

SHATTERED STAR



BESTIARY

WHAT GREAT WONDERS EXISTED IN THE AGE OF LEGEND! IF ALL OF THE STORIES CAN BE BELIEVED, AMAZING CITIES OF GLEAMING SILVER AND RARE METALS FLEW EFFORTLESSLY THROUGH THE AIR, TOWERING METROPOLISES AND COLOSSAL MONUMENTS SPRANG UP SHAPED BY MAGIC AND BUILT BY THE HANDS OF GIANTS, AND NEARLY IMMORTAL WIZARDS HELD THE GREATEST POWER AT THEIR FINGERTIPS AND USED IT TO RULE PROSPEROUS NATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. HOWEVER, AS WITH ALL THINGS, THOSE TIMES WERE DESTINED TO PASS, AND PASS THEY DID INTO THE AGE OF DARKNESS.

—KURALI MESSONDIN, *THE TIMES OF THE INNER SEA*

This month's entry into the Pathfinder Bestiary reveals cunning creatures from ancient empires. Many of these creatures have been on Golarion for thousands of years, but they have lain low, and like the secrets of these fallen empires, have been lost on the fringes of memory.

CHANCE MEETINGS, MALCONTENTS, AND MONSTERS

As the PCs perform the ritual to combine the shards into the *Sihedron*, the former Thassilonian capital city of Xin rises from the ocean, bringing with it a massive tidal wave. When the PCs venture to this newly risen island, they do so with a solitary task in mind—stopping Xin's return to Golarion. To provide additional opportunities for adventure, three encounter hooks are listed below as well as a table of random encounters suitable for this volume of the Pathfinder Adventure Path.

Most of the encounters on the table fit among the crumbled ruins of Xin, and since most of the city is still flooded, the aquatic results on the table fit in the submerged portions of the ruined city. When consulting the table, if the resulting roll is not appropriate to the PCs' current location, roll again or simply choose a suitable encounter.

Exploring Opportunists (CR 14): While the Shackles is better known for piracy in the Inner Sea region, brigands and free captains ply the waters everywhere, and the Varisian Gulf is no different. While sailing the near Magnimar, this pirate crew nearly fell victim to the tsunami that resulted from Xin rising above the water, but the nautical skills of the captain and crew kept the ship afloat. Sure of his sailing and not afraid of adventure, Captain Dethros (use the stats for a pirate captain on page 281 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*) changed his course and headed straight to the new island, eager to plunder its previously hidden wealth. He ordered his first mate Breyton Chayros (use the stats for a bandit lord on page 259 of the *GameMastery Guide*) and eight crew members (use the stats for a raider on page 280 of the *GameMastery Guide*) to assemble an away team to assist in looting the island and providing protection while doing so. The PCs can encounter this crew while exploring the island and potentially brawl over the possession of ancient relics and newly uncovered treasures.

Fear and Flame (CR 15): Roused by the sudden appearance of the lost city of Xin and the potent magic unleashed during this event, the adult red dragon Zastulax (*Bestiary* 98) gathered her cruel graveknight champion (*Bestiary* 3 138) and set off to investigate the newly risen palace. Arriving at the ruins of the ancient city, she sought to secure the magic-wrought place as her own and has been fighting its guardians and any newcomers

ISLE OF XIN ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1–4	1 augnagar	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 219
5–9	1d6 carnivorous crystals	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 45
10–14	1 demilich	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 66
15–19	1d8 hezrous	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 62
20–24	1 nightwing	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 203
25–29	1d4 shining children	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 245
30–34	1 dybbuk	15	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 108
35–39	1d4 glabrezus	15	<i>Bestiary</i> 61
40–44	1d4 iron golems	15	<i>Bestiary</i> 162
45–49	1 neothelid	15	<i>Bestiary</i> 214
50–54	1 bythos	16	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 10
55–59	1d6 ghorazaghs	16	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 124
60–64	1 mithral golem	16	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 139
65–69	1 plasma ooze	16	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 220
70–74	1d6 shipwrecker crabs	16	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 60
75–79	1 marilith	17	<i>Bestiary</i> 63
80–84	1 rune giant	17	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 130
85–89	1 kraken	18	<i>Bestiary</i> 184
90–94	1 clockwork goliath	19	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 54
95–100	1 shoggoth	19	<i>Bestiary</i> 249

ever since. In the air she serves as a mount for her undead companion, strafing enemies with fire from above. On the ground, the graveknight dismounts and wades into battle with its greatsword while also using its devastating blast ability. These two dangerous combatants fight in tandem, always adjusting to accommodate each other.

Sloth's Servant (CR 16): Thousands of years ago, Malkay Enrili was a visitor to the city of Xin, a skilled wizard seeking to learn more of Thassilon's particular style of magic, but he perished as the city was destroyed and sank below the waves. However, this adherent of Krune was a potent conjuror, and his violent passing in such a magic-rich place transformed him into a writhing abomination—a worm that walks (*Bestiary* 2 286). In his new form, he wanders the shattered halls and sunken streets of the once-great city, as he has for millennia. Loneliness never struck Malkay in the thousands of years since his transformation, as he could call companions and helpers from a countless array of worlds. From constantly summoning these allies, he learned more about the current state of Golarion and widened his knowledge of the planes, as well as increasing his skill at magic. His most recent assistants, a group of four piscodaemons (*Bestiary* 2 72), were promised mortals to torture and souls to savor, but have grown bored, hungry, and agitated. However, now it seems the risen city of Xin should bring many, many more opportunities for death and torture.

