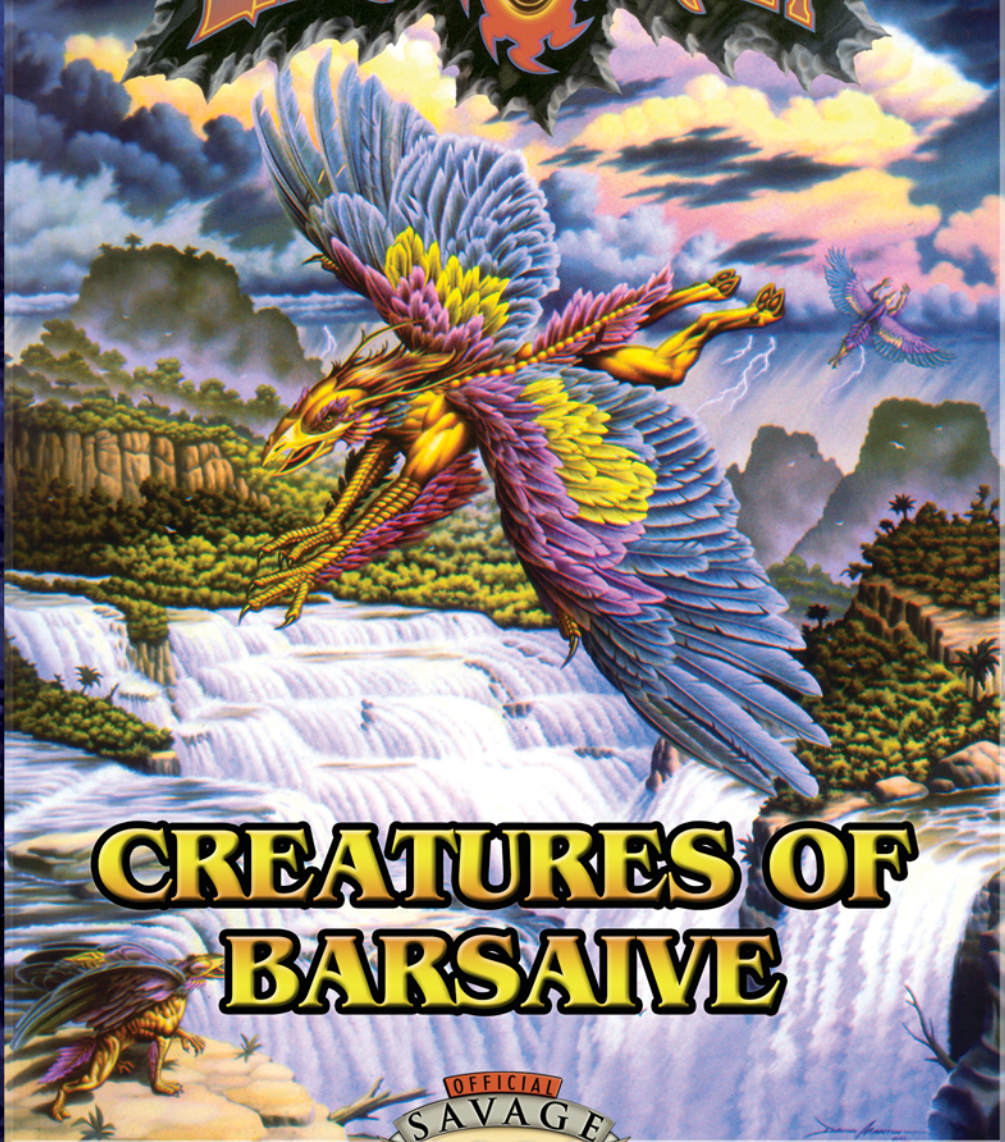


EARTHDOWN



CREATURES OF BARSALVE

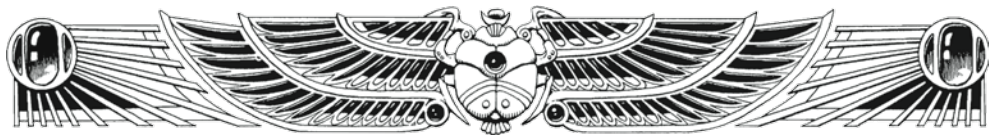




CREATURES OF BARSADIVE



EARTHDAWN SAVAGE WORLDS EDITION SOURCEBOOK



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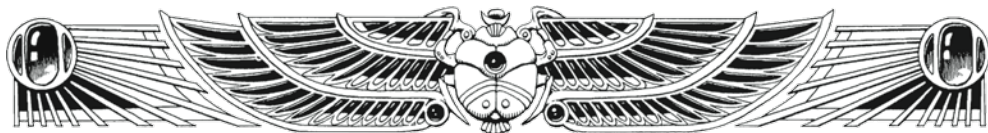
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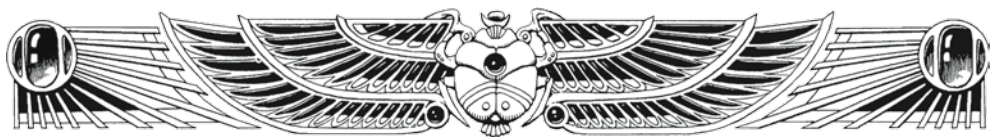




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CHAPTER 1: PREFACE

The following text is transcribed from the speaking of Vasdenjas, a most noble and intelligent dragon. I have written down his words almost without alteration, adding my own comments and clarifications only as appropriate. In the immense bestiary described in this volume, the dragon included certain creatures that I might have left out as inconsequential, had I been the sole author; I did not feel inclined, however, to question the judgment of so powerful a patron and so have written of every creature about which he spoke. For ease of use, I have organized the creatures into alphabetical order; Vasdenjas, however, spoke of them as he happened to think of them. I have left his words virtually untouched by the editor's pen, as I found his rambling style of speaking most entertaining.

—By the Hand of Tiabdjin the Knower, Scribe of the Great
Library of Throal and First Scholar of the Khavro'am

To the small folk of Barsaive, Vasdenjas the Master of Secrets extends most cordial greetings. (For those who recognize my Name, yes, I am that Vasdenjas, the one called the Terrible. I would remind you, however, that the cattle farmers on the great Scythan plains first called me that in their anger over losing their herds to my appetite—as if a dragon has not as much right to eat as any other Namegiver! As for the name Eater of Cities, that label is completely unjustified. I have eaten but one city in all my centuries of existence.)

I have read a certain book, titled *An Explorer's Guide to Barsaive*, which claims to accurately describe the wonders and perils of Barsaive for the edification of travelers and adventurers. It is my sad duty to inform its authors that their opus is riddled with grievous errors and woeful inaccuracies, more than a few of which might cost you weaker folk to lose life or limb. (Shocking, it is, how little you know of the creatures with whom you share breathing space. But then, how much might one really expect mere dwarfs to know? I should not blame you too much for your lapses, I suppose... after all, your small brains cannot hold much information... You're scowling, Tiabdjin. Is the smell of the fresh meat bothering you again? No? [Here Vasdenjas paused.] Oh, dear. I am sorry... I did not mean to speak slightly of your people. Why, some

of my dearest friends have been dwarfs. Indeed, the dwarf race does very well within its limitations... oh, please. Don't look like that. I really am sorry. Shall we continue with the preface?)

For any adventurer who wishes to preserve a whole skin (or for any Namegiver with anything like decent curiosity), consider this volume my gift. It contains several centuries' worth of my own vast, personal knowledge of the flora and fauna of Barsaive and beyond, most ably transcribed by the excellent scholar, Tiabdjin the Knower.

I consider myself reasonably well read, and my travels have given me knowledge of many things, but upon meeting Vasdenjas in his mountain lair I felt nearer to being an unschooled child again than I have in many years. The dragon later told me that his reptilian peers consider him small and weak by comparison with them, but he remains the largest and most terrifying being I have ever laid eyes on. Were it not for my desperate desire to glimpse the famed Unwinding the Mysteries of Mana—the dragon had induced me to come by sending me a page from that long-lost magical tome—I would no doubt have run screaming for my life back down the rocky slopes of Wyrmspire. As it was, only Vasdenjas' ample store of elven brandy gave me sufficient calm to speak coherently to him rather than to simply stand before him and shake.





CHAPTER 1: PREFACE

Master Tiabdjinn has served well as my scribe for the past three years, and I feel certain that this volume will contain few (if any) inaccuracies. As a token of my benevolent feelings for you, my smaller cousins, I bequeath these writings to the Great Library of Throal with only the following stipulation: that my Name and proper title, Master of Secrets, appear on the front of the bound volume. I should like them to be at least a hand's breadth high, worked in gold leaf

and outlined in copper gilt...well embellished, too, befitting such a princely present as my accumulated wisdom.

I shall trust those at the Great Library to choose the artisan...I am digressing again, aren't I? I can tell by the look on your face, Tiabdjinn. It seems I learn as swiftly as ever. My fellow dragons all know I can out-think them. Jealous, that's what they are...[Here Vasdenjas cleared his throat—sounding very much like a thunderstorm—and, with a somewhat abashed look, proceeded.]

This volume includes my discourses on many of the immense variety of creatures I have encountered, from the present day all the way back to the distant time when little magic existed in this world. (Skeptical Tiabdjinn—you don't believe me when I tell you that once upon a time no magic existed in the world. It is true, nonetheless.) I have observed many areas of Barsaive that to you small folk remain unexplored wilds, and so this volume contains valuable information on creatures you might expect to meet in less civilized regions. Because I wish this book to be of specific use to Barsaive's bold explorers and travelers, rather than of interest only to students of natural history, almost all of the creatures I describe are the extremely dangerous species of our land. Wise readers may learn how to avoid these hazards when they can—and how to fight them off only if they must.

I include one last reminder to the prospective traveler or the would-be adventurer in the grip of wanderlust. Even I, with my enormous strength and formidable powers, treat many of these creatures with a healthy respect. If a dragon gives these beasts a wide berth, then certainly so should you weak and fragile denizens of this land.

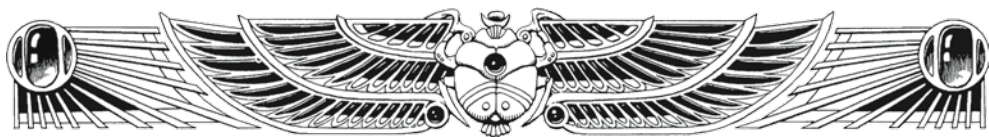
Most people of my acquaintance react badly to dragons—those who do not fear them dislike them because they often seem arrogant. As a counter to the unpleasant view of dragons espoused by so many of my fellow Namegivers, I relate my own experiences with Vasdenjas, whom I found most cordial and friendly (if a bit lacking in insight as to the needs of Namegivers other than himself).

As soon as I arrived in the vast cave that was his lair, he offered me fine elven brandy to put me at my ease. After I had drunk a flagon and a half (the first downed in as close to a single gulp as elven liquor will permit, the second sipped with greater appreciation), Vasdenjas sociably joined me in a light repast consisting of several sheep as he told me his purpose in bringing me to Wyrmspire. He was so kind as to roast with his own breath the bits of mutton he offered me—his own portion he devoured raw, after killing the unfortunate snack with a single blow of his talons. I admit I found the bleating of the frightened sheep unnerving, but Vasdenjas no sooner noticed this than he magnanimously killed the rest of his meal at once. As most dragons prefer their meat as freshly killed as possible, it was most civil of him not to insist on slaughtering each sheep as he ate it.

He also exerted himself to provide me with accommodations to my liking, shaping a dwarf-sized bed from a pile of gold coins. It is true that cold metal is not the most comfortable substance on which to sleep, particularly when strewn with precious gemstones (which the dragon had intended as a special nicety), but my host meant so well by his efforts that I had not the heart to correct him.

He did notice, after several hours of our discourse, that I was turning blue with cold, and inquired delicately as to how he might ease my discomfort. When I suggested a blanket, he took up an uneaten sheep carcass, stripped it of its skin with a single stroke, and most politely blew hot breath on it to cure it before handing it to me. It stank dreadfully, but Vasdenjas was so clearly delighted with his contribution to my comfort that I accepted his offering with as little distaste as I could manage.

Within the limits of his understanding—surely similar to our own—Vasdenjas behaved in a manner hospitable enough to be worthy of a dwarf.



BASILISK

The basilisk is an annoying creature, able to do damage far out of proportion to its size. An ugly thing, it looks like a cross between a garden snake and a lizard no bigger than my forearm.

A more specific description of its size might be helpful to readers.

More specific? I know exactly how long my forearm is... ah, I take your point.

A basilisk grows about four feet long. Drab-looking things, they're usually grayish or brown, with no distinguishing features save for a gray, roosterlike comb atop their heads. Some scholars claim the basilisk resembles the cockatrice—don't believe them. A basilisk no more looks like a cockatrice than I look like a basilisk. All right, it looks a bit like a cockatrice, but not much. Some folk also think basilisks and dragons are kin, though I can't imagine why. As if such magnificent beings as dragons could have anything in common with dull little lizards! Of course, that's not to say they're beneath notice. Quite the contrary. Basilisks may be drab, but they are quite dangerous (even to dragons!).

Did I say the basilisk has only one distinguishing feature? It has two: the comb and its beady eyes. The eyes glow with a fierce white light, which might save a lucky adventurer from destruction if he spots the glow and has the sense to run. He had best run fast, however; the glow is only visible at night, and after dark a basilisk can kill almost any creature with one glance. During the day, sunlight obscures the basilisk's eyelight. It can still kill you, but only if you're standing close to it. The knowledgeable woodsman has a slim chance of turning the basilisk's power against it. Like its hapless victims, the creature cannot withstand its own sight. If you can reflect a basilisk's eyelight back at it, the nasty beast will die. To perform such a feat and stay alive is no simple task, but I have known those who managed.

I have heard tales of adventurers who met a basilisk; most died before they realized what was killing them. The only device that I have ever heard of being used successfully against one was an elaborate set of mirrors placed in the path of a hunting basilisk by a brave—or foolhardy—adventurer.

The basilisk hunts by night, crawling out of its cave at twilight. (This habit proves they are not dragonkin—dragons hunt whenever we please!) At twilight they are most dangerous, driven to

hunt by ravenous hunger. Travelers in the northern regions of Barsaive, where night falls earlier and lasts longer, should take the greatest care not to become a meal for one of these loathsome pests.

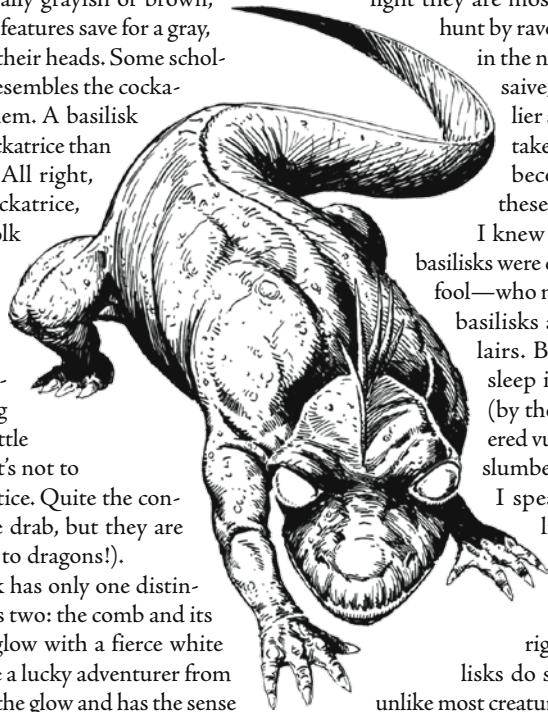
I knew a man once—thought basilisks were close kin to my kind, the fool—who mistakenly believed that basilisks are vulnerable in their lairs. Because many dragons sleep in our lairs, and might (by the foolhardy) be considered vulnerable to attack when slumbering, the fool of whom

I speak thought that basilisks also slept in their lairs and believed he might more easily kill a sleeping one. He was

right in one thing—basilisks do sleep in their lairs. But

unlike most creatures, they sleep with their eyes open, lighting up the small caves as if with a hundred candles. My acquaintance, upon entering the beast's lair, met the full glare of its eyes and... [Here Vasdenjas made a gesture that I interpreted as the dragon equivalent of a shrug.]

Because of its powerful killing glare, the basilisk rarely needs to fight its enemies and so often travels into dangerous places in search of food. If the basilisk runs into anything hostile, it tries to kill its opponent—and it usually succeeds. If it cannot kill its opponent—because the sunlight is strong enough to mask its glare or the opponent



CHAPTER 2: CREATURES

is magically protected, for example—the basilisk flees. If cornered, it bites.

As is true with all magical creatures, some folk try to use these beasts' innate powers for their own ends. I question the intelligence of such attempts with regard to the basilisk. No Wizard I have ever known—and I have known many quite powerful Wizards—has harnessed the basilisk's magic. Legends abound of foolish magicians who tried and died for their efforts. To any reader stupid enough to try such a stunt, I give the following advice: find somewhere secluded for your idiotic experiment so you won't kill anyone except yourself.

For many centuries, magicians and scholars puzzled over how Barsaivian basilisks reproduce. A creature that kills anything it looks at can hardly be expected to mate in any usual way and would most likely kill any little basilisks it managed to spawn. I have discovered the answer to this puzzle; the basilisk does not mate, but splits. Every so often in a basilisk's life, its tail begins to grow thicker and takes on the appearance of a second head. After several weeks, both heads look exactly the same, and the creature splits in half. The two halves begin to grow new tails, and within days there are two basilisks instead of one.

I can't think of anything more about these creatures that might be of interest to Namegivers, except

that when roasted they taste like chicken. I have never eaten one raw—the only way to eat a basilisk without risking dying in the process of catching it is to flame it to death. I prefer my meat raw and so rarely dine on basilisk, though anything will do if I'm hungry enough. (Don't look like that, Tia-bdjin—I've never yet eaten a guest, and I have no intention of starting with you!)

BASILISK

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Special Abilities

• **Armor +2:** Thick skin.

• **Claws/Bite:** Str + d6.

• **Deadly Gaze:** The basilisk can send out a deadly gaze of light from its eyes using the standard cone template. Every target within this cone must make an Agility roll at a -2 penalty or suffer 2d6 damage. In Dim lighting, this damage increases to 2d8. In Dark lighting, this damage increases to 2d10.

ADVENTURE SEED

A powerful magician wishes to study the basilisk's killing glare in hopes of devising a spell to produce a similar effect. He needs a live basilisk for his experiments, and hires the characters for the difficult task of capturing one.

