



BESTIARY

WHAT STRANGE HORRORS WE'VE SEEN ON THIS JOURNEY! AT FIRST IT APPEARED TO BE JUST ANOTHER ROCK IN THIS BOULDER-STREWN CAVERN, BUT AS WE APPROACHED THE BEAST STOOD ON ITS STOUT INSECTOID LEGS. AS ITS ILLUSION DISSOLVED, WE SAW FOUR GROTESQUE APPENDAGES SPROUT FROM THE BEAST—EACH WITH A DIFFERENT METHOD OF INFLECTING HARM. ITS STRANGE, RASPING MOUTH SCREECHED FORTH SOMETHING IN SOME FOUL TONGUE, WORDS SHREDDING OUT OF ITS MAW LIKE JAGGED STEEL ON SMOOTH STONE. NEVER BEFORE HAVE I SEEN SUCH A FIEND, AND I HOPE NEVER TO SEE ONE OF ITS KIND AGAIN.

—FROM THE JOURNAL OF MARLIS NALATHANE, EXPLORER

This month's Pathfinder Bestiary is a special treat, in part because every entry was written by someone in the office. First, former intern Jerome Virnich writes of the watchful cephalophores, stony depictions of martyred saints. With much of this volume's adventure dealing with Windsong Abbey and the strange goings-on beyond the *Doomsday Door*, there's no better time to showcase some new extraplanar creatures. Sean K Reynolds writes about the herald of Groetus to go along with the article on this apocalyptic god; James Jacobs brings us a strange qliphoth that's been crawling around in his head since he was a kid making adventures for his friends and family; and F. Wesley Schneider delivers two of his favorite outsiders (aside from devils, of course) with a new kytan and psychopomp.

CHANCE MEETINGS, MALCONTENTS, AND MONSTERS

Throughout the course of the Shattered Star Adventure Path, the PCs make their way to a handful of interesting sites in the wilds of Varisia. While PCs at this level may have access to magical transportation such as *overland flight* and *teleport*, many characters find themselves instead traveling the old fashioned way. In the case of this volume's adventure, the PCs can visit Windsong Abbey by boat via the Varisian Gulf, on horseback, or simply by walking, and random encounters like the ones presented on this page make for perfect opportunities to break up such long periods of travel.

Some of the creatures on the Lost Coast Encounters table can be confronted along the shores of the Varisian Gulf, while others can be found in the hills and forests surrounding Windsong Abbey. If a random encounter roll doesn't fit the PCs' current location, roll again on the table or simply choose an appropriate encounter from the listed selections. The table and the following entries build upon some of the typical encounters to be had in this hazardous region.

Spriggan Ambush (CR 10): A wretch of a man, Dintran Malgor (use the stats for a champion on page 263 of the *GameMastery Guide*) was booted from his order of Hellknights only to come across four spriggans (*Bestiary* 2 257) in his subsequent wanderings. The villains formed an alliance based on bloodlust, and the group now prowls the foothills of the Fogscar Mountains south of the Churlwood looking for travelers to harass—and Varisians to slaughter. They hope to bring on other monstrous creatures and other unsavory humanoids to form a band of brigands, and ultimately want to establish a base of operations with a range of influence greater than that of their small camp. Dintran and the spriggans set up ambushes for caravans and travelers, allowing the spriggans to leap out of hiding before Dintran himself wades into the fray.

LOST COAST ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1–5	1d4 bulettes	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 39
6–10	1 nuckelavee	9	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 203
11–14	1d6 chuuls	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 46
15–19	1d8 highwaymen	10	<i>GameMastery Guide</i> 259
20–24	1d12 leucrottas	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 178
25–29	1d8 sea drakes	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 109
30–34	1d4 aurumvoraxes	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 35
35–39	1 elder mud elemental	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 121
40–43	1d4 giant snapping turtles	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 273
44–47	1d6 giant tarantulas	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 256
48–52	1d8 pukwudgies	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 223
53–57	1 thunderbird	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 264
58–61	1d4 tick swarms	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 265
62–66	1 athach	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 33
67–70	1d6 baykoks	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 35
71–74	1d8 bodaks	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 48
75–82	1d12 hill giants	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 150
83–89	1d8 mohrgs	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 208
90–99	2d8 redcaps	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 233
100	1 banshee	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 41

Possessing a Shadow (CR 11): Marlon and Endrek have long been friends after saving each other's life a number of times in battles throughout western Avistan. They have since signed on with an expedition leading into the frontier of Varisia, but after passing through Nidal, the pair of sellswords (*GameMastery Guide* 283) picked up some unwanted company. As the two passed through the Mindspin Mountains, they became possessed by two shadow demons (*Bestiary* 67). Now, the four have traveled to the Lost Coast in a campaign of corruption and murder, and the human soldiers have fully embraced their demonic riders.

Lord of the Forest (CR 12): Deep in the Churlwood a threat lingered in seclusion for decades, but now it stirs. An adult green dragon (*Bestiary* 96) controls a portion of the forest 40 miles west of Wolf's Ear, and has grown discontent with her humble domain. The dragon spends much of her time sleeping, relying on her goblin minions to bring her meals. However, once a month the beast flies from her hidden forest den to plague the Lost Coast. The dragon rampages for 3 or 4 days before returning to her lair to slumber. She tends not to target communities, instead plucking off individual travelers or devouring small camps of Varisian wanderers; ruined wagons and acid-burned tents are frequently all that remain.

SHATTERED STAR

CEPHALOPHORE

Holding its own severed head in its hands, this marble statue looms forbiddingly over what it protects.

