly monstrous abominations of living brain matter and thirsty veins.

Bestiary

Ecology

Eerie hunters of the eternal night, ghorazaghs possess a physiology unique—some even say alien—from all other beings on Golarion. Deadly creatures with a highly efficient digestive system, they prove capable of digesting nearly any organic material, producing no waste regardless of how much they consume. However, the bulbous predators prove incapable of digesting blood. While all other digestible materials are processed in the creatures' five tube-like stomachs (with inedible substances merely being vomited forth), blood is strained and stored in flexible chambers attached to the creatures' gnawing, leech-like tentacles. A ghorazagh can store blood for long periods of time, their bodies emitting enzymes that allow them to manipulate the consistency of such fluid. When one wishes, it may expel measures of stored gore through its tentacles along with these enzymes, producing a variety of effects. Most notoriously, ghorazaghs are known to violently expel a slurry of chemical-infused blood that, should it strike living creatures, invades flesh and acts upon a victim's circulation, making the creature sluggish or even paralyzing it. The gore weavers may also excrete blood and bonding chemicals with incredible dexterity, causing blood to congeal into an unnerving scabrous material as hard as stone. Such grisly structures ghorazaghs fashion expertly, forming vast hives and sanguine tunnels within their claimed domains.

In realms overrun by ghorazaghs, the gore weavers create perverse, unbelievable structures: clotted cysts and viscous walls of blood seemingly raised from the depths of the Abyss itself. Threaded with vein-like ducts of flowing gore, these pulsing hives teem with a perverse kind of half-life. Within their grotesque fastnesses, ghorazaghs settle into individual-sized pools of plasma linked with those running throughout the structure. More than mere resting places, these nodes allow ghorazaghs to draw the blood pulsing through a structure into their bodies and expel it forth. In effect, each resident becomes a living heart within the hive. Yet the blood within a ghorazagh hive serves merely as a medium for the creatures' complex bodily enzymes. Each gore weaver within the hive can detect messages emanating from the unique chemicals of its kin just as humanoids might recognize words and one's particular voice. Thus, information passes swiftly through these ghastly structures, efficiently alerting those resting within to danger or the orders of the ruling hive lords.

Habitat & Society

Native to the eldritch depths of Orv, ghorazaghs know nothing of light or sky, and little of the creatures who call the surface realm home. In the sweltering depths of the Darklands, they prey upon beasts that claw and writhe, masters of reaches of the earth called wastelands by even

the most tenacious denizens of the endless night. Capable of finding sustenance among even the meanest vermin, ghorazaghs see prey in all things that grow and move, making no distinction between blind worms, cave fungi, and shrieking humanoids.

Along the edges of impossible abysses, upon the jagged ceilings of vast vaults, and spilling across the broken floors of sprawling caverns, ghorazaghs raise grotesque, scabrous complexes, more half-living organs than anything other races might call cities. Using their abilities to manipulate gore, these bloated aberrations raise cyst-like citadels as communal shelters, enclosures for food, and defenses against the Darklands' many dangers. Each hive obeys the commands of a ghorazagh hive lord, a massive, hermaphroditic creature that serves as the progenitor, racial memory, and living will of the community. Beneath such titans, clot-armored brood guards defend their lord and hive, while lesser ghorazaghs serve as drones, collecting food, expanding the hive, and seeking out new creatures to dissect, understand, and taste before relating their discoveries to the greater hive. The entire hive acts as a perverse collective venture, almost insectile in basic structure though possessed of a curiosity, ingenuity, and ravenous nature that drives ghorazaghs to seek either mastery over or destruction of all things they encounter.



Council of Thieves

NIHILOI

A mass of black, bramble-like tentacles writhes from the back of this vague, shifting humanoid. Inky skin covers the creature, and ebon claws curve long and thin from the tips of its fingers. Numerous tendrils of wispy shadow hold the creature aloft while others rise above its shoulders in strange, wriggling wings.

