



# THE CINDERLANDS

## THE FIRES OF THE STORVAL PLATEAU

*The Cinderlands play host to a desolate backdrop of scrubland and drought, famine and death. As hot as a forge and dry as a desert, the broken flats radiate a hazy, wavering heat so tangible that it robs the body of precious moisture in mere hours. What beasts make their homes there are deceptive and violent, while what few plants claw their way through the cracked ground are as nourishing as rocks. It is the next best thing to Hell on Golarion. Gozreh swelters in this parched place, repeatedly venting his fury against the unsuspecting lands in cleansing baptisms of fire.”*

*—The Cinderlands Expeditions, Preface*



By far the least hospitable landscape in Varisia, the Cinderlands have been written off by most of the region's residents as worthless—fit only for the crazed Shoanti barbarians displaced over the centuries by immigration from Cheliar. Yet such views are shortsighted, for within the Cinderlands' borders lurks a surprising display of life and geologic diversity. What follows is an in-depth, ecological examination of this charred and bitter land—a synopsis of its violent origins, an assessment of its outwardly inhospitable environment, an inspection of its unstable natural resources and irregular weather patterns, and a fascinating look at the unusual plants and creatures that are as callous and unforgiving as the fuming landscape they call home.

## NATURAL HISTORY OF THE CINDERLANDS

As one stands in the Cinderlands and gazes across a terrain that occasionally belches flames across its breadth, driving panicked creatures before it, it is hard to imagine this place as anything but a wasteland. Yet this inhospitable land was not always so bleak. During the early chapters of Golarion's natural history, the Cinderlands were actually a prehistoric coral reef system which rested beneath a primordial sea.

Far below the sea floor of those ancient times, the world's bowels shifted and caused two tectonic plates to collide. The impact of that convergence was so great that the rocks in the lithosphere compressed together, forcing the oceanic plate to slide beneath the continental plate to relieve the pressure. This subduction gave rise to a reverse fault that uplifted a large section of the sea floor—a landmark that would one day be dubbed the Storval Plateau. As the waters of that doomed sea drained away and the lands saw their first rays of sunlight, magma rose to the surface and formed a volcanic arc—a belt of cinder cone volcanoes that runs parallel to the trench of the Arcadian Ocean. Today, the ejecta those cones spew into the environment blankets the ground, and when environmental conditions are favorable, emberstorms—impenetrable blizzards of ash and cinders—rumble across the southern portion of the plateau.

The fate of the now-extinct prehistoric reef was to form an extraordinary deposit of organic peat that settled deep into the ground. Layer upon layer of sediment formed atop that living graveyard, and the resulting heat and compression squeezed out all of the moisture. This fossil fuel became so deeply entrenched that it reached a breaking point of extreme temperature and pressure, triggering a reaction that converted solid fuel to natural gas. A massive cap rock held these flammable vapors in check for ages, but when Bakrakhan sank into the sea, the rock splintered and the trapped gas that had remained

buried for centuries suddenly had a route to the open air, encouraging a land already besieged by wildfires to burn faster and hotter.

The natural history of the Cinderlands has been one of violent upheaval. As it stands today, the Cinderlands are still in the process of change. By all accounts the Storval Fault is yet rising, driven ever upwards by the innards of Golarion.

*By far the most exasperating aspect of the badlands is the wind—ceaseless, unrelenting wind. To say it has played havoc with our research material is an understatement. Just yesterday, we lost an entire month's worth of geological notes. If it were constant, the wind wouldn't be quite as much of a nuisance, but the continuous pattern of extreme buffeting followed by a few seconds of stillness is maddening. The dust and ash get into everything: backpacks, canteens, boots, eyes, nostrils—you name it, sand gets into it.*

—*The Cinderlands Expeditions,*  
Chapter 2: *The Blistering Wind*

## GEOGRAPHY OF THE CINDERLANDS

The Cinderlands rest on the southern Storval Plateau, bounded by the banks of the Kazaron River and the Kodar Mountains in the north, the Storval Deep and Wyvern Mountains in the west, the Mindspin Mountains in the east, and the Storval Rise in the south. The Kazaron flows from the Kodars following the southwest tilt of the plateau, meanders through the broken foothills and grasslands, and eventually empties into the Storval Deep. The Yondabakari flows south from the Mindspins and cuts a stubborn path right through the heart of the Cinderlands, providing the lands just enough water to prevent desertification.