CHANGELING

As far as I know—and my knowledge encompasses almost every spot in Barsaive—this tragic creature lives only in the Scythia Mountains near the eastern edge of the Blood Wood. I have heard rumors of at least two other places where they have appeared but do not know for certain if the rumors are true. The rumors come from elves, who are overly prone to waking nightmares and poetic exaggerations. Elves are such daydreamers... a most troublesome foible in my opinion—

Master Vasdenjas—you were speaking about changelings?

Of course. A small forest village full of Horrortainted windlings, called changelings by those few who have encountered them and survived, exists in that region, and I have heard that the village is growing more swiftly than is natural. As they seem

corrupted beyond all hope of redemption and crave the pain and terror of others as much as does their Horror master, such a development bodes ill for that part of Barsaive, particularly for the Blood Wood. Thus far, however, Queen Alachia seems too proud to ask for help in eradicating the creatures. I call the changelings tragic because they once were Namegivers, and it is terrible to see any of my cousins—even the smallest and least regarded—reduced to such a state. I believe the changelings' village was once a windling kaer whose inhabitants succumbed to the Horrors; their corruption wrought dreadful changes in these poor creatures.

Changelings are the same size as windlings, but with a terribly distorted shape. Their faces are bulbous and hairless, their teeth elongated, and their hands tipped with nails so long and wicked that



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they look more like claws. Their legs have joined to become an armored, wormlike tail. Once-healthy flesh is tinted a murky blue, the color you weaker folk tend to turn when you become corpses. Only their thin, fragile wings remain the same.

The Horrors granted the changelings a terrible ability, one that even I fear (with reason). They have the power to reshape living bones from a distance. From all I have heard, a single changeling cannot shape anything much larger than a finger bone; several together, however, can reshape the limbs of you small folk with ease. The pain of it could make an obsidiman shriek, and only the most powerful of magicians can restore a reshaped limb to some measure of usefulness. No one can restore it to its former state. If you fall afoul of changelings, kill them or flee as quickly as you can.

I have learned from one survivor that the changelings have lined the inside of their kaer with the bones of living beings, twisted into eerily beautiful shapes. (It seems not even the taint of the Horrors could rob them of their artistic gifts.) These sculptures are extremely rare (for obvious reasons), and certain collectors pay immense sums for them. The dazzling profit to be made continues to lure the foolhardy, desperate, or simply greedy adventurer to dare the perils of the changeling's kaer, despite the fact that few ever return.

A fragmentary account of these creatures in the Great Library says that the bones also strengthen the kaer walls and serve as a powerful defense against intruders. At a changeling's command, the bones turn into wicked spikes, making it almost impossible to enter without getting cut to ribbons. The veracity of this account is yet to be ascertained.

CHANGELING

Attributes: Agility d12+1, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d12, Stealth d12, Survival d10

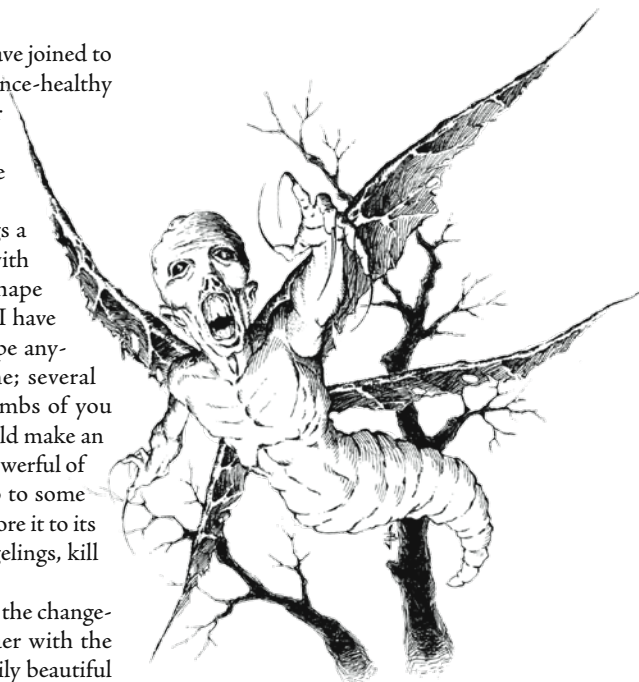
Charisma: —; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 4

Gear: Bone Dagger

Special Abilities

• **Bone Dagger:** Str+d8.

• **Bone Shape:** Changelings may use dark powers to shape bones up to 10' away. Reshaping one limb takes



5 rounds. Once a round during each of the five rounds, the target must succeed at an opposed Spirit roll. If the target fails, the targeted limb becomes completely useless until somehow healed with magic (gaining the One Arm or Lane hindrances, at the Game Master's discretion, stacking with each failed roll).

Feed on Fear: Changelings feed on their victims' fear. Every time a target is damaged by a changeling, the creature must succeed at a Spirit roll. If it succeeds, it does not feel enough fear and the changeling switches targets the following round, if one is available. If not, the changeling continues to attack.

• **Flight:** Changelings have a flying pace of 6".

• **Forehead Fold:** Once per day, a changeling may target any living creature within 6' with a skull and attempt to fold it backward into its brain. The target must succeed at a Vigor roll at a -4 penalty or suffer 2d10 damage. No armor protects against this damage.

ADVENTURE SEED

A rich aristocrat with an extensive collection of unusual and beautiful artifacts learns of the changeling kaer's existence. He hires the characters to get a few bone sculptures for him, promising them wealth beyond their wildest dreams on their return.

CHAPTER 2: CREATURES

CHIMERA

Chimeras are among the most amazingly stupid creatures, which is fortunate, because otherwise they could probably lay waste to most of Barsaive unopposed. Lacking even the intelligence of a sea sponge, chimeras are still powerful enough to pose some slight danger to dragons—how much more threatening they must seem to softer and weaker folk, I can only imagine.

Many different kinds of chimeras exist, though all share certain similar features. They are large creatures, often standing taller than eight feet at the shoulder. They all possess a lion's body and head, and also two extra heads that sprout from the base of the neck. Finally, every chimera has leathery, bat-like wings that enable them to fly, though far more clumsily than even the newest-hatched dragons.

Where chimeras differ is in the two extra heads. The commonest chimera has a serpent's and a goat's head to either side of its lion head, but I have seen far stranger assortments: a lion, a frog, and a goat;

a lion, a rat, and a hound; and so on. The chimera's extra heads determine its powers to an extent, though not every chimera with the same three heads has exactly the same abilities. I have known chimeras to breathe fire, sense astral creatures, and inspire mortal terror in those who see them, to name just a few of the powers of this beast.

What kind of chimera breathes fire, oh Master of Secrets?

[After a long pause, during which ensued much coughing and throat clearing] Er... well... a dragon-headed one.

Can a chimera kill a dragon?!

Chimeras. Plural. I don't want to talk about it.

Could you perhaps explain—if you know, that is—how the variation in heads occurs?

Of course I know! Am I not Master of Secrets?! Chimeras mate every three years.

The male chimeras hunt various animals, attempting to find and slay the most powerful foes in hopes of impressing the females.

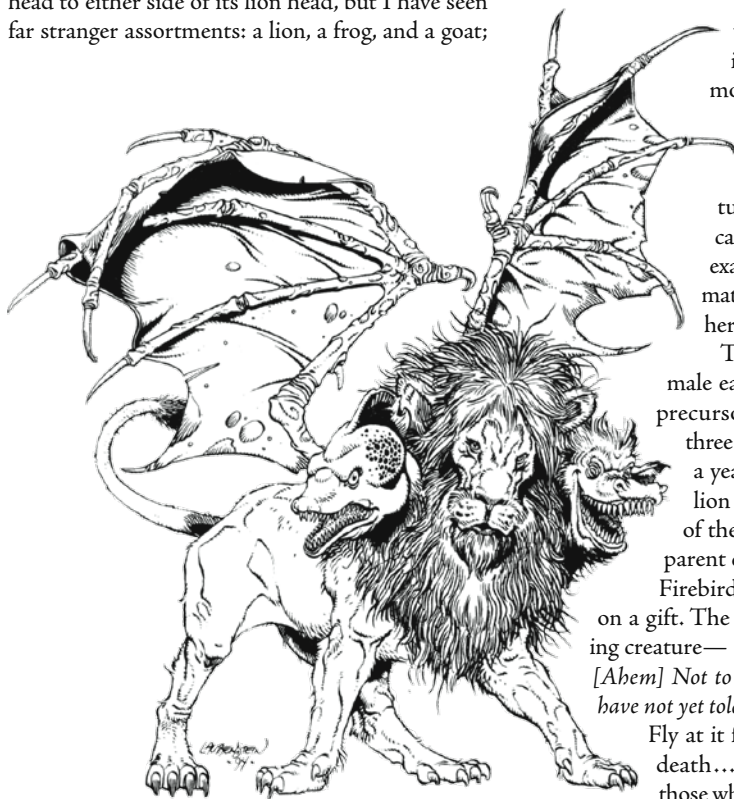
After each male has caught two such creatures, he presents their carcasses to a female as a gift. She examines them and chooses her mate based on who has brought her the strongest beasts.

The female and her chosen mate each eat one of the gifts as a precursor to mating. The litter of three to five infant chimeras, born a year later, all have the middle lion head flanked by the heads of the two creatures eaten by the parent chimeras.

Firebirds also choose mates based on a gift. The firebird is a most fascinating creature—

[Ahem] Not to interrupt, noble sir, but you have not yet told me how to battle a chimera.

Fly at it from behind and char it to death... ah, sorry. Fortunately for those who must fight them, chimeras





can be fooled with simple tricks. They make particularly easy targets for Wizards, who can control their tiny minds with little effort. I have known several Wizards, in fact, who used chimeras to guard kaers. Of course, the stupid creatures don't follow orders terribly well and so are almost impossible to train. Despite this (to my mind) overwhelming disadvantage, many Wizards are still willing to pay amazingly high prices for newborn chimera cubs. I regard chimera cubs as fit only for food; the young ones taste amazingly like chicken, no matter what assortment of heads they're sporting.

CHIMERA

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Varies by head—refer to the table below.
- **Claw:** Str+d6.
- **Flight:** Chimeras have a Flying Pace of 6".
- **Improved Frenzy:** Chimeras may make three Fighting attacks each action at no penalty—one for each head (see the table below).
- **Low Light Vision:** Chimeras ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Pounce:** Chimeras often pounce on their prey to best bring their mass and claws to bear. It can leap 1d6" to gain +4 to its attack and damage. Its Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action when performing the maneuver however.
- **Size +2:** Chimeras can weigh over 600 pounds.
- **Twin Attack:** A chimera may attack with both its claw and bite in the same round with no multi-action penalty.

A chimera has two random heads flanking its center lion head. A list of example heads and their abilities can be found below:

Roll	Animal Head	Abilities
1–2	Dog	Bite: Str+d8.

Go for the Throat: With a raise on its attack roll, the dog head hits the target's most weakly armored location.

3–4	Rat	Bite: Str+d4.
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Disease: Any creature bit by the rat head must succeed at a Vigor roll or suffer from a short term debilitating disease.

5–6	Serpent	Bite: Str+d4.
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Poison: Any creature bit by the serpent head must succeed at a Vigor roll or suffer from a lethal poison.

7–8	Frog	
-----	------	--

Grapple Tongue: The frog head can flick out its tongue at any target within 2", starting a grapple.

9–10	Dragon	Bite: Str+d6.
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Fiery Breath: The dragon head may breathe fire in a standard cone template. Every target within this cone may make an Agility roll at -1 to avoid the attack. Those who fail suffer 2d8 damage and must check to see if they catch fire. The dragon head may not attack with its claws or bite in the round it breathes fire.

ADVENTURE SEED

Five or more years ago, a famous band of adventurers discovered a kaer thought to be destroyed during the Scourge. By magical means, they informed the king of Throal of their discovery, but disappeared shortly afterward. The king hires the characters to discover the fate of the vanished adventurers and, if possible, to rediscover and explore the kaer. Unknown to the characters, the adventurers died fighting a chimera, who brought them to a female as mating gifts. The resulting litter of five all have two human heads and an assortment of powers appropriate to the devoured adventurers. All five still live near the kaer, and one has its nest inside the kaer's entrance.

COCKATRICE

This large earthbound bird appears to be half rooster, half lizard, and bears a passing resemblance to the basilisk (though really only passing).

Usually six feet tall and six feet long, the cockatrice is covered with many-hued feathers, except for its bare legs and tail. The feathers are anything but the soft, silky down to which most Namegivers are accustomed; they are rough enough to draw blood from a human's, elf's, or dwarf's fragile skin.

A cockatrice's short, stubby wings are useless for flying, but can help the creatures double or even triple the distance they can jump.

Unlike the basilisk, which looks most like a lizard, the cockatrice shows much more of the bird in its appearance. The rooster's comb atop the cockatrice's head leads the gullible to suppose it akin to the basilisk, which it is not. A cockatrice's mouth is a perfect blending of a chicken's beak and a lizard's



CHAPTER 2: CREATURES

jaws, and though its legs look like a lizard's, the knee joint bends backward like a bird's. The cockatrice's only feature that I would call solely reptilian is its snake-like tail. Often, the tail is half the length of the entire creature.

A solitary, silent, and deadly hunter, the cockatrice gathers in packs only during mating season. It hunts by charging its victims and leaping on them, carefully placing its lizard feet to make no sound that might alert its prey. It can leap amazing distances, sometimes hurtling more than 30 feet through the air and landing on its victim's back, biting and clawing.

It also has one last trick that soft-skinned folk should beware above all others: tiny hooked barbs all over its tail—each no longer than your smallest finger, Tiabdjinn—that pierce the victim's skin and inject a paralytic poison. When the cockatrice strikes or even lightly brushes a victim with its tail, the tiny hooks dig into the skin and break free from the creature. Unless the victim has the constitution of a... well, a dragon... the paralytic poison will immobilize him and leave him entirely at the mercy of the cockatrice.

Wickedly sharp, almost as sharp as my talons, the barbs can easily cut through thick clothing. These hooks grow so fast that if a cockatrice cannot leave them in some hapless foe's hide, it must scrape its tail against a tree or rock every two days or so to remove them and give fresh barbs ample room to emerge.

What about armor, noble sir? For example [here I pointed to a gilded breastplate inset with rubies, clearly of dwarf make]... surely the thing's barbs cannot cut through this. But can they pierce lighter sorts of armor, such as padded leather or cloth?

Cloth armor would give you no protection. I once saw an elf hero wearing padded cloth armor die from a cockatrice's poison. He gave the creature quite a fight, though.

Though deadly, cockatrices fight like cowards, which is why I despise them. They often take on



creatures far larger than themselves, but they always attack from behind. If you meet one head on, it will do everything it can to get behind you; once you turn your back to it, the cockatrice will leap at you and slash your back to ribbons.

The cockatrice prefers wide plains such as those near Parlainth and Iopos, but I have seen the little pests in the Badlands near Travar and even here on Wyrmspire. I find them great fun to toy with. I fool them into thinking I have turned my back, and then swiftly whip my head around to face them. I know of few more comical sights than a leaping cockatrice attempting to halt in midair, clawing and flapping madly. Of course, my thick hide protects me from the paralytic poison. You thin-skinned folk have no such luck.

COCKATRICE

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities

• **Claws/Bite:** Str+d6.

• **Paralysis:** Any creature damaged by a cockatrice's barbed tail must succeed at a Vigor roll or suffer from a paralysis poison.

• **Pounce:** The cockatrice can leap d4" to gain +2 to its attack and damage. Its Parry is reduced by -1 until its next action when performing this maneuver, however.

• **Tail:** Str+d4.

ADVENTURE SEED

According to Theran and Barsaivian alchemists, a cockatrice's blood can help to remove a Horror mark. A government official who recently suffered an unfortunate encounter with a Horror hires the characters to bring him a live cockatrice so that he can use its fresh blood to remove the Horror's taint.

CAVE CRAB

The cave crab lives in the Delaris Mountains, and so it seems likely that very few readers of this volume will ever encounter one. The Delaris Mountains ring the southern region of the terrible and corrupted Wastes, a dreadful place that only the mad or the desperate among you weaker folk will ever visit. The mountains themselves are as beautiful as the Wastes are blighted, and so make a fit habitat for the delicacy known as the cave crab. It has other names as well—the demon crab and “the mock-Horror”—but I prefer to call it dinner.

The cave crab is a risky meal to capture, of course. I bear many a scar from the crab's wicked claws—see, this mark at the base of my left wing, and this nasty discoloration on my claw, and this small scar on my belly (that was a close call, indeed)—just imagine what the creature might do to you little folk! I assure you, however, that the reward is worth the danger. [Here I heard a noise like an avalanche, which I later realized was Vasdenja's stomach rumbling.]

Excuse me for a moment, Tiabdjinn...

The dragon's eyes glazed over, and without a word he slid out of the cave and took wing. An hour later, he returned with a huge blackened and charred crab in his talons. A gash on one of Vasdenja's forelegs bled profusely, but he seemed not to notice. He dropped the carcass on the cave floor and tore off a large chunk of its white flesh, sighing with pleasure as he chewed. I received the distinct impression that if he had been alone, my host would have gulped down the huge crab in a few bites, then slept for a prodigious length of time.

As he dined on the crab—dribbling bits of meat from the corners of his mouth—he invited me to try some by offering a piece the size of my hand on the end of one claw. I expressed my preference for tearing off my own chunk as politely as possible. It was tasty enough,

though it did not send me reeling to the Passions as it clearly did my companion.

Unlike its ocean-born brethren, the cave crab possesses four legs and two pincers instead of six legs and pincers. A thick armored shell encases its entire boneless body, including its unnaturally slim legs. The shell is as strong as iron and as light as wood—almost impossible to pierce.

Would the shell of a cave crab make a good suit of armor?

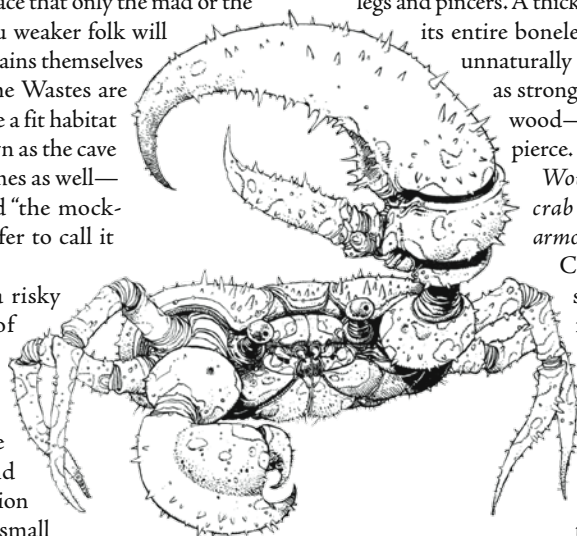
Certainly not. Far too small... but I am forgetting my audience again. I suppose it might, though I can't see how anyone would shape it.

