

SHATTERED STAR



BESTIARY

THIS BIZARRE WORLD, CAPPED ENDLESSLY IN THE TENEBROUS VEIL OF NIGHT, TEEMS WITH DANGEROUS CREATURES RIPPED STRAIGHT FROM A MADMAN'S NIGHTMARE. SILHOUETTED AGAINST A PALLID MOON, HUNDREDS OF STRANGE HUMANOID CREATURES FLIT THROUGH THE SKY FAR ABOVE THE WINDSWEPT CLIFFS AND MOUNTAINS, AT TIMES CHASED BY LARGER, MORE UNFATHOMABLE HORRORS. EVERY SO OFTEN, THEY LIFT A SQUIRMING CREATURE FROM THE GROUND BELOW, WRESTLING WITH IT FOR A FEW MOMENTS LIKE A KITTEN PAWING AT A LIZARD, BEFORE DROPPING IT TO THE COLD GROUND ONCE AGAIN.

—ATILIA SPIRLIU, *A SIGHT INTO DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES*

This month's Pathfinder Bestiary brings you to the heights of the Storval Plateau, where you can discover the threats that lurk just below the surface, as well as those that have leaked over from another dimension. Here we explore otherworldly horrors from the mind of H. P. Lovecraft—the whole, the flying polyp, and the nightgaunt—as well as a herald of a forgotten deity.

CHANCE MEETINGS, MALCONTENTEDS, AND MONSTERS

As the PCs search for another shard of the *Sihedron*, this adventure takes them to Guiltspur. Once used by Karzoug as a bridge to the dread realm of Leng, Guiltspur frequently leaks threats from that plane into Golarion. Here you'll find a random encounter table suitable for Guiltspur and its environs—including Leng—as well as three encounter hooks to add to your Shattered Star campaign.

Some of the creatures on the table can be encountered on the way to Guiltspur or in its immediate vicinity, while others can be encountered in the dungeons below—or the realm of Leng itself. If the result is a creature not suitable for a random encounter in the PCs' current environment, roll on the table again or simply choose an appropriate encounter.

Dreaming Dangers (CR 13): Those sleeping in the proximity of Guiltspur frequently find themselves plagued by unsettling dreams. Some of these nightmares are simply the result of mundane dreaming, but sometimes nightmares are the direct result of Siebetha, a night hag (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 215) who preys on mortals while they sleep in hopes of collecting some savory souls to add to her collection. With the aid of four particularly nightmarish animate dreams (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 29), Siebetha seeks out those sleeping in the area, then uses her dream haunting ability to slowly wither her victims to nothing. In recent days, this group of nightmare peddlers has been seeking out giants that have been laboring at Guiltspur, but the group is always looking for more intelligent and thus tastier victims for its phantasmagoric predations.

Raiders (CR 14): Sometimes members of the Shoanti clans violate the codes of their clans and find themselves exiled to the harsh badlands of the Storval Plateau. These exiles either perish in the harsh climate or persevere, using their strength and brutality to eke out an existence raiding other clans or preying on those who travel this land. Benkor and his fellow exiles fit into this latter category. Benkor (use the stats for a bandit lord on page 259 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*) leads a group of eight bandits and raiders (use the stats for a viking on page 281 of the *GameMastery Guide*) in a campaign of theft and murder across the plateau. Here they fought some of their previous enemies in other clans, and then took on tribes of giants, which led them to the area around Guiltspur. As they have gained power and confidence, they have begun

GUILTSPUR ENVIRONS ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
01–09	1 fire giant	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 148
10–15	2d8 nightgaunts	10	See page 90
16–20	1d8 wyverns	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 282
21–23	1d6 destrachans	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 83
24–28	1d4 night hags	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 215
29–32	1d4 rift drakes	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 106
33–35	1d4 rocs	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 236
36–42	1d8 denizens of Leng	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 82
43–49	1d4 gugs	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 151
50–54	1d6 mastodons	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 128
55–58	1 roper	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 237
59–62	1d8 shantaks	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 244
63–66	1 shining child	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 245
67–71	1d8 stone giants	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 151
72–75	1d4 carnivorous crystals	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 45
76–81	1d4 moon-beasts	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 195
82–87	1 Leng spider	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 176
88–92	1d4 scarlet walkers	14	<i>Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition</i> 414
93–99	1d6 stone golems	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 163
100	1 shemhazian demon	16	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 80

threatening any creatures they come across that have something they want—including powerful adventurers. They prefer setting up ambushes and traps, using their knowledge of the environment to their advantage.