The badlands are rugged, inhospitable terrain formed by long periods of drought and heavy wind erosion and make up the majority of the Cinderlands, particularly near the mountain chains and east of the Yondabakari. Odd rock formations, canyons, gullies, and hoodoos fill the landscape, separated by twisting valleys and crags. Deep gorges create natural wind tunnels, and their howling can carry for miles. Many of the rock formations have alternating tiers of sandstone and ash rock, creating a stark, contrasting ambience of red and black layers. The wind's effect is everywhere—the rocks and formations are smooth and curved, mimicking the sand dunes of a desert. Large areas are solid rock, but other areas have stretches of leached soil and silt. A short, weedy scrub grows in patches throughout the badlands, offset by succulent plants.

Just north of the Storval Rise are the galtroot flats, a land of short, red galtroot bushes that grow in deposits of red



clay. Also residing in this region are the squat and menacing cinder cones that produce the ever-present volcanic ash that blankets the ground. The extreme winds here make any travel through this land treacherous, as the airborne ash creates a gray, impenetrable haze and an occasional ash devil.

In the northern Cinderlands, the waters of the Kazaron make the ground rich in soluble nutrients, producing soil that is more fertile for producing areas of grassland. Because there are no trees to rob the sunlight, the topsoil is rich with life, and the vast majority of northern plant species take the form of grass or scrub.

## GEOLOGY OF THE CINDERLANDS

Due to the enormous amount of geological activity in the crust, many different rocks and minerals exist in the Cinderlands. Blood-red charstone, composed of black granite speckled with potash feldspar gemstones, is much prized among the Shoanti. Rocks that form within copper ore, such as azurite and malachite, are useful as pigments when ground into a paste. Ash rock is similar to sandstone; it forms when layers of volcanic basalt particles accumulate through sedimentation and pressure, eventually forming unique black-tinged cliffs, eroded hoodoos, and other formations.

Copper and iron are plentiful—in particular, the foothills of the Mindspins dump massive amounts of copper ore onto the banks of the Yondabakari. Many crystal veins in the crust contain electrum in addition to small traces of other metals, such as copper, gold, and zinc—all of which make the area valuable to dwarven miners from Janderhoff.

During the convergence of the tectonic plates, chunks of diamond broke free from underground veins and rose to the surface, and now lie buried beneath the grounds of the cinder cones, waiting

to be easily extracted by those willing to work so close to violent geologic activity. Deposits of coal, hidden just below the surface, rest near the mountain chains that bound the Cinderlands. Some of the deposits near the Wyvern Mountains have been burning for decades, due to the sheer amount of coal concentrated there.

## Cinder Cones

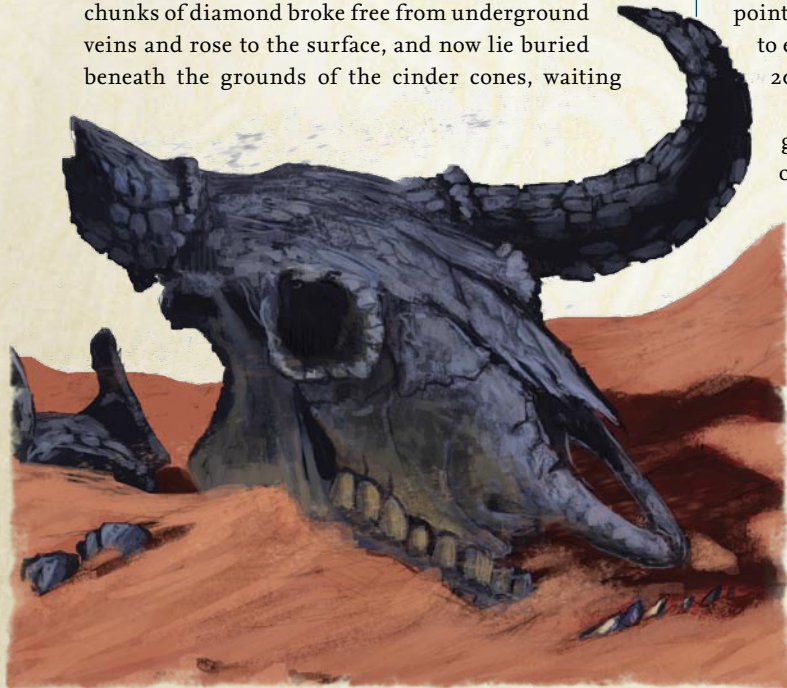
The Cinderlands are spotted with cinder cones—hills of volcanic fragments built up around volcanic vents. The larger ones near natural gas seeps are capable of lava flows and extreme explosive eruptions. Seismic activity accompanies these magma fountains, and the small volcanoes vent incredible amounts of ash through their flanks and summit craters.