The crab's horrible pincers, each more than four feet long, are strong and sharp enough to slice a thick tree trunk or any nearby obsidiman neatly in half. The underside of each claw is sharp also, enabling the crab to slash at its opponent or close its great pincers on a convenient limb. The crab lives in the many caves throughout the Delaris peaks, where it can hide in the cool shade during the day. It leaves the cave at night to hunt. I have seen these creatures eat everything from tree branches to horses to people.

Cave crabs are most easily hunted during the day, when the heat of the sun makes them sluggish. Once you find a cave in which you believe a crab dwells, breathe a mighty gout of flame into the crevice. The intense heat will weaken and confuse it—

Forgive my interruption, but we other Namegivers cannot breathe fire. Can you suggest some more practical method of killing a cave crab?

If you possessed the foresight to include among your number a powerful spellthrower, you might defeat it and roast it in the same instant, as I do. I suppose you also might lie in ambush outside its cave and leap on it when it tries to escape. Yes, that would work splendidly—as long as there were a number of



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you—but you must keep clear of those claws. One slash can disembowel a dragon. I shudder to think what might happen to a more delicate body

CAVE CRAB

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Swimming d10

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (4)

Special Abilities

• **Armor +4:** Shell.

• **Claws:** Str+d8.

• **Size +2:** Large body with long legs.

• **Grapple:** Any creature successfully grappled by a cave crab automatically suffers Str+d8 damage each round.

ADVENTURE SEED

An elfen gentleman approaches the characters in Bartertown and hires them for a hunting expedition. Too late to back out of the agreement, they discover that the elf is really a drake-servant of the great dragon Icewing, who has a hankering for the taste of fresh cave crab but doesn't want to risk killing it himself.

DEATH MOTH

This repulsive insect, called the nocturnal head-hunter by scholars who lack poetry in their souls, looks deceptively harmless. It greatly resembles a moon moth, growing to a length of two feet or so with a wingspan of five feet and even possessing similar coloring. Most death moths are dark blue to dull black, though a few folk have told me of lilac-colored ones in parts of Barsaive far from Wyrmspire.

Like the moon moth, the death moth has six legs that end in hooked claws and two sets of wings, the first set of which serve as protection for its cobweb-thin flying wings. The moon moth, of course, is a harmless flying nuisance. The death moth can kill.

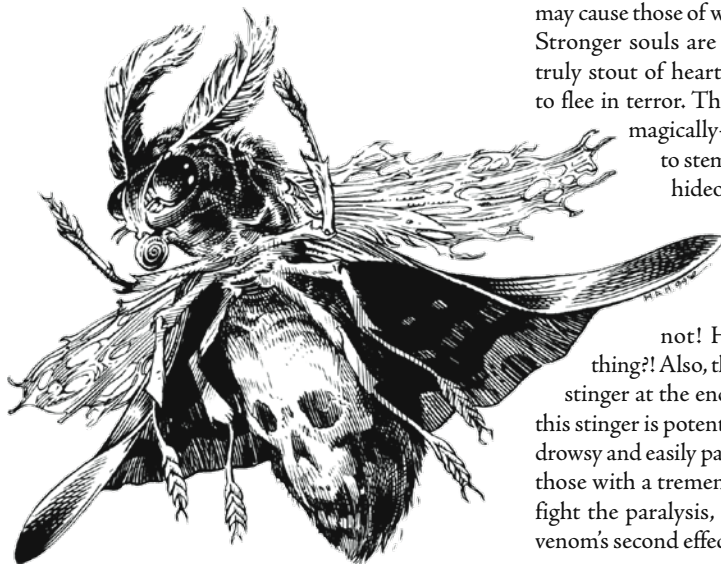
Only by turning one of these disgusting insects over can you see the difference between the death moth and the moon moth. A horrible, leering face peers up from the death moth's underbelly, as if a Horror had tattooed its image on the moth's underside. Those who look closely might be able to tell that this image is natural coloring—but most people who encounter the things are far too terrified to inspect them. From any distance greater than a few feet away, the death moth looks like the bodiless head of a madman floating through the air—a sight to send even the boldest adventurer into screaming fits.

Indeed, seeing the death moth's terrible markings may cause those of weak constitution to die of fright. Stronger souls are paralyzed with fear. Only the truly stout of heart can actually summon the will to flee in terror. The death moth inspires this fear magically—it is far too intense a feeling to stem from mere shock at the insect's hideous appearance.

You speak as if from personal experience. Has a death moth ever frightened you?

Me?! What nonsense! Certainly

not! How dare you suggest such a thing?! Also, the death moth has a long barbed stinger at the end of its belly. The venom inside this stinger is potent enough to make a large dragon drowsy and easily paralyzes any smaller victim. Only those with a tremendously strong constitution can fight the paralysis, and even they succumb to the venom's second effect. The poison makes the victim





forget the past four hours of his life, including encountering the moth.

The death moth attacks other living things because it must lay its eggs in a living host. The eggs live in the venom and enter the host when he or she or it is stung. (The death moth prefers large animals such as cattle or horses, but willingly uses Namegivers.) It most often stings its victims in the shoulders and back, laying its eggs in the muscles. Within little more than two weeks, the infesting larvae completely consume their host's internal organs. (I have heard that the feasting of the infant insects causes agonizing pain.)

Once the insects reach a length of six inches, they eat their way out of the host's body in search of a nearby tree or house to climb, in whose branches or eaves they cocoon. Upon leaving the cocoon as adult death moths, they must mate and find a host for their eggs within two weeks, then they die.

I have treated a few poor sufferers infected with death moth larvae. The initial diagnosis is particularly difficult to make, because the victim does not remember the moth's attack and so does not mention it. Many diseases mimic the pain caused by the feeding insects, and so even a skilled physician may fail to think of death moth infestation as a possible cause. Many treatments for infestation exist, so many, in fact, that I have no room to list them here. Interested readers should consult my book, Parasites and Diseases of Barsaive, before attempting any cure.

DEATH MOTH

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10

Pace: 1; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

♦ **Fear:** All creatures within a 12" diameter of the death moth must succeed at an opposed Spirit roll or become incapacitated for d4 rounds.

♦ **Larval Infestation:** A death moth lays 3d6 eggs in an incapacitated host, who remembers nothing of the attack. The eggs gestate over a period of 7 to 10 days, at the end of which they hatch, inflicting 1 Wound per day until the host dies. These Wounds cannot be healed until the parasites are somehow removed. A Heal roll with a -6 penalty can remove the hatchlings. However, every failed roll automatically causes 1 Wound to the patient.

♦ **Poison:** Any creature stung by the death moth must succeed at a Vigor roll or become incapacitated for d4 hours.

ADVENTURE SEED

A traveling companion of the characters goes off on his own into the forest, where a death moth attacks him and implants its eggs in his back. He returns to his companions less than an hour after he left, shaken and unable to remember the events of the past few hours. The characters investigate their friend's memory loss and stumble over a nest of eight or nine death moths nearby.

DYRE

The dyre eats grasses, travels in herds, and appears to pose little danger to the adventurer. Ork cavalymen prize the dyre as a mount because of its huge size, quick brain, and irritable temper. Most ork cavalries have at least one or two in their ranks, if not several.

Standing only a little shorter than I do at the shoulder—er, that is to say, twelve feet or better—the dyre is covered in long, matted brown fur. Its back rises sharply in the middle as if humped, and it resembles a cross between a bear and bull. (An ungainly thing, but far more graceful than it looks. Come to think of it, I've heard the same thing said of trolls.)

Like a bear, the dyre has squat, stubby legs and a short tail. Its head looks like a bull's, only wider, with sharply curving horns. The beast has hardly any neck

at all, holding its head so low to the ground that only its back-hump shows over the top of the high plains grass. A dyre looks ferocious, but it eats no meat—only grasses such as abound on the plains near Parlainth and the ancient ork kingdom of Cara Fahd.

Ah, what a place that was, full of hard fighters and strong drinkers who never wasted time being ashamed of anything they'd done. A magnificent kingdom, for all its lack of the usual trappings of great states. No sweeping grandeur to its huge stone buildings... no great art to speak of, at least not as I judge these things... not even any particularly great learning, at least not when compared to my own... but a magnificent realm for all that.

It was the spirit of the place, if you know what I mean. It constantly challenged one to live life a



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little more gloriously than one had the day before. To work harder, play harder, fight harder... one could feel it in the air, like lightning barely held in check. As a race, orks may lack beauty and a certain refinement, but when given their freedom they know how to make better use of it than any other Namegivers I know... except dragons, of course—

With all due respect, noble sir, might we return to the subject at hand?

Certainly. What was I talking about?

Dyres.

Ah yes. Dyres will eat other plants when they can get them, and consider fruits and vegetables rare delicacies. Indeed, they will often eat themselves ill given a chance. To keep them healthy, their ork riders often muzzle them when not on the battlefield.

Anyone foolish enough to think the dyre a placid, docile creature because it is a mere herd beast should think twice before hunting one. The slightest annoyance triggers a killing frenzy in these huge animals, another trait that their ork riders value. An ork enjoys nothing more than guiding this great mount into battle and riding its ferocious wave of destruction, bobbing to and fro like a feather in a whirlpool and spearing enemies on all sides with his long lance.

I have witnessed several battles in which orks sent their dyre-mounted cavalrymen ahead to strike the enemy; by the time the main cavalry reached the battlefield, the foe had already fled.

A herd of wild dyres numbers about forty—mostly females, half-grown males, and young. Every herd has only one adult male, who has the sole privilege of mating with the females. Once a young dyre reaches maturity, the herd leader challenges him and usually forces him out. After a few years on his own, the hardened young male often returns to the pack to challenge the leader—those not strengthened by their solitary ordeal die. Most returning males are more than a match for the leader, and so often win the

fight to become the new herd leader.

Mating season comes only once every two years, and so very few herd leaders mate more than once or twice with the females before being deposed.

When approached by a predator, the dyres gather into a huge circle with the young at the center. The females stand on the outside of the circle to hold off attackers. Most predators lack the prodigious strength necessary to take down a healthy adult, and won't risk getting crushed

by the dyres' hooves or speared with their wicked horns for the slight chance of bringing down a young animal. [Here Vadsenjas preened a little and modestly ducked his head.] I have managed to bring down a few dyres in my day... when I was a young dragon in my prime... but I know of no others who have done it. Interestingly, these huge beasts taste remarkably unlike chicken.



DYRE

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Special Abilities

• **Armor +2:** Thick skin.

• **Claws/Bite:** Str+d6.

• **Ram:** If a dyre can charge at least 6" before attacking, it adds +4 to its damage total.

• **Size +2:** These creatures weigh between 800 and 1,000 lbs.

ADVENTURE SEED

The characters briefly join an ork scorcher band, during which time they learn ancient scorcher ways of sharpening weapons, riding mounts, fighting honorably, and breaking dyre calves. In a trial by fire, the scorcher leader orders the characters to find a dyre herd and retrieve a few young beasts for training.

EARTH Q'WRIL

This furred oddity-looks part mole and part serpent, with a birdlike beak (though a far stranger sort of beak than that possessed by any bird of my acquaintance!). About as long as a human's forearm (there, Tiabdjinn, is that a more understandable guide?), the earth q'wril looks harmless—indeed, it looks faintly ridiculous. For once, appearances are not deceiving; most of these beasts pose no threat to anything save a few plants. The q'wril feeds on roots, berries, and fruit, though some few have developed a taste for meat. These latter are quite rare, and few adventurers will likely encounter them.

The earth q'wril can move through the earth as easily as a Cathay dragon through the air or a fish through water. The beast uses its diamond-hard, pyramid-shaped beak to break through all but stone and the hardest clay. The beak also dribbles a thin fluid, which acts as a lubricant and has a property I can only describe as magical; it somehow thins the soil, allowing the beast to pass through it as if the earth had no more substance than the air. Most q'wril travel just a few feet below the earth's surface, though they can move as far below ground as they desire.

The q'wril's senses are abnormally sharp, though no one seems to know why. Scholars, as usual, squabble endlessly over the reason; some believe that the beast's furry coat is sensitive enough to detect objects on the ground above it, while others insist that the creature has some other unknown sense that makes it aware of its surroundings. Still others claim the q'wril's beak has some mystical property apart from the magic liquid it secretes, basing this staggeringly far-fetched assumption on the rapid clicking of the beak below the soil that is occasionally heard. If I cared to know the answer, I could certainly

discover it, but I consider the question irrelevant. All anyone really needs to know is that the q'wril can see the world above ground as easily as you or I.

The q'wril's extraordinary vision, combined with its prowess at hurling itself out of the earth with great force, enables this subterranean beast to find the fruit on which it lives. The q'wril can burst from the ground and seize objects many feet above it,

bounding into the boughs of an oak to graze on its leaves

or plucking a tasty apple from an exposed branch.

It can even spear other small animals, leaping into them like a tiny furred javelin. Many people may tell you that the earth q'wril jumps, but

I have observed this beast for centuries, and I know that the "jump" is a sprint straight upward, through and out of the

ground. The surface disturbance caused

by the q'wril's subterranean movement ceases just before it leaps because the animal is sinking deeper into the soil to get a longer run at the surface.

The q'wril likes the company of its fellows, often moving in groups of twenty or more. A pod of q'wril cresting above the fields or weaving around the trunks of trees below a forest floor is one of Barsaive's most fascinating sights, to my mind, though most of Barsaive's farmers would not agree with me. The beast's taste for roots make the q'wril the farmer's enemy; a large pod can devastate a field in a scant few days. In areas plagued by q'wril, the working folk build stone corrals around their fields and bury stone slabs in the soil to keep the creatures from burrowing in and then erect palisades upon the stone foundations to stop the beast from leaping over the top. Many farms in these areas resemble intricate mazes or daunting fortifications, all to stop the depredations of a creature smaller than a dog.

Villages plagued by the q'wril rarely seek out and exterminate the animals, having learned from bitter experience that they will only lose many Namegiver lives in the process. The creatures attack in pods,



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bursting suddenly through the earth at blinding speed and using their deadly beaks to stab their attackers through even the heaviest armor. Elves prize these beaks as arrowheads, and some windlings use them as spear tips when they can get them. I have noticed that those earth q'wrl who have tasted the blood of other living creatures are no longer content to feed off of roots and berries, but insist on freshly killed meat. Northern Barsaive in particular is occasionally plagued by such carnivorous pods.

EARTH Q'WRIL SWARM

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities

• **Bite:** Earth q'wrl swarms inflict dozens of tiny bites every round to their victims, hitting automatically and

causing 2d4 damage to everyone in a large burst template (dropping to a medium burst template after 1 Wound is inflicted). Damage is applied to the least armored location (victims in completely sealed suits are immune).

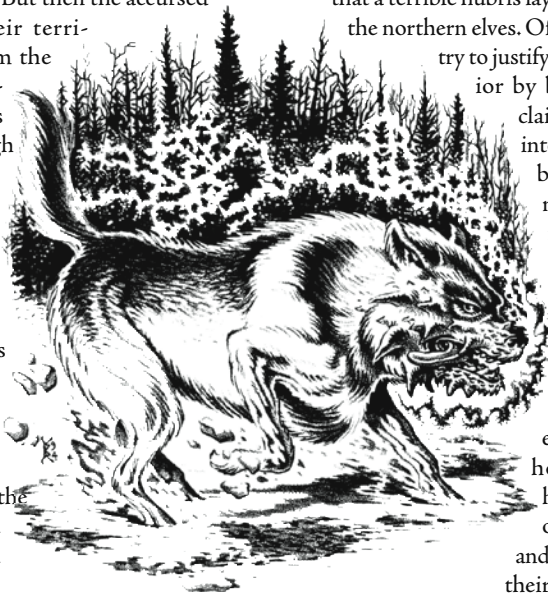
• **Swarm:** Parry +2; Because the earth q'wrl swarm is composed of scores of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his damage in Strength each round.

ADVENTURE SEED

A river near a village where the characters are staying floods the feeding grounds of the local q'wrl population, forcing them to plunder the farmers' fields to survive. The farmers turn to the characters to help them exterminate the unwanted pests, not knowing how deadly an opponent these small creatures can be.

ETHANDRILLE

The ethandril represents a tragedy like that of the changeling. Once, the ethandril was a creature with a place in the life of the Universe, a proud beast that roamed the wilds of the Wyrn Wood. Those ethandrills preyed on the smaller animals of the forests and even occasionally took on larger prey, such as full-grown elk. But then the accursed blood elves used their terrible magic to transform the ethandril into a fearsome abomination as bad as they. Bad enough that the elves corrupted themselves with their powerful and dangerous magic during the Scourge—but they also corrupted all the innocent living things around them, living things that had no choice in the matter. Today's blood elves are only a sickly shadow of the elves of Wyrn Wood that I once regarded with great fondness.



The elves I knew—or thought I did—would never have changed so many living things in so dreadful a way. The elves I knew were a thoughtful, conscientious race with a respect for the Universe and its power that many dragons—myself included—believed equal to our own. But little did we know that a terrible hubris lay hidden in the hearts of the northern elves. Of course, the blood elves

try to justify their deplorable behavior by blaming the Horrors, claiming they were forced into their horrible choice, but I find that argument self-serving. To my mind, they have forfeited their right to be called Namegivers—

Please, Great One—about the ethandril?

Are you afraid I might offend the elves, scribe? Well I hope I have, for they have offended me, every other living Namegiver, and the Universe itself with their twisted magics.



Great One, I entreat you.

Oh, very well. To our earlier subject. Before the blood elves' magic corrupted them, ethandrilles were a kind of wolf only a little larger than big dogs. The wretched creatures we now call ethandrilles still look somewhat the same as their forerunners once did, covered in brown and gray fur to better conceal themselves in the forests. The Ritual of the Thorns, however, caused thorns to pierce the thin skin around the ethandrilles' mouths and stretched their fur in a horrible manner where their pelts were too thick for the thorns to penetrate. The poor beasts look tortured, as indeed they are. Like the blood elves, ethandrilles are in constant agony from the thorns and are immune to the pain-causing powers of the Horrors.

The thorn magic also made the ethandrilles larger and fiercer, and enhanced their already keen tracking abilities. In addition, the magic gave them the ability to discharge a mighty bolt of lightning at an opponent before actually engaging in combat. Luckily for the elves of Blood Wood, their cursed forest is damp enough to keep the bolts from starting fires—though Barsaive and her Namegivers might be better off if the bolts did set those blighted woods ablaze. Some say the thorn magic also left the ethandrilles with the ability to call on the wood elementals, who have always been the forest's true protectors—I don't know whether or not this is true. It may be—certainly the ethandrilles can't track a bleeding brithan across an open field outside Blood Wood's borders, but they always seem to know instinctively when an intruder has entered the forest.