Sinister Fiendcallers (CR 15): When the lost city of Xin-Shalast was rediscovered high in the Kodar Mountains, it drew those interested in history, power, and riches from all across Avistan. Not all of these visitors' however, had benevolence in their hearts. Knowing the lost city to be a dangerous place, Kistad, a demon-worshipping cleric with roguish skills (use the stats for a cult leader on page 279 of the *GameMastery Guide*), prepared herself and her group of adventurers by stealing powerful magic items before setting out across the Storval Plateau. Enlisting the aid of a ranger named Frantoc (use the stats for a bounty hunter on page 283 of the *GameMastery Guide*) and an adventuring scholar named Thanli (use the stats for a sage on page 297 of the *GameMastery Guide*), the group set off to uncover ancient Thassilonian riches. Kistad and Thanli successfully made use of a stolen cache of scrolls to bind two vrocks (*Bestiary* 69) to their service. Now they visit lost Thassilonian sites collecting more power and wealth in order to pay off the other fiends they manage to bind to their service. Defeating this group not only rids the world of the members' foul presence, but also gives adventurers access to a large collection of stolen scrolls and other potent magic items.

SHATTERED STAR

BHOLE

This titanic worm heaves its endless bulk into the air, raising a bleached end as if ready to strike with a massive set of hooked jaws.

BHOLE

CR 17



XP 102,400

CN Colossal magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, tremorsense 120 ft.; Perception +28

Aura frightful presence (300 ft., DC 26)

DEFENSE

AC 33, touch 1, flat-footed 33 (–1 Dex, +32 natural, –8 size)

hp 290 (20d10+180)

Fort +21, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11

DR 10/—; **Immune** acid, disease, fire, magical control, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning effects; **SR** 28

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., burrow 50 ft.

Melee bite +29 (6d6+25/19–20 plus grab), slam +29 (3d8+25/19–20)

Space 30 ft.; **Reach** 60 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon, overwhelming strength, swallow whole (20d6 acid damage, AC 26, hp 29), trample (2d8+25, DC 37)

STATISTICS

Str 44, **Dex** 8, **Con** 28, **Int** 3, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 23

Base Atk +20; **CMB** +45 (+49 grapple); **CMD** 54 (can't be tripped)

Feats Awesome Blow, Critical Focus, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Critical (slam), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Staggering Critical, Vital Strike

Skills Perception +28

Languages Aklo (rarely speaks)

ECOLOGY

Environment any underground

Organization solitary

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) Once every minute, a bhole can expel a prodigious amount of thick slime from its gullet. This breath weapon has a range of 900 feet, and creates a 40-foot-diameter spread of slime in its targeted area. Any creature within this area must succeed at a DC 29 Fortitude save to avoid being stunned for 1d4 rounds. The slime transforms the area it coats into difficult terrain. Furthermore, any creature that is in the area (or that attempts to enter the area) must succeed at a DC 29 Reflex save to avoid becoming entangled by the slime. Bhole slime persists for 2d6 hours—bhole lairs are typically pre-caked with the stuff. A bhole can move through bhole slime without penalty. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Immune to Magical Control (Ex) A bhole is immune to nearly all forms of mind control, including all charm

spells, *suggestion* spells, and dominate spells. It is similarly immune to *magic jar* and possession attempts. Confusion and other mind-affecting effects that don't allow another creature to directly control a bhole work normally. Rare effects that allow a creature to manipulate the exact effects of confusion on a creature provide one of the few ways to magically control a bhole. Other methods, particularly those tied to strange and powerful artifacts, may work as well.

Overwhelming Strength (Ex) A bhole always applies 1-1/2 times its Strength modifier on all natural weapon attacks.

