

## SHATTERED STAR



## BEFORE SIN

**I**N THE TIME BEFORE TIMES, REALITY WAS NOT AS WE KNOW IT TODAY. IN THAT TIME, ALL WAS CHAOS, AND THE INTRODUCTION OF STABILITY AND ORDER BY THE PROTEANS WAS ITSELF AN ACT OF CHAOS. THE QLIPPOTH WERE OLD EVEN THEN, AND THEY LOOKED UPON THE PROTEANS AS MEWLING NEWBORNS. THE QLIPPOTH WERE OLD BEFORE MORALITY ROSE IN MORTAL MINDS, AND THEY PREDATE THE VERY CONCEPT OF EVIL ITSELF. IN MANY WAYS, THE CREATION OF GOOD CREATED THE EVIL IN THE QLIPPOTH, AND AS SUCH, THE HIGHER POWERS OF GOOD ARE THE GREATEST OF HYPOCRITES. FOR BY BECOMING, THEY GAVE THE QLIPPOTH CAUSE.

—BOOK OF THE DAMNED, "BEFORE SIN"



Everyone knows about demons. Everyone knows that demons come from the Great Beyond, that they seek the devastation and destruction of all life, that they embody the worst in humanity by giving shape and flesh to sin. Fear of demonic possession, of demonic conjurations unleashed, of portals to demonic realms ripping open into this reality—the people of the Inner Sea region need not look further than the blasted chasms of the Worldwound or the dripping blight of Tanglebriar to see real-world proof of the dangers of demons. But what few folk realize or grasp is that if the Abyss were a house, the demons are merely its residents. And just as in any old house with a long history, there are other... things... that live in the walls, deep in the nooks and crannies, in the crawspace, or under the basement. Things that the denizens of the house find repugnant, even horrifying. In the Abyss abides an older, more ancient evil than demons, a form of life that existed before all else, a prehistoric primeval presence known only to a few. Yet in all of our deepest, darkest nightmares, we know its touch. These terrors were the first—and if they have their way, they will also be the last. For they are the qliploth.

This article presents a number of observations and examinations of various aspects of the qliploth race, including notes on the realms they rule in the Abyss, their interactions with the Material Plane and demonic life, and the mysterious and powerful qliploth lords—particularly Yamasoth the Polymorph Plague. Since this information supplements the introduction to the qliploth race as presented on page 218 of *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*, the bulk of the material from that book is not repeated in the following pages.

## THE QLIPPOTH

The creatures known as qliploth (the singular and plural forms are the same) are as mysterious as they are horrifying, as one might expect of the first form of life imagined by reality. These monsters hail from a time when morality did not exist, when gods and mortals were unknown, when, perhaps, time itself had not yet begun to unfurl. Certainly, the qliploth were old when the first proteans brought order to chaos and discovered the endless tunnels of the Abyss running through the underworld of the Outer Sphere. What the race's goals and desires may have been in that unimaginably distant past is unknown, and more to the point, cannot be known to minds that have only the current reality as a point of reference. Just as reality changes what it touches, so did the introduction of the qliploth to the reality of the Great Beyond change them. Enemies of all they encounter, they warred on any who would dare encroach upon their domains. And when no enemies dared approach, the qliploth took their wars to them, boiling up out of the Outer Rifts in seemingly endless armies.

Some philosophers attribute the creation of demonic life at daemonic hands as one of the greatest ironic deeds ever performed—while the daemons certainly did not have the well-being and safety of the Great Beyond in mind when they first injected mortal sin into a qliploth imbued with Abyssal quintessence, the resulting distraction the fecundity of demonic life posed to the qliploth certainly turned their attention away from the rest of reality. For as the Abyss grew more and more comfortable and skilled at drawing upon mortal sin to populate its pits with demons, the qliploth found themselves waning in number. They were no longer born from the Abyss, which had found a better way to spawn, and they were themselves hunted by these new creatures. Today, the qliploth have retreated to the deepest trenches of the Outer Rifts, to realms where even the demons fear to go, and from these blasphemous bastions they plot the destruction of sin itself—not by slaying the demons born from it, but by destroying those creatures that brought sin into the Great Beyond in the first place. By slaying all mortal life, the qliploth hope to curb the demonic fecundity and retake the realms they view as rightfully theirs.