CEPHALOPHORE

CR 8



XP 4,800

N Large construct

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 21 (+2 Dex, +12 natural, -1 size)

hp 96 (12d10+30)

Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities shatter weapons; **Immune** construct traits; **SR** 20

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee 2 slams +18 (2d6+7 plus dazing strike)

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

Special Attacks dazing gaze, dazing strike

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 32

SQ shatter weapons, statue

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary or pair

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dazing Gaze (Su) As a standard action, a cephalophore can hold up its severed head to make a gaze attack that affects all seeing creatures within a 60-foot radius. These creatures must succeed at a DC 16 Will save or be stunned for 1 round. Creatures that successfully save are instead sickened for 1 round. This is a mind-affecting fear effect, and the save DC is Wisdom-based.

Dazing Strike (Su) Any creature struck by the cephalophore's slam attacks must succeed at a DC 16 Will save or be dazed for 1 round. Those who save against this affect are instead sickened for 1 round. This is a mind-affecting fear effect, and the save DC is Wisdom-based.

Shatter Weapons (Ex) Whenever a character strikes a cephalophore with a weapon (magical or nonmagical), the weapon takes 3d6 points of damage. Apply the weapon's hardness normally. Weapons that take any amount of damage in excess of their hardness gain the broken condition.

Statue (Ex) If a cephalophore stands perfectly still, it is indistinguishable from a normal statue. An observer must succeed at a DC 20 Perception check to notice the cephalophore is alive. If a cephalophore initiates combat from this pose, it gains a +6 bonus on its initiative check.

Adventurers wandering among forgotten ruins, abandoned temples, or moldering graveyards may have a chance

encounter with an enigmatic cephalophore standing watch over the site. At a cursory glance, these guardians appear to be looming statues of decapitated humanoids, their severed heads held aloft in a gruesome warning or cradled in their hands like a precious prize. To benign passersby, these marble constructs remain inert, their stone gazes producing only an unnerving sense of watchfulness. However, those who attempt to raid or desecrate the cephalophore's holy site quickly find that this seemingly immovable statue is anything but. Consequently, many adventurers and tomb raiders have come to see cephalophores as a type of good-luck omen, because when one finds a cephalophore, a dangerous and treasure-filled ruin—hopefully still unlooted—is surely not far away.

Part guard and part trap, most of these hulking figures were constructed millennia ago to stand watch over culturally vital holy sites. Cephalophores are the perfect sentinels—they remain completely still, without fatigue or complaint, for centuries, until a specific set of circumstances triggers them. These triggers are far from universal, and each individual cephalophore has a different set of transgressions that it is constitutionally bound to prevent. For many, it's the perturbation of certain relics within its tomb or temple, but some cephalophores are bound to attack any who pass by without performing a now-long-forgotten ritual or incantation.

A typical cephalophore stands 10 to 15 feet tall and weighs up to 4,000 pounds. Cephalophores are made of solid marble, which makes attacking them with standard weaponry inefficient at best.

ECOLOGY

Cephalophores are intimately linked to specific tombs or temples, with each constructed to stand guard over a single location. While the ravages of time do little to diminish the single-minded dedication of these creatures, the sacred edifices to which they are bound seldom stand so firmly against the ages. Consequently, cephalophores are often found amid ruins or deep in the wilderness, standing vigilant guard over a site that has been long forgotten by mortal society. Many cephalophores lie buried beneath sandy dunes, overgrown by unchecked jungle foliage, or entombed within collapsed caverns.

Not entirely immune to aging, cephalophores do decay very slowly, their marmoreal forms flaking and crumbling over centuries. This process is hastened in climates where exposure to local weather conditions is especially ruinous or erosive. It is for this reason that the majority of intact cephalophores are discovered in arid climates or enclosed habitats like caves or catacombs. This leads some to mistakenly believe these creatures prefer such environs. In reality, preference has nothing to do with it—they are simply better preserved in dry conditions. Cephalophores

subjected to centuries of high winds or dripping water sometimes deteriorate into featureless columns, the details of their forms washing away with the elements. Consequently, those having come in contact with a malformed cephalophore often chalk up the encounter to a spiteful earth elemental, and have no idea how close they were to an ancient treasure trove or forgotten tomb.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Designed to perform a single, lonely function and constructed to be mindless, cephalophores are not at all social creatures. Any vestige of identity the constructs have is left over from their makers, who designed them in accordance with the aesthetics of their own cultures. Most scholars of Golarion suspect the first cephalophores were constructed during the height of the ancient city of Ninshabur in present-day Casmaron, whose influence extended as far west as Ancient Osirion and present-day Taldor. These scholars also posit that the cephalophores were made in an attempt by the Ninshaburians to emulate the living monoliths of Osirion, with whom Ninshaburian phalanxes were likely to have come into contact. The Ninshaburian origins of the cephalophores are evidenced by both their appearance and their geographic locations.

One obvious indicator of the cephalophores' link to Ninshabur is the facial characteristics of the animate statues. Many of the constructs feature stylistically arched eyebrows and ferocious grimaces, in keeping with the characteristics of many known Ninshaburian statues of lammasus and sphinxes. Further, the locations of known cephalophore sites are consistent with the territory of the once-influential empire. Though the highest concentration of cephalophores is undoubtedly in eastern Qadira, they have also been encountered throughout Andoran, Cheliax, Galt, Isgar, Varisia, and even Nex in eastern Garund. Many of these territories were never officially conquered by the marauding Ninshaburians, but it's possible some of their cultural practices and techniques spread to other societies, prompting a variety of sects to create their own cephalophores.