NIHILOI CR 11  XP 12,800

CN Medium outsider (extraplanar)
Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 90 ft., see in darkness; Perception +18
Aura tendrils

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 18, flat-footed 15 (+7 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)
hp 135 (10d10+80); fast healing 5 (only in shadows)
Fort +11, **Ref** +16, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities malleable; **Immune** cold

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)
Melee 2 claws +13 (2d8+3), 2 slams +13 (1d8+3 plus grab)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft. (with slam)
Special Attacks shadow crafting
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)
 At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 16)
 3/day—*deeper darkness*

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 24, **Con** 27, **Int** 15, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 18
Base Atk +10; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 31
Feats Agile Maneuvers, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility
Skills Acrobatics +20 (+24 to jump), Bluff +17, Diplomacy +17 (+21 against Plane of Shadow natives), Escape Artist +20, Fly +24, Knowledge (planes) +15, Perception +18, Stealth +20 (+30 in dim light); **Racial Modifiers** +10 Stealth in areas of dim light, +4 Diplomacy when dealing with other Plane of Shadow natives

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal; broadcast

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Plane of Shadow)
Organization solitary, cell (2–8), or cabal (9–26)
Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Broadcast (Su) Nihiloids possess a selective type of long-distance telepathy. All nihiloids can communicate telepathically with all other nihiloids within 3 miles. An intermediary nihiloid can even pass messages between others of their race separated over long distances. They can also communicate telepathically with members of other races within 50 feet.

Malleable (Su) Nihiloids exist as shadow, congealed into tangible but ever-twisting forms. Anytime a nihiloid is aware of imminent attack, it receives the benefit of 20% concealment, as it can warp and shift its body to avoid the blow.

See in Darkness (Su) Nihiloids can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, even that created by a *deeper darkness* spell.

Shadow Crafting (Sp) Five times per day, when in an area of dim light or darkness, a nihiloid can manipulate shadow to reproduce an effect identical to *shadow evocation*. Typically, these effects are DC 19 to resist, but if both the nihiloid and its target are within areas of dim light or darkness, the DC increases by +2. This is a shadow effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Tendrils (Su) Once aware of enemies nearby, as a standard action, a nihiloid can unleash its tendrils in a haze of umbral whips that surrounds the area within 10 feet of it. Any creature that enters this area takes 4d6+3 points of damage from dozens of deadly lashes (Reflex save DC 23 for half damage). A nihiloid must take an additional standard action to end this effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Violent xenophobes, the creatures typically called nihiloids, devashades, or shadow lords pose a rising threat to interlopers into their umbral realm. In ages immemorial, these creatures enjoyed vast empires upon the mysterious Plane of Shadow, but through the millennia incursion by immigrants and interlopers have eroded their way of life and scattered their numbers. In the face of spellcasters from the Material Plane striding across their homeland—using it as little more than a umbral thoroughfare—and whole terrible races like kyttons migrating to their native reaches, the nihiloids have long retreated into the deepest darknesses of their realm. Yet as alien encroachment continues, slowly the nihiloids have revealed themselves, and found to their surprise that they are powerful and feared.

Nihiloids—as the first travelers from Golarion termed them, believing them to be members of an ancient mythical race—resemble gaunt, vaguely humanoid creatures shrouded in ever-writhing shadow stuff with fountains of dark tendrils jutting from their backs. They often hold these thin limbs in tight bunches that appear like strange, dense wings, but unfurl them easily and with shocking speed to lash out against their enemies. Unable to vocalize words, nihiloids are widely distrusted by creatures foreign to the Plane of Shadow. Even a pair of the shadowy natives is unsettling to those encountering them for the first time as they silently gesture and nod, holding secret councils few others can understand. Creatures frequently interacting with them know the nihiloids have a shared name for their race, though since these creatures speak only telepathically, the term sounds more like the passage of massive wings than a word pronounceable in most sentient tongues.

Ecology

Artisans of the Plane of Shadow, with a near-peerless understanding of that realm, nihiloids can, like sculptors, twist and manipulate the very fabric of their

Bestiary

home plane. Birthed from the dark plane, these natives are as true inhabitants of their realms as the denizens of the Material Plane are of theirs. The ever-changing gloom of the plane permeates these creatures, and they likewise prove dark and changeable. Yet as the nature of shadow is to flee from the light, so too do nihiloids find it natural to retreat from interlopers into their realm. Having done so since times unrecorded, only in recent centuries has a new sentiment grown among these shadow lords, a feeling that they are losing an important battle and that both their survival and their realm are threatened. Thus, slowly over the span of centuries, resistance to foreign invaders has gradually become a hallmark of this mysterious race.

Nihiloids, both male and female, stand nearly 7 feet tall, but often raise themselves up off the ground on coils of their dark tendrils. Those thick bunches of thin limbs that extend from their backs they typically hold together in dense clusters, causing them to appear like wings, but can unravel them and bring them to bear with incredible swiftness. Having a highly malleable form, nihiloids are light, weighing an average of 65 pounds. When angered, they can temporarily inflate themselves to appear larger, whipping their tendrils around in a fierce display. In addition to serving as weapons and locomotion, nihiloid tentacles are used to feed as well. When tightly wrapped around or within a meal, the tendrils secrete a digestive acid and absorb nutrients through tiny openings.