SHATTERED STAR

AZATA, Raelis

This lithe, bronze-skinned celestial wanders the worlds ceaselessly, seeking tales of wonder and heroism.

RAELIS

CR 10



XP 9,600

CG Large outsider (azata, chaotic, extraplanar, good)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +16

DEFENSE

AC 24, **touch** 14, **flat-footed** 19 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 138 (12d10+60)

Fort +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10

DR 10/cold iron and evil; **Immune** electricity, petrification, rune mastery; **Resist** cold 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., fly 120 ft. (good)

Melee 2 slams +19 (2d8+7 plus stun)

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

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +16)

Constant—*freedom of movement*, *nondetection*

At will—*alter self*

3/day—*dimension door*, *modify memory* (DC 17)

1/day—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *plane shift*

Sorcerer Spells Known (caster level 12th; concentration +16)

6th (3/day)—*greater glyph of warding* (DC 21), *shadow walk*, *symbol of fear* (DC 21), *symbol of persuasion* (DC 21)

5th (5/day)—*seeming*, *symbol of pain* (DC 20), *symbol of sleep* (DC 20)

4th (7/day)—*confusion* (DC 18), *greater invisibility*, *scrying* (DC 18)

3rd (7/day)—*beast shape I*, *explosive runes* (DC 18), *glyph of warding* (DC 18), *haste*, *illusory script* (DC 18), *lightning bolt* (DC 17), *sepia snake sigil* (DC 18), *suggestion* (DC 17)

2nd (7/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 16), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *scorching ray*, *see invisibility*

1st (7/day)—*erase*, *feather fall*, *hypnotism*, *silent image* (DC 15), *ventriloquism* (DC 15)

o (at will)—*arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 19, **Con** 20, **Int** 18, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +20 (+24 grapple); **CMD** 34 (36 vs. grapple)

Feats Greater Grapple, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Acrobatics +18 (+26 when jumping), Bluff +18, Fly +20, Knowledge (geography) +15, Knowledge (history) +15, Knowledge (planes) +18, Perception +16, Perform (oratory) +15, Spellcraft +18, Stealth +14

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech
SQ mutable polymorph, word caller

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Elysium)

Organization solitary, pair, or band (3–6)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Mutable Polymorph (Su) When using spells with the polymorph descriptor, raelises have an uncanny amount of control over their target shape. While they still cannot use the spells to transform into specific individuals, they can control the skin tone, the hair color, the general body shape, and even the gender of the creature they transform into, granting them a +20 bonus on Disguise checks instead of the usual +10. This is a free action made as part of the spellcasting.

Rune Mastery (Ex) Raelises are masters of all magic based on runes or symbols. They automatically add *explosive runes*, *glyph of warding*, *greater glyph of warding*, *sepia snake sigil*, and all symbol spells to their list of spells known and increase the DC for these spells by 1. Additionally, raelises are immune to magical traps and effects that utilize runes or symbols, such as *sepia snake sigil* and *explosive runes*.

Spells A raelis casts spells as a 12th-level sorcerer. It has no sorcerer bloodline and does not gain any other sorcerer class abilities.

Stun (Ex) A raelis's iron-hard fist delivers a powerful, stunning blow. A creature struck by this attack must succeed at a DC 23 Fortitude save or be dazed for 1 round. If the attack is a critical hit and the target fails its save, the creature is instead stunned for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Strength-based.

Word Caller (Su) Raelises automatically sense the presence and basic topic of any books, scrolls, or other writings within 50 feet. By spending a standard action, they gain a deeper understanding of the text, treating up to 100 pages of nonmagical writing as if they had read it, or treating one magical spell or scroll as if they had read it and successfully made a successful Spellcraft check to understand it.

Formed from the souls of authors, artists, and storytellers, raelises travel to the farthest corners of Golarion and beyond searching for epic stories, poems, and simple tall tales. As they travel and quest for ever more obscure tales, they strive to make the world a brighter place—setting wrongs right or acting as agents for divine beings.

Though raelises appear to be frail, they possess a wiry strength and long-fingered hands ideally suited for the brawling and wrestling they enjoy so much. Deep brown or gray eyes dominate their expressive faces, and smiles and laughter come easy to their lips. Newly formed raelises have fair skin, but it slowly darkens over the centuries as they spend long hours exposed to the sun and elements. A raelis stands 9 feet tall and weighs close to 1,000 pounds.

ECOLOGY

The lust for new tales and stories drives raelises to the mortal planes more often than most of their azata brethren.