Scholars debate whether ancient cephalophores were originally statues, chiseled from stone and then imbued with deadly purpose, or whether they were once living creatures that were immortalized through some forgotten ritual. If it's true that the Ninshaburians were inspired by the divine guardians of Osirion, then it's likely both methods were used at different times.

Rock carvings found in the abandoned temple complex of Tabsagal indicate that the characteristic decollation of cephalophores was tied to a ritual wherein highly venerated holy warriors (akin to present-day paladins or clerics) were offered near-immortality in exchange for their service to Ninshabur. The majority of the ritual seems to have consisted of oath-taking, wherein the terms of the heroes' guardianship were made clear. However, to seal the pact, these warriors were then required to offer their own heads in homage to their ancient gods. After their beheading, the soldiers' bodies rapidly turned to stone, and they were then moved to their eternal resting places as guardians of Ninshabur's holiest sites.

A cephalophore's grisly pose is a perfect representation of the self-sacrificial zealotry of Ninshaburian warriors. Those who chose to become Ninshabur's longstanding holy guards forsook all freedom and everlasting rest to ensure that their empire's sacred artifacts remained unmolested. Those who would stir the dust of Ninshabur must risk the wrath of these ever-watchful martyrs and the single-minded dedication that drives them.

CONSTRUCTION

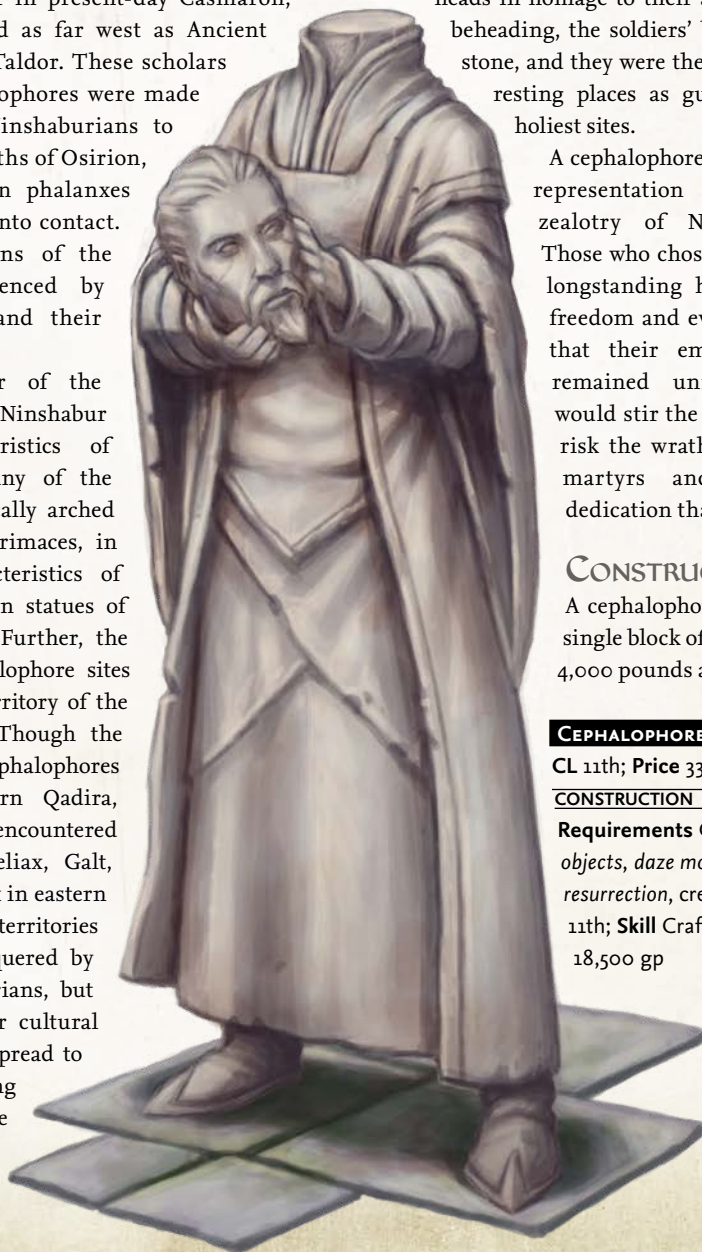
A cephalophore is constructed from a single block of marble weighing at least 4,000 pounds and costing 3,500 gp.

CEPHALOPHORE

CL 11th; Price 33,500 gp

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Construct, *animate objects*, *daze monster*, *geas/quest*, *resurrection*, creator must be caster level 11th; **Skill** Craft (sculpture) DC 20; **Cost** 18,500 gp



SHATTERED STAR

END'S VOICE

A long crimson cloak drapes over the form of this large faceless being, which floats just above the ground on footless legs as its menacing flail crackles with blue currents of electricity.

END'S VOICE

CR 15



XP 51,200

CN Large outsider (chaotic, extraplanar)

Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft., trueseeing; Perception +21

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 15, flat-footed 27 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 insight, +16 natural, -1 size; never surprised or flat-footed)

hp 225 (18d10+126); fast healing 5

Fort +18, Ref +11, Will +19

DR 10/law and magic; Immune confusion, insanity; Resist acid 30, cold 30, electricity 30, fire 30; SR 26

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

Melee +1 shock heavy flail +23/+18/+13/+8 (2d8+7/17-20 plus 1d6 electricity and maddening strike)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks destructive aura

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +24)

Constant—*foresight* (self only), *true seeing* (self only)

At will—*arcane eye*, quickened *bleed* (DC 16), *hideous laughter* (DC 18), *knock*, *magic missile*, *shatter* (DC 18), *telepathic bond*, *touch of idiocy*, *true strike*