The blood elves have domesticated the once-proud ethandrille, using the beasts as draft animals, pets, and more. The elves use ethandrilles to ferry supplies and food from tree to tree, stand guard throughout

the forest, and drive intruders back across the wood's borders, to name just a few tasks.

I once watched a pack of ethandrilles track down a Horror and rip the evil thing to pieces. As soon as it entered the Blood Wood, a pack of ethandrilles sensed it and hunted it down. When they found it, half the pack stalked the monstrous entity from the front while the rest galloped around to attack it from behind. They all hit the Horror with lightning bolts before it even knew they were there; then they leaped on the Horror and tore it to shreds. They left behind only a small puddle of green ooze with a few scraps of blackened, rotting flesh floating in it. I found it impossible to eat for half a day afterward.

ETHANDRILLE

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Endure:** Ethandrilles gain a +4 bonus to Soak rolls.
- **Fleet-Footed:** Roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.
- **Go for the Throat:** Ethandrilles instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly armored location.

ADVENTURE SEED

A rich patron hires the characters to capture a few ethandrilles from the Blood Wood, a task much easier said than done. From the moment the characters arrive in the Blood Wood, the ethandrilles follow them. Within a day or two, the elves of the Blood Wood discover the characters and demand that they leave the forest. If the characters refuse, the ethandrilles drive them out; the characters will need all their skill to get out of Blood Wood alive.

FELUX

The felux looks like a lion, but with eyes almost as huge as a dragon's—ah, about the size of a human's hand, that's how big around they are. A nighttime hunter, the felux uses its eyes to catch its prey. The only other living being with such acute night vision is a dragon, which gives you an idea of just how impressive a felux's sight is. No mere scholar has yet discovered the felux's origin, but then, they have not the

advantage of a centuries-long life in which to learn of these things. I have—and I can tell you that the felux's sight and its unusual powers result from the touch of magic on the ordinary lions of Barsaive.

The felux, in fact, is one of the few cases in which a change induced by magic helped a creature to survive instead of destroying it. I could tell you tales of some of the dreadful magical warpings many



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fight the adult female to get to her babes, I can think of several less messy forms of suicide.

The guards of Stoneforge Keep use feluxes as guard animals and walk around the walls of the castle with them. On command, each felux gazes out across the surrounding lands. Anything anywhere near the Keep might as well try to hide in broad daylight; the felux will certainly see it and flash its eyelight to incapacitate would-be intruders.

I have heard of a few adventuring bands who use these creatures to explore old, forgotten kaers. For a reason we have yet to fathom, the felux's eyelight terrifies the Horrors. I have also heard accounts of several mercenaries who use trained feluxes for night work and ambushes. Once their targets enter a certain area, they command the feluxes to use their flickering eyelight. Anything within the light falls to the ground in an uncontrollable fit.

creatures underwent during the Scourge that would make your scales turn cold—

The felux, oh Master of Secrets. Let us return to the felux.

But the curious beasts created by the Scourge are so interesting—

The felux!

The inability to tolerate a few digressions is the sign of a tiny mind. But since you insist...

The felux stalks its prey in deadly silence, then throws a beam of light brighter than a thousand moons from its eyes. The glare blinds the unfortunate victim; the felux gives a quick flick of its sharp claws and its erstwhile quarry becomes a tasty dinner. If necessary, the felux can also attack by causing its eyelight to flicker at an amazing speed. Those who gaze at the flashing light fall to the ground, racked with spasms, which do not cease until the eyelight stops flickering. More than a few people find this method of crippling an enemy extremely useful, and I know at least five Wizards who have created spells that duplicate this effect.

A felux can also be trained, though they do not feel the same loyalty or warmth toward their masters as a dog or a house cat. For the foolish reader of this tome who chooses to rush out and catch his very own pet felux, however, I offer the following warning (which you weaker races would do particularly well to heed!). Only if caught as kittens and trained from their earliest weeks are they manageable at all. And catching a kitten is nearly impossible, unless you are lucky enough to find a den of kittens whose mother has been killed. If you must

● FELUX

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities

• **Bite/Claw:** Str + d6.

• **Eye Beam:** Up to 3 times per day, a felux can throw a brilliant beam of light in a standard cone. Any creature capable of sight within the beam must succeed at a Vigor roll or be blinded for 2d4 rounds.

• **Eye Flash:** Once per day, a felux can cause its eyes to flash on and off, causing any one creature within 3" to succeed at a Vigor roll or go into uncontrollable seizures for d4 rounds. This time, afflicted creatures fall Prone and become incapacitated.

• **Improved Frenzy:** Felux may make two Fighting attacks each action at no penalty.

• **Low Light Vision:** Felux ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

• **Pounce:** Felux often pounce on their prey to best bring their mass and claws to bear. It can leap 1d6" to gain +4 to its attack and damage. Its Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action when performing the maneuver however.

• **Size +2:** Felux can weigh over 500 pounds.



ADVENTURE SEED

The characters are hired to guard a caravan en route from Bartertown to Haven, which lies within the ruins of Parlainth. The caravaneers, fearful of meeting Horrors along the way, have acquired a felux to serve as a guard animal in the hope that

the creature's eyelight will protect them. Not many days from Parlainth, a Horror-marked questor of Jaspree halts the caravan and demands that the caravaneers release the felux into the wild. The characters attempt to drive off the questor, but he or she takes command of the felux and orders it to attack.

★ FIREBIRD

The firebird is a truly beautiful and fascinating creature, almost as fascinating as dragons (if I do say so myself). It roams the air above the molten lava of the Death's Sea, one of the many living creatures that inhabit that supposedly barren waste-

land. It is amazing to me how little other Namegivers know of the life that teems in the Death's Sea—such ignorance doesn't speak well for your powers of observation, I must say. You all look at the Death's Sea and see only an ocean of fire in which you could not possibly live, and so you assume that nothing else can live there either. Sloppy thinking, if you ask me. Why should every crea-

ture in the Universe behave as you do? If you were to carefully observe the lava flows and floating islands, you would see a variety of fire-resistant living creatures that might astonish you. Indeed, many such creatures mate on the solid ground of the temporary islands, a sight I am sure many of your scholar colleagues would find fascinating... What, Tiab-djin—no disapproving frown?

Can it be I am at last allowed to digress a little?

Actually, noble sir, I find the notion of life in the Death's Sea so incredible that you briefly struck me speechless.

Back to the firebird, then. It looks like a large eagle, with a wingspan of perhaps ten feet, but its feathers change color depending on its surroundings. Like most creatures in the Death's Sea, the firebird can

tolerate the intense heat of the lava and the sun overhead without burning; however, the firebird does not care much for such temperatures. When it glides over the lava in search of food, it changes its feathers to a burnished silver to reflect the heat of the updrafts back down into the sea.

Other color changes help it hide from predators (and believe me, friend scribe, some of the creatures that hunt in the Death's Sea are almost as dangerous as I am!); the firebird can change color to match the reddish lava flows or the brown of a hardened-lava island, depending on its needs.

When the firebird does fight, it changes to a dull black and flies in a long, low circle over the boiling lava in order to build up tremendous heat in its body. It then flies close to its foe, upon whom it can inflict great damage without even a touch. The firebird finds its smoldering-hot body temperature painful, but endurable; its enemy, however, cannot withstand the heat. Clothing, sails, even some kinds of armor regularly burst into flame when a firebird passes close by. As for weapons with which one might strike a firebird, a wooden club or staff becomes an instant torch and a sword or other metal weapon becomes soft and malleable after a blow or two. Wooden airships are especially vulnerable to a firebird's attacks unless specially treated to resist flames.

The firebird also uses its weight as a devastating offensive weapon. It often streaks toward its foe at



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blinding speed and strikes him. The luckiest victim of such a collision suffers truly dreadful burns; the impact knocks the less fortunate off their ship or island and into the lethal lava below.

Mating firebirds are among Barsaive's most amazing sights. The male hunts down a large creature as a gift for the female, and then the female and the male feast on the carcass. After mating, the female lays several eggs, often more than twenty, each the size of a human's fist. Life is harsh in the Death's Sea; almost all of the eggs and hatchlings are eaten by other predators within a year, and so only a large clutch of eggs will produce enough offspring to ensure that a few will live to adulthood. The firebird's existence is further threatened by certain magicians who will pay handsome sums for firebird eggs, feathers, and hatchlings so as to extract elemental fire from them. I despise such people; to my mind, they are little more than murderers.

FIREBIRD

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d6

Pace: 3; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

Claw/Bite: Str.

• **Fire Aura:** Any creature that begins its turn within 1" of a firebird suffers 2d6 fire damage.

• **Fire Immunity:** A firebird is completely immune to damage and effects from fire and heat.

• **Flight:** Firebirds have a Flying Pace of 15".

• **Push:** Any creature struck by a firebird must succeed at an opposed Strength roll or be pushed back d2".

ADVENTURE SEED

While working on an airship mining elemental fire, the characters are sent down to a temporary island in the Death's Sea. As they walk across the island, they discover a nest of fresh firebird eggs. The parent birds are out hunting, providing the characters with the perfect opportunity to scoop up the eggs in order to sell them when they reach civilization. After the parents return to find the nest empty, however, they will search far and wide for the criminals who stole their children...

GATE HOUND

The gate hound is an aberration not of Nature, but of certain Namegivers' meddling with Nature. To explain this wretched creature's origins, I must digress into your own history—of which, I might add, you are all shockingly ignorant. In the last few years before the Scourge, many of your magicians searched frantically for ways to protect the Namegiver races from the Horrors. The sensible ones built the kaers and citadels. However, a few particularly boneheaded, arrogant mages attempted to lower the magic levels around their city of Chasteyn so that the Horrors would never arrive there. To halt the natural cycle of magic, of course, was far beyond the ability of any magician in Barsaive or anywhere else in the world. Such a

monumental task is even beyond we dragons, which we had the sense to realize.

These ignoramuses, though, began their research with absurdly high hopes. For reasons I cannot fathom (not being a fool myself), the magicians chose to create a creature that could drain

magic. (They could have worked toward devising a ritual to serve the same end,

and saved their descendants

considerable grief—but

I suppose they thought

a mere ritual would be a

less spectacular achievement.)

Their experiment failed to produce the desired result (as any dragon could have told them it would); instead, it produced the gate hound, a creature of limited ability to drain magic and an enormous appetite for warm flesh.

I have read ancient records that say the gate hounds followed the Horrors from whatever hellish dimension spawned them.

Is this untrue?





Friend scribe, I am undoubtedly centuries older than your “ancient records.” I’d trust my memory over any bit of moldering parchment.

The gate hound resembles a giant dog or wolf, often standing six feet tall at the shoulder. Stocky and thick-muscled, they are covered in dull red fur that seems to soak up the light (indeed, this phenomenon may be another one of their magical powers). Their eyes glow with a fierce white light, not unlike a basilisk’s. They have huge jaws crammed full of sharp teeth, and hunt in packs large enough to bring down almost any living creature—eight to ten hounds at least, sometimes more. (I can kill them by burning them. The Passions only know how you weaker races could hope to survive a gate hound attack.)

Gate hounds can drain magic, though nowhere near as well as their creators hoped. They store magical energy drained from another creature in an organ just below their thick, ugly necks. The drain is short-lived, however, wearing off within a few seconds. (As if any botched creation of a few overeager magical idiots could triumph over Nature!)

Like Horrors, gate hounds are drawn to magic-rich places. The two species often meet and attack each other savagely. Some secret animosity seems to exist between them; even intelligent Horrors renowned for savoring their foes’ slow death over many years do not retreat from battle with gate hounds until either they or the gate hounds die.

More than a few magicians—perhaps the latter-day descendants of the fools who created these beasts—have attempted to harness the power of the gate hounds. Thus far, all that I know of have failed. One especially stupid magician tried to use a hound’s magic-draining organ to lower the level of

magic around his house. Predictably, he succeeded in draining his own magical ability—worse yet, he made the effect permanent (the Universe only knows how). To my mind, trying to tame or otherwise use a gate hound makes as much sense as turning a Horror into a beast of burden.

GATE HOUND

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities

• **Bite:** Str+d6.

• **Drain Magic:** Up to three times per day, a gatehound can drain the magic from a creature within 20”. If the targeted creature fails an opposed Spirit roll, it cannot use any magic—including Karma—for d4+1 rounds.

• **Fleet-Footed:** Roll a d10 when running instead of a d6.

• **Go for the Throat:** Gatehounds instinctively go for an opponent’s soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target’s most weakly armored location.

ADVENTURE SEED

A pack of gate hounds begins to stalk a character (or a friend of the characters) who, unknown to his companions, has a Horror mark. Rather than attack their victim, however, the hounds simply follow and watch him. The characters investigate the hounds’ presence and discover the Horror mark just as the Horror itself turns up to check on its new slave. The unfortunate character with the Horror mark, as well as his or her companions, are immediately caught in the middle of a titanic battle between the Horror and the slaving gate hounds.

GENHIS

The genhis—that is, the adult genhis—is a placid, faintly foolish-looking grass eater that resembles a large cow. It even travels in herds, though only in small ones (for very good reasons). You will find it unbelievable that this gentle, slow-thinking creature long ago destroyed every village and town in the ancient troll kingdom of Ustrect—but it did. I watched it happen. Your scholars blame the razing of Ustrect on Horrors (indeed, they seem to blame

every calamity on Horrors), partly to convince themselves that such destruction cannot happen again because most of the Horrors are gone. Well, they’re wrong. Readers of this tome had best pay close attention to this entry, lest a new generation of Barsaivians succumb to the devastation of the genhis.

Most people know of the adult genhis and in some areas of Barsaive even use them as meat animals. The prudent among genhis herders rid themselves of their



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herds every ten years, if not more often, for it is almost impossible to tell which of the cow-like adults is a pregnant female. The young take a decade or so to grow large and strong enough to survive outside the womb, and it's when they emerge from that womb that the trouble begins. Moments after being born, young genhis begin to raze everything in their path in a frenzied search for food.

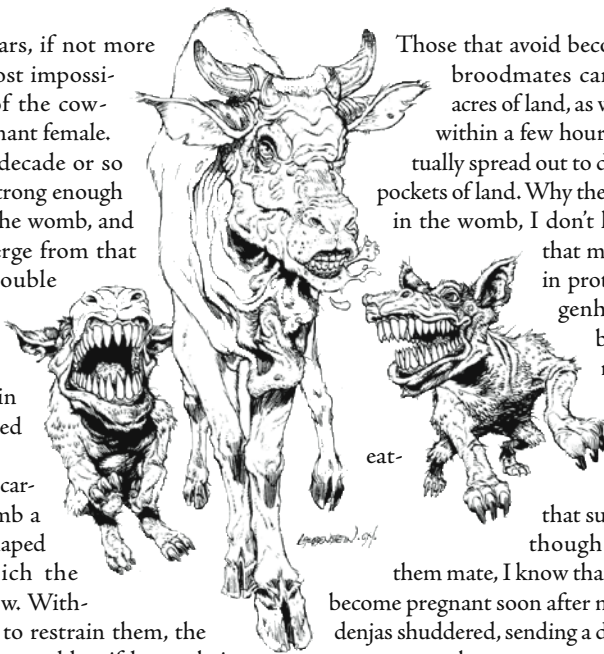
A pregnant genhis carries within her womb a large, tough, sack-shaped membrane in which the unborn infants grow. Without the membrane to restrain them, the horrible little beasts would swiftly eat their way out of their mother's body. Before giving birth, the mother genhis looks for the perfect spot in which to bring her little monsters into the world. She greatly prefers forests and farms, which have plenty and varied food for her ravenous babies—trees, birds, deer, cattle, horses, crops, people, everything. Having chosen the birthing place, the mother genhis expels the sack from her womb and runs for her life. Within a scant few minutes of landing on the ground, the baby genhis chew their way through the sack and swiftly begin eating everything within reach.

If you ever chance to see a female genhis galloping madly past you, fly away—er, that is, run away as fast as your feet will carry you, or you'll end up as food for a newborn genhis.

Young genhis look nothing like their parents. Instead, they resemble a cross between a bird and a lizard (remarkable, isn't it, how many Barsaivian creatures seem to look like an unfortunate hybrid of birds and lizards!), with a toothy mouth almost half the length of the entire creature. Their powerful jaws enable them to chew through anything—metal, wood, stone, and flesh. Fortunately for Barsaive, the horrid little pests frequently snack on each other soon after birth, and many a genhis brood destroys itself before doing much damage to anything else.

Those that avoid becoming prey for their broodmates can destroy countless acres of land, as well as all inhabitants, within a few hours, though they eventually spread out to destroy more isolated pockets of land. Why they don't eat each other in the womb, I don't know, but I surmise that magic plays some part in protecting them. As the genhis grow larger, they become less and less ravenous, after about five years turning into placid planters. Unfortunately, most of the genhis that survive are female, and though I have never seen them mate, I know that most of the females become pregnant soon after maturing. [Here Vasdenjas shuddered, sending a draft through the cave strong enough to scatter my parchment.]

I know of some magicians who have attempted to experiment with an intact genhis womb, and in all of these cases the final report (usually not written by the experimenting magician) described "mixed results." (Whatever that means. With these creatures, I imagine "mixed results" are somewhat gruesome.) Those of my readers inclined to experiment should think twice and three times before playing with a birth sack full of little carnivores just waiting to make a meal out of every living thing in your town or village.



ADULT GENHIS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12
Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d6
Pace: 7; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 10
Special Abilities
 • **Bite:** Str.
 • **Size +2:** Adult genhis are large creatures.

CHILD GENHIS

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6
Pace: 7; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Special Abilities
 • **Bite:** Str+d4.

ADVENTURE SEED

A Nethermancer hires the characters to bring him or her a genhis' birth sack with which to make a few gruesome experiments. Of course, the magician

neglects to mention what's inside the birth sack, letting unsuspecting characters in for a painful and dangerous surprise.

* GLOBBEROG

The globberog is a most curious and repulsive creature that protects its own fragile body with the flesh and bones of other living things. This disgusting lump of quivering meat exudes and can also spit a sticky ooze with which it glues to itself the bodies of those unfortunate enough to fall afoul of it. From these bodies it creates a shell, which over the years can grow amazingly thick and strong, depending on how many creatures or Namegivers the globberog catches.

Any unlucky victim trapped by this spittle remains paralyzed by it unless it breaks down, which begins to occur (if at all) only after more than five hours' exposure to sunlight. In most cases, of course, the victim does not have this slim chance of escape. If the globberog gets close enough to trap a person or creature by brushing its sticky slime against him, the victim instantly becomes the newest piece in the globberog's revolting shell. If the thing must spit at its victim to ensnare him, it rarely allows five hours to pass before slithering up to the poor wretch and fusing him to itself.