## CONJURING QLIPPOTH

As mentioned in *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*, qliploth are particularly difficult to command when conjured via *planar ally* and similar spells. Once a qliploth is conjured, Charisma checks made to force it to comply with demands take a –6 penalty when made by most humanoids. Those few humanoids who have pledged their souls to the qliploth, and who thus, in death, feed the ravenous maws below the demon-haunted reaches of the upper Abyssal realms, do not take this penalty. Mere worship of a qliploth lord is not enough, though—a humanoid must undertake particularly violent and foul rituals of self-mutilation in order to bind her soul to a qliploth lord and negate this penalty. The elven cleric Ardathanatus clawed out and ate his own eye as part of one such ritual to Yamasoth, and this ritual, when compared to others, is relatively tame and painless.

## QLIPPOTH RUNESTONES

The Abyss is an ever-changing plane, a tangle of rifts and canyons so vast in scope as to be effectively infinite. As the eons pass, some abyssal realms collapse, while others crumble open and swallow vast regions of the Outer Sphere. This constant churning of old realms into new ones is relatively slow in the modern age, but when order first came to the chaos of the Maelstrom at the dawn of creation, the Abyss fractured into existence much like a pane of glass shattering under the blow of a hammer. At this time, fragments of the earliest Abyss—the Abyss ruled only by qliploth—were sent hurtling through the



## THE GREATEST QLIPPOTH

Some particularly blasphemous tomes and ancient parables whisper of supposed truths that could drastically change the nature of how the world's faiths regard the qliploth race. These whispers state that the Rough Beast Rovagug is, in fact, the mightiest of all qliploth, and that he is thus the most ancient and most powerful of all the gods. Certainly, the fact that it took many of Golarion's most powerful deities, working together, to imprison the Rough Beast in the non-space known as the Dead Vault located at the heart of Golarion itself lends credence to the fact that Rovagug is powerful indeed. If he is in fact also a qliploth (as his shape certainly suggests to those who compare his image with the creeping horror of most qliploth), it is both a comfort and a disquieting notion that he lives on in a prison dimension linked somehow to the very core of the world. One particularly mad philosopher, a woman whose name is now lost, even theorized that the Great Beyond was an impossible coil, and that the mythical "outer shell" beyond the Outer Sphere was in fact the realm known as the Dead Vault wherein Rovagug had been imprisoned, which would mean that the entirety of the Great Beyond was itself contained within the core in which Rovagug now dwells.



planes. In many cases, these fragments landed in places like the elemental planes and good-aligned planes where they encountered raw elemental energies or sacred powers that seared and sundered them to nothingness. In other cases, these fragments hurtled into the vast emptiness of the Astral Plane, where today they still race on an endless voyage into forever.

But a number of these stones made it all the way to the freshly formed universe of the Material Plane. For eons, these stones drifted through the void of space, bathing in the energies of the Dark Tapestry or falling into the gravitational well of stars or black holes. Like the shards traversing the planes, some of these stones were destroyed, others drift still, but in some rare instances, a stone finds itself crossing the interstellar path of an unfortunate planet. In cases where the stones are large enough, such encounters result in the fiery destruction of the hapless world, but now and again the stones are small enough that they break apart in the planet's atmosphere and rain down as fragmentary runestones, embedding themselves in parts of the world like infectious spores or droplets of poison.

Golarion is one such world fortunate enough to have been struck by a fragment of the Abyss small enough to break apart in just this manner. These stones arrived on

Golarion when it was still young, and as continents shifted to the whims of plate tectonics or the tinkering of gods, the stones shifted as well. Some were pulled deep below and remain lodged in cystlike chambers in the Darklands, while others have tenaciously clung to the surface. The presence of these strange stones, marked with twisting runes that denote their link to the ancient qliploth realms, warps and taints their surroundings. There are places on Golarion where no civilized race has dared set foot, which even the greatest of dragons and mightiest of giants avoid. Here, qliploth are strangely common encounters, as are warped and twisted mutations of creatures native to the world. At the heart of each such region may be found a qliploth runestone.

These stones vary in size from a few feet across to megaliths measuring hundreds of feet in height. They always bear strange runes that, with a successful DC 30 Knowledge (planes) check, can be recognized as being ancient Abyssal runes associated with the qliploth. In many cases, these runes are linked to qliploth lords, some of whom may still live on the Abyss. A qliploth runestone radiates an aura of *antipathy*—with a radius measured in many miles—against all creatures, save those who are immune to mind-affecting effects (such as qliploth and vermin). Many have other effects as well, such as transforming all liquid in the region to poison; infusing the area with shifting, partially real nightmare illusions; animating objects and plants; or even periodically opening portals into the Abyss to allow qliploth to slip through. Destroying a qliploth runestone should be akin to the destruction of a minor artifact, with each stone requiring a different and difficult method to remove it from the world.