The majority of the material expelled by cinder cones is miniscule particles of ash, although the immense amount spewed into the environment invades every aspect of the Cinderlands. Infrequently, magma explodes from one of these small volcanoes (see page 304 of the DMG for details on lava effects). After an eruption, shelves of black volcanic glass sometimes form, which the Shoanti frequently harvest to make knives many times sharper than the keenest steel.

*Sarenrae's Tears* (CR 5): Large cinder cones can produce deadly debris known locally as Sarenrae's Tears—buckler-sized globs of half-cooled molten basalt and trapped volcanic gases—that eject with enormous force, potentially shooting great distances. Cooling as they fly through the air, the volatile rock solidifies into elongated tear-shaped rocks, making them aerodynamic enough to travel up to a mile. The impact of one of Sarenrae's Tears often causes it to shatter explosively, dealing 3d6 points of piercing damage and 3d6 points of fire damage to everything within 15 feet of the point of impact (DC 20 Reflex, save for half).

Hundreds of these natural powder kegs litter the grounds surrounding cinder cones. If damaged or disturbed, these deadly rocks can still explode (hardness 7, 1 hit point), blowing glass shrapnel in all directions just as the airborne variety. Sarenrae's Tears the size of wagons with proportionately scaled destructive capabilities have been recorded, but are fortunately rare.

*Sarenrae's Tresses* (CR 4): During periods of heavily sustained wind, long strands of glass fibers form when wind picks up the magma of a fountain eruption and carries it downwind, cooling it in the process and ripping to shreds anything in its path. Named Sarenrae's Tresses by the Shoanti, the glass strands bear a strong resemblance to hair or straw and litter the ground miles downwind of the cones in long, jumbled heaps. During the Cinderlands'





occasional windstorms, Sarenrae's Tresses are kicked into the air, flensing anything unfortunate enough to be nearby. Anyone within a quarter mile of a cinder cone during a windstorm suffers not only the effects of the high winds (see page 95 of the DMG) but takes 2d6 points of piercing damage per round.

## Emberstorms

During the peak of summer, when the wind is at its driest, an emberstorm can form in the aftermath of a particularly large wildfire. Because the generated heat is so great, the surrounding oxygen burns instantly, creating inward-facing wind currents. Once this occurs, a perpetual cycle of oxygen, ash, and embers feeds the fire and intensifies its heat, giving it its own renewable source of fuel. The winds produced by this phenomenon can reach hurricane-force gales that cause the emberstorm to grow to devastating sizes. With a good wind behind it, the storm can travel hundreds of miles, appearing from afar like a black blizzard that flickers with fire.

Emberstorms are massive areas of moving, deadly weather, easily measured in miles. There are two parts to the storm: the edge (up to 100 feet inside the storm's borders) and the heart (the area more than 100 feet into the storm). Within the edge, creatures are subjected to the effects of strong winds (see page 95 of the DMG), take a -10 penalty on Spot, Listen and Search checks as well as missile attacks beyond 10 feet, and gain concealment.

Within the heart of an emberstorm, the wind increases to severe or even windstorm levels. The scouring ash and grit in the air also creates all the effects of a duststorm, save that they normally leave behind only 1d4-1 feet of dust and ash in their wake (see DMG page 94). Additionally, whenever a character takes nonlethal damage from an emberstorm, he also takes 1 point of fire damage from the cinders and hot ashes. An emberstorm is a CR 4 encounter.

*We have been experimenting with a deep crack in the ground that we located today. If you look at it from a certain angle, you can almost see invisible vapors emanating from it. After much debate over our next course of action, we agreed to set it on fire—in retrospect, this was not the wisest choice. Even our guide seemed shocked when it combusted with a loud popping sound, followed by an intense shaft of blue flame. All of our attempts at extinguishing it have been unsuccessful. Minch has been trying to come up with a proper term for this phenomenon. God's Pyre, Tinderbox Geysers, and Cerulean Scorch (of which I was particularly fond) all met with playful derision and were vetoed by the majority. For lack of a better term, we have settled for calling this blue flame rockfire for the remainder of this research.*

—*The Cinderlands Expeditions,*  
Chapter 3: The Fields Will Burn

## PEOPLE OF THE CINDERLANDS

As inhospitable as the burning plains of the Storval Plateau are, several species actively seek to claw a life from the hard clay and lifeless ash.