Known on some worlds as dholes, bholes are among the largest of living creatures, wormlike leviathans of such size that few can claim to have seen one wholly from head to tail, and those who do tend toward madness and other afflictions that carry with them a heavy burden of doubt. The coloration of these creatures' coiling bodies ranges widely—from darker blues and purples to paler grays, yellows, or bleached white—with a cavernous mouth consisting of long, bony jaws that extend and unfold from the creature's head when it feeds.

ECOLOGY

By all accounts, bholes are incredibly long-lived—those that exist in remote worlds or on other dimensions have done so for countless eons. The bholes themselves seem to have no interest in their history, perhaps as a result of their limited intellect, but by all accounts a bhole can live forever, barring death by violence. For a creature as immense and dangerous as a bhole, such conditions essentially amount to immortality.

Regions inhabited by bholes are always barren wastelands. What creatures survive there do so with a combination of stealth and speed, and even then they quickly learn to make themselves scarce when the telltale rumbling of an approaching bhole begins to shake the ground. Bholes themselves seem able to eat and digest anything and everything, and in time can reduce a huge area to a honeycombed network of immense tunnels. These regions swiftly collapse, leaving behind crumpled, rubble-filled pits of vast and terrifying size. Legends speak of entire worlds being reduced to rubble by bholes—they also tell of the danger of allowing these monsters into inhabited worlds, for their hunger is eternal, and a relatively small number of bholes can do incredible damage on a continental scale.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Legends state that even larger bholes exist in distant realms below the Dimension of Dreams or deep under Leng. These legends state that no one has actually seen one of these truly enormous bholes; while someone

must have witnessed one for the legend to spread, the number of those who have survived an encounter with a bhole with body and mind intact is so small that the hyperbole is for all intents and purposes the truth. Certainly the immense burrows in certain regions of the underworld below Leng or the Dimension of Dream speak of massive creatures indeed—holes into which typical bholes might fall and vanish forever. If these monsters do indeed exist, they do so on a scale that may make them impossible denizens of such constraining habitats as mere planets.

Bholes are more intelligent than animals, but only just. They rarely speak, and their vocabularies are generally limited to only a handful of words in ancient, mostly forgotten languages—those words they do know and speak in more widespread tongues are generally limited to a few phrases in Aklo. Yet bholes rarely have cause to speak, for little seems to interest them apart from eating and slithering.

No active bholes currently exist on Golarion, although dormant ones may certainly dwell in the deepest reaches of the Darklands, or may well be trapped between this world and other dimensions. Explorers are most likely to encounter these creatures on other planes, other planets, or in other dimensions. Certain members of the cult of Groetus have long sought a way to bring bholes to Golarion, or if they already exist in its depths, methods of locating and awakening them, for what swifter doom could one bring to a planet than to infest it with creatures capable of coring it out as a worm might devour an apple from within?

ENCOUNTERS WITH BHOLES

A typical bhole is only 30 feet wide, yet is hundreds of feet long and weighs thousands of tons. Combat with such immense monsters might present some challenges for games based around miniatures and play mats. When you include an encounter with a bhole in such a game, it might be best to describe the immense worm as extruding itself out of the earth to attack those nearby—if the bhole needs to move, it simply burrows to a new location, sticks out its head, and starts attacking new targets. Alternatively, you can treat the bhole's head as its only actively dangerous portion. In this case, attacks directed at its immense body are irrelevant, with only those directed at its head (which consists of a 30-foot space) actually reducing its hit points. You might even run an encounter with a bhole using a truly enormous space on your Flip-Mat—a space of 100 feet or more, perhaps. This solution presents its own challenges,

obviously, particularly if your gaming area lacks for space. Of course, if these options for handling immense monsters don't sit well with you, the best solution is to simply downsize bholes in your game; assume they coil up on themselves and fit entirely into their 30-foot space, with their length accounting for their unusually enormous reach. Finally, you might consider not using miniatures at all for a fight against a bhole, with the assumption that once combat begins, the immense monster poses a significant threat to all in the area and that even several rounds of flight might not put a victim outside the monster's reach. Pick the solution that works best for your style of game play; in the end, the point is that a fight with a bhole should be one that your players remember for a long time.