5/day—*confusion* (DC 20), *contact other plane* (see below), *feeblemind* (DC 21), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *mind fog* (DC 21), *nightmare* (DC 21), *phantasmal killer* (DC 21)

1/day—*break enchantment*, *disintegrate* (DC 22), *harm* (DC 22), *insanity* (DC 23), *mage's disjunction* (DC 25), *mass invisibility*, *moment of prescience*, *power word kill*, *weird* (DC 25)

STATISTICS

Str 18, Dex 17, Con 24, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 22

Base Atk +18; CMB +23 (+25 sunder); CMD 39 (41 vs. sunder, can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Critical (heavy flail), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (heavy flail)

Skills Disable Device +18, Fly +16, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (geography) +18, Knowledge (history) +21, Knowledge (religion) +21, Perception +21, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +18, Stealth +17, Use Magic Device +24; Racial Modifiers +4 Acrobatics when jumping

Languages Aklo, Ancient Osiriani, Azlanti, Common, Cyclops, Draconic, Orvian; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ madness, no breath

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Astral Plane or Pharasma's Boneyard)

Organization solitary

Treasure standard (Large +1 shock heavy flail, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Adaptable Life Force (Su) Any effect that heals living creatures and harms undead or heals undead and harms living creatures (such as cure spells, inflict spells, and channeled energy) always heals the herald, even if the source of the power intended to harm it.

Contact Other Plane (Sp) This ability functions as the spell *contact other plane*, but the herald can only ask questions on the behalf of another creature, the questioner (not the herald) must make the Intelligence check (if any) to avoid losing Intelligence or Charisma, and the loss is permanent rather than temporary.

Destructive Aura (Su) As a swift action, the herald can emit a 30-foot aura of destruction for 15 rounds per day. All attacks made against targets in this aura (including the herald) gain a +7 morale bonus on damage rolls, and all critical threats are automatically confirmed. These rounds do not need to be consecutive.

Maddening Strike (Su) If the herald successfully hits a creature with its flail, as a swift action it may force the opponent to make a DC 25 Will save. If the creature fails its save, it is confused for 1 round. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Madness (Ex) The herald uses its Charisma modifier on Will saves instead of its Wisdom modifier, and is immune to insanity and confusion effects. Only a *miracle* or *wish* can remove its madness. If this occurs, the herald gains 6 points of Wisdom and loses 6 points of Charisma; it automatically reverts to its insane state 1d10 minutes later.

Telepathic Bond (Sp) This ability functions like *telepathic bond*, except any creature linked to the herald's disturbing thoughts takes 1 point of Wisdom damage every 10 minutes.

Groetus's herald is End's Voice, an enigmatic creature that is both more and less mysterious than its master. It looks like a giant shrouded figure floating above the ground, legless and faceless, wielding a heavy flail with ends made of glowing energy. Its visage is often confused with a reaping undead, though it is a living outsider and acts mildly insulted when others assume it to be otherwise. Its voice is hollow and distorted, as if echoing from the far end of a long metal tube, and colored with accents from ruined empires and dead languages. It rarely comes to Golarion, and for most of these visits it is merely a silent witness to a great slaughter upon the battlefield or the last gasp of a dying city, though it may strike out with its weapon or magic at a seemingly random wounded or dying target, as if making sure the creature dies as expected.

The herald may be insane from associating with Groetus, but it has a clarity unknown to mortal worshippers of the God of the End Times; perhaps its vast knowledge somehow protected it from a truly insane fate, or its status as a herald may give it a kind of lucidity that pierces the fog of madness. It does not cackle at itself like

a madman, respond to unheard voices, kill for pleasure, or exhibit any of a dozen other obvious signs of insanity typically exhibited by the mad followers of Groetus.

ECOLOGY

End's Voice does not eat, drink, or breathe; it lacks a face or mouth, and cannot be bribed with food or pleasure. It acts like an unfeeling thing, more patient than a mountain, slowly scouring away at existence like the ocean's tide or a desert wind. It has no role in the creation of life, and does not seem to take any part in the cultivation or upbringing of creatures or civilizations.

Though it is known to kill without being provoked, it only does so if the target has already suffered serious harm or is on the brink of death, and even these it may ignore; it has drifted over a bloody battle, passing hundreds of dying heroes and officers, only to strike at a single common soldier before vanishing. Once, it killed a human woman moments after a difficult but successful birth, and chose to spare the child. It acts in this callous way toward mortals, undead, outsiders, and even dragons, but never against mindless creatures or those with animal-level intellect. Perhaps these killings are the directive of Groetus, steering a soul's course in the afterlife or preventing some future event; perhaps they represent an obscure code, with the time of death and name of the deceased unlocking a cipher over the course of a millennium; or perhaps they are just random acts of violence, the only evidence of the creature's tightly suppressed lunacy. If attacked, End's Voice retaliates, though sometimes it ends combat simply by driving some or all of its opponents insane and then retreating. It may return to dispatch these defeated foes days, months, or years later, even on the victim's deathbed, or it may ignore them utterly and show no recognition if the healed opponents confront it again.