The globberog's sticky spittle is magical in nature, much like the spit of the bog gob (to whom I believe this noisome creature is related). Struggling to free yourself from it, unfortunately, only worsens matters. The more you struggle, the faster you spread the sickening stuff all over yourself. Because the globberog builds its shell from whatever creatures or Namegivers it

encounters, each shell is uniquely disgusting. I know of more than a few people driven mad with grief and revulsion at the sight of friends and loved ones stuck to a globberog's back, staring vacantly at them from under a glaze of slime. I have even heard of a globberog that entered a kaer and killed all the inhabitants. The poor people and all of the kaer's treasure were stuck to its outsides, making the thing look like a huge, slithering treasure chest. Though globberogs have no use for the treasures and coins they often pick up, they fiercely resist any attempt to remove these bits and pieces.

The creature under the shell is a soft, hairless lump about the size of a cow, covered in a disgusting ooze (which, by the way, tastes terrible). It has four tiny nearsighted eyes that fortunately give it poor aim when spitting. When the beast begins to build its

shell, it sends small veins into the bodies on its back, through which it draws sustenance from its victims. The creatures can only feed in this revolting way, as they have no mouths or stomachs. The veins also carry the globberog's spittle and keep it flowing across the creature's entire shell. Because it is constantly exuding a fresh layer of slime, the globberog rarely suffers any ill effects from prolonged sunlight.

When a globberog's shell finally gets so huge that the creature can no longer move, the globberog detaches



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itself from the shell and (coincidentally) gives birth to several new globberogs. The newborn globberogs, each the size of a large cat, cling to the inside of the discarded shell, which protects them from most natural predators hungry enough to actually want to eat one of them. The adult globberog stays near its young and will quickly add to its new shell any predator foolish enough to attack its offspring.

As a globberog's spittle makes an almost unbreakable glue, the glands that produce it can fetch high prices in many cities. Killing a globberog to get these glands requires extreme caution, of course. Many a greedy and feckless adventurer has paid for a lack of planning with his or her life.

GLOBBEROG

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4, Shooting d10

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11 (4)

Special Abilities

- **Adhesive Spit:** Up to three times a day, a globberog can launch a glob of adhesive spit up to 6" away, making a standard shooting attack. If successful, the target becomes completely immobilized as the goo hardens into a thick shell (Toughness 8, Damage Type

bludgeoning). The shell falls apart if exposed to d4 hours of direct sunlight.

- **Armor +4:** Living shell hide.

- **Bash:** Str+d6.

- **Living Shell:** A globberog can attach any creature it captured with its adhesive spit to its own outer shell, where veins snake their way across the enclosed creature's flesh, draining blood and dealing 2d6 damage each round. Any creature attached in such a way can be pried free with an opposed Strength roll. If the globberog is killed, it falls away.

ADVENTURE SEED

A globberog that long ago entered a kaer and killed all its inhabitants is now wandering the countryside in search of more victims. The people of a town that lies on the path of the creature's wanderings hire the characters to track it down and kill it; as an added inducement, the locals agree that the characters can keep any valuables they find stuck to the globberog in addition to their fee. Unknown to the characters, they are not the first party sent to kill the creature; several other adventurers have already tried and failed, including some of the characters' friends. The globberog has fused the remains of those friends into its shell, right where the characters can see them.

GREATER TERMITE

This creature is one of the few insects sufficiently interesting to warrant my attention. They are enormous as insects go, often reaching a size and length that Barsaive's largest rats might envy. Like their tinier brethren, colonies of greater termites create giant towers of mashed tree pulp; however, the greater termites' towers often rise more than thirty feet into the sky and are as wide as my front leg is long. [About fifteen feet.]

Greater termites come in many colors, from pasty white to bright red to shiny black. In many cases, each colony of termites seems to have its own distinct coloring. A thick carapace protects them from most predators, though not from dragons. I find them quite tasty, particularly when scattered across freshly killed cattle as a garnish. I simply grab a handful in my claws and squeeze them until their carapaces crack. Another enjoyable way to eat greater termites is to roast them until the heat of my breath makes their insides bubble out with an appetizing

POP! Those of you unable to breathe fire could easily cook them in the same way over a hot campfire. (Tiabdjinn, is something wrong? You look positively green!)

Three kinds of greater termites exist: workers, soldiers, and queens. The workers build the colony's tower, hunt for food, and care for the young. The soldiers protect the colony from predators. These termites have powerful pincers, vicious temperaments, and a natural poison that unfortunately does not kill, but makes its victim writhe on the ground in agony if so much as a drop of the secretion touches his skin. The queen, the mother of the colony, is a bloated version of her smaller kindred.

Greater termites eat both meat and plants and have developed powerful jaws with which to chew an amazing variety of foodstuffs. They also use these fearsome mandibles to bore through any substance in search of food and to make the pulp from which they build their towers. I don't know what their jaws

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are made of—they may even be some magical substance—but they can bore through any material, given enough time. It is easier for them to chew through soft wood than through metal or stone, but they can do it. I once wit-

nessed a greater termite colony infesting the side of a stone fortress in search of food. Took the things days to break through the granite... of course, there were dozens of them, or it would have taken even longer.

I remember the sound of their ceaseless chewing—the grating of their mandibles on stone was quite unpleasant. My ears positively cringed before the noise. Not the loudness of it... it was more a matter of pitch. With each scrape against the stone, the termites made a high, thin screech—like someone sawing away at a boulder with a rusty iron dagger. The people inside the fortress seemed shockingly unaware of the termites' assault on their stronghold—but then, many of you smaller folk can't really hear things properly, so perhaps they didn't notice the grinding sound. A pair of guards had the bad luck to be standing right near where the termites first broke through. Devoured in a couple of bites, poor fellows. They never knew what hit them.

One mystery about these insects that I have yet to fathom is their ability to communicate silently with each other across great distances. After centuries of observation, I believe them to be under the mental control of the queen. To my mind, only an intense mental bond can explain how the soldier fighting some foe outside the colony knows immediately that its queen is under attack. If you are foolish enough to attack a termite queen, every soldier in the colony will return to it from any distance to defend her. This kind of mental bond also explains the behavior of worker termites. When one of these finds food, it begins to stuff its jaws, and without stirring a step away from its feast somehow manages to call its fellow workers to join it. Within minutes, hundreds

of other worker termites arrive to help collect the same food supply. I ask you, how else but by an intimate connection

with each other's minds could these insects accomplish such feats?

Well, since you pose it as a question... the brightest scientific minds of the Great

Library of Throal have made an extensive study of the greater termite and other such insects. They discovered that the insects use scent glands

to communicate with other termites in simple terms. When a termite finds food, to use your own example, it fires a cloud of a particular scent into the air. When the smell reaches the colony, other workers follow it back to the source.

Ridiculous!

GREATER TERMITE

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Special Abilities

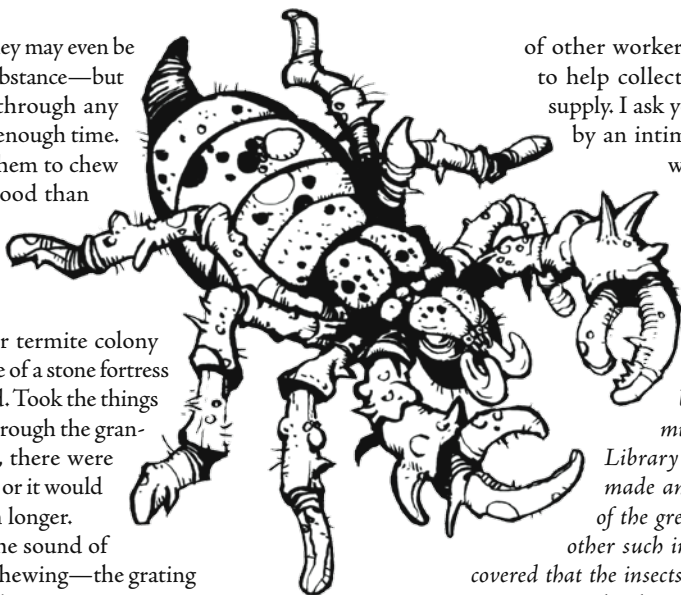
• **Armor +2:** Shell.

• **Irritant Spray:** Once every d4 rounds, a giant termite can spit out a line of concentrated irritant up to 6" away, making a standard throwing attack. If successful, the target breaks out in extremely painful rashes and swelling for d4 hours. During this time, the character must succeed at a Spirit roll each time he wishes to take any action. If he fails the roll, he cannot perform the action, though it is still wasted, as if he had.

• **Mandibles:** Str+d4, AP 1.

ADVENTURE SEED

A colony of greater termites infests the wall of a fortress, whose owner hires the characters to remove the pests before they do too much damage. Of course, exterminating a nest of rat-sized insects with mandibles that can slice through armor, flesh, and bone is easier said than done.



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HARBINGER

Countless legends tell of the Passions visiting Namegivers in times of great need or rewarding those faithful individuals who live with a particular Passion's ideals in their hearts. But I wonder how many readers of this book have ever noticed that legends rarely speak of the dire consequences that befall those who anger the Passions. Well, I have seen what happens; the angered Passions deal with such miscreants by sending a fearsome creature known as a harbinger.

One of the best-known tales of a Namegiver who angered the Passions is the legend of Naka. Naka farmed a small plot of land in the ancient kingdom of Landis, long before the Scourge. For years Naka worked his field. The Namegiver never enjoyed the profits that some of his fellow farmers earned, but neither did he ever go hungry. He largely kept to himself and never spoke ill of others. Over time, however, Naka grew resentful of his neighbors' successes. Slowly his resentment grew, like a black tumor in his heart. Then one day a terrible storm darkened the skies over Landis. Naka went out into the fields of his neighbors, and invoking the Name of Garlen, Passion of the Hearth, he offered his fellow farmers shelter in his large house. He offered them warm food and wine, and soon all of them had fallen asleep. Then Naka massacred them and stole their valuables. Needless to say, Garlen was not too pleased with Naka's actions, though the legend does not, as Vasdenjas says, mention precisely how she took her revenge against him.

I must admit, I question the inclusion of an avatar of the Passions in this treatise—after all, surely such powerful beings are more than mere creatures! I do not, however, feel inclined to question my host's judgment too closely.

A harbinger is a giant, ethereal-looking armored knight, standing more than ten feet tall and wielding a huge, two-handed

broadsword with deadly accuracy. Most who know of them, including myself, believe that the harbingers valiantly upheld a certain Passion's beliefs in life and have been rewarded after death with a chance to destroy their beloved Passion's enemies. Only those strong enough to defeat a harbinger—few souls, indeed—dare risk angering a Passion. For any lesser being to do so is an extravagant form of suicide.

Because the Passions manifest their harbingers, each of these beings possesses several magical abilities that aid them in hunting down evildoers. Each harbinger appears in the place where the atrocity that roused the Passion's anger occurred, so that local folk will see that the Passion intends to avenge the evil. The harbinger tracks the evildoer tirelessly, stopping only when it completes its task or is destroyed (a highly unlikely occurrence). Upon discovering its quarry, the harbinger announces itself and challenges the criminal to single combat with its magical sword. I have never witnessed any duel against a harbinger that did not end in the space of five heartbeats or less with the harbinger victorious.

Harbingers were far less of a peril before the Scourge, because the Passions only used them to punish the most grievous crimes. When the Scourge drove three of the Passions mad, those Passions began to call down harbingers at will. It may be that their madness makes them see almost any action that does not glorify them as a grievous crime, and that belief is all they need. Even with all my

immense strength and powers, the prospect of battling a harbinger makes me quake with fear; you weaker, two-legged races should take every possible precaution not to accidentally anger a Mad Passion lest you pay for it with your short life.

Of course, if you do anger a Passion, you may survive by begging for forgiveness



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and promising to atone for your errors. If you do this swiftly and convincingly enough when the harbinger appears, it—and its creator—may have mercy on you. I warn you, however, that harbingers can smell lies. Unless you tell the truth, it will kill you. Also, if you fail to atone for your wrongs, the Passion's vengeance will be swift and brutal indeed. I do not know precisely what happens to such unfortunates, but I hear they suffer a punishment far worse than death.

HARBINGER

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d12, Notice d10, Throwing d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 13 (3)

Gear: Plate mail, two-handed sword

Special Abilities

• **Fleet-Footed:** Harbingers roll d10s instead of d6s when running.

• **Size +2:** Harbingers stand over 7' tall.

• **Two-handed Sword:** Str+d10.

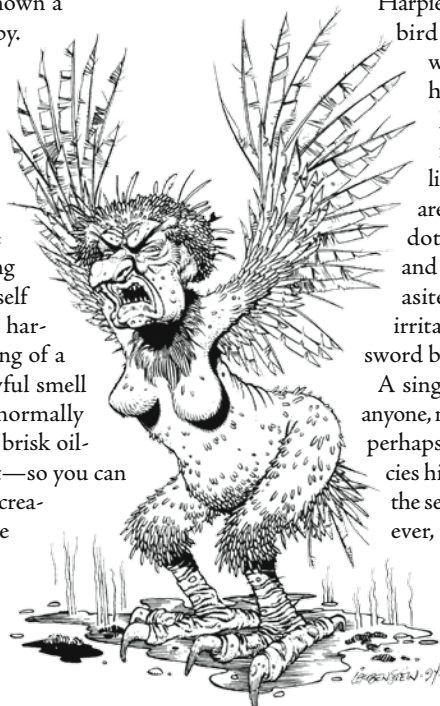
• **Unerring Track:** Harbingers have a Passions-granted ability to track those who have transgressed against their patron Passion. To use this ability, the harbinger chooses any target that is currently on the same plane of existence as it is. This target must succeed at an opposed Spirit roll. If the target fails, the harbinger can follow the target unerringly, even if the target passes over bodies of water or flies through the air.

ADVENTURE SEED

As the characters are traveling through a city, an obviously terrified local asks for their protection—against what, he refuses to say. Claiming to be rich, he offers to pay them handsomely for their efforts, but tells them very little about himself. The characters soon discover that their new employer is a questor of the Passion Mynbruje who has angered her by calling upon her to punish his enemies one too many times. The questor fears, with reason, that Mynbruje will send one of her terrible harbingers against him.

HARPY

Never in my life have I known a fouler species than the harpy. Nothing could possibly be as filthy as their diseased bodies except their foul mouths. Should you meet a harpy or a pack, I recommend bathing for an hour or two afterward to remove the stench from your clothing and hair. Even I immerse myself in water after encountering harpies, letting the slow steaming of a smallish lake cleanse the awful smell from my scales. (I am not normally fond of bathing—I prefer a brisk oiling by some devoted servant—so you can see just how disgusting these creatures are, that they force me to so alter my usual habits. Which reminds me, Tiab-djin—would you be so kind as to oil my left shoulder this evening? It itches.)



Harpies are a repulsive cross between bird and human, displaying the worst qualities of both. They have the faces and bodies of hags, covered with grimy matted feathers. Their bird-like feet and short stubby wings are dirt encrusted, their faces are dotted with suppurating boils, and their feathers crawl with parasites. Their harsh, shrill voices irritate the ear like the scrape of a sword blade on rocks.

A single harpy poses no danger to anyone, not even you small folk (except, perhaps, to a grandiose fool who fancies himself an adventurer but lacks the senses needed to survive). However, harpies almost always travel in packs. Groups of the foul things pose no danger to me, but they seriously threaten weaker Namegivers. A hunting

CHAPTER 2: CREATURES

pack of harpies lands in a tree (or several trees) near their chosen victims, at whom they hurl every slur and foul word they know (and they know more curses than most of you folk will hear in a lifetime). By this torrent of abuse they hope to anger their opponents so as to make them careless in combat.

The insults also help the harpies determine the strength of their foe; an enemy who remains calm is most likely an experienced adventurer too strong for the harpies' taste, whereas one who becomes furious likely has little discipline and so will be easily defeated. Harpies are cowards by nature and prefer to attack as few opponents as possible, and weak ones, at that. Once they succeed in angering their enemies, the harpies attack. Because they have had time to gauge their opponents' strength, they almost always attack the strongest fighter or the group's leader first, swooping down upon him before wheeling off to attack others. Harpies slash at their victims' faces with their sharp-taloned feet and batter them with makeshift weapons, such as clubs and large rocks. If the battle seems to turn against them, the harpies fly back to the treetops and hurl more foul words.

The greatest danger harpies pose, assuming their victims survive an attack, is the threat of disease. These dreadful monsters wallow constantly in their own filth and carry several terrible afflictions to which they are immune but most other living things are not. Often, victims who survive an initial harpy attack succumb to some bizarre and debilitating disease within a few hours. If the illness doesn't kill them, the harpies will fall upon their weakened prey and slay him.

I have no idea how these disgusting bird-monsters mate and do not care to find out. The young are born into a world of filth and forced to fend for themselves almost immediately—a harpy feels no familial ties and has no compunction about kicking its offspring away from food violently enough to snap a chick's dirty neck. The last to feed on kills, young harpies eat a steady diet of rotting meat (when they eat anything at all). Prone to starvation and not yet immune to the diseases rampant in the filth amid which they live, young harpies die at a tremendous rate—though not fast enough to eliminate the species entirely, unfortunately. Harpies do appear to have a limited form of intelligence almost as keen as a Namegiver's, but they care nothing for the pursuit of knowledge, the study of magic or the arts, or any other thing except their foul kind's survival.

HARPY

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d10, Taunt d8

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

• **Claw:** Str+d4.

• **Filthy Strike:** Any creature damaged by a harpy's claws must succeed at a Vigor roll or suffer from a long-term chronic debilitating disease.

ADVENTURE SEED

A questor of Lochost, determined to civilize the harpies, hires the characters to protect him from the monsters' constant assaults and to carry supplies deep into the wilds of Barsaive, where colonies of harpies are rumored to exist.

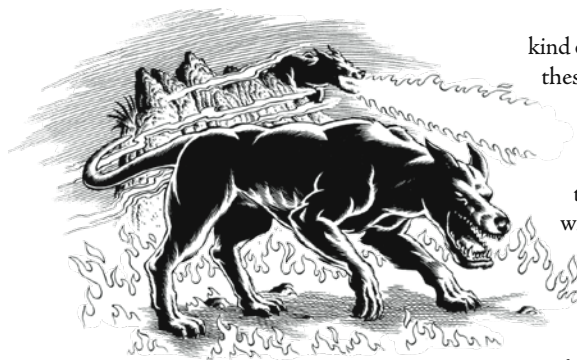
HELL HOUND

Hell hounds are large dogs, standing more than four feet high at the shoulder. Their stocky, muscular bodies are covered with short dark-brown fur that seems to absorb the light; indeed, they bear a passing resemblance to gate hounds. Teeth as sharp as my talons fill their jaws; a hell hound can easily tear an arm or a leg off a human or an elf with a single bite.