## QLIPPOTH LORDS

Beyond even the iathavos in power are the rarest of qliploth—unique and powerful lords that rule the deepest and darkest Abyssal depths. The number of qliploth lords active today represents only a small fraction of those who existed at the dawn of creation. As the eons wore on, the qliploth lords were opposed by nearly all who learned of their existence. Demon lords, arch devils, empyreal lords, and the deities of the Great Beyond themselves have taken offense at the blasphemy of the qliploth lords, and have long since destroyed many of the more powerful among them. Those who remain are either shadows of the qliploth lords' true glory or are so adept at hiding their true natures that none have yet glimpsed even hints of their forms.

The bulk of qliploth lords are creatures roughly equivalent in power to nascent demon lords, ranging in strength from CR 21 to 25. More powerful creatures akin to demigods in stature may still exist in the deepest



## QLIPPOTH LORDS

Qlippoth Lord	Alignment	Areas of Concern	Favored Domains	Weapon
Chavazvug	CE	Fiery consumption, monstrous recursion	Chaos, Evil, Fire, Repose	Heavy flail
Isph-Aun-Vuln	CE	Infestation of the flesh, poisonous wind	Air, Chaos, Evil, Trickery	Longbow
Oaur-Ooung	CE	Tainted oceans, vile fecundity	Chaos, Evil, Plant, Water	Trident
Shiggarreb	CE	Forbidden magic, wartime atrocities	Chaos, Evil, Magic, War	Ranseur
Thuskchoon	CE	Blinding hunger, secrets revealed	Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Knowledge	Greatclub
Yamasoth	CE	Cursed kingdoms, vile experiments	Artifice, Chaos, Earth, Evil	Halberd

parts of the Abyss, but for now, these theoretical qlippoth demigods must remain mysteries.

Of particular note are some qlippoth lords who have chosen to abandon their “roots” and accept the demonic as the new order of the Abyss. Qlippoth lords who accept sin and allow themselves to be transformed often gain a significant boost in power that catapults them out of this lower tier directly into the ranks of demon lords, but only at the cost of forever losing any tenuous alliances they may have had with the true lords of the Abyss. For these qlippoth, that trade-off is more than worth it, since the power they now wield as demon lords is formidable indeed. Demon lords who began existence as qlippoth lords include Cyth-V’sug, Dagon, Jubilex, Mazmezz, Yhidothrus, and Zevgavizeb. Some scholars include Yamasoth as a nascent demon lord, but in fact Yamasoth is a qlippoth lord—a lord who doesn’t take it well when he’s misrepresented as a mere demon!

Yamasoth is presented in full detail on the following pages; other known qlippoth lords include (but are certainly not limited to) the following vile abominations.

**Chavazvug:** Appearing as a towering tangle of fire-drooling digestive organs that stumbles and crawls on impossibly long, thin legs, Chavazvug is unusual among the qlippoth in that his hatred is not of mortal life but of demonic life. He often invades demonic realms with armies of minions to wage war, content in the knowledge that if “slain,” he merely grows a new body from one of thousands of boiling lakes of bile in his hidden lair.

**Isph-Aun-Vuln:** One of the most intelligent and subversive of the qlippoth lords, Isph-Aun-Vuln is a monstrous parasite of the soul who, on the rare occasions she manifests outside of a hideously mutated host body, appears as a twisting mass of mist-shrouded, dripping tendrils tangled around a fanged anemone’s maw. Isph-Aun-Vuln is particularly fond of using humanoid hosts to lead nations to suicidal ends in either war or decadence.

**Oaur-Ooung:** Pallid and poisonous, Oaur-Ooung is an aquatic fungoid horror of eyes and gasping throats of tangled hooks whose floating roots dangle miles below her like the twitching tendrils of the largest jellyfish. Cyth-V’sug is believed to have been spawned from the last of Oaur-Ooung’s blisterwombs, but a new blisterwomb is said to be growing upon her flank—her largest yet.