When called by mortals, the herald demands specific deeds of death, injury, or property damage, for End's Voice always seeks to further the end of times. For example, it may ask that every third adult male in a village be branded on the face with a mysterious symbol, or that a prince with black hair be nearly drowned, or a castle's eastern wall be cracked but left standing. Usually, these acts have no apparent link to the needs of the herald's conjurer, and most create a series of events that takes years or decades to play out. It favors the burning of incense

and exotic woods, lingering over the fragrant smoke and making strange contortions.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

When not serving Groetus or called by the faithful to perform a specific task, the herald flies over the surface of Groetus's moon, pausing to alter parts of the writing on the surface or draw runes on a blank area untouched by the god's madness. Sometimes it can be seen curled up there on the moon or reclining somewhere on the Astral Plane as if sleeping, though the eerie being is clearly not at rest. It makes no gestures of friendship or comradeship toward other divine servants of Groetus, though it accepts their presence (and their insanity) as if used to them. On one occasion, it absorbed a servitor into itself, inhaling the creature like smoke, then expelling it a year later with no explanation or apparent harm to the creature.



SHATTERED STAR

KYTON OSTIARIUS

Cloaked in shadows, every curve and sculpted muscle of this vision of physical perfection suggests some new gasping pleasure or titillating torture.

OSTIARIUS

CR 5



XP 1,600

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

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +2 natural, +4 shield)

hp 52 (7d10+14); regeneration 2 (good weapons and spells, silver weapons)

Fort +7, **Ref** +4, **Will** +11

Immune cold, *magic missile*

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 touches +2 (1 plus 1d4 bleed)

Special Attacks compel courage, unnerving gaze (30 ft., DC 21)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

Constant—*shield*

At will—*calm emotions* (DC 16), *darkness*, *enthrall* (DC 16), *major image* (DC 17)

3/day—*crushing despair* (DC 17), *shadow walk*, *silence* (DC 16)

1/day—*plane shift* (to the Material Plane and Plane of Shadow only, lawful evil creatures only), *shout* (DC 18)

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 19, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Skills Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Escape Artist +9, Heal +14,

Intimidate +14, Knowledge (planes) +14, Perception +16,

Perform (oratory) +14, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +12

Languages Common, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ shadow traveler

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Plane of Shadow)

Organization solitary, pair, or synod (5–9)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Compel Courage (Ex) An ostiarius can inspire courage as a 5th-level bard using bardic performance, granting a +2 morale bonus on saving throws against charm and fear effects and a +2 competence bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls. This ability has a range of 50 feet and affects those creatures the ostiarius chooses who also willingly accept the benefits of the effect (no saving throw required). The ostiarius's performance compels creatures to perform at dangerous extremes. Any living non-outsider that benefits from this ability takes 1 point of bleed damage. A creature that accepts these benefits for multiple consecutive rounds gains additional points of bleed damage that stack with one another (to a maximum of 5). This is an audible,

mind-affecting effect and can be countered by a bard's countersong ability.

Shadow Traveler (Ex) When an ostiarius uses *plane shift* to travel to the Plane of Shadow, it arrives at its intended destination with complete accuracy. When an ostiarius uses *shadow walk*, it moves at a rate of 100 miles per hour.

Unnerving Gaze (Ex) A creature that succumbs to an ostiarius's unnerving gaze becomes sickened for 1d4 rounds. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Ostiariuses mind the gate between the world of mortals and the endless excruciating delights of the Plane of Shadow. Their role is twofold: admitting their brethren to the Material Plane using their powers of extraplanar travel, and, more insidiously, convincing mortals to willingly journey with them to their shadowed homeland. They are the emissaries of their people, encouraging susceptible mortals to turn away from the tired philosophies of their dull traditions and dim imaginations and to embrace inconceivable possibilities in a realm of inscrutable darkness. Their guidance leads those they counsel to a path of taboo indulgences and selfish excesses, gradually indoctrinating them in the unsqueamish methods and gluttonous mindset of the kyton race. Eventually, when a mortal is deemed worthy—which is to say, irredeemably corrupted and likely having set others down the same path—the ostiarius leads her into the dark of the Plane of Shadow, where it and its kin gorge themselves upon this newly trapped scrap of flesh and thwarted expectation.

An ostiarius might superficially appear to be of any gender or completely androgynous, often undergoing physical manipulation to present an appealing figure to those it would court. Extremes of exotic tattooing, piercing, or body modification often mark their forms, and some ostiariuses go so far as to fuse flesh, shining accoutrements, and dark clothing into a single epidermal layer. Most proudly stand over 6 feet tall, though their weights range from exceedingly light to grossly heavy due to interior cavities either scraped empty or filled with the most perversely beautiful but utterly superficial organs.

KYTON RHETORIC

Ostiariuses are infamous for their half-truths and honey lies. As the reputation of the kyton race does not lead most mortals—even those with the most stained souls—to embrace the pain-tasters' cruel mortal enlightenment, it falls to ostiariuses to turn minds against their own bodies, encouraging philosophies of suffering to take root and override their natural fear and revulsion of kytons' so-called "gifts." To such ends, ostiariuses claim absolute openness with those they court, and deftly—supposedly

candidly—answer even the most pointed questions about their insidious natures. The following are just a few of the questions commonly put to kyton ostiarius, and their well-rehearsed answers to each.

Kytons are evil. Why should I trust you?

“Evil? Such a small word to sum up my people, our culture, and our millennia-old dogma. I have little belief in the concept. I’ve seen holy men sacrifice innocents and be called saints. I’ve seen mothers who stole only to feed their children go to the gallows. I perceive evil to be an artificial construct, a mere description created by frightened clerks so they can determine whether one’s actions fall within or outside their narrow visions for what reality should be. But am I evil? I believe in potential. I believe that some creatures are without significance and not worthy of my hand raised to save them. Conversely, I believe the multiverse blesses some beings with extraordinary traits, with the potential to do—to be—great things. The fact that I exist to seek out such potential and help it flourish means that regardless of what you believe about such small words like ‘good’ and ‘evil,’ inarguably the cosmos has guided me to you, and as I believe in the power of that cosmos, I believe in you.”