Unable to just stand idly by, raelises aid mortals more frequently than do other azatas, though they almost always do so disguised as humans or sometimes even common or familiar animals. Raelises prefer to avoid physical confrontation when dealing with mortals, but don't hesitate to influence events in other ways. A raelis might travel from town to town spreading tales and news to encourage rebellion in a poorly run kingdom, or insinuate itself into an invader's army to sow dissension. Often a raelis's influence isn't felt until it is long gone, as raelises use their powers to bend minds in subtle ways to plant the seeds of change.

Essentially gender neuter in their natural form, raelises have an androgynous beauty to their lean, sculpted bodies. When altering their physical form via *alter self* or other magical abilities, they can choose to take on male or female forms. Younger raelises often have a preferred gender, but as they get older, raelises choose their gender based on mood or as the task in front of them demands. They occasionally tryst with mortals, though their lack of stable gender identity sometimes leads to confusion.

Ironically, bards and storytellers are the mortals least likely to receive the aid of a raelis azata. Raelises almost universally believe the best mortal works are born of strife and crisis. Shielding a known storyteller from the trials of life could very well prevent the greatest epics from being written. Exactly how far they are willing to let things go is a matter of preference and a frequent topic of debate among their kind. Raelises like to compare the trials and suffering of storytellers to the fire and anvil that forges a great sword. Raelises do not enjoy this suffering, however, and those who deliberately abuse or murder a storyteller while a raelis is near discover swift justice after the fact.

Traveling is raelises' second love; they pride themselves on their knowledge of obscure back roads and trails. While they all have favored trails, raelises consider it a bad omen to make the exact same journey twice and they go long distances out of their way to avoid doing so. After eons exploring in this manner, the average raelis becomes a living atlas.

Though competent flyers, raelises prefer to walk or even run when they travel. Even on the coldest and hottest of days they travel with their feet bare. They love the feel of grass or even mud between their long toes, and pass time reciting stories they have collected, getting a feel for the flow of the verse and the rhythm of the words. Raelises can run for days at a time without stopping to rest or even sleep, crossing great distances or just scouting all available roads and trails in an area.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Their ability to travel discretely and their familiarity with the cities and geography of Golarion make raelises excellent spies and agents for deities with similar interests. While they avoid long-lasting alliances, raelises have much in common with the Empyrean Lord Sinashakti and often find themselves exchanging favors with him. Less frequently, they strike bargains with Cayden Cailean or even Desna in exchange for small favors or information.

Though many raelises are poets and storytellers, they value the stories mortals create. Few raelises worry overmuch about the accuracy of any given story—they are more interested in the art of the telling rather than the veracity of the tale. Some raelises even prefer the most outlandish tall tales and outright fabrications, as long as the exaggeration furthers the story.



CLOCKWORK DRAGON

Made from gleaming metal and countless complex cogs and gears, this draconic creature has the presence of a dangerous killing machine.

CLOCKWORK DRAGON

CR 16



XP 76,800

N Huge construct (clockwork)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 34, touch 13, flat-footed 28 (+4 Dex, +2 dodge, +20 natural, -2 size)

hp 177 (25d10+40)

Fort +8, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities noqual scales; **DR** 15/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits; **Resist** electricity 20, fire 20; **SR** 27

Weaknesses vulnerable to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft., fly 100 ft. (average), swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +35 (4d6+12), 2 claws +35 (2d8+12), tail slap +30 (2d8+6), 2 wings +30 (2d6+6)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks breath weapon (100-ft. line, 14d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 22 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), powered by abysium, self-destruction

STATISTICS

Str 34, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +25; **CMB** +39; **CMD** 55 (59 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Initiative^B, Lightning Reflexes^B

Skills Fly +8, Perception +8, Swim +20; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Fly, +8 Perception

SQ adamantine weapons, efficient winding, exceptional perception, swift reactions

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Adamantine Weapons (Ex) The teeth and claws of a clockwork dragon are made of adamantine, and have the qualities of a weapon made from that material.

Efficient Winding (Ex) Built for deployment on long and dangerous missions, a clockwork dragon can function for 3 days per Hit Die every time it is wound.

Exceptional Perception (Ex) A clockwork dragon construction includes magical enhancements that grant the creature particularly keen senses. In addition to its +8 racial bonus on Perception checks, a clockwork dragon can detect invisible creatures as if it were under the effect of a permanent *see invisibility* spell.

Noqual Scales (Ex) The noqual alloy from which a clockwork dragon's scales are crafted grants the creature spell resistance. In addition, a clockwork dragon gains a +4

resistance bonus on any saving throw made against a magical source.

Powered by Abysium (Ex) A clockwork dragon's bite carries with it a dangerous poison rendered from the skymetal abysium. The clockwork dragon need not deal damage to affect its target with this affliction. If the clockwork dragon's bite attack is sufficient to hit the creature's touch AC or if the dragon's bite hits but damage reduction negates any damage dealt, the target is affected with abysium exposure.

Abysium Exposure: Poison—contact; *save* Fortitude DC 18; *onset* 1 minute; *frequency* 1/minute for 6 minutes; *effect* 1d4 Con plus nauseated; *cure* 2 saves.