SHATTERED STAR

FLYING POLYP

This nauseating tapered tower of flesh, eyes, and tendrils coils through the air, surrounded by a strange vortex of sucking wind.

FLYING POLYP

CR 14



XP 38,400

CE Huge aberration (air)

Init +6; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +26

Aura frightful presence (90 ft., DC 24)

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 16, flat-footed 26 (+5 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +13 natural, -2 size)

hp 207 (18d8+126)



Fort +13, **Ref** +12, **Will** +16

Defensive Abilities amorphous, deflecting winds, partial invisibility; **DR** 10/magic and slashing; **Immune** acid, cold, sonic; **SR** 25

Weaknesses vulnerable to lightning

OFFENSE

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

Melee 4 tentacle +21 (1d8+9/19-20 plus grab)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks constrict (1d8+9), sucking wind, wind blast

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th; concentration +19)

At will—*alter winds*^{APG}, *gust of wind* (DC 17), *whispering wind*, *wind walk*

3/day—*control winds* (DC 20), *river of wind*^{APG} (DC 19), *wind wall*

1/day—*control weather*, *whirlwind* (DC 23)

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 15, **Con** 24, **Int** 19, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +24 (+28 grapple); **CMD** 42 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (tentacle)

Skills Fly +27, Knowledge (engineering) +22, Knowledge (history) +22, Knowledge (nature) +25, Perception +26, Spellcraft +25, Stealth +15, Use Magic Device +23

Languages Aklo

SQ amphibious

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or storm (3-10)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Deflecting Winds (Su) A flying polyp's control over wind allows it to surround itself with blasts of precisely aimed gusts, effectively granting the creature a +5 deflection bonus to its Armor Class and a +4 resistance bonus on Reflex saving throws.

Partial Invisibility (Su) A flying polyp's body constantly flickers and shifts, passing from visibility to invisibility in a seemingly random pattern and often not wholly at once, leaving the creature's body in what appears to be multiple sections. This ability, combined with the flying polyp's amorphous, elastic form, makes it difficult to target a flying polyp, granting it a 20% miss chance against all attacks. By concentrating, a flying polyp can become fully invisible.

Sucking Wind (Su) This attack allows the flying polyp to send an eerie "sucking" wind out to slow and eventually stop a creature's escape. The wind itself isn't particularly strong, but it creates a peculiar sucking sensation as

if it were attempting to pull things back toward the flying polyp. Activating this ability is a full-round action for a flying polyp, and it must concentrate each round to maintain the sucking wind's effect, as if it were concentrating to maintain a spell duration. The sucking wind manifests as a 100-foot-radius spread, with the flying polyp at the center. Each round the polyp maintains concentration, the sucking wind's radius increases by 100 feet, to a maximum radius of a mile. A flying polyp can detect creatures within this area via tremorsense. As a free action, it can increase the effects of the sucking wind on up to five different creatures within the area at one time. Each targeted creature must succeed at a DC 26 Fortitude save each round it remains in the area of the sucking wind or be slowed until it leaves the area. A creature already under the effects of any slowing effect (such as from this sucking wind or a *slow* spell) that fails this save is held in place for 1 round—it is not helpless, but cannot move via any means. *Freedom of movement* protects against the effects of the sucking wind, and *control winds* negates its effects in the area of effect of the *control winds* spell. Natural windstorms or other powerful winds have no effect on a sucking wind. A flying polyp can activate a sucking wind once per day, and can maintain concentration on the effect for up to an hour. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Wind Blast (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds as a standard action, a flying polyp can create a powerful blast of wind at a range of up to 120 feet. This blast of wind creates a sudden explosion of flesh-scouring wind in a 30-foot-radius burst. All creatures within this area take 14d6 points of bludgeoning damage, with a successful DC 26 Reflex save halving the damage. In addition, these winds can check or blow away creatures as if they were tornado-strength winds (see page 439 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*). The save DC is Constitution-based.