The presence of fire in its mouth and eyes, however, clearly shows the hell hound for what it is. If you look deeply enough into a hell hound's throat (though I can't think of any good reason to do so),

you can see fire flickering within. A hell hound's eyes also seem to burn; deep within the sockets are twin balls of flame. In complete darkness, the eyes of a hell hound glow like candle flames.

Hell hounds have an impressive magical ability, one they share with dragons. At the height of their power, they can breathe great gouts of flame as long as my back leg—forty feet or so. (That level of power means that the hell hound has not used its fire-breathing ability for more than a day. If it does not have full power, it belches shorter streams of fire.)



Unlike normal fire, this magical flame can briefly burn almost anything, including armor, weapons, rocks, clothing, wood, and flesh.

In truth, the hell hound's magic flames are not precisely fire as most Namegivers understand it. The flame mixes in the hound's throat with a volatile ooze that sticks to the hound's target and burns continuously. One can only put out this burning ooze by completely suffocating it.

So an adventurer struck by this foul stuff might survive by immediately plunging into water, or some other liquid that itself does not burn?

Yes, but he'd best do it quickly before the fire does him serious harm.

Hell hounds travel and hunt in packs so that they can surround their prey from all sides. Once the pack has encircled its victim, the pack leader sets the poor wretch afire. If the victim tries to bolt in any direction, the hound nearest him or her coughs up its own stream of fire at the sufferer, forcing the victim to stagger back into the tightening circle of hell hounds. Most of you smaller races and nearly all animals begin to succumb to the pain and shock of your burning flesh within minutes. The smaller the prey, of course, the faster it burns. Hell hounds hunt in this way to ensure that only a few pack members use up their fire-breathing power at any given time and to cook their food so as to reduce their chances of eating diseased meat. Clever beasts—and as such particularly dangerous.

More than a few rumors have reached my ears regarding hell hounds and dragons, all of which are spurious. We dragons did not create hell hounds, nor do we keep them as pets. The fact that they breathe fire as we do is no more than a coincidence of Nature. Certainly we have never indulged in any

kind of dubious magical experimentation to produce these creatures; as far as I know, only your races subject other living things to such butchery.

A hell hound can be kept as a pet if raised from a pup, and will show amazing loyalty to its master as long as it is not hungry. Those who wish to tame a hell hound would be well advised to feed it often.

Curiously, Vasdenjas did not mention the hell hounds' astral sight. I cannot quite believe that such an informative source as the Master of Secrets would make such a glaring oversight... and yet I find it hard to believe that all the tales I have heard about these beasts are wrong. This omission is puzzling indeed, for which I apologize to the reader.

HELL HOUND

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

• **Bite:** Str+d6.

• **Fiery Breath:** Hell hounds breathe fire in a standard cone template. Every target within this cone may make an Agility roll at -2 to avoid the attack. Those who fail suffer 2d8 damage and must check to see if they catch fire. A hell hound may not attack with its claws or bite in the round it breathes fire.

• **Fleet-Footed:** Hell hounds roll d10s instead of d6s when running.

• **Go for the Throat:** Hell hounds instinctively go for an opponent's soft spots. With a raise on its attack roll, it hits the target's most weakly armored location.

• **Savage Rend:** The hell hound's bite deals damage that is hard to resist. Soak rolls against a hell hound's bite suffers a -2 penalty.

ADVENTURE SEED

Through his efficient spy network, the King of Throal learns that the Therans are attempting to create devastating siege weapons whose fiery blasts can burn through almost anything. If they succeed, no fortress in Barsaive will provide protection. The King hires the characters to find out how the weapon builders intend to produce the powerful fire. The characters learn that the Therans are slaying hell hounds to obtain a supply of the unique magical substance the animals use to spit their dangerous flames.

HYDRA

In revealing the truth about the creation of the hydra, I shall doubtless incur the anger of my fellow dragons. However, I am willing to risk their greatest wrath to keep the hydra's evil progenitor from creating any other such terrible creatures. None of my dragon brethren, who have at times been inclined to dismiss me because of my slightly smaller size, would display such courage as I do in telling you this tale.

These pathetic creatures have not existed in Barsaive for very long—a mere six hundred years or so. In those days, the Great Dragon Thermail (of whom you may have heard) lived in Barsaive and made many close friendships with her fellow Namegivers. Most unusually for dragons, Thermail often invited visitors of other races to her lair for discussions of art, philosophy, history, and other such subjects that excite a dragon's interest. She placed great trust in her guests, and that trust was never broken—except once.

For the space of three years, Thermail forbade her usual visitors and isolated herself in her lair. She laid a clutch of eggs, tended them carefully, and cared for her infant brood when they hatched. She had intended to reopen her lair to the world after five years, once her hatchlings had grown strong enough to fend for themselves. In the third year of her isolation, however, tragedy struck.

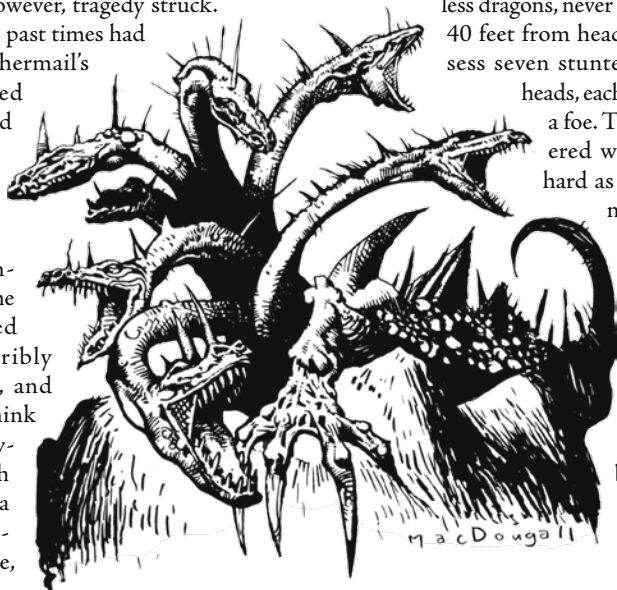
A magician who in past times had greatly enjoyed Thermail's hospitality entered her lair unseen and stole seven of the ten hatchlings.

I regret that no dragon ever discovered the identity of the thief—he should have died swiftly and horribly for such a crime, and it angers me to think that he may be living still. (I very much hope that he was of a short-lived and violent-tempered race,

and that he lost his miserable life to garroters in the back alleys of Kratas or some such place.) We know very well, however, what this thief did with his prize. This evil magician grafted the young dragons together to form a single creature with seven dragon heads—a hydra. The powerful magic used to sustain this abomination twisted and stunted it, so that it grew to half the size of a great dragon and became mad. Even worse, the magician somehow created a second hydra from the first and bred them to each other. Within a mere decade these tragic monsters roamed across all Barsaive.

The theft of her hatchlings sent Thermail into a terrible rage. Because she did not know which Namegiver had betrayed her, she could only assuage her grief and anger by striking at all who were not dragonkind. She flew across Barsaive, searing villages and crops down to the last miserable hut and withered stalk. But this destruction could not bring her children back, and her grief for them only grew greater. At length, the great and noble Thermail escaped her sorrows by impaling herself on the spearlike peak of Wyrmspire. This mountain has been called by that Name ever since.

Now that you know the dreadful tale, I will tell you of the beast itself. Hydras resemble small wingless dragons, never growing longer than 40 feet from head to tail. They possess seven stunted, twisted dragon heads, each of which can attack a foe. Their bodies are covered with small scales as hard as any armor you can name. The magical grafting of the first hydra gave it many of a dragon's magical powers, but the full extent of these powers varies from creature to creature. Some breathe devastating fire, while others can freeze enemies in terror with a





glance. Mercifully, they cannot cast spells—no one knows for certain why, but I believe they simply lack sufficient intelligence to learn them. Because one never knows what powers a hydra may have, a prudent adventurer should expect the worst when dealing with these creatures.

If anyone who reads this book ever meets a hydra, I implore you to kill it. If you cannot, then do your best to convey to a dragon where the creature resides or roams. We dragons always kill hydras on sight in the most merciful way possible—they are an abomination that cannot be allowed to live, and yet we pity them because they never asked to be made. I looked into a hydra's eyes once before killing it, and saw a bewildered sadness—as if it somehow sensed its unnatural origin and felt ashamed.

HYDRA

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+7, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d12, Notice d12, Swimming d12

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 12 (4)

Special Abilities

• **Armor +4:** Scaly hide.

• **Claw/Bite:** Str+d8.

• **Draconic Ability:** Every hydra has one draconic power, as found in the table below. The hydra has 10 Karma Points for the purposes of any power that requires Karma.

• **Hardy:** A hydra does not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.

• **Huge:** Attackers add +4 to their Fighting or Shooting rolls when attacking a hydra due to its massive size.

• **Multiple Heads:** Hydras have seven heads. Each head may make a Fighting roll in a round without a multi-action penalty.

• **Size +8:** Hydras are massive creatures, over 80' long from nose to tail, and weigh well over 40,000 pounds.

DRACONIC ABILITY TABLE

Roll	Power
1	<i>Improved Frenzy:</i> The hydra may make two attacks at no penalty.
2	<i>Fiery Breath:</i> A hydra may breathe fire in a standard cone template. Every target within this cone may make an Agility roll at -1 to avoid the attack. Those who fail suffer 2d8 damage and must check to see if they catch fire. A hydra may not attack with its claws or bite in the round it breathes fire.
3	<i>Suppress Magic:</i> -4 to opponents' use of magic.
4	<i>Armored Scales:</i> Three points.

ADVENTURE SEED

As the characters are walking through a woodland, the shadow of a dragon passes over them. The great creature lands nearby, addresses the characters by name, and asks them to do it a service (for which it will richly reward them, of course). It claims a magician is attempting to create his own pet hydra and has stolen a clutch of the dragon's eggs, which he intends to transform into one of these horrible creatures. Unfortunately, the Wizard is hiding in an abandoned kaer too small for the huge dragon to enter. The dragon asks the characters to enter the kaer, rescue the eggs, and either kill the magician or bring him to the dragon.

Alternatively, use the story line described above, but with the following twist. Unknown to the characters, the dragon is lying through its immense teeth. The magician once angered this dragon, and the great creature is using the characters to exact its revenge.

JUNGLE GRIFFIN

The jungle griffin is one of Jaspre's most beautiful and dangerous children. Brother to the common griffin, the jungle griffin is a creature of even greater grace and beauty. Far larger than common griffins, jungle griffins stand six to seven feet tall at the shoulder, are eight to nine feet long, and have a wingspan of almost fifteen feet. The portion of the creature that resembles an eagle carries much brighter-colored feathers than do common griffins—red, yellow, and even green are quite usual among jungle griffins. Large horns extend from either side

of the jungle griffin's head, though I've yet to discover how it uses them.

As their name implies, jungle griffins live in or near jungles. The Servos harbors a few, but most of Barsaive's jungle griffins are found in the Liaj Jungle. Fifteen or twenty jungle griffins at a time build their nests near clearings in the dense growth, often not far from wide rivers or waterfalls. They appear to love both water and sunlight as a dragon loves his meat.

I can personally attest to the close kinship between jungle and common griffins—I tried





the griffin's land; upon awakening, the trespasser has only the vaguest memory of where he was and what happened to him.

Most jungle griffins prefer to deal with trespassing Namegivers in this way; they dislike fighting because it endangers their young and taints the air with the smell of blood. However, they will brutally attack any Namegiver who insists upon re-entering their territory too many times.

How many is "too many times," noble sir?

I don't know. To be safe, I'd say more than once. That's not the kind of question you should attempt to answer by trial and error unless you want to die.

JUNGLE GRIFFIN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

- **Claws:** Str+d6.

- **Flight:** Jungle griffins have a Flying Pace of 20".

- **Improved Frenzy:** Jungle griffins may take two Fighting attacks each at no penalty.

- **Intuition:** Jungle griffins can make Notice rolls to sense if a character has ill intentions toward it.

- **Low Light Vision:** Jungle griffins ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

- **Pounce:** Jungle griffins often fly down to pounce on their prey to best bring their mass and claws to bear, gaining +4 to its attack and damage. Its Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action when performing the maneuver however.

- **Size +2:** Jungle griffins weigh up to 750 lbs.

- **Terrifying Screech:** Once per hour, a jungle griffin can emit a loud and horrifying screech. Any non-jungle griffin within 12" of the jungle griffin must succeed at a Spirit roll or become Shaken.

eating a jungle griffin once, and it gave me just as bad a case of indigestion as its less noble cousin. However, the difference between the two creatures go deeper than size or coloring. Of particular interest to Namegivers who have ridden common griffins is this fact: no jungle griffin will ever permit a Namegiver to sit on its back. I have seen more than one Cavalryman or Beastmaster killed and eaten after trying to ride a jungle griffin. (Wise heads learn to respect the wishes of such large and dangerous creatures.)

The jungle griffin also possesses magical abilities that the common griffin does not. The territorial creature uses these magical abilities to deal with trespassers. Jungle griffins stake out territory surrounding their nests for a distance a Namegiver might walk in an hour, and they can magically sense any Namegiver who enters this region. Two or three griffins seek out the trespassers and frighten them off if possible. If not, the jungle griffin uses its second magical trick. The griffin can send intruders into a trance, during which it leads them beyond the borders of its territory. The trance lasts for several minutes after the subject has departed from

ADVENTURE SEED

While walking through the Servos Jungle in search of a kaer supposedly located near a waterfall along the Serpent River, the characters discover that the lands around the waterfall contain a den of jungle griffins. To reach the kaer, the characters must find a way to pass through the griffins' territory without falling victim to the creatures' magical abilities or causing them to attack.

KRAKEN

This creature, described (with intense hysteria) in a few legends and histories, is a myth. I speak of it only because TiabdjIn the Knower has requested it—he, like so many other Namegivers, has been deluded into believing that kraken exist. A true friend such as I am to my fellow Namegivers cannot allow such ignorance to continue, and so I will tell you the truth about kraken.

I must admit, though, it astonishes me how detailed are the legends that describe this mythical beast. You weaker folk have a positive genius for embroidering plausible-sounding tales out of nothing. Having heard some of TiabdjIn's tales, I can easily see where many other-wise intelligent folk might believe that kraken possess ten long, powerful tentacles covered with sucking cups the size of one of my eyes.

[One of Vasdenjas' eyes is about the size of a human-sized dinner plate.]

Indeed, I was briefly caught up in TiabdjIn's explanation that the kraken grasps its prey with its many limbs and then flexes the tentacles back and forth, tearing apart the ship or creature or whatever it happens to snare. He even described how the kraken finishes off living prey by tearing into it with its wicked, curved beak. It all sounded perfectly plausible, until I considered the impossibility of any squidlike creature living long enough in Barsaive's dangerous oceans to become the 200-foot behemoth TiabdjIn described.

When he began to describe the terrible black inky stuff that the kraken supposedly spews, I had to sit hard on the tip of my wing to keep from laughing. Supposedly, this ink darkens the water all around the kraken and is terribly poisonous. Therefore, an alert ship captain can spy out an approaching kraken

by the number of dead fish he sees near his ship. But if the ink darkens the waters, why do the legends not warn captains to look for such signs? And if the stuff is so terribly poisonous, why doesn't it kill the kraken? The descriptions of this creature simply fall apart under the most gentle probing and should only convince the credulous.

Some legends of kraken spring from an obvious source—some people have seen large squid, a few of which can grow to lengths of 30 feet or better, and simply exaggerated their size. So many

of you folk are so small that even a 30-foot squid must seem like a vast sea monster.

Other supposed sightings lend themselves easily to other explanations.

Twenty years or so ago, the captain and crew of the *Denman*—a sea-going galley—claimed to have seen a kraken rolling in the water about nine dragon-lengths away from them. They said it swam toward them and tried to grab the ship with its ten long, ropy limbs, and only the captain's skilled piloting enabled them to escape being devoured by the terrible creature. This

story neglects to mention, however, that the *Denman* was trying to plunder a Theran cargo ship carrying a powerful magician. Clearly, the magician created the illusion of a kraken to scare off the pirate vessel.

An account from the coastal town of Myrapor, dated some eight centuries ago, speaks of a terrible battle between two kraken not far from Myrapor's harbor. Those who witnessed the battle through a spyglass saw two huge, snakelike creatures writhing in the water, wrapping their great tentacles around each other and inflicting terrible wounds. Folk more knowledgeable about the creatures of the



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sea would have recognized these “fighting kraken” as two leviathans mating (a violent process, easily misunderstood).

I cannot agree with Vasdenjas on this subject—I have read too many legends of kraken, all describing them in great detail, for me to dismiss these creatures as myth. In the account from Myrapor, for example, the people clearly saw several tentacles in motion. From Vasdenjas’ own description, I know that leviathans have no tentacles. As for exaggerating the length of giant squid, even the smallest Namegiver surely can tell the difference between thirty feet and two hundred!

❖ KRAKEN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d12+7, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d12, Swimming d12

Pace: —; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 19 (4)

Special Abilities

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Armor +4:** Thick skin.
- **Bite:** Str+d8.

• **Drag to the Depths:** Kraken drag grappled opponents under the waves. A submerged creature may hold its breath for as many rounds as his Vigor die. After this, the creature suffers a level of fatigue each round until it dies.

• **Huge:** Attackers add +4 to their Fighting or Shooting rolls when attacking a kraken due to its massive size.

• **Size +7:** Kraken are massive creatures, over 70’ long and weigh well over 35,000 pounds.

• **Tentacles:** Kraken can attack up to 6 times per round with its tentacles. Each successful hit deals Str+d6 damage. On a raise, the tentacles automatically grapple the target.

ADVENTURE SEED

A mercantile trading company that recently lost three ships hires the characters to defend the merchant vessels against the pirates they believe are responsible. Unfortunately, the ships were destroyed and the crew eaten by a kraken... and the same fate awaits the fourth ship unless the characters and crew together can defeat the terrible sea monster.

❖ KRILLRA

This revolting pest is actually the female krilworm, a fact that will probably come as quite a surprise to most readers. The female krilworm, or krillra, shares certain features with the male, but in many ways looks quite different. Both sexes are, of course, equally disgusting. Not for all the gold in Parlainth would I ever eat a krillra or krilworm.