Self-Destruction (Ex) When reduced to below half of its hit points, a clockwork dragon can trigger a reaction that causes its body to self-destruct in a fiery explosion that deals 20d8 points of fire damage in a 20-foot radius. This violent explosion superheats the various volatile materials that make up the clockwork creation and spreads the risk of abysium exposure to all creatures that are within a 300-foot radius.

The magic-wielding engineers of ancient Azlant created marvelous clockwork creations, but few equaled the formidable power of the clockwork dragon. The construction of clockwork dragons was based on a similar design, that of the clockwork leviathan. The Azlanti engineers used the leviathan as a basic chassis, borrowing the same technology to fully waterproof the creature, then further modified the clockwork monstrosity to specialize it for defense and fast, brutal attacks. The Azlanti focused on clockworks because they knew that the aboleths' illusions and magic meant to trick the mind would be useless against their mechanical creations, and began amassing clockwork armies of various shapes and uses to fight against their sinister rivals. In addition to being sent to war against aboleths, clockwork dragons were also used by the Azlanti against other threats, such as the serpentfolk, and later the Ghol-Gani cyclopes.

Most of the time, clockwork dragons are built to represent metallic dragons, though some creators designed their mechanical beasts to resemble dragons of the chromatic grouping. Preserved illustrations unearthed from Thassilonian archaeological sites show even primal and imperial dragons influenced some designs.

It is rumored that an improved version of the clockwork dragon's design possessed a semblance of sentience, having the ability to alter their programming mid-mission. Other variants of clockwork dragons wield breath weapons that deal alternate forms of energy damage. The greatest example of these variants is said to be capable of blasting a line of force from its fanged mouth. Some even claim to have spotted a similar creature in Numeria (likely a product of parallel design): a robotic creation outfitted

with enhanced flight, keen senses, lasers, and self-propelled explosive devices.

The Azlanti engineers who first crafted these creations made use of some of the rarest elements available. This included the various skymetals, and in the creation of the clockwork dragons, the engineers discovered many new uses for those metals. Through their research, they found a more efficient way to work noqual and discovered the safest methods of working with abysium. According to some reports, though the material was never used for clockwork dragons as far as anyone knows for sure, the engineers even discovered a way to alloy djezet.

The inclusion of abysium shows that the clockwork dragons were not necessarily designed to win their particular battles, and some claim the elaborate devices were never intended to return once successful. The Azlanti could send these skymetal-infused creatures at their enemies as a first strike, sickening whole groups from exposure to abysium and thus weakening the targets for the Azlanti soldiers who followed.

ECOLOGY

Clockwork dragons must be wound up to perform, and though a full winding lasts much longer for these creations than other clockwork creatures, they eventually use up their power and go dormant. Most clockwork

dragons in Golarion remain in this dormant state, awaiting a fresh winding.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Clockwork dragons were most plentiful in Azlant, though in Avistan, Thassilonian builders were also known to create the elaborate creatures for use in war. As constructs, the creatures have no true society, but many clockwork dragons were deployed with a contingent of clockwork servants to attend to their winding and repairs. Some clockwork dragons were also built with tiny compartments in their bodies that housed a dozen clockwork spies they could deploy during their missions so they could provide their creators with a full report of the particular action in which they were involved. Most of the time, these tiny clockwork spies cling to the dragon while it is in action, scurrying over its metallic scales as the beast pursues its quarry.