My magic says you’re evil. Why shouldn’t I slay you?

“Pause to consider the source of that information. Something has told you that I am evil, and why wouldn’t it? I seek to enlighten. To reveal secrets of reality, rebirth, immortality, and divinity that no creature that calls itself ‘good’ would wish to see revealed. Surely my words are heresy in every faith where the blind follow the sighted, for I promise to reveal wonders inherent in every worthy soul, wonders the deities claim are theirs alone.”

Your race hails from the Plane of Shadow. Why do you dwell in such a terrible place?

“My people seek to escape form, to escape prejudice, to escape all restrictions that wantonly engage us. To this end, my people voluntarily migrated to the one place in all existence where the body becomes muted, and voices, philosophies, and sensations are amplified. My people are ascetics, the darkness our endless meditation.”

Your people originated in Hell. Care to explain?

“Surely you know there are angels as well as devils in Hell. In the home of the righteous, there must be a single law. All who refuse to bow to that law are rebels in the eyes of the empowered, and so must be outcast. Those who refuse to bend to righteousness—or worse, who hold their own visions of righteousness—are exiled to the burning hinterland. But, were my people prisoners of Hell, were we truly damned, could we have left so easily? My people have been pilgrims in many lands, and have come to understand many truths

of the cosmos. Hell was merely the last of many realms through which we’ve passed.”

Your methods indulge in fear and suffering. Why would I embrace such destruction?

“Pain. Sorrow. Fear. These are not emotions. These are instincts of animals, of lesser beings. Do you think the rat feels contentedness, the snake either love or lust, the sow ecstasy? We are without the vestigial mental reflexes of mortals. Yet such enlightenment is not our purview alone. We would teach all with minds to understand how to be more than what an evolution of meat and tears would constrain. We offer possibility and revelations of enlightenment, states your kind are predisposed to distrust, to view as revolution, but which those with the potential for greatness clasp as rungs upon the ladder of exultation.”



SHATTERED STAR

PSYCHOPOMP, KERE

This unnaturally pale woman is dressed in the somber garb of a mourner, her countenance covered by a lengthy black veil.

KERE

CR 10



XP 9,600

N Medium outsider (psychopomp, extraplanar)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, spiritsense; Perception +24

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+5 Dex, +7 natural)

hp 114 (12d10+48)

Fort +8, **Ref** +15, **Will** +13

DR 10/adamantine; **Immune** death effects, disease, poison;

Resist cold 10, electricity 10; **SR** 21

OFFENSE

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

Melee 2 claws +17 (1d4+3 plus 1d6 cold), shroud +17 (infectious fear)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (15 ft. with shroud)

Special Attacks infectious fear (DC 20), veil of tears

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; concentration +15)

At will—*ghost sound* (DC 14), *grave tell*, *greater invisibility*, *hide from undead* (DC 15), *minor image* (DC 16), *searing light*, *whispering wind*

3/day—*fog cloud*, *mage's faithful hound*, *mirage arcana* (DC 19), *speak with dead* (DC 17), *waves of fatigue*

1/day—*gate* (to the Boneyard or Material Plane only; planar travel only)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 21, **Con** 18, **Int** 13, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 30

Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse

Skills Escape Artist +7, Fly +28, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (religion) +16, Perception +24, Sense Motive +24, Stealth +24

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Infernal

SQ grave dependent, grave meld

ECOLOGY

Environment any (graveyards or the Boneyard)

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Grave Dependent (Su) A kere is mystically bonded to a single gravestone—typically the most impressive or oldest in a graveyard—and must never stray more than 300 yards from it. A kere who moves 300 yards beyond her bonded grave immediately becomes visible and unable to use any of her spell-like abilities. A kere who is out of range of her bonded grave for 24 hours takes 1d6 points of Constitution damage, and another 1d6 points of Constitution damage every day of separation that follows—eventually, this

separation kills the kere. A kere can break this bond or forge a new bond with a new grave by performing a 24-hour ritual and making a successful DC 20 Will save. If a kere is not bonded with a grave, she must either actively try to forge a new bond or attempt to return to the Boneyard (where she takes no penalties from not being bonded).

Grave Meld (Su) A kere can meld with any gravestone or funerary sculpture, similarly to how the spell *meld into stone* functions. She can remain melded with such a structure as long as she wishes.

Grave Tell (Sp) This ability functions as the spell *stone tell*, but only affects stone funerary structures, like gravestones, cemetery monuments, lych-gates, mausoleums, and similar constructions.

Infectious Fear (Su) Any creature struck by a kere's shroud must succeed at a DC 20 Will save or become frightened for 2d4 rounds. Any creature that physically touches a creature frightened by this effect must succeed at a DC 20 Will save as well or also be frightened for 2d4 rounds (though the fear of the creature touched is not contagious). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Shroud (Ex) A kere's shroud is an insubstantial thing that only a kere can touch. Creatures that come into contact with this shroud find it to be as insubstantial as mist—though they often do feel the terror it inspires. A creature that is unaware of a kere and is struck by her shroud is not aware that a weapon has struck it. A kere's shroud vaporizes upon its owner's death.

Spiritsense (Su) A psychopomp notices, locates, and can distinguish between living and undead creatures within 60 feet, just as if she possessed the blindsight ability.

Spirit Touch (Ex) A psychopomp's natural weapons, as well as any weapon it wields, are treated as though they had the *ghost touch* weapon special ability.