A flying polyp is a hideous mass of flesh, eyes, tentacles, and mouths suggestive of a particularly nauseating evolutionary path. A typical flying polyp measures 30 feet in length but is unusually light for its size, weighing no more than 2,000 pounds. These creatures seem to have no maximum lifespan, but their violent, warlike nature ensures that death eventually occurs—even if it takes eons for the polyp to encounter something capable of defeating it.

ECOLOGY

A flying polyp is a physical being, but one composed of material strangely unlike the flesh that garbs most living creatures. While the stuff that makes up the exterior of a flying polyp's body might seem similar to ordinary flesh, it often behaves in ways that should be impossible.

The material seems to fade in and out of visibility, almost at random, at points becoming transparent enough that the nauseating inner workings of the thing's body are laid bare to view. Although the polyp feels moist and damp to the touch, what might serve as blood in other creatures behaves more like strange vortices of wind within a flying polyp's body. When wounded, its damaged flesh does not bleed so much as whistle and gust.

A flying polyp's association with wind is particularly noteworthy, and goes far beyond the strange storms that surge through what passes as veins and arteries in its massive body. These creatures have a remarkable ability to control the air around them, both via a wide array of spell-like abilities and through the use of potent supernatural powers. They do not wield tools or weapons as a rule, instead using their mastery of the winds themselves to wage war and build their grim cities, scouring towers and chambers out of basalt with precise blasts of sand-laden wind.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Although flying polyps certainly display some of the features of other sentient races, particularly in their habit of building cities (although these towering cities incorporate architectural features that most other races find awkward and unsettling), in other areas they seem strangely primitive or disinterested. They are as aberrant in mind and philosophy as they are in physical form. For example, they seem to have neither a name for their own race, nor a language to call their own. Their cities, while unnerving in their vast scale, seem to serve little other purpose than to unnerve, for flying polyps do not engage in trade or politics or other social constructs.

The primary exception to this, to the detriment of other creatures unfortunate enough to dwell in regions claimed by flying polyps, is war. Flying polyps excel at genocide, using their mastery over wind to scour clean entire cities and civilizations when they come upon them. Some among their kind can even travel to other planets by bringing with them a sizable sphere of purloined wind and air to carry them aloft and sustain them, and with this power they lead armies from planet to planet as necessary, relentlessly tracking their chosen enemies across worlds. Every so often, flying polyps encounter a race that is their equal in war, and on some worlds, including Golarion, they still endure the humiliation of these ancient defeats after being imprisoned in extensive underground chambers where they are cut off from the outside world. Yet flying polyps are long-lived, and when an unforeseen tectonic event creates new exits to their prison chambers in forgotten corners of the Darklands, they emerge with unabated fury to seek revenge.

SHATTERED STAR

KURSHU THE UNDYING

This large creature has the upper body of a winged woman and the lower body of a snake. She looks withered, like a preserved corpse.

KURSHU THE UNDYING

CR 15

XP 51,200

LE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +10; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +25

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 17, flat-footed 24 (+2 deflection, +6 Dex, +13 natural, -1 size)

hp 229 (17d10+136); regeneration 5 (acid)

Fort +20, **Ref** +11, **Will** +17

DR 10/cold iron and magic; **Resist** cold 30, electricity 30, fire 30, sonic 30; **SR** 26

Weaknesses divine separation

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +21 (1d6+5 plus 1d4 Intelligence drain), tail slap +16 (1d8+2 plus grab)

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

Special Attacks constrict (1d8+5), power surge

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th; concentration +22)

At will—*detect magic, floating disk, mage hand, read magic, tongues*
3/day—*cure serious wounds, dispel magic, displacement, fireball* (DC 20), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *hold person* (DC 20), *lightning bolt* (DC 20), *limited wish, magic missile, plane shift* (DC 24), *slow* (DC 20), *stinking cloud* (DC 20), *vampiric touch*

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 23, **Con** 26, **Int** 31, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +17; **CMB** +23 (+27 grapple); **CMD** 41 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Craft Wondrous Item, Great Fortitude, Hover, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll

Skills Diplomacy +24, Escape Artist +23, Fly +21, Heal +22, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (arcana) +30, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +27, Knowledge (history) +27, Knowledge (planes) +30, Knowledge (religion) +27, Perception +25, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +30, Stealth +22, Swim +22, Use Magic Device +27

Languages Aklo, Azlanti, Draconic, Infernal, Terran, Thassilonian; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ change shape (human; *alter self*), feed, spell-like crafting

ECOLOGY

Environment any land (extraplanar)

Organization solitary or cabal (herald and 1d4 charmed outsiders of CR 5 to CR 10)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Divine Separation (Su) The herald has been separated from Lissala for thousands of years and does not know where

her master is. The loss of her connection to the goddess severely weakens the herald, and she gains 1 negative level per day, up to a maximum of 16 negative levels. These negative levels cannot be suppressed or removed in any way (including *restoration* spells), except by using her feed ability. If Lissala returns and the herald regains her connection to her master, she permanently loses this weakness and its associated negative levels.

Feed (Su) Once per day, the herald can devour an outsider's corpse as a full-round action. For each Hit Die of the devoured outsider, the herald automatically removes 1 negative level gained from her divine separation ability. The consumed outsider must have at least 8 Hit Dice.

Intelligence Drain (Su) The herald drains 1d4 points of Intelligence each time she hits with her slam attack. (The herald does not heal any damage when she uses her Intelligence drain.)

Power Surge (Su) Three times per day as a swift action, the herald can increase the DC of her next spell-like ability (if it is cast that round) by +2.

Spell-Like Crafting (Su) The herald may use any of her spell-like abilities when crafting magic items as if they were actual spells.

Lissala's herald is Kurshu the Undying, a powerful and dutiful agent of magic who has been suffering in her master's long absence. Known as "Kurshu the Divine Serpent" during the time of Thassilon, she possesses a powerful serpentine lower body, a female humanoid upper body, and three pairs of feathered wings. Her humanoid half is more serpentine than that of a lillend; she has tiny scales on her arms and a scaly cobra hood that blends into her hair. She looks haggard, as if afflicted with a chronic wasting disease, and her movements betray an ancient and resigned weariness. Her voice is thin and susurrant, and she tends to hiss when she speaks, especially when angry. She tends to verbalize in Thassilonian even when communicating telepathically. She is a lost being without a purpose, devoted to Lissala but unable to find her.

Records of the herald's origin are lost to passing centuries, but she claims she was created in her current form by the goddess, who used parts from several different creatures and then granted her true life. The goddess's withdrawal has taxed the herald's ability to maintain her own life, and eventually she may fragment back into her component pieces (which may or may not be alive after this transformation). Bound to Lissala by magic and an unshakable sense of duty, she resents her master for leaving her behind to wither away, and despises herself for knowing that if Lissala returns, she will crawl back to the goddess like a sheltered, neglected child who has no alternative but to love her creator and jailor.

ECOLOGY

Kurshu's degenerative condition means that (unlike most outsiders) she must eat to survive; otherwise, she wastes away into a skeletal, nearly helpless version of herself. She reached that lowest point only once, but was lucky enough to catch suitable prey unawares and work her way back to an exhausted but functional level. Consequently, Kurshu makes sure to feed at least every few days.

As there are few creatures in Lissala's service who have the power to conjure her, Kurshu is mainly left to her own devices, but (unlike heralds of active deities) may choose to respond to a summons from any spellcaster. In exchange for her services, she demands that she be given outsiders she can enslave for later feeding, Thassilonian magic items, or items that bear some lingering piece of Lissala's power. She is knowledgeable about Thassilonian magic, rune magic, and Azlanti practices, though she is hesitant to speak of the latter when on Golarion lest it attract unwanted attention from slaves of the aboleths; having witnessed Earthfall at a distance, she has no desire to subject herself to a direct attack by entities who control that kind of magic.