**Gargoyles:** Bands of savage gargoyles have long made their home on the Storval Plateau. In the Cinderlands particularly, the ashen and brick-colored gargoyles of the Ashwing tribe soar from aerie to aerie, snatching up whatever meals they can and taking wing when the fires of the land grow too near.

**Orcs:** Raiders from the Hold of Belkzen and brutes from Urglin frequently prey upon the same animals as the native Shoanti, and upon the Shoanti themselves. Fearful of the deadly land, they rarely linger for long, yet it's not uncommon to find the charred remains of orcs who were unable to outrun an emberstorm.

**Shoanti:** The Shoanti tribes of the Sklar-Quah wander the Cinderlands, preying upon the lands' deadly predators and following migrating aurochs. The flames of the land have long held a place in the faith and traditions of these warlike barbarians, most noticeably in the fearless charges of the burn riders and in the rite of passage all quah members must face: the Burn Run (see "People of the Storval Plateau" and the Pathfinder's Journal in *Pathfinder* #7).

**Varisians:** The wandering cousins of the Shoanti occasionally make their way through the Cinderlands, always either on their way somewhere else, or just to say they've been.

## Methane Seeps

Gas seeps emit odorless, volatile organic compounds that the naked eye cannot perceive. While these vapors are non-toxic, they are composed of a highly flammable compound that combusts in the presence of any heat source. These methane seeps fuel the Cinderlands' natural wildfires and keep them burning even in areas of sparse vegetation. A methane seep might take the form of an isolated gas vent or an entire gas field hundreds of feet in diameter.

Some of the larger geysers have depleted their gas stores, leaving sprawling caverns deep below the surface. What creatures inhabit these murky cavities is unknown, but extensive veins of raw diamond and underground lakes of crude petroleum draw prospectors from all over. Attempts at mining are fraught with peril, however, as the underground passages interconnect, comprising a vast network of tunnels, tubes, oil reservoirs, and gas chambers that permeate the entire shelf. If a combustive chain reaction were set off, it is unlikely that anything would survive.

**Rockfire (CR 6):** When the rare summer thunderstorm travels into the central areas of the Cinderlands, lightning can combust an entire gas field and set it ablaze, producing what is known as rockfire—large sheets of blue flame that





whoosh through gas fields in the blink of an eye. Any creature in a gas field set alight—either by lightning or open flame—takes 8d6 points of fire damage (DC 25 Reflex save for half).

## CLIMATOLOGY OF THE CINDERLANDS

The climate of the Cinderlands is hot and dry, seeing little in the way of moisture and precipitation. Although the environment meets the requirements for desert classification, it contains few of the geographical features often associated with deserts. Still, the stifling air of the plateau makes it one of the driest places on Golarion.

The Cinderlands boil during the summer and freeze during the winter, although the low precipitation (as little as 8 inches of rainfall per year) makes snow practically unheard of. Any serious study of the plateau shows its weather patterns to be unpredictable, and the only real constant is the drought brought on by rain shadows. Because mountain chains bound the Cinderlands on three sides, only the southern monsoon winds bring the Cinderlands any significant precipitation. Under these conditions, the vegetation becomes dry and brittle—perfect tinder for wildfires.

*This morning, we took turns counting lightning strikes, but we lost count around 50 or so. There are just too many to count effectively. Suffice to say, a good thunderstorm can produce strikes numbering in the hundreds. With all of this activity, it still doesn't seem to rain here. We see the dark clouds gathering in the mountains, and they produce fantastic lightning displays, but they never seem to progress down into the Cinderlands.*

—*The Cinderlands Expeditions*, Chapter 4: Gozreh's Wrath

## ECOLOGY OF THE CINDERLANDS

The Cinderlands contain hundreds of different species of animals and insects of all classifications, including numerous creatures not found anywhere else in Varisia. The harsh environment has forever left its mark on the organisms that live there, and many of its plants and animals have adapted to the hot and dry conditions in unique—and sometimes startling—fashions.