Veil of Tears (Su) Any graveyard that hosts a kere is gloomier and more solemn. All exterior areas within such a graveyard are perpetually affected by *darkness* and *mind fog* (Will DC 20). Additionally, any undead creature that enters the area is also affected as per the spell *slow* (Will DC 20). Those who save against these effects are immune to the graveyard's veil of tears for the next 24 hours. Those who fail are affected by these penalties for as long as they remain in the graveyard. A veil of tears can be raised or lowered by the resident kere as a free action. The veil disperses if a kere leaves the graveyard or is destroyed, and rises upon her return. The veil can also be dispelled for 1 day by casting *dispel magic* or a similar spell upon the kere's bonded gravestone. The spell effects are cast at the kere's caster level (usually 11th). The saving throw DCs are based on the resident kere's Charisma.

Certain places are sacred, settings meant to remain free of the raucous sounds and defiling touch of the living. Graveyards number among some of the most obvious of such places, where stone guardians and the buried weight

of the dead bear on visitors with undeniable gravity. But certain forces disregard the fundamental sanctity of such ground—mortal and deathless heretics who use such places to hunt, feed, or cloak fouler deeds. Yet not all cemeteries are unguarded, and the vaporous shadows and palpable dread of some burial grounds suggest not corruption, but the custody of an ominous otherworldly guardian.

Keres, like all psychopomps, are emissaries of the Boneyard, the necropolis that all mortals must traverse at the end of life. While most psychopomps concern themselves with the souls of the recently deceased, keres mind the resting places of the dead. Their stewardship derives not from any otherworldly care for the deteriorating dust left in the wake of mortal life, but rather from an interest in those who come seeking the dead where they lie. Such creatures often engage in perversions keres seek to oppose. To this end, keres take up lonely residences amid the tombs and monuments of graveyards, spreading an ominous air and giving rise to tales of hauntings and strange encounters to deter even the boldest intruders from trespassing upon the fields they tend.

Keres appear as pale, sickly women standing about 5 feet tall and weighing less than 100 pounds.

ECOLOGY

As otherworldly natives, keres have little direct impact on the world of the living, but the atmosphere they intentionally create is undeniable. To deter the living from treading upon the cemeteries they mind, keres employ tactics similar to those of mournful ghosts and mythical beings from storytellers' tales of spirits and haunts. Their presence fills the area they guard with a palpable dread, and they fill these cemeteries with baleful howling, somber illusions, and glimpses of their own ghastly forms. While they rarely create phantasmagoric images of the undead—out of a loathing for such perverse creatures—their unsettling displays of dangerous animals, lost children, whispering plants, shuddering gravestones, living statuary, pale doppelgangers, unnatural weather, and other eerie phenomena are typically more than enough to give a graveyard a haunted reputation.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

A kere's exact methods usually matter little, as they tend to keep to more vulnerable, remote cemeteries, and prove most active when night cloaks the dark deeds of trespassers. But, occasionally, overzealous keres come into opposition with a fearful community and those sent to deal with the supposed haunting. Since their aloof nature causes them to avoid speaking directly with mortals, keres usually deal

with would-be exorcists in the same manner they deal with other trespassers—by trying to frighten them away. Those who refuse to be frightened might be attacked, or faced with inquisitive illusions as a kere attempts to divine whether the interlopers are threats to her graveyard or not.

More than once, a kere has been known to grow bored in her vigil and actively attempt to attract mortal visitants, but such attention-seeking psychopomps often find the added excitement isn't worth the bother.

For all of the ambiance and grim reputations cultivated by keres, their primary objective upon the Material Plane is to preemptively thwart the deeds of necromancers and undead. To this end they terrorize grave robbers, harry the work of dark cultists, and openly attack the unliving. Any undead beings who enter or manifest in a cemetery under a kere's care find the weight of eternity crushing down upon them, making the most common sorts easy prey for these sentinel psychopomps. In some cases, though, more powerful undead might find ways to undermine a kere's defenses, or even drive her off. Such desperate keres have been known to grudgingly seek out aid, typically from the church of Pharamasma or fringe-dwelling magic-users, in countering the taint of undeath.



SHATTERED STAR

QLIPPOTH GONGORINAN

This human-sized crablike creature scuttles on six stumpy legs, and each of its four arms sports a different method of inflicting pain.

GONGORINAN

CR 11

XP 12,800

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

Init +10; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +18

Aura horrific appearance (30 ft., DC 20)

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 17, flat-footed 20 (+6 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural)

hp 137 (11d10+77)

Fort +14, **Ref** +13, **Will** +7

DR 10/lawful; **Immune** cold, acid, mind affecting effects, polymorph effects; **Resist** acid 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 22

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

Melee +1 scimitar +19/+14/+9 (1d6+7/15–20), claw +17 (1d8+6 plus bleed), sting +15 (1d4+3 plus poison), pincer +15 (1d6+3 plus grab)

Special Attacks bleed (1d6), constrict (1d6+7), oviposition, web (+17 ranged, DC 22, 11 hp)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; concentration +16)

Constant—air walk, freedom of movement

At will—statue

3/day—baleful polymorph (DC 20), protection from law

1/day—dimension door, mass reduce person (DC 19), polymorph any object (DC 23)

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 23, **Con** 24, **Int** 13, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +17 (+21 grapple); **CMD** 34 (42 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (scimitar), Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Skills Acrobatics +20 (+24 when jumping), Climb +28, Disguise +16 (+24 as a boulder while in statue form), Knowledge (arcana) +15, Perception +18, Stealth +20 (+28 among rocks), Swim +17; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Acrobatics when jumping, +8 Disguise as a boulder while in statue form, +8 Stealth among rocks

Languages Abyssal; telepathy 100 ft.