Habitat & Society

Nihiloids prove exceedingly rare, most having retreated to the farthest-flung depths of the Plane of Shadow where their numbers have dwindled. With rising frequency, though, many have shrugged off their race's fear of interlopers and come to lurk in the shadow reflections of cities on the Material Plane. In such eerie metropolises, groups of nihiloids form tightly knit cells, with small groups potentially claiming districts as their own or splitting entire shadow cities between themselves. Quick to influence and master lesser shadow creatures—such as shadows, shadow garms, and fetchlings—nihiloids can draw surprisingly large populations of shadow creatures to a single location. While large clusters of such beings don't overtly threaten the Material

Plane, such is true only so long as the natives of that plane stay within their realm. Those spellcasters who step from their city homes onto the Plane of Shadow might find the land far less deserted than is typical for the plane, a realm of living shadow and hostile, glowing eyes. Outside such cities or group settings, lone nihiloids hunt down interlopers into their realm, shadowing trespassers until the time is right to strike. While slaying such intruders satisfies their need for vengeance, all nihiloids also seek out portals leading onto the Plane of Shadow and destroy such passages however they can, striving toward a day when all know to avoid the nighted realm.



Nihiloids possess a simple, loose society, their ability to broadcast their thoughts allowing them to maintain contact between a staggering number of individuals across extreme distances. Thus, one nihiloid in danger can alert all others in a wide area, either calling for assistance or merely keeping one another informed on the state of their territory. While these groupings sound highly organized, it is more like a bond of family than an organized administration, with nihiloids knowing nothing of rank or class. In highly populated areas, some nihiloids do attain a measure of influence over their brethren, but rarely to the extent that any would call themselves leaders or punish their errant kin.

Council of Thieves

VRYKOLAKAS

Slinking forth on bent limbs and gnarled claws, this twisted abomination bears a resemblance to a starved, plague-ridden ape, its form bestial and bent, with pallid skin stretched unnaturally over knotted bone. Yet its visage holds a greater terror, for amid fangs and milky eyes linger the withered features of a living corpse.

VRYKOLAKAS

CR 10



XP 9,600

NE Medium undead

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17

Aura pestilent aura (5 ft., DC 21)

DEFENSES

AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural)

hp 115 (10d8+70); fast healing 5

Fort +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **Immune** undead traits

Weaknesses vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +13 (1d6+6 plus energy drain), bite +13 (1d6+6)

Special Attacks horrid visage, energy drain (1 level, DC 21), rend (2 claws, 1d6+9)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

3/day—*charm animal* (DC 17), *disguise self* (DC 17), *fear* (DC 20)

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** 7, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 23

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +13; **CMD** +28

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Stealthy, Toughness

Skills Climb +14, Disguise +6, Perception +17, Stealth +21;

Racial Modifiers +8 Disguise when impersonating its former living self

Languages Common

SQ feed, feral possession

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure Value standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Create Spawn (Su) Any humanoid creature that is slain by a vrykolakas's natural attacks becomes a vrykolakas itself in 1d4 days if not blessed and properly buried. A blessing might entail either the spell *bless* or a more mundane consecration. A vrykolakas's spawn are free-willed and wild, typically remembering nothing of their moment of death and caring nothing for the vrykolakas that killed them. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Feral Possession (Ex) Upon being reduced to 0 hit points, a vrykolakas's spirit attempts to possess any animal within 100 feet. This ability is similar to the spell *magic jar* but does not require a receptacle and has a duration equal to 1 hour for

every Hit Die the vrykolakas possesses. The target must make a DC 21 Will save or be possessed. If the possession fails, the vrykolakas immediately dies. If the possession succeeds, the animal immediately retreats to the vrykolakas's grave, where it attempts to bury itself in the earth. If left uninterrupted for 1d4 days, the animal transforms into a new vrykolakas with all the same statistics as the original. If discovered and slain during this time, both the animal and the vrykolakas spirit are destroyed. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Pestilent Aura (Su) All creatures that come within 5 feet of a vrykolakas must save to resist contracting bubonic plague. Any creature that successfully saves against a vrykolakas's pestilent aura cannot be affected by the aura of that same vrykolakas for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Bubonic Plague: aura—inhaled; *save* Fort DC 21; *onset* 1 day; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d4 Con damage and 1 Cha damage and target is fatigued; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

A restless and savage form of undead, the vrykolakas knows only rage and relishes the suffering of those who failed it in life. Reanimated corpses of wicked and vengeful souls denied even the basic burial rites, these unreasoning vampire-kin unleash their wrath against the living, indiscriminately spreading disease and death among all in their paths. Their bitterness at their own disgraced ends drives them to a loathing of all life and a jealous desire to see all other living creatures fall to their same level of profanity and debasement. Such hardly proves a conscious plot, though, but rather a fundamental instinct. Thus, a single vrykolakas can devastate an entire village, potentially spawning a host of new vrykolakas from their victims.