### Flora

The local flora must employ exceptional methods for gathering moisture and surviving the regular wildfires, giving rise to three major groupings of floras—water hoarders, drought tolerators, and fire adaptors.



Water hoarders are succulent plants capable of storing water during periods of rainfall that sustains them through droughts. They gather moisture via shallow roots and store water in membranes composed of expandable tissue, which swell noticeably when full. Since they are targets of thirsty animals, most hoarders have developed defense mechanisms, such as poisonous thorns, to keep potential water poachers at bay. Cacti comprise the majority of this group, although some bushes and trees can hoard water as well.

Drought tolerators have learned to use what water they need when it is available, and then enter dormant states during periods of drought. A resinous substance coats their seeds and washes off when it rains, allowing germination to occur only in the presence of water. To bear the lack of hydration, many have evolved small leaves that require little water, which they shed during periods of extreme drought. Common tolerators include bushes, scrub, and grass.

Fire adaptors have changed to survive fire through various techniques. The majority of them grow reserve buds and branches at root level, which burgeon after a fire has burned the plants' leaves. Some exotic plants display a trait known as fire-induced germination—the seeds remain dormant until the presence of heat opens the fire-resistant seedpods, allowing them to take over an area quickly after a fire has reduced the competition to fertile ash. The more ruthless adaptors even encourage fire by exuding flammable oil from their leaves. Fire adaptors contain all manner of flora, found in the hottest areas and those that sustain wildfires.

**Basilisk Barrel:** An 8-foot-tall barrel capable of storing 2 tons of water makes up the bulk of this purple-mottled cactus. Because the large amount of water it holds makes it a prime target, it has developed sensitive, bright red pods that cover its exterior. When disturbed, the pods discharge a cloud of paralytic droplets affecting a 10-foot area around the perimeter of the plant. Some of the more enterprising predators have learned to patrol these barrels, hoping to make an easy meal of any creature paralyzed by these dangerous cacti, and particularly deft shoanti sometimes harvest the pods for use in potions.

**Ember Poppy:** A waxy substance that reacts with combustion coats the seed banks of the ember poppy, and once a fire passes through an area it sprouts and germinates. Its seeds remain buried in the soil for years, awaiting the next fire.

**Flask Tree:** At first glance, flask trees appear to be dead, but upon closer inspection one learns that this is simply a surprisingly successful camouflage system—many creatures walk right past a substantial store of water thinking the trees to be just burnt chunks of wood. A flask tree gets its name from the shape of its trunk—enlarged at

## THE ANGEL OF STORMS

Windstorms are common during all seasons, but on hot days, whirlwinds have the potential to materialize from the overheated air above the ground. While these dust devils are typically only a few hundred feet high and move erratically, the more violent whirls can reach heights of several thousand feet. During particularly large wildfires, firestorms appear when warm updrafts coalesce into a vertical cone of rotating fire. Once this tornado-like phenomenon is born, it can travel on its own or move within the existing wildfire, making it that much more deadly.

These tornadoes are known collectively by the Shoanti as *Yayoncha*, the Angel of Storms, and are viewed with both fear and awe. Several stories in their oral tradition culminate in shamans calling *Yayoncha* from the brooding skies in order to tear through battlefields and scatter enemies.

its base from the water store giving it the appearance of a potion bottle.

**Galtroot Bush:** This short bush grows in red clay and often sheds its crimson leaves during drought periods to tolerate the loss of water. Containing a powerful narcotic, the galtroot has many uses, both medicinal and recreational. The Shoanti tribesmen mix the dried leaves with wood ash to create barbarian chew, which invigorates their warriors' ferociousness during battle.

**Lotra Tree:** These short trees have adapted tough, thick barks laced with oil that is resistant to fire. Younger trees burn in severe blazes, but the mature trees survive relatively unscathed, showing at most only bole scorching.

**Scrub:** This short, stunted vegetation grows in patches throughout the Cinderlands. While scrub refers primarily to dry, straggly weed, the term encompasses much of the vegetation, including trees and bushes.