CONSTRUCTION

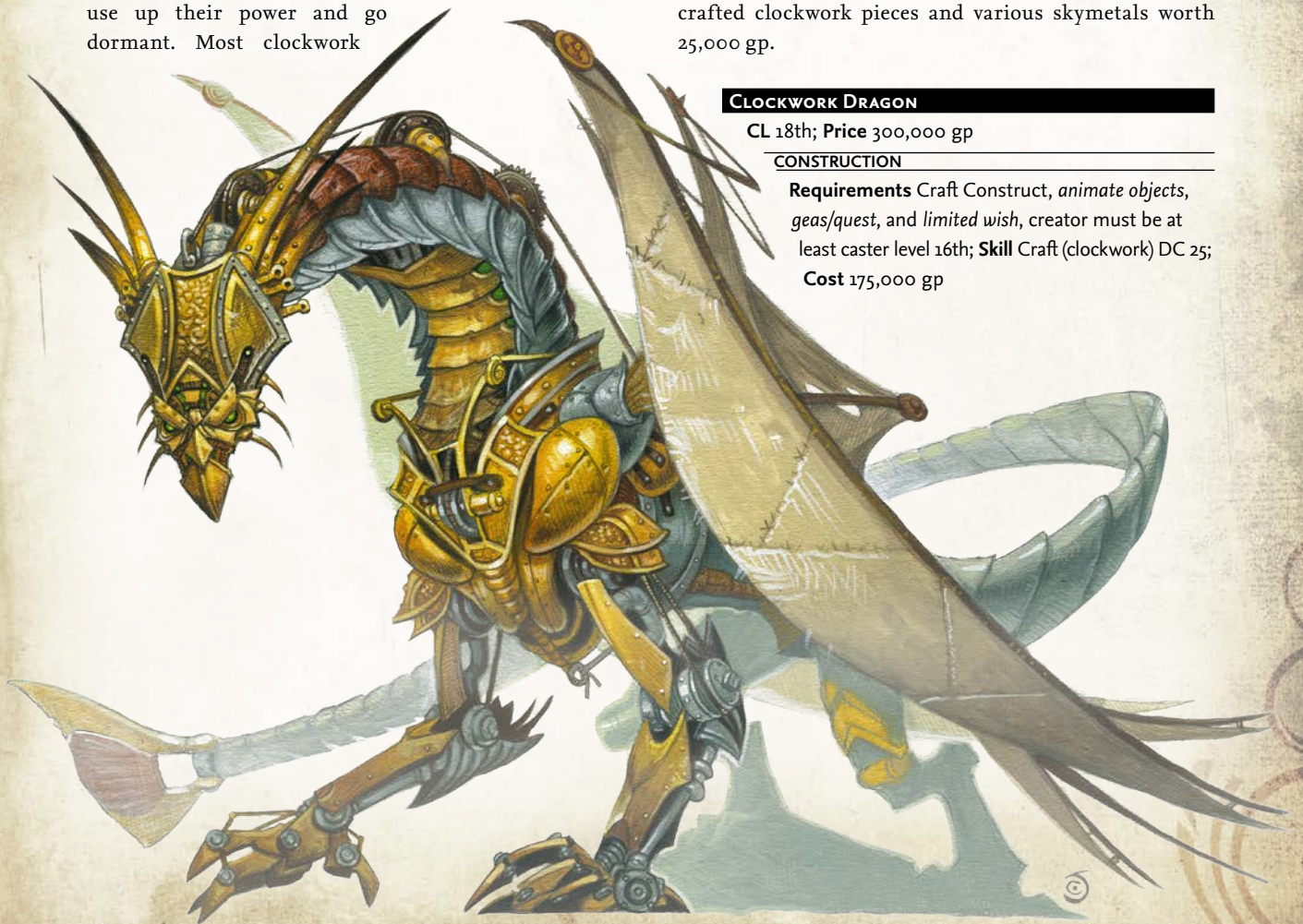
The clockwork dragon is a masterpiece of Azlanti technology and is exceptionally difficult to create. In addition, the inclusion of skymetals makes clockwork dragons much more expensive than normal clockwork creations of the same size. The creator must begin with crafted clockwork pieces and various skymetals worth 25,000 gp.

CLOCKWORK DRAGON

CL 18th; Price 300,000 gp

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Construct, *animate objects*, *geas/quest*, and *limited wish*, creator must be at least caster level 16th; **Skill** Craft (clockwork) DC 25; **Cost** 175,000 gp



SHATTERED STAR

LIVING RUNE

A pulsating glyph animates into a quickly flowing script that changes form as it rewrites itself, before finally assembling into an arcane symbol that flares with untold magical power.

LIVING RUNE

CR 13



XP 25,600

NE Medium aberration

Init +15; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.;
Perception +27

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 28, flat-footed 16 (+6 deflection, +11 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 153 (18d8+72)

Fort +10, **Ref** +17, **Will** +15

Defensive Abilities amorphous; **Immune** bleed, disease, magic, paralysis, poison, stunning

Weaknesses vulnerable to sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., climb 50 ft.

Melee glyph touch +24 touch (3d8 electricity)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks symbols of power

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +17)

At will—*arcane mark*, *illusory script* (DC 18), *telekinesis* (sustained force only, DC 20)

3/day—*explosive runes* (DC 18), *greater glyph of warding* (DC 21), *sepia snake sigil* (DC 18)

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 32, **Con** 18, **Int** 15, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 41 (can't be tripped)

Feats Alertness, Combat Expertise, Deceitful, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Skill Focus (Stealth), Spring Attack

Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +15, Climb +12, Disguise +7, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (history) +15, Knowledge (planes) +15, Knowledge (religion) +15, Perception +27, Sense Motive +19, Stealth +35

Languages truescript

SQ camouflage, compression, two-dimensional

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or string (3–4)

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Camouflage (Ex) A living rune is able to shift its coloration and form to blend into its surroundings. The creature automatically hits with its touch attack against any creature that fails to notice it and enters its square.

Glyph Touch (Su) A living rune deals 3d8 points of electricity damage with a successful touch attack, and it uses its Dexterity modifier (instead of its Strength modifier) to resolve all touch attacks.

Immunity to Magic (Ex) A living rune is immune to spells and spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance. In addition,

certain other spells and effects function differently against the creature as noted below.

- An *erase* spell deals 6d6 points of damage to a living rune.
- A living rune caught in the radius of any symbol spell is immune to its effects and heals 1d8 points of damage per spell level. Hit points beyond its total maximum are gained as temporary hit points that fade in 1 hour.
- A living rune is affected normally by *magic missile*, *maze*, and spells that deal sonic damage.

Symbols of Power (Su) As a standard action, a living rune can shift its form into a number of powerful symbols whose effects can damage or incapacitate opponents. Each round the living rune can choose a new effect, but a particular symbol form can only be used once every 4 rounds. This attack is resolved with a touch attack and the save DC is Charisma-based.