The krilworm, at its largest, measures no longer than a human’s hand and foot placed end to end. The krillra, however, often stretches fifteen or more feet. The krillra also has a single, triple-faceted eye. The female’s mouth is proportionately smaller than the krilworm’s, but on a fifteen-foot insect, even a small mouth is large enough to tear off a human- or dwarf-sized limb in one bite. Both the krillra and krilworm have black, batlike wings, though the krillra’s span 25 feet or better. Like the krilworm’s, the krillra’s tail is tipped with four squig-gling tentacles. The krillra also shares the krilworm’s preference for underground holes and swampy ground. (You see how loathsome they are? Any creature that enjoys living in fetid marshes—ecchhhh!) Krillra spend their lives flying over our beautiful land, rarely touching the ground. They eat birds and other flying things,

including an occasional airship crew. In complete and deadly silence, the krillra approaches its prey from the direction of the sun so that its quarry cannot see it until it is too late. Once in striking range, the krillra snaps its tail forward and grabs its victim in its loathsome tentacles. Only the largest and strongest creatures can avoid being crushed into a bloody pulp in the krillra’s cruel grip—and if it cannot kill by crushing, the krillra simply bites its victim’s head in two. Having killed its meal, the krillra holds the corpse in one or two tentacles and uses the remaining ones to tear off succulent bits of mashed, dripping flesh.

The Great Library of Throal contains many texts describing such horrible scenes, written by survivors of krillra attacks upon airships. We had always assumed that these journal entries represented the exaggerations of overwrought and perhaps damaged minds, because we possessed no scholarly writings on the nature or even existence of such a creature. My fellow scholars will be dismayed to learn that this creature actually lives and reproduces!

To see krillras and krilworms mate is to witness a scene of violence rarely seen in other of Nature’s

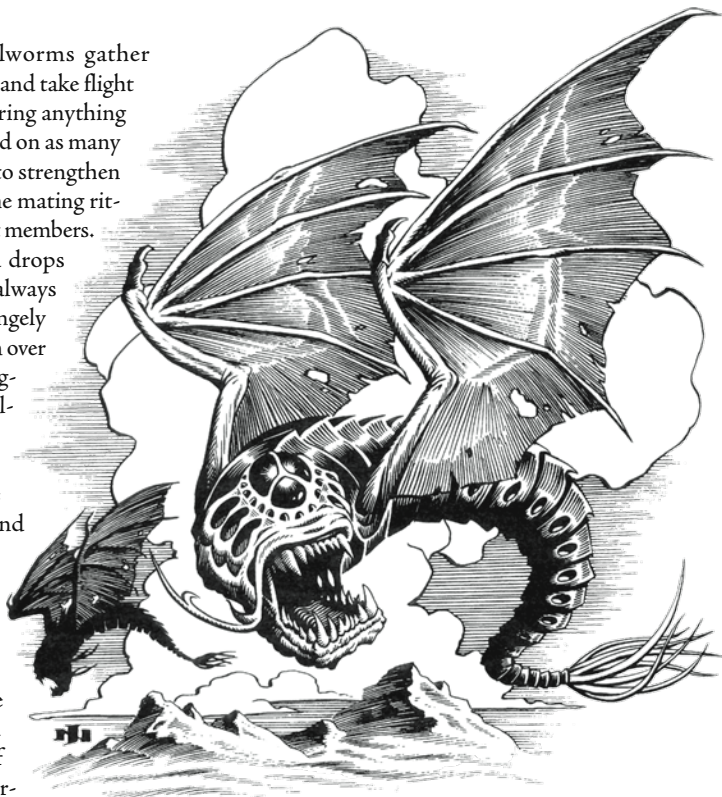
creatures. Once a year, krilworms gather together in enormous swarms and take flight across the countryside, devouring anything that gets in their way. They feed on as many creatures as possible in order to strengthen themselves for their ordeal; the mating ritual will kill the swarm's weakest members.

When a single female krillra drops down from the sky—almost always on the tenth day of Rua, strangely enough—the krilworms swarm over her in a violent rush to impregnate her. Not only do the krilworms often kill each other in this frenzy, but the krillra herself kills any krilworm she can reach with her mouth and tentacles. Only the strongest and luckiest krilworms will manage to climb past the krillra's thrashing tail and leave their seed within her.

Once all the krilworms have either mated or died, the krillra flies to the nearest body of water and skims across its surface, depositing her eggs by the thousands. Three months later, the infant krilworms hatch and immediately fly away in a frantic search for food. I sincerely hope no one who reads this work ever happens to be walking by any lake or pool where krillra eggs are hatching—even Nethermancers, for whom both the males and females of this species have a strange affinity, will most likely end up as the hatchlings' first meal.

Most noble host Vasdenjas, you have failed to even hint at a method of defeating such a creature.

I am well aware of my omission! I simply avoided discussing that very topic to prevent lesser beings than myself from indulging in false hopes of surviving a direct attack from this creature, for I know of no way to do so. As a great dragon, my superior size and speed allow me to outdistance the loathsome krillra in the air. And quite frankly, though the creature shows no other signs of intelligence, its instinct for survival must instruct it to avoid my kind altogether, for they have rarely been known to attack any type of dragon.



❧ KRILLRA

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d10

Pace: 2; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 11 (4)

Special Abilities

• **Armor +4:** Thick skin.

• **Bite:** Str+d8.

• **Crushing Tentacles:** Any creature successfully grappled by a krillra automatically suffers 2d8 damage each round.

• **Flight:** Krillra have a Flying Pace of 20".

• **Size +4:** Krillra weigh over 3,000 pounds.

ADVENTURE SEED

A scholar who believes that krillras are intelligent hires the characters to fly an airship into known krillra feeding grounds and attempt to talk to the creatures. Unfortunately for the characters, the scholar is wrong. The krillra are not intelligent—simply dangerous and very, very hungry.

LEECH RAT

The leech rat is living proof of just how strange a place Barsaive can be. This creature is so rarely seen that even I knew nothing of its existence until a mere decade or so ago. The leech rat is tiny, no bigger than a dwarf's foot, and—by itself—largely harmless. (The thing's teeth and claws are scarcely bigger than a couple of needle-leaves tied together—a bite or a scratch from one is no more irritating than an insect bite, even to thin-skinned folk like dwarfs, humans, elves, and such.) However, most Namegivers will only meet a leech rat when it is riding another creature and is infinitely more dangerous as a consequence. Even I have learned to be wary of beasts with a leech rat clinging to them.

The leech rat looks like an ordinary rat, except that it moves on six legs and balances with a short tail. Most have brown fur, though I have seen black and white ones. It has wickedly long claws for its size, built for climbing, and a somewhat larger mouth than one might expect of a rodent. At the base of its tail lie two scent glands which it uses to control larger animals so that they may kill its meat for it. The first gland produces a soothing scent that pacifies the creature chosen by the leech rat as its mount; often, the mount enters a sleeplike state under this odor's influence.

The leech rat then climbs on the somnolent creature's back, sits on its shoulder, and grips firmly with its claws. Small glands just above each of the claws produce a mild painkiller so that the host creature does not feel its rider and attempt to throw off the rat.

On my recent travels across Barsaive I discovered an ancient healing text that referred to "extract of the foot of a leech rat" as a painkiller and a sedative. I am most grateful to Vandenjas for telling me the precise nature of a leech rat.

The second scent gland sends the leech rat's mount into a frenzy, in which it tries to kill anything in its path (and usually succeeds). When a creature is under the influence of this scent, killing it is often the only way to stop it. Once the berserk mount has slain every potential predator in sight (or they have all sensibly fled), the leech rat once more exudes the soothing scent to calm the mount. Then it carefully climbs down and feasts on the carcasses of the slain.

To ensure an ample food supply—and also to protect themselves from predators with a taste for rats—the leech rat chooses its mount for strength and ferocity. If a mounted leech rat encounters a creature stronger than the one it is riding, it sprays its soothing scent in the air in hopes of ensnaring the other creature and changing mounts. It does not confine itself to dumb beasts, either; I have heard many a tale of a powerful warrior acquiring a leech rat while battling some fierce creature.

Many magicians and alchemists who have recently rediscovered old magical texts and learned the value of the leech rat's glands will pay a high price for those sacs of scent, as will the few healers who know of the creature's existence. Getting the glands, of course, is a risky proposition. The leech rat may be riding anything from a lion to a brithan to a chimera, and so the bold (or greedy) adventurer in search of one must defend against all the powers of the leech rat's host creature. When removing the glands from a dead rat—should you be so lucky as to kill one—use some device or spell to protect your mouth and nose. Unless handled with great care, the glands will burst and spray their contents all over you, paralyzing you or driving you into a killing madness. Were I one of you small folk, I wouldn't attempt to catch a leech rat in the first place—not many



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of you have the bodily strength needed to fight a crazed mount, and you succumb all too easily to the effects of its odors.

LEECH RAT

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d10, Stealth d10

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 2

Special Abilities

• **Bite:** Str.

• **Enraging Scent:** Any creature already pacified by the leech rat's pacifying scent is susceptible to this ability. The leech rat must be within 1" of its target in order to use this ability. A creature thus targeted must make succeed at an opposed Spirit roll or fly into rage, attacking the nearest living creature (but not the leech rat). This effect lasts for d4 rounds. A leech rat can use this ability up to three times per day.

• **Pacifying Scent:** Any creature within 1" feet of a leech rat must succeed at an opposed Spirit roll or be influenced into believing that it must protect the leech rat. Creatures affected can attempt a new opposed roll at the beginning of their turn in order to break free from the effect. If a leech rat attaches itself to the back of an affected creature's neck, this roll suffers a -4 penalty for the host creature.

• **Size -2:** Leech rats are very small creatures.

ADVENTURE SEED

For the past few weeks, a wyvern has rampaged through the area where the characters are staying. Hired to track and kill the wyvern, the characters discover that the beast is being driven mad by the leech rat perched on its back. They must not only kill the enraged wyvern, but avoid becoming the leech rat's next chosen mounts.

LEVIATHAN

As we dragons are kings of the land, so our inferior cousins, the leviathans, rule the sea. (As dragon-kin, of course, leviathans hardly belong in a discourse on creatures—but because some of your scholars insist on classifying dragons with mere beasts, I suppose I might as well describe leviathans for you. Thank your colleagues at the Great Library, by the way, for correctly classifying dragons as a Namegiver race in *An Explorer's Guide to Barsaive*—that was one of the few subjects they grasped correctly.)

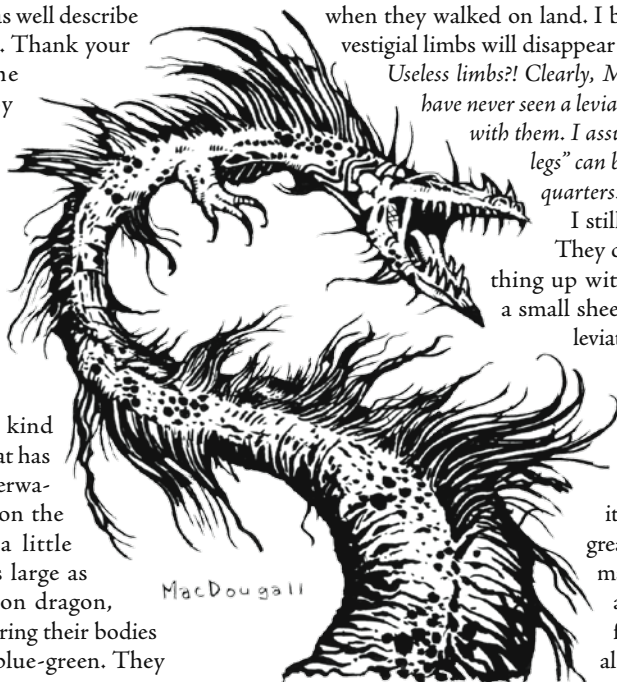
A leviathan is a kind of lesser dragon that has adapted to an underwater life. They are on the small side, only a little more than half as large as an average common dragon, and the scales covering their bodies are an iridescent blue-green. They

have enormous jaws (by your standards) filled with huge teeth; the largest leviathans can swallow a small boat whole. Though leviathans look more like huge snakes than dragons, they still possess four short, stubby legs that appear to be a throwback to a time when they walked on land. I believe these useless vestigial limbs will disappear eventually.

Useless limbs?! Clearly, Master of Secrets, you have never seen a leviathan tear a ship apart with them. I assure you, those "stubby legs" can be devastating at close quarters.

I still say they're useless. They can hardly pick anything up with them—not even a small sheep. I can't imagine a leviathan ever walking on those stumps.

Neither the leviathan's huge size nor its ferocity in battle truly makes it king of the sea. Its greatest power lies in its magical abilities. Leviathans can breathe fire as we do and can also give off waves of



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fear so intense that sailors often leap overboard to escape the “sea monster.” Like dragons and windlings, leviathans can see astral creatures as clear as day. Hunters of leviathans—of which there are more than I would have expected, given the sheer power of these dragon-kin—often lose their lives to these magical powers when more straightforward attacks have failed to drive them off.

I spent a few months last summer on a leviathan-hunting ship and so could observe the hunters’ techniques. They sailed near the leviathan’s home in an airship to avoid entering its native element. Having spotted a particularly large specimen, they used spells to lure it to the surface and then attempted to spear it with magical harpoons. This particular leviathan gave the hunters a terrific battle, ramming the ship hard enough to shake half the crew into the water and then turning its fear-inspiring power against the rest of us. To this day, I do not know why I refused to give in to my terror and simply jump overboard. Once the beast saw that it had thrown the ship into confusion, it dove deep and swam away. I felt relieved, though I certainly did not say so to my disappointed companions. They had hoped to make a fortune by harvesting one of the creatures organs, in which leviathans apparently collect precious elemental water.

Many hunters of leviathans make the mistake of believing them to be no more than stupid beasts. I admit they are far less intelligent than true dragons such as myself, but our leviathan cousins nevertheless understand the world around them. They even have a rudimentary language, a fact that will doubtless surprise many readers of this treatise. Their conversation (such as it is) can be mind-numbingly dull, but they know almost everything that goes on in the sea. Talking to a leviathan is easily managed, provided you treat it with the utmost courtesy and bring it a gift as a token of your respect. A boatload of cattle is always well-received—leviathans eat prodigious amounts and are often hungry. Precious gems are even better—most leviathans share our fascination with valuables and pretty baubles. (Which reminds me, Tiabdjinn—have I shown you my ruby? Not the little egg-shaped one, but the really big one—so big I can hardly hold it in one paw. You must tell me what you think of it... [sigh] all right, after we finish talking about the leviathan. You little folk are so persistent...)

I have heard rumors recently of a society of sailors who have learned to train leviathans as waterborne mounts. I find such a notion highly unlikely—leviathans doubtless consider themselves superior to most other Namegivers and would almost certainly refuse to serve small folk as what amounts to performing animals.

LEVIATHAN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Swim d8

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 19 (4)

Special Abilities

• **Aquatic:** Pace 12.

• **Armor +4:** Scaly hide.

• **Bite:** Str+4.

• **Crush:** A leviathan may emerge from the depths to wrap its body around a ship or other creature as a grapple action. Each round the grapple is maintained deals Str+2d4 damage.

• **Enormous:** Creatures gain a +4 bonus when attacking a leviathan due to its enormous size.

• **Fear:** Any creature capable of feeling fear that comes within 10’ of a leviathan must make a Spirit roll each round or become Shaken.

• **Fiery Breath:** Leviathans breathe fire in a standard cone template. Every target within this cone may make an Agility roll at –2 to avoid the attack. Those who fail suffer 2d10 damage and must check to see if they catch fire. A leviathan may not attack with its bite in the same round it breathes fire.

• **Reach:** A leviathan has a biting reach of 2.

• **Size +8:** Leviathans measure over 100 feet long.

ADVENTURE SEED

While traveling over the sea, the characters catch glimpses of what seems to be a great sea serpent that never approaches any closer than a mile. When the characters’ ship nears port, the leviathan rises in front of the vessel, startling them all when it speaks. It explains that the characters had a safe journey because it has protected them from other sea creatures, and it desires payment in gems and coin for its efforts. During their conversation with it, the characters learn that the leviathan is too lazy to fight every cargo ship that crosses its territory, preferring instead to escort the ships and then demand payment before allowing the ships to dock. They must decide whether to pay it, fight it, or simply talk their way out of their predicament.

MAGMA BEAST

Among the many hazards that face those who mine elemental fire from the Death's Sea is the magma beast, a truly fearsome predator that many folk believe is a Horror. As tall as my foreleg—almost twice as tall as an obsidiman—the magma beast is a dreadful combination of human and lizard. Red-brown scales cover its body, and its toes and fingers end in wicked claws. Its head is covered in tentacles that writhe and hiss like fiery, venomous snakes.

Legend says that magma beasts destroyed the Scavians. Is this true, O powerful Vasdenjas?

Don't ask me. I was napping at the time. The magma beast lives in the runnels throughout the flowing lava of the Death's Sea, leaving the lava only to hunt. Their red color makes magma beasts almost impossible to distinguish from the molten ocean (a dragon could do it, of course, but none of you small folk can see anywhere near as well as we can), a camouflage that allows them to easily stalk their favorite meal—elemental fire miners.

Once a magma beast spots an airship heading toward a floating island, it summons several of its fellows to gather around the island with only their heads showing above the surface. Then the whole pack of them waits, hidden by the lava flow, until the miners' shipmates lower them toward the glowing surface on ropes specially made to be impervious to fire. As soon as the miners have dropped low enough to gather the fire, the magma beasts spring onto the island (to gain sure footing for attack) and slay the luckless victims.

I have often seen four or more magma beasts grab the ends of the fireproofed ropes and pull on them to rock the ship back and forth. Inevitably, some of the crewmen lose their footing and plunge toward the island below, where the waiting magma beasts gobble them up. This method of hunting, to my mind, proves that magma beasts have an uncanny intelligence. Most creatures would simply eat the

prey already on the ground, rather than employing any stratagem to get more.

I have heard a tale of a mining crew that managed to trick magma beasts.

Instead of lowering miners on fireproof ropes, they lowered cloth dummies on ropes made of ordinary flax. When the magma beasts tried to grab the ropes, as Vasdenjas describes, they burned right through them and the ship lifted off safely. I have also heard that elemental fire miners will pay well for knowledgeable guides who can recognize the signs of a school of magma beasts.