Kurshu has no compunction about killing something that defies her or appears to be withholding information or objects she wants (if she has to, she can compel answers from its corpse using *limited wish* to duplicate *speak with dead*). She feels her pseudo-mortality at all times and fears death, and is likely to flee any encounter in which she feels outmatched.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Kurshu is alone in the multiverse. Her goddess is gone, Lissala's other divine servants have perished or converted to other faiths, mortals who knew her at the height of Thassilon are long dead or in suspended animation, and her existence has no purpose. Her hunger for outsider souls repulses her (as she never had to eat while Lissala was present) but she accepts it as a necessary embarrassment because she is unwilling to accept death—or an eternity spent as an invalid.

She normally keeps a "stable" of charmed outsiders near her (using her *limited wish* spell-like ability to duplicate *charm monster*) so she can slay and consume one if necessary. Her devotion to law and hatred of chaos means her minions are usually daemons, demons, or proteans; though she finds their flesh repugnant, she would rather destroy a minion of disorder than a devil or similar lawful evil outsider. She is stern but courteous to these minions, who obey and

respect her power even beyond the enforced friendliness of the magic that binds them to her.

Because of her chaotic associates, she has survived many hostile encounters in which opponents attacked her with lawful magic (such as *order's wrath*)—such attacks do not harm her, giving her a few vital seconds to decide whether she wants to retaliate or abandon her minions and flee.

The herald spends her infinite hours wandering the planes in search of Lissala or visiting Golarion to bask in places sacred to her missing goddess, trying to detect echoes of her master's presence like an old widower smelling his dead wife's clothes for a hint of perfume to spark a long-forgotten memory.



SHATTERED STAR

NIGHTGAUNT

This lanky ebon humanoid has batlike wings and a long prehensile tail, yet its most unsettling feature is its lack of a face.

NIGHTGAUNT

CR 4



XP 1,200

CN Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +6; **Senses** all-around vision, blindsight 60 ft.; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)

hp 37 (5d10+10)

Fort +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities faceless; **Immune** cold, gaze weapons, inhaled toxins, scent-based attacks

OFFENSE

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

Melee 2 claws +9 (1d6+4 plus grab)

Special Attacks clutches, tickle

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 5, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +9 (+13 grapple); **CMD** 22

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Fly +7, Perception +6, Stealth +11; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

Languages Aklo (cannot speak)

ECOLOGY

Environment any mountains

Organization single, pair, flight (3–12), or colony (13–50 plus 1–4 nightgaunt elders)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Clutches (Ex) Although a typical nightgaunt stands only half a foot taller than most humans, it is a remarkably tenacious grappler. A nightgaunt gains a +8 racial bonus on all combat maneuver checks made to grapple (rather than the typical +4 bonus most creatures with the grab ability gain). If a nightgaunt uses its fly speed to move itself and a grappled target, it can fly at full speed.

Faceless (Ex) A nightgaunt has no face, yet it can still see with remarkable clarity in all directions as if its entire body were a single strange eye. This unusual form of vision renders it immune to gaze attacks, but not to illusions that rely upon vision to function. A nightgaunt feeds on the despair and horror of its victims, which replaces the creature's need to eat and drink. It has no need to breathe at all, and is immune to all inhaled or scent-based effects.

Tickle (Ex) A nightgaunt's long, sinuous tail is covered with razor-sharp barbs. While this appendage looks dangerous and is exceptionally agile, a nightgaunt's tail doesn't have much strength, and thus cannot be used as a natural weapon. Yet when a nightgaunt grapples a foe, its tail can slither along the target's flesh to tickle and tease with

nauseating efficiency. Ticking a foe is a swift action, and the foe must either be helpless or grappled by the nightgaunt in order for it to use this ability. When a creature is tickled by a nightgaunt, the victim must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Nightgaunts haunt the deepest and darkest chasms of dream. They lurk in the shadows that loom at the edges of sane slumber, but are ready at any moment to snatch a blithe dreamer away, carrying it off into realms of endless nightmare and tickling it terribly all the way. They appear as stooped, emaciated humanoids, yet possess a strength in their sinewy limbs that far surpasses that of most humans. With inky black skin, batlike wings, long spiny tails, and demonic horns protruding from their skulls, nightgaunts are fearsome foes—yet it's their lack of any facial features makes the creatures truly nightmarish.