Fear: The target becomes panicked for 2d6 rounds (Will DC 24).

Pain: The target suffers wracking pains that impose a –4 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks for 1 hour (Fort DC 24).

Persuasion: The target is charmed by the living rune (as *charm monster*) for 2d6 hours (Will DC 24).

Slow: The target is slowed (as the *slow* spell) for 12 rounds (Will DC 24).

Stunning: The target is stunned for 1d6 rounds (Fort DC 24).

Weakness: The target suffers crippling weakness that deals 2d6 points of Strength damage (Fort DC 24).

Truescript (Su) A living rune can sculpt its form into complicated scripts and pictographs that can be understood by any creature with the ability to read written language. A living rune can also understand any written or spoken language.

Two-Dimensional (Ex) A living rune only exists in two dimensions, and has some qualities in common with incorporeal creatures. A living rune has no Strength score. It cannot move in three dimensions (such as jumping or flying), and can only navigate along solid surfaces such as floors, ceilings, and walls. It can only attack creatures by entering their squares and touching them directly. A living rune can crawl onto solid surfaces that can then themselves be moved (such as onto a tome via its *telekinesis* spell-like ability). It cannot fall or take falling damage, cannot make trip or grapple attacks, and cannot be tripped or grappled. It cannot take any physical action that would move or manipulate an opponent or the opponent's equipment, has no weight, and does not set off traps that are triggered by weight. A living rune takes no damage from nonmagical attacks and only takes half damage from magical weapons.

Whether first scribed by some forgotten deity or birthed by magic glyphs long soured, living runes are among the most stubborn and arrogant of dungeon denizens.

Though two-dimensional and lacking any sort of real body, the creatures are sentient, but with a venomous hostility toward the so-called “lesser races” they feel are corrupted forms of the universe’s first words of creation. Appearing as magical glyphs, animated pulsating runes, etched hieroglyphics, or even ancient cave art, these creatures live to prey on lesser beings for no other reason than to prove their superiority over flesh-and-blood creatures.

ECOLOGY

Living runes are ambush hunters, lying in wait amid ancient graffiti and faded pictographs, or even on the pages of ancient texts and tomes. They use their mutable forms to camouflage themselves—often changing texts with *illusory script* to lead adventurers into nearby traps or hazards, or lacing important sources of information with *explosive runes* and then striking at trespassers when they have triggered the dangerous glyphs. Immortal unless destroyed, the creatures do not need sustenance in a traditional sense, though, like their will-o’-wisp cousins, they seem to feed on the terror and pain they induce in their victims. In addition to fear and pain, living runes feed on the written word (which they can erase through this consumption or leave unharmed). Living runes reproduce by a strange sort of mitosis, where two creatures merge to create complex sentence structures and concepts before splitting a portion off each of their malleable bodies to create a new unique rune that contains the knowledge of both parent runes.