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground (the Abyss)

Organization solitary, pair, or cast (3–10)

Treasure standard (+1 scimitar plus other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Horrific Appearance (Su) Creatures that succumb to a gongorinan's horrific appearance become confused for 1d4 rounds.

Oviposition (Su) A gongorinan can implant a stony egg the size of a human heart in the body of any Small or larger pinned, helpless, or willing creature as a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. This action deals 1d4 points of Constitution damage to the victim. If the victim survives this damage, the egg takes root deep in the victim's body, links to his mind, and begins gestating. The egg grows rapidly, dealing 1 point of Intelligence drain every day to a minimum score of 1. Once this Intelligence drain affects a creature that already has an effective Intelligence score of 1, the egg "hatches" inside of the victim. This causes the victim to immediately transform into a horrid animal, aberration, magical beast, or vermin (the exact choice is made by the gongorinan according to its



strange goals and unknowable desires), whereupon it begins living out its new life via pure instinct—this effect otherwise functions as if it were *baleful polymorph* to which the creature had failed its secondary Will save to retain its personality.

A gongorinan can command the actions of a creature that has undergone this transformation as if the victim had been affected by *dominate monster* (this works even on creatures that are normally immune to such effects as a result of being mindless) as long as the gongorinan is within 120 feet of the creature. The effect can be reversed by *break enchantment* (DC 22—treat the gongorinan's Hit Dice as its caster level), but cannot be dispelled.

Poison (Ex) Sting—injury; *save* Fort DC 22; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d3 Strength damage and staggered for 1 round; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

The gongorinans are the spawn of the nascent qliploth lord Yamasoth, although one could be forgiven for thinking them of them less as offspring and more as parasites. A gongorinan's basic shape resembles that of an immense, stocky crab, save that they lack all of the features crabs have adapted for an aquatic life—gongorinans are terrestrial creatures. A typical gongorinan possesses no fewer than a dozen stalked eyes, and is capable of extending these eyes from the upper edges of its body just above its mouth to a length of nearly 3 feet, giving it extraordinary vision in all directions. A gongorinan's mouth is a complex tangle of sliding plates and toothy ridges that rasp and shriek against each other as it speaks and chews, but despite their frightening shapes, these mouthparts are ill-suited for making physical attacks; the gongorinan relies upon its arms for that. Each gongorinan has four of these, and each arm is a different, highly specialized appendage. The humanoid arm is used for fine manipulation or the wielding of weaponry, while the mantislike claw is used to shred flesh and create deep, bleeding wounds. The needle-covered tentacle is used to sting and inject a painful poison to stagger foes, while the pincer is used to snatch and hold victims close for oviposition.

A typical gongorinan stands about 6 feet tall and weighs 800 pounds. When at rest, a gongorinan retracts its limbs into its rock-encrusted body, allowing it to appear remarkably like nothing more than a large, misshapen boulder. Larger specimens known as elder gongorinans exist (and often possess additional and even more dangerous arms), but these are quite rare on the Material Plane save for in the depths of Hollow Mountain.

ECOLOGY

All gongorinans carry within their bodies a brood of horrific egg masses, yet these eggs are not used for the propagation of their kind (that process is governed by a more traditional and yet more nightmarish method best

left unspoken). Instead, these eggs carry within their stony shells a raw quintessence of the Abyss, infused with the ichor-seed of the gongorinans' lord, Yamasoth. Whereas most creatures are driven to breed and multiply, the gongorinans are instead driven to seek out humanoid hosts for their eggs. The implantation happens via the gongorinan's mouth and a hideous ovipositor that's not quite tongue and not quite toothed prolapsing throat, but something worse. Fortunately for most who might encounter a gongorinan, the process of oviposition leaves the horrid creature open to attack and cannot be performed quickly, yet to the lone adventurer caught and overwhelmed by a gongorinan, this is small comfort indeed.

Once an egg has been implanted, it takes many days to grow, and the gongorinan prefers to carry the unfortunate host off to restrain it in a hidden location. Victims are often cocooned in webs or left stranded in high cavern ledges far above the ground so that the egg can gestate. As it grows, the egg feeds on the victim's mind, absorbing the victim's intellect until it has reduced the host to a drooling wreck. At this point, the egg doesn't hatch so much as it merely merges with the host, effecting a horrific and permanent transformation into a monstrous form. The gongorinan can influence this ultimate form as it lays its egg. It typically chooses powerful creatures that are already found in the region, for these "young" are loyal to their parent and serve as loyal guardians or playthings. Victims retain no true portion of their previous personality, but those who have been rescued from this horrific fate via powerful magic do retain memories of their time as a transformed monstrosity. Many never quite recover from these ordeals, and often develop a peculiar form of madness in which they regard their monstrous life as having been their true life, and their true life as the curse. The most despondent of these victims eventually seek the promise of peace through suicide rather than endure the dreams of their life as a monster—dreams that carry within them a most horrible longing.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Gongorinans are an industrious and intelligent breed of qliploth, and where they find themselves, they invariably form hive-like complexes to live in. These gongorinan "cities" are labyrinthine affairs with plenty of chambers for their transformed children to live in. In the Abyss, gongorinan hives can grow truly immense, with populations in the thousands, but even the Material Plane is no stranger to gongorinan hive cities. The largest of these hives are thought to be located deep beneath Hollow Mountain, where Runelord Alaznist lured the Polymorph Plague himself, Yamasoth, into dwelling for a time. While Yamasoth has long vacated the Darklands caverns under Hollow Mountain, they bear the name of his spawn—Gongorina—and his spawn dwell there still.