*Devoid of foliage and permanently blackened by the barrage of flames, flask trees offer up one of the gloomiest sights in the Cinderlands. At dusk this evening, as we sat in hushed silence, their bloated, misshapen figures surrounded us on the orange-blasted horizon, creating an eerie landscape of squat, dejected husks reaching their withered branches toward the sky. We would have given the dismal trees a wide berth if it weren't for our always-resourceful Shoanti escort. To our astonishment, he pulled out a tap, promptly hammered it into the base of one of those charred stumps, and proceeded to fill 20 of our canteens.*

—*The Cinderlands Expeditions*,  
Chapter 5: Flowers in an Ashen Land

## Fauna

Many creatures in the Cinderlands have had to make special accommodations simply to survive. A mammal grows longer eyelashes than usual and has the ability



*For many years, we scholarly types assumed the crustaceous fossils found in the Cinderlands to be the remains of gigantic, prehistoric crabs. Nevertheless, as I sit here in the shadow of one of those half-buried colossal beasts, I fear I can no longer say with any certainty that these were sea creatures. Minch was the first to point it out, but it looks rather look like a giant insect. Yet if we were to propose that these remnants are, in fact, fossilized exoskeletons of some long-gone giant bug, we would be outright ridiculed.*

—*The Cinderlands Expeditions,*  
Chapter 6: Shadows of the Past

to close its nostrils—two traits that keep dust and ash out of its system. A predator lies in wait in a burn zone until the approaching wildfire drives fleeing prey into its hungry maw. An animal that is diurnal in most other environments becomes nocturnal to avoid the blistering winds and heat. The underlying theme is one of survival, and this mind-set radiates throughout the Cinderlands, from the massive storm roc to the lowly scrub rat.

**Akyrak:** These large arachnid predators have remarkable camouflage abilities—their quivering, translucent bodies blend in so well with the surrounding heat waves that they appear invisible to the naked eye. More akin to a scorpion than a spider, these creatures hunt large game.

**Ankheg:** This massive, burrowing insect thrives in the Cinderlands. Many ankheg burrows rest in areas that



regularly sustain wildfires, and these oversized, well-fed insects are surprisingly adept at darting out of the safety of their holes and snatching fire-fleeing prey.

**Aurochs:** These herd animals can reach weights of 2,600 pounds and heights of 80 inches at the shoulder. While the females have smaller horns, the horns of a bull can reach 2-1/2 feet in length and have ridges at their bases and edges, which they whet on large boulders until razor sharp.

When herding, female aurochs, their calves, and young males travel at the center, and the bulls patrol the perimeter. During the mating season, sparring matches erupt as the bulls contend for the females in heat. The males often hold their heads low and swing their massive horns from side to side while sizing up their competitors. These clashes, which involve head butting and rending, are vicious and sometimes fatal.

**Basilisk:** These reptiles cluster together in considerable numbers deep in the wind tunnels of the eastern badlands. Existing almost entirely on a diet of ash rock and minerals, the basilisks keep to themselves unless disturbed, which is a rare event.

**Bulette:** Found in the areas devoid of rock formations, bulettes keep to the hills for the most part and tunnel into the loose soil. These burrowing creatures sense minute vibrations in the ground and attack from below without warning, and travelers seeking to avoid their wide territories are advised to keep an eye out for their distinctive temporary dens, called drifts.

**Bush Tiger:** These powerful hyenas have oversized heads and necks and underdeveloped hindquarters that give them arched spines. Their front feet are larger than their back feet, making their tracks easily distinguishable. They are consummate scavengers and form ranging circles around feeding predators, waiting for the sated beasts to leave before moving in and taking over the carcass. Bush tigers have the ability to digest bones, giving them a source of marrow nutrients that other carnivores leave behind.

**Cindersnake:** This reddish-patterned snake is one of the deadliest in Varisia, and has little to fear from most other predators. It spends its hunting hours buried in the silt lying in wait, and holds the tip of its tail erect from its burrow to attract prey. Unlike other snakes, it stands its ground if a larger creature approaches it.

**Ember Scorpion:** The exoskeleton of an ember scorpion is composed of several layers—the soft epidermis, two chitinous layers (one flexible, one rigid), and a tough external layer coated with a waxy substance. They often hunt actively in the open in addition to the proven method of lying in wait. Ember scorpions display the bone-chilling trait of sucking all of the nutrients



and marrow from their kills, leaving behind only hollow bones and loose skins of internal organs, making them efficient scavengers as well as ruthless predators.