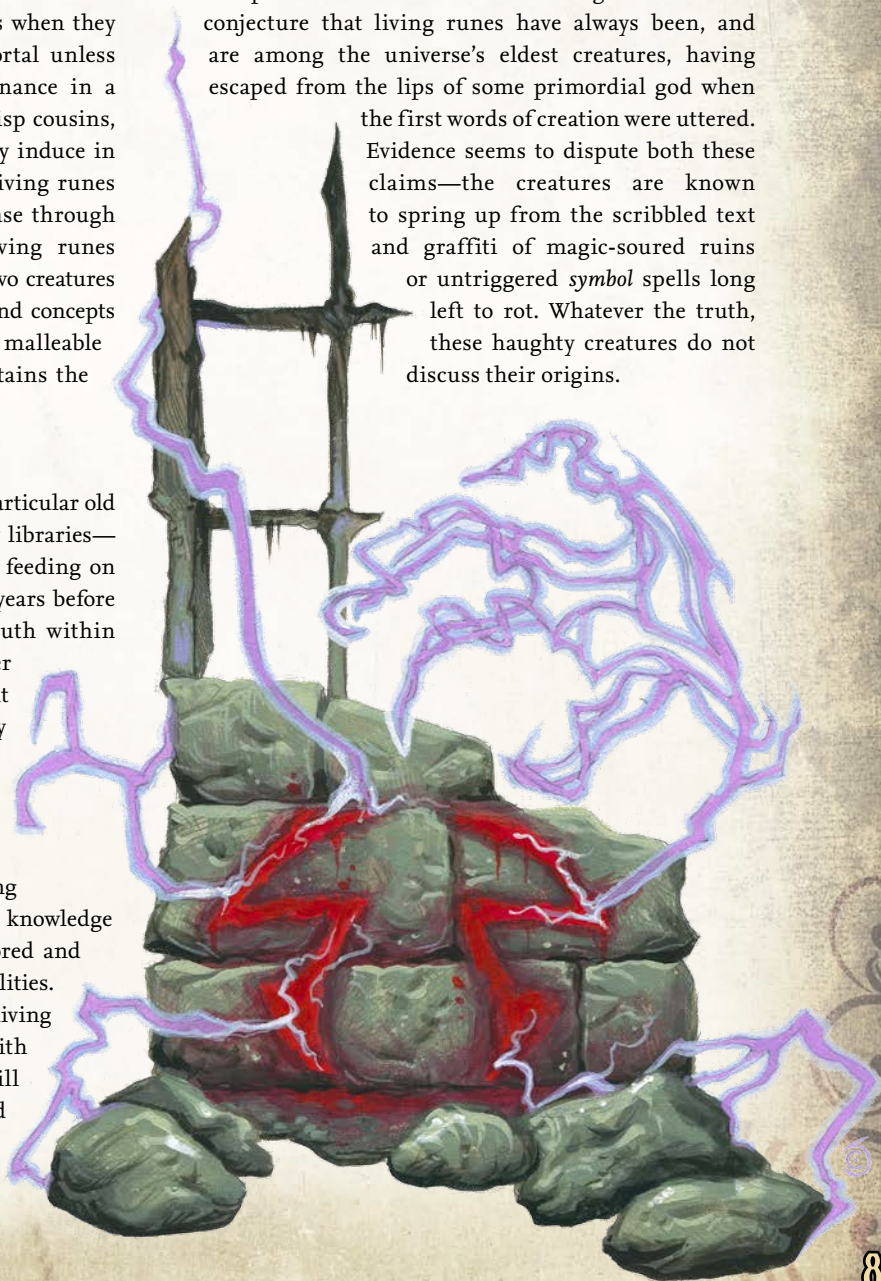
HABITAT & SOCIETY

Most commonly found in deserted ruins—in particular old alchemical labs, forgotten temples, and musty libraries—living runes prefer to live isolated existences, feeding on lost knowledge, consuming it slowly over the years before erasing or altering it, then hoarding the truth within themselves to tease races seeking to recover it. For this reason, they prefer to haunt the fringes of civilization, where they may terrorize lesser creatures in this manner—particularly arcane spellcasters. They derive a sick pleasure from the mental and physical torture of humanoids; in particular, they enjoy cornering humanoids in debates and wrapping them in riddles with the promise of shared knowledge or information, before ultimately growing bored and attacking the intruders with their myriad abilities. Such communications always begin—in the living rune’s unique form of communication—with scribbled inquiries trespassing creatures will understand, and this somewhat playful and innocuous introduction often draws explorers to their deaths when they assume they are

conversing with some benign artificial intelligence. In instances becoming horrifically frequent, archivists have discovered previously unheard of colonies of living runes deep in the bowels of urban libraries and archives, hiding out for years in an attempt to learn more of modern civilization, with unknown motivations that may hold terrible consequences for civilized races.

ORIGINS

In the annals of recorded history, ancient texts mentioning living runes always seem to do so in relation to the forgotten goddess Lissala, leading scholars to believe that either the creatures served worshipers of the deity in some way, or were rewarded as gifts to particularly devout supplicants. Some even speculate that Lissala herself is responsible for the creation of living runes. Others conjecture that living runes have always been, and are among the universe’s eldest creatures, having escaped from the lips of some primordial god when the first words of creation were uttered. Evidence seems to dispute both these claims—the creatures are known to spring up from the scribbled text and graffiti of magic-soured ruins or untriggered *symbol* spells long left to rot. Whatever the truth, these haughty creatures do not discuss their origins.



SHATTERED STAR

MEZLAN

An amorphous blob coalesces, slowly rising up to form into a humanoid figure. As it stabilizes, intricate details emerge.

MEZLAN

CR 14



XP 38,400

N Medium ooze (shapechanger)

Init +11; **Senses** blindsight 120 ft.; **Perception** +20

DEFENSE

AC 30, **touch** 18, **flat-footed** 22 (+7 Dex, +1 dodge, +12 natural)

hp 195 (17d8+119); **regeneration** 5 (acid)

Fort +12, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11

Immune ooze traits; **SR** 25



OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., **climb** 20 ft., **swim** 20 ft.

Melee 2 morphic weapons +22 (2d8+10)

Ranged morphic weapon +19 (2d8+10)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (15 ft. with 1 slam per round)

Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6, spell battery (*chain lightning* [DC 19], *dispel magic*, *mage armor*)

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 25, **Con** 24, **Int** 15, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 40 (can't be tripped)

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Stealthy

Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +14, Climb +18, Disguise +25, Escape Artist +9, Linguistics +11, Perception +20, Sense Motive +20, Stealth +25, Swim +18; **Racial Modifiers** +12 Disguise, +4 Linguistics, +4 Stealth

Languages Aklo, Azlanti, Common; versatile speech

SQ morphic body, skill pool

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Morphic Body (Ex) A mezlan can assume the appearance of any Medium or Small creature (other than creatures with the elemental, incorporeal, or swarm subtypes—the body assumed must be solid). The mezlan's creature type doesn't change in this new form and it gains none of the mimicked creature's special abilities; the transformation is cosmetic only. In these other forms, the mezlan retains all of its normal statistics and abilities as depicted above. Though this ability only affects the mezlan's outward image, it is a transmutation effect.