**Shiggarreb:** A huge driderlike monster, Shiggarreb has mastered arcane magic and plays a role as a messenger for the qlippoth lords. She is often associated with new qlippoth invasions of Material Plane worlds, and has long crusaded among the qlippoth to reclaim lost Abyssal realms now held by demon lords.

**Thuskchoon:** A towering spire of clattering limbs and stalked mouths that slithers upon a glistening, sluglike body, Thuskchoon is a nearly mindless force of relentless devastation and consumption. His worshipers expect little from him, and seek to lead him from world to world under the belief that the meandering swath of destruction he leaves behind contains secrets to power.





# SHATTERED STAR

## YAMASOTH

Writhing, hook-covered tentacles unfurl from this behemoth's body, at the center of which gapes a maw with a red eye in its throat.

### YAMASOTH

CR 24

XP 1,228,800

CE Gargantuan outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, qliploth)

**Init** +11; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., *detect good, detect law, true seeing*; Perception +35

**Aura** cloak of chaos (DC 24)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 43, touch 18, flat-footed 35 (+4 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 dodge, +25 natural, -4 size)

**hp** 526 (27d10+378); regeneration 15 (lawful)

**Fort** +33, **Ref** +28, **Will** +18

**DR** 15/cold iron and lawful; **Immune** cold, death effects, mind-affecting effects, poison; **Resist** acid 30, electricity 30, fire 30; **SR** 35

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** maw +36 (2d10+13/19-20), 4 bites +36 (2d8+13/19-20), 6 tentacles +34 (2d6+6/19-20 plus grab)

**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft. (30 ft. with tentacles)

**Special Attacks** constrict (2d6+13), gaze weapon, horrific appearance (DC 29), polymorph plague, rend (4 bites, 2d8+19), tentacle transformation

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 20th; concentration +26)

Constant—*cloak of chaos* (DC 24), *detect good, detect law, fly, freedom of movement, true seeing*

At will—*desecrate, greater dispel magic, greater teleport, statue, stone shape, telekinesis* (DC 21)

3/day—*quickened baleful polymorph* (DC 21), *flesh to stone* (DC 22), *phase door, polymorph any object* (DC 24), *wall of stone*

1/day—*earthquake, summon* (level 9, any qliploth or combination of qliploth whose total combined CR is 20 or lower 100%)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 36, **Dex** 25, **Con** 38, **Int** 25, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 22

**Base Atk** +27; **CMB** +44 (+48 grapple); **CMD** 66 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Dodge, Greater Vital Strike, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*baleful polymorph*), Staggering Critical, Vital Strike

**Skills** Fly +45, Intimidate +36, Knowledge (arcana, planes) +37, Knowledge (dungeoneering, history, nature, religion) +34, Perception +35, Sense Motive +35, Spellcraft +37, Stealth +25, Use Magic Device +36; **Racial Modifiers** +10 Fly

**Languages** Abyssal; telepathy 300 ft.

**SQ** qliploth lord traits

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any (Sekatar-Seraktis)

**Organization** solitary or group (Yamasoth plus 2d6 gongorinans and 2d6 various polymorphed minions)

**Treasure** triple

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Gaze Weapon (Su)** As a free action at the start of his turn, Yamasoth can gape his central maw wide to expose the horrific red eye lodged in what should be his throat. This gaze weapon has a range of 30 feet, and polymorphs creatures affected by it into giant vermin, animals, or magical beasts (Fortitude DC 37 resists). Yamasoth chooses what creatures to transform victims into as they fail their saving throws. This effect otherwise functions as *polymorph any object* (CL 20th), and is a polymorph effect. Yamasoth can keep his maw open for up to 3 consecutive rounds, after which his throat-eye closes and this gaze weapon cannot be used again for 1 minute. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Horrific Appearance (Su)** Creatures that succumb to Yamasoth's horrific appearance are stunned. At the start of each round thereafter, a creature stunned in this way can make a choice—fight the overwhelming chaos and horror and attempt a new DC 29 Will save to end the stun effect and act normally on that round, or accept the chaos into its soul and automatically succeed at the save to recover from the stun effect. This latter option immediately shifts the creature's alignment one step closer to chaotic evil. This shift in alignment can be fixed via *atonement*, but counts as a voluntary alignment shift for the purposes of *atonement*'s material component requirements. A creature that becomes chaotic evil as a result of this also becomes a willing minion and ally of Yamasoth.