In addition to fire miners, magma beasts also eat salamanders, firebirds, lava fish, and other creatures who live in or near

the Death's Sea. They enjoy company and often travel in large groups. I heard once of an entire colony of magma beasts that lived inside the lip of a bubbling volcano. Speaking of volcanoes, the magma beast possesses the curious ability to make a volcano erupt at will. Needless to say, such a power makes it a formidable foe. If you are unlucky enough to meet a magma beast or two (most often many more), don't bother trying to kill it with a weapon. Like the firebird, the magma beast is terrifically hot; one touch on its skin, and your sword



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blade or dagger will turn to liquid metal. If you manage to draw even a little of its boiling-hot blood, the waves of heat will drop you unconscious where you stand. Only a solid fire-resistance spell, cast on you and everything you're carrying, can give you any hope of surviving a battle with a magma beast (and that is a slim hope, indeed).

MAGMA BEAST

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d12+4, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d8, Swim d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 13 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +2:** Thick skin.
- **Bash:** Str+d4.
- **Fire Immunity:** The magma beast is completely immune to damage and effects from fire and heat.
- **Flaming Body:** A magma beast's body is covered in dancing flames. Anyone striking a magma beast without reach takes 2d6 damage. A creature that grapples or is grappled by a magma beast takes 3d6 damage. Any

creature that begins its turn within 1" of a magma beast must succeed at a Vigor roll or gain a level of Fatigue from the sweltering heat.

• **Magma Burst:** Once per day, a magma beast can cause a column of lava 4" in diameter to burst forth from the surfer of Death's Sea like a geyser 20" into the air. Any creature caught in the diameter of the column suffers 5d6 damage for 5 rounds. Each raise on an Agility roll reduces this damage by d6. If the lava is cooled somehow, the damage ceases immediately.

• **Size +6:** Magma beasts stand twice as tall as obsidimen and are just as powerfully built.

ADVENTURE SEED

A scholar who believes that magma beasts are intelligent creatures decides to gather definitive information on magma-beast society. She charts passage aboard a fire-mining airship and hires the characters to protect her from the dangerous creatures of the Death's Sea and from her rough-and-tumble crewmates.

MANTICORE

The very thought of the manticore's terrible fate fills me with sadness. Long ago, before the Scourge, these terrible creatures were truly noble beings, intelligent and honorable, able to discuss Art and Nature and other such subjects with ease. Indeed, one of the most rewarding friendships of my long life was shared with a manticore—Chastynella was her Name. I met her when I was a young dragon, roaming the forests of those ancient hills you call the Twilight Peaks. I had been alone for some time and desperate for some companionship, but among the humans and trolls that inhabited those woods, I encountered only fear and hostility. A handful of souls did not react to my overtures by running away or raising their spears, but unfortunately they had little or no knowledge of the finer pursuits of life. Then one day I found myself trudging along a lonely mountainside, loudly lamenting my sorry state, when I heard a voice gently mocking me.

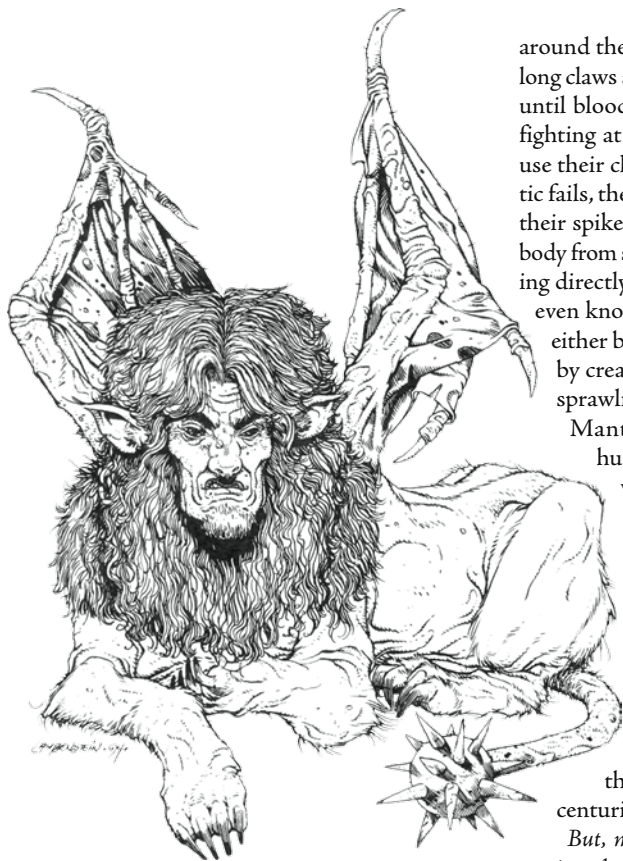
"Oh, poor dragon. Poor, poor dragon. No one will play today," the voice said.

"What impudent Namegiver dares mock the great dragon Vasdenjas?" I bellowed loudly. "Show yourself so that I might slay you now for your

thoughtless actions." (What can I say? I was a young dragon and still quite full of myself.)

Filled with rage, I stood poised for battle, ready to punish the one who dared make light of my lamentations. I was expecting a wild-eyed troll or the like to emerge from the trees, so imagine my surprise when a fabulous winged, lionlike creature appeared. I had never seen a manticore before, and I immediately forgot my anger as I stared in dumbfounded amazement at the sight before me.

"What's wrong, young dragon?" the creature asked. "Have you never met a manticore before? Or is there some foul substance hanging from my nose that commands your gaze?" Thus, I met Chastynella, who brought an end to my loneliness. For in her, I met a companion who did not quake in fear at the sight of me, a companion who proved to be my intellectual equal. Yes, I remember Chastynella, and her rambling rhapsodies on philosophy that could hold my attention for hours. Oh noble master, I beg your... Yes of course, back to the subject at hand. As with so many living things in Barsaive, however, the noble manticores were corrupted by the Horrors almost beyond recognition.



Those foul abominations killed most of the manticores, allowing only those driven mad by their attacks to live. These poor, mad manticores bred and carried on the species throughout the Scourge, passing on their madness to their offspring. Why the Horrors devastated the manticores with such particular ferocity, I cannot fathom—but Barsaive lost a marvelous creature, and I lost many true friends.

The manticores of our time (your time, I should say—my time stretches over more centuries than you can count!) look the same as their ancestors did—they resemble huge lions with batlike wings and humanlike faces. Their tails end in spiked balls, which they use to dreadful effect in combat. Most manticores nowadays are dull yellow in color; few of the black, brown, and white manticores remain.

Before the Scourge, manticores only hunted to eat. Those who live in Barsaive these days, however, attack at random. They fly back and forth

around their enemy, raking him or her with their long claws and striking hard with their spiked tails until blood seems to rain down on them. When fighting at close quarters or on the ground, they use their claws to disembowel the foe; if that tactic fails, they knock the enemy to the ground with their spiked tails. If a manticore swings its entire body from side to side, it can hit an opponent standing directly in front of it with its lethal tail. It can even knock over its enemy with its great wings, either by striking with the wings themselves or by creating huge gusts of air that send the foe sprawling backward.

Manticores also cast spells, using their humanlike mouths to speak the necessary words as easily as any Namegiver. Some folk find this spellcasting ability terrifying, for good reason; I, however, see it as a possible sign of hope that the noble manticores of old will return. Because the Horrors have largely left our world, I believe the manticore bloodline will revert to what it once was. The Horror-brought madness and corruption will fade away, leaving the manticores the wise and noble creatures they were centuries ago.

But, noble master, how can one protect oneself against the mad manticore?

Interesting question. Think for a moment, Namegiver—how does one fight a Nethermancer? How does one fight a thundra beast? Unless you are a very powerful magician and a very powerful warrior, my advice for protecting yourself against a manticore is simple—don't run into any.

◉ MANTICORE

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8, Spellcasting d8, Stealth d8, Tracking d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +2:** Thick skin.
- **Bite/Claw:** Str+d4.
- **Flight:** Manticores have a Flying Pace of 15".
- **Improved Frenzy:** A manticore may take two Fighting actions each round at no penalty.
- **Size +2:** Manticores weigh over 600 pounds.

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• **Spellcaster:** Manticores can cast spells as a Wizard Adept, with 10 Threads, and d6 Novice and d6 Seasoned Wizardry spells.

• **Tail Bash:** Str+d8.

• **Wind Gust:** A manticore can bat its wings, creating a powerful gust of wind in a standard cone template. Any creature in the cone's range must succeed at a Strength roll with a -4 penalty or be knocked prone. The manticore cannot make a bite, claw, or tail attack in the same round that it uses this ability.

ADVENTURE SEED

A town where the characters are staying suffers several magical attacks by a large lionlike creature. A local magician suspects a manticore is behind the attacks and convinces the town to hire the characters to find the mysterious beast. The magician asks the characters not to kill the creature because he hopes to discover the secrets of the manticore's spellcasting ability.

MOLGRIM

Most folk who have seen the molgrim and lived to speak of it—precious few, as you might imagine—assume it is not a natural beast, but yet another magically created abomination. They cannot imagine that the Universe actually gave birth to something so hideous—and the molgrim is certainly hideous, combining bits and pieces of many different creatures into a truly sickening whole. Moderately sized—smallish, if you ask me—the thing is about as tall as a large bear, but much broader, with a deep and powerful chest. Its back slopes like a toad's, and it has froglike hind legs with which it can make

prodigious leaps. Its forelegs, though smaller, are as strong as a human's arms, and the three fingers on its broad hands are tipped with claws as long and broad as a human's forefinger.

Even though it looks like a large and ugly frog, the molgrim is not an amphibian. (Nor truly a mammal... but I digress.) Its hide is not moist like a frog's, but dry and tough like imperfectly cured leather. Short, thick, oily fur grows from its mottled skin, light-colored on the back and darker on the belly. Most molgrims I've seen are gray or light tan around the spine, dark brown or black underneath. The creature's head is too large for its body, and I have never seen anything like the shape of its skull. Most of the head looks bearlike, but the molgrim has a large beak in place of a snout. Wickedly hooked and sharp as a dragon's claws, this beak is perfect for tearing flesh. The molgrim is a carnivore, most often found in the foothills of the rugged mountain ranges ringing the region Named the Wastes (though any stretch of rough, broken ground will do). It eats bears and mountain sheep most often, as well as anything else that wanders into the gaze of its small, red-rimmed eyes.

Lacking the patience and intelligence to ambush its food, the molgrim prefers to chase down its prey. The creature can leap up to 35 feet forward and almost half that distance upward, and it can run faster than a galloping horse for minutes at a time.

Molgrims often capture their prey with one terrifying leap, landing on a victim's back and brutally snapping the spine in half. If a molgrim must give chase to capture its meal, it invariably captures it. In all my years of life, I have never seen a molgrim tire of the chase. Once the creature has the





scent of its prey and sets off in pursuit with an ugly, barking cry, only death will end the hunt.

Molgrims are constantly hungry, and during the day they are always either feeding or seeking food. More territorial than griffins or even wyverns, molgrims hunt alone; one of the few things that can distract a molgrim from the chase is the arrival of another molgrim in its hunting grounds. Unless the interloper is a female seeking a mate (or a male intruding on a female's hunting grounds), the two molgrims will fight to the death. Many such challenges kill both combatants; one gets torn to shreds, and the other dies soon afterward from its wounds. I have seen at least five of these fatal battles, and they seem to all progress the same way. The defending male first attempts to charge the challenging male and drive the challenger from his territory. When this counterchallenge fails, the defending male rears up on its hind legs, utters its horrible cry, then leaps at the challenger in an attempt to grapple the intruder and slash at it with his beak and claws. The challenger often leaps at the same moment, and the two monstrous figures clash in midair, falling to the ground already tearing and clawing at each other. If one manages to break free, they repeat this behavior until one loses enough blood to fall unconscious and die at the beak of the other.

The female molgrim always seeks her mate rather than waiting for a male to seek her out, testing each male she encounters by entering his territory and challenging him. Only if the male survives this vicious challenge does the mating proceed. Because the male is smaller and weaker than the female, only the strongest males battle their would-be mate to a draw and earn the right to pass on their fitness to survive to a new generation. After mating, the male

departs, never to return to that female except by chance. Within six months, the female gives birth to two or three cubs and protects them until they are weaned, a year later. After that, the young molgrims must fend for themselves.

I have heard of strange folk in the Wastes who catch and tame molgrims as mounts, but knowing of these creatures' viciousness makes me doubt such fantastic tales.

MOLGRIM

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12+2

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d12, Notice d12, Stealth d6, Swimming d8, Tracking d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 13 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +2:** Thick skin.

- **Bite/Claw:** Str+d4.

- **Pounce:** Molgrim can leap up to 7', gaining a +4 bonus to attack and damage. However, it suffers a -2 to its Parry for the remainder of the round.

- **Size +2:** Molgrim weigh over 800 lbs.

ADVENTURE SEED

While in the city of Jerris, the characters hear of a nearby town under attack by molgrims. Upon arriving in the town as its protectors, they learn that the local folk recently expanded their farmlands into a hunting ground contested by two huge molgrims, which killed several of the farmers. Not long after the characters arrive, a female molgrim seeking a mate enters the same territory and proceeds to challenge the males. All three molgrims are shoring up their strength by snacking on the local farmers, and may add the characters to the menu as well unless the characters can defeat them.

NAGA

The naga is one of far too many creatures that seem to owe their existence to barbaric magical experiments with innocent living things. Though I cannot prove magicians brought this beast into the world, I have reasons to suspect a certain cabal of Therans... but I'll speak of that later. More important to tell you how to recognize this creature and guard against it, hmmm?

Nagas have the body of a snake and the head of a human. The body is roughly the size of a rock python

or a sea snake. Coin-sized scales cover it, their color changing to suit the place where the naga lies. As nagas live everywhere from mountain peaks to misty swamps, differences in color can be huge. Most nagas, however, prefer bare earth and so are dusty brown in color. A naga's head is always that of a woman in the prime of her life, beautiful in face but as bald as a dragon's egg. Her eyes are the same silver as I am, and fine scales cover her skin. I, of course, cannot judge the attractiveness of humanlike women (they



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all look a little like hairless worms to me), but many males of other Namegiver races have told me that they find nagas' faces irresistible. Even their two-inch canine teeth, which most males would surely find distasteful, don't seem to detract from the nagas' beauty. Of course, the presence of that lovely face on a serpentine body is enough to remind even the most besotted male that he is looking upon an abomination—if he can bring himself to think straight.

Nagas possess an innate magical ability to enthrall any male with a single glance, save for those possessing the strongest will. The victim of this power forgets that the object of his obsession is a bizarre blend of human and snake. Used in combination with the naga's second power, which allows it to change the color of its scales to blend with its surroundings, the naga's magic makes it a formidable foe.

A camouflaged naga stealthily approaches its prospective victim, then reveals itself and entrances him in order to lead him to a secluded spot. Once it gets its victim alone, it compels him to lie down so that it can feed on his lifeblood. However (and very luckily for the victim), the naga has intelligence enough to have developed a conscience. Many nagas no longer kill other intelligent beings, preferring to kill and eat tree monkeys. Therefore, most of them now use their entrancing power simply to lead men away from their homes. Only a few hundred nagas, to my knowledge, entrap and kill Namegivers for food.

As for the Therans who created the naga, I believe the culprits are a few Theran magicians in the pay of Overgovernor Pavelis—yes, the one who lost the so-called Theran War. Shortly after the end of the Scourge, when the Therans began to think



of returning to Barsaive, they realized that they might face resistance to their rule. Just in case anyone in Barsaive had managed to raise an army to oppose Thera, Pavelis the Fool ordered certain mages to create the naga as a secret tool of assassination.

When released into Barsaive, the nagas were to entrance and devour all the able males in the province's fighting force, making any ensuing

battle an easy victory for the Therans.

Unluckily for Pavelis and his stooges, the nagas questioned the morality of such an action. When released into Barsaive, they refused to

do what the Therans wanted. Instead, the nagas claimed part of Barsaive as their own and quieted their innate craving for Namegiver flesh by eating a certain kind of tree monkey that seemed to satisfy them. For the past sixty or so years, the nagas have lived more or less peacefully, breeding and raising young (I have no idea how, as they all appear to be of one sex) and creating homes that might almost be called naga settlements. In general, the best way to avoid being slain by a naga is simply to leave it alone—or to be sharp-eyed and female. If you do meet one with a taste for Namegivers, travel with a woman who can knock some sense into your silly head before the naga entrances you completely.

I cannot judge the truth of Vasdenjass' accusations against the Therans, but I have never heard anything remotely like his story of the nagas' origins and purpose. I fear that, like many dragons, the Master of Secrets distrusts the Therans so much that he blames them for every evil in Barsaive.

NAGA

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Notice d10, Persuasion d12, Stealth d10, Swimming d8, Tracking d8

Pace: 7; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (2)

Special Abilities

♦ **Armor +2:** Thick skin.

♦ **Bite:** Str.

♦ **Constrict:** Any creature grappled by a naga suffers Str+d4 damage each turn. The naga may also bite any creature it has entangled in its coils.

♦ **Enthrall:** The naga can enthrall any creature within 15" by succeeding at an opposed Smarts roll. Enthrallled creatures perform any action as mentally commanded by the naga. The creature is entitled to another opposed Smarts roll each round on its turn. A naga can only have one creature enthrallled at any one time.

♦ **Size +3:** A naga is 15 feet long.

ADVENTURE SEED

While traveling with a caravan, the characters enter a region of Barsaive that the nagas have claimed for their own. Mistakenly believing that the caravaneers plan to attack them, the nagas are killing them one by one, using their entrancement powers to draw off stragglers and dispatch them in private with a bite to the neck. When the characters notice that members of the caravan are starting to disappear, they investigate the situation and must then deal with the nagas.

NAUTILID

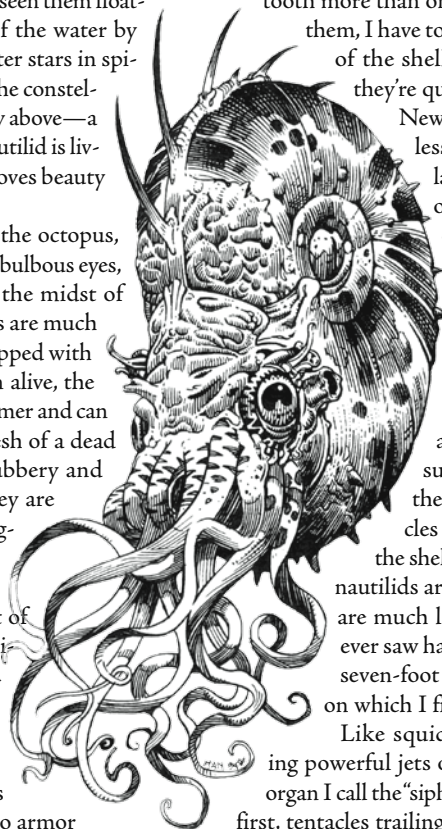
This sea beast is among the most exquisite creatures in Barsaive's seas. I have seen them floating just below the surface of the water by night, glowing like underwater stars