Morphic Weapons (Ex) A mezlan can manipulate its body to mimic a wide array of potent weaponry wielded by its various forms. While the weapons may look different, they are considered natural weapons and they all do the same amount of damage; are treated as magic for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction; and deal bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage. Once per round, a mezlan can extend one of its limbs to strike at a distance up to 15 feet away with one of its slam attacks. Also, while mimicking a creature wielding a ranged weapon, a mezlan can fire a portion of its body as if the fragment were a projectile. This projectile is treated as a thrown weapon and has a range increment of 60 feet.

Skill Pool (Ex) A mezlan has a special knack for solving problems. Five times per day, it can apply a +4 competence bonus on any skill check, even checks for skills it has no ranks in or skills that can only be used untrained.

Spell Battery (Su) A mezlan can store up to 10 levels of spells that it can then cast freely. The spells imbued into a mezlan

are each activated with the casting time for the relevant spell and are cast at the caster level of the spellcaster who provided the spells. A mezlan can store and use both divine and arcane spells, and can be imbued by any number of casters at a time. To fuel this ability, a caster must cast her spells into the mezlan; alternatively, the spellcaster can use a scroll to place a spell into the mezlan. A mezlan must voluntarily lower its spell resistance in order to be imbued with spells.

In addition, a mezlan can choose to lower its spell resistance and absorb spells cast at it. The mezlan must be aware of the incoming spell and ready an action to absorb it. Only spells that have the mezlan as a target can be absorbed in this way; area spells are not absorbed. If a mezlan already possesses 10 levels of spells, it cannot absorb more. The mezlan can use these absorbed spells as its own.

Versatile Speech (Ex) A mezlan has a talent for parsing spoken languages. After spending 1 minute listening to a speaker use a language it doesn't already know, a mezlan can understand that language. After listening for 1 additional minute, the mezlan can speak the language. This understanding lasts for 24 hours before fading from the mezlan's mutable mind. To understand the same language again after this time, the mezlan must spend another minute listening to a creature speak that language. The mezlan doesn't have to be engaged in a conversation to use this ability.

Built by Azlanti arcanists and engineers to perform the duties of spies and elite troops, units of mezlans were deployed to engage in extractions, infiltrations, and quick strikes on well-protected locations. Scholars believe that at the height of Azlant, close to 1,500 mezlans were created to save the empire. The difficulty of destroying mezlans leads scholars to believe that at least half of them still exist to this day.

Mezlans blur the lines between constructs and oozes, a mixture made even more strange by their possession of unique, previously human personalities. Each mezlan was once an exemplary living Azlanti or Thassilonian soldier graced with superior skills and intelligence. Upon being chosen for this new duty, these soldiers were given a full explanation of the changes they would undergo and signed a contract to serve them empire as mezlans. Each was then subjected to numerous magical and technological procedures to extract her consciousness, preserve it, and inject it into her new form. Sometimes the process didn't take as well as others, and resulted in an incomplete and flawed mezlan. Evidence of these flawed specimens didn't always reveal itself before the creatures were deployed, and many these became rogue mezlans.

Most mezlans were recruited from the ranks of the military, and thus most of them possessed martial-related

or skill-related class levels; however, a few of these creatures were once wizards who traded their magical talent for an amorphous form and near immortality.

ECOLOGY

Without the need to eat, sleep, or breathe, mezlans are practically immortal. When they are defeated in battle, they simply disincorporate and begin seeping down into the soil or cracks in the ground. If the material making up a mezlan isn't contained in some way or destroyed by subjecting it to continued energy damage, the creature lies dormant for 10 years before reforming. When a mezlan reincorporates, it is treated as if it had 16 negative levels. These negative levels are removed through time at a rate of 1 per month.

Mezlans retain a portion of their previous memories and experiences, but the extent of those memories varies from individual to individual. Some mezlans slowly regain their memories, some immediately remember everything from their previous incorporation, and others never fully grasp their previous selves.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Mezlans seem to get along and work well with other mezlans, but to normal, living creatures, they appear strange and unnatural. They are very observant creatures who study everything they encounter, especially creatures—a frequent use of their skill pool ability. Some mezlans become accustomed to a particular form or body and use that persona as a default. Others enjoy keeping dozens of regular personas and cycle through them for particular duties they need to complete, meshing these personalities into a toolkit they use throughout their day-to-day activities. A few purists keep an amorphous, bloblike form unless they need to resemble something else. Strange mezlans who have gone mad over the years constantly shift their forms, flickering between hundreds of different ones.

BECOMING A MEZLAN

Though not constructs, mezlans are still created beings, the marriage of transformative magic and a living soul. Only the prohibitive cost of creating mezlans, not any shortage of volunteers, prevented their creators from manufacturing thousands of them. The sheer volume of djezet needed to create a mezlan forced their creators to grant the honor of the transformation to only the best of the best, greatly increasing their worth.

The method for creating a mezlan is lost to time, though it is rumored one of them retains the knowledge to produce more of its own kind. In any case, the price of the materials and special processes necessary to create an army of mezlans would likely bankrupt a nation.