A typical nightgaunt is 7 feet tall and weighs 175 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Nightgaunts' most singular feature—their uncanny *lack* of features—is perhaps their most intriguing biological facet. That the creatures can see is manifestly obvious, for they react to purely visual stimulus with speed and precise action, as if their whole bodies can see in all directions. Scholars have yet to determine how the bizarre creatures accomplish this eerie stunt, but the fact that they were spawned originally in the depths of ancient nightmares might indicate that no sane or logical explanation for their sight exists.

Nightgaunts feed on emotions; while fear and horror are the usual staples of nightgaunts' diet, the creatures actually prefer a meal of varied emotions. A mix of laughter and terror provides a succulent meal for nightgaunts. Little else can provoke as delectable a bouquet for a nightgaunt as lifting victims high into the air while tickling them with its long, whip-like tail, a situation that those who have survived relate as one that can never be forgotten. During this frightening feeding, a nightgaunt often carries its victims aloft for miles as it continually tickles and torments the poor souls, finally dropping its prey into a remote area where monsters and worse lie in wait once it has gorged itself. Although nightgaunts won't hesitate to drop particularly troublesome or dangerous creatures from a great height, they prefer to release those they carry off from heights of only a few feet, as if to ensure their survival in whatever eldritch wilderness the nightgaunts have brought their victims to. Nightgaunts rarely return to feed on creatures they've dropped off in a dangerous region (although the same cannot be said of victims who escape to safety), provoking theories that the creatures have some sort

of ancient pact with the monstrous denizens of these remote locales.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Nightgaunts dwell in the parts of the world that inspire nightmares, where dreamers pray for dawn. They can be found amid the creaking boughs of haunted forests, lurking in the caves of desolate mountain gorges, or perched atop crumbling gravestones in forgotten boneyards. Yet when they grow hungry, they take wing from their eerie lairs to seek out victims, scouring cities and towns for open windows from which to snatch their meals.

Although nightgaunts can be found throughout Golarion, this is not their original home. The first nightgaunts were spawned deep in the Dimension of Dream from the nightmares of a forgotten poet whose fears were so consuming that every night he dreamt, his nightmares grew more and more powerful and overwhelming. Dreams of being carried over horrific landscapes and mind-numbing vistas of eldritch blight drove the poet deeper and deeper into madness, and in desperation he sought out the aid of a strange alchemist who supplied him with an elixir that would rid him of his fears forever. The poet took the draught and immediately fell into a deep slumber, and in that slumber, his nightmares fled his mind, transforming into the first and most powerful of the nightgaunt race. Unfortunately for the poet, the nightgaunts also took his muse, and when he woke the next morning, he found his ability to write had vanished forever—he had traded his soul for a life of gentle sleep. When he found he could not go on without his poetry, he sought out that strange alchemist in hopes of reversing what he'd done. The stories do not reveal what fate eventually met this strange and forlorn poet, but the nightgaunts have certainly prospered.

Most nightgaunts have little drive to be anything more than predators of slumbering societies. They often gather in large colonies, entertaining each other by sharing emotions they've fed upon via strange touches and lingering caresses. Powerful warlords, wizards, priests, and the like often enjoin nightgaunts to serve them as guardians or even forms of travel, promising them slaves or other captured prey in return for their services, but those who traffic with nightgaunts must take care to stay in their faceless friends' good graces, for a nightgaunt can turn upon its allies at the smallest slight.

Nightgaunts often war with the other creatures found in their desolate realms,

led into battle by elder nightgaunts who carry strange magical tridents and command considerable magical powers. These elder nightgaunts typically have levels as magi or oracles—a nightgaunt colony led by such a powerful creature is a much more dangerous threat than most, for these colonies often have agendas that go beyond mere predation upon kinder societies. Nightgaunt elders are typically chaotic evil, and many use their followers to keep humanoids as cattle in horrific pens or cages in lightless caverns.

The most powerful nightgaunts, though, are those original creations pulled from the mad poet's nightmares. These creatures are all-powerful spellcasters of prodigious size, and dwell in the deep underground realms below the Dimension of Dream, or else rule vast rookeries on the ragged borderlands that surround the dread Plateau of Leng. What their goals might be is not for sane minds to know.