**Horned Spirestalker:** The scales of the giant geckos of the Cinderlands, the horned spirestalkers, display many grooves and channels that lead directly to the lizards' mouths. By passing through condensation-gathering vegetation, the spirestalkers are able to extract the necessary moisture for hydration. Many of these lizards dwell on crags and hoodoos, snatching prey from the rocky floor below. The rare black-scaled spirestalkers live in harmony in the wind tunnels alongside the basilisks, and blend in well with the basalt-tinted rock walls and formations found there. The basilisks ignore them, as the geckos keep the tunnels devoid of insects, small mammals, and other nuisances.

**Jewel Beetle:** A jewel beetle is an offshoot of the more common fire beetle but has adapted its receptor glands to detect infrared radiation produced by large fires. The annual mating migration occurs during the peak of summer when the chance of fire is at its greatest. Once the beetles locate a suitable heat source, a mating frenzy occurs within the flames. Afterwards, the females lay their eggs in the dead wood of the burnt trees and continue on their way. Since most of the consumers of beetles flee from wildfires, the eggs are safe from predation and, as a result, the jewel beetle population is high.

**Purple Worm:** These gargantuan worms live beneath the Cinderlands, feeding on the plentiful minerals and gems. While hundreds of these creatures exist below ground, only occasionally will one grub its way to the surface. Purple worms' diets consist of rocks and minerals, and they are especially fond of diamonds. Organic material is a delicacy—a purple worm sometimes surfaces to snack on large concentrations of living organisms such as an aurochs herd. The innards of a purple worm consist of a pharynx for pulling in food, an esophagus where the food travels to the gizzard that breaks it down, and sprawling intestines where digestion occurs.

**Ko-Minka:** These blink dogs rove the fringes of the badlands in wild packs. Other creatures in their domain have learned some of the meanings behind their barks—mostly predator warnings and yelps of impending bad weather. This symbiosis has served the Ko-Minkas well, for they understand that strength in numbers is a key to survival. They forage during the day, rooting for insects and lizards, using their large ears to locate underground vibrations and movement.

**Redback Rattlesnake:** Most active in the morning when temperatures are at their lowest, the redback spends the hottest part of the day underground in its burrow or hidden away within deep scrub. During the winter, when temperatures are lower, the redback hunts actively during the daytime.

## CINDERLANDS CREATURES

The Cinderlands are home to a wide variety of creatures, many unique to the region. Listed below are the game statistics and sources for use in constructing encounters with species not listed in the MM or presented here under an alternate name.

*Akyrak:* See page 80

*Aurochs:* Advanced 7 HD bison

*Bush Tiger:* Advanced 5 HD hyena

*Cindersnake:* Tiny viper

*Ember Scorpion:* Large monstrous scorpion

*Horned Spirestalker:* Giant gecko, see *Pathfinder* #1

*Jewel Beetle:* Giant fire beetle with immunity to fire, and only glows within 1 mile of a substantial heat source

*Ko-Minka:* Blink dog

*Redback Rattlesnake:* Large viper

*Scrub Rat:* Badger

*Storm Roc:* Roc

*Tube Centipede:* Medium monstrous centipede

**Scrub Rat:** These rats live in almost any terrain that displays loose scrub covering. Building extensive underground warrens just beneath the ground, large colonies congregate together for mutual protection. Scrub rats are a constant feature of the terrain, and provide a steady food supply for many of its predators.

**Storm Roc:** Invading the lowlands from their mighty nests high up in the Wyvern Mountains, these birds of prey sit unchallenged at the apex of the food chain. Storm rocs have compact bodies with short but extremely strong necks. Short legs with long toes and sharp claws allow them to grasp creatures of substantial size. The full-grown storm rocs hunt the aurochs herds, and often drive them to panic and stampedes.

**Tube Centipede:** These curiosities use the red clay common to their environment to construct hollow tubes that rise above ground level, serving as entrances to their underground tunnels. Centipede tubes often cluster together with various diameters and heights, and winds blown across their jagged tops produce a ghastly, dissonant screech that carries for miles. This cacophony achieves two goals—it warns predators away and attracts the jewel beetles that are a staple of the centipedes' diet. Any slight variation in the vibrations of the tubes alerts the centipedes to the presence of potential prey.

**Wyvern:** Occasionally flights of wyverns make their way down from the mountain range that bears their name to hunt aurochs. Amazingly, these lizards successfully compete with the storm rocs over the same hunting grounds, and conflicts between the two groups often arise.