**Maw (Ex)** Yamasoth's central maw is a primary attack that threatens a critical hit on a roll of 19-20. A creature hit by Yamasoth's maw while his gaze weapon is active takes a -4 penalty on its next saving throw against the gaze attack.

**Polymorph Plague (Su)** Any creature that has been affected by one of Yamasoth's polymorph effects becomes "contagious." For 24 hours after the creature's initial transformation, any other creature that touches or is touched by the polymorphed creature must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC = 10 + 1/2 the polymorphed creature's HD + the polymorphed creature's Constitution modifier) to resist polymorphing into a creature identical to the current form of the polymorphed creature.

**Qliploth Lord Traits** A qliploth lord is a powerful and unique qliploth that rules a significant portion of an Abyssal realm. Qliploth lords possess the following traits.

- Immunity to cold, death effects, mind-affecting effects, and poison.
- Resistance to acid 30, electricity 30, and fire 30.
- *Horrific Appearance (Su)* This ability functions similarly to the typical qliploth ability, save that qliploth lords' horrific appearances often create physical effects and changes in their victims. Despite these physical effects, a qliploth lord's horrific appearance remains a mind-affecting effect.
- *Summon Qliploth (Sp)* Once per day, a qliploth lord can summon any qliploth or combination of qliploth whose total combined CR is 20 or lower. This ability always works, and is equivalent to a 9th-level spell.



- Telepathy 300 feet.
- A qliphoth lord's natural weapons, as well as any weapon it wields, are treated as chaotic, epic, and evil for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.
- Qliphoth lords can grant spells to their worshipers. Granting spells does not require any specific action on the qliphoth lord's behalf. All qliphoth lords grant access to the domains of Chaos and Evil; in addition, they grant access to two other domains and a favored weapon that vary according to each qliphoth lord's themes and interests.

**Tentacle Transformation (Su)** At the start of every odd-numbered round, three of Yamasoth's tentacle tips transform into one of three different types of appendages—a serpent's head, a clawed hand, or a metallic blade. The three tentacles all change into the same type of attack, and the change persists for 1 full round, after which the three tentacles revert to normal tentacles on every even-numbered round. While transformed, the limbs make the following types of attacks instead of tentacle attacks.

- *Blade:* talon +36 (3d6+13/19-20)
- *Clawed Hand:* claw +36 (2d6+13 plus bleed damage equal to the damage dealt by the claw)
- *Serpent Head:* bite +36 (1d8+13 plus poison: bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 37; *frequency* 1/round for 12 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Dex drain and slowed for 1 round; *cure* 3 consecutive saves)

Yamasoth, known also as the Polymorph Plague, dwells in the endless cavern realm of Sekatar-Seraktis in the Abyss. Constantly at war with bickering balor lords and other powerful demons, Yamasoth has held his own as the lord of the Abyss's largest, most centralized region: the Kingdom of New Flesh. The “new flesh” in question consists of the qliphoth lord's subjects—men and women from countless worlds who may have been kings and queens at one time, but here are nothing more than base monsters, vermin, and beasts to serve at Yamasoth's whim. Some he feeds upon. Others he keeps for his harem. But the bulk of the denizens of the Kingdom of New Flesh are soldiers. In this army, other qliphoth serve as commanders and generals, particularly Yamasoth's favored minions, the gongorinans (see page 90).

Unlike most qliphoth, Yamasoth does not necessarily prefer to kill but rather to transform. A human who sins and dies produces a soul that fuels the demonic horde, but a dumb beast or feral monster who dies is merely carrion. By transforming free-willed

mortals into monsters, Yamasoth's Army of the New Flesh only becomes more capable of ending worlds. Yamasoth's centuries-long alliance with Runelord Alaznist may have eventually resulted in such an assault on Golarion, but the devastation of Earthfall ended those plans before Yamasoth's burgeoning realm could finalize its gestation—proof that even in the greatest of disasters, some good is wrought.

Yamasoth's interest in transformations goes far beyond mere polymorphing. The qliphoth lord is also fascinated by the act of fleshwarping and reworking life into new forms of mutants. Rumors state that the nature of the experiments that take place deep in the Kingdom of New Flesh closely mimic those the daemons performed in the Abyss so long ago that resulted in the first demons. In fact, some dissident demonologists claim Yamasoth himself is a nascent demon lord, and is in fact that first, primal demon born of daemonic tampering with Abyssal quintessence and sinful souls.