A vrykolakas (the name both singular and plural) appears as a terrible, bestial corruption of the being it was in life. Twisted by rage and undeath into an animalistic shape, these undead bear the taint of death, their bodies lean to the appearance of starvation and pocked with evidence of rot and disease. Hunched and twisted, a vrykolakas's bent spine is the same length it was in life if straightened, but the feral posture of most cause them to slump to a mere 4-1/2 to 5 feet tall. The wasting of death also greatly decreases the corpse's weight, reducing even hearty men to at least 20 or 30 pounds less than they weighed in life.

ECOLOGY

Despite its savage and decayed appearance, a vrykolakas often passes through towns and villages undeterred, due to its supernatural ability to disguise itself. With the ability to cloak its terrible shape, a vrykolakas typically appears little different than it did in life. Death removes much of the living corpse's sense of who it was, though, so vrykolakas rarely reconstruct their original appearances

with complete accuracy. Thus, family and acquaintances often notice the resemblance, but do not readily identify a vrykolakas as the resurrected individual.

A vrykolakas thrives upon disease and death, drawing its vigor from those humanoids it passes near. It walks among the living merely to infect them with its grave taint, passing on the subtle corruption of death. Its mere touch drains the life from a victim as well, stealing from its very essence. A vrykolakas's favored victims typically come from among its former family members and friends, which it pursues with only half a memory of any previous connection, yet a lingering malice, as such former companions failed to prevent its accursed fate.

A vrykolakas is uniquely bound to the place where it died or its body was originally interred. It must return to this site every Starday and bury itself amid the earth or stones to rest for 24 hours. A vrykolakas is entirely helpless during this period and can be easily destroyed if it can be located. The vampire-kin understand this weakness, though, and go to great lengths to avoid being followed to their resting places.

Habitat & Society

Vrykolakas typically appear near or in rural areas close to their graves. They walk the open streets of villages and hamlets during daylight hours, avoiding direct interaction and attention, all the while infecting those nearby and robbing them of their vitality. By night they seek to take their revenge more overtly, wreaking havoc upon the community, destroying food and property, attacking and smothering people in their beds, stealing valuables, and generally terrorizing people. Many rural superstitions and prejudices against strangers stem from tales of vrykolakas, slipping quietly into town or lurking at the edges of a community, spreading death and despair among the innocent.

The Greek Vampire

The vrykolakas (pronounced "vree-KO-la-kahss") is an undead creature from Greek folklore. Synonymous with revenants, these terrors manifest as humans that have returned from the grave to perform some act before they can peacefully rest. Many stories of the vrykolakas are not of horrid, evil undead, but of deceased persons attempting to return to their former lives, such as the shoemaker who

returned from the grave to mend his children's shoes, carry water, and chop firewood.

The more vengeful type of vrykolakas gained stronger belief in Greece after the arrival of Slavic immigrants, who brought with them tales of blood-drinking vampires and werewolves. The word *vrykolakas* itself borrows from Slavic, derived from the Bulgarian word *vukodlak*, *vuk* meaning "wolf" and *dlaka* meaning "fur." This suggests that vrykolakas were somehow associated with werewolves, most likely due to the Slavic belief that werewolves became vampires after they died.

A person could become a vrykolakas in a variety of ways. The most common involve a person being evil and immoral, an excommunication from the church, or improper burial rites. Some thought that eating the meat of a sheep that had been killed or wounded by a wolf or a werewolf would turn a person into a vrykolakas. A cat or other animal jumping over a dead body could also result in its evil return. Curses, such as "may the ground not receive thee," would also condemn the recipient to undeath as a vrykolakas. Many also believed that a vrykolakas would knock at your door and call your name, but could only do so once. If one answered the door, he would die shortly thereafter, and become a vrykolakas. For this reason, the superstition that one should not answer the door until the second knock still exists in some Greek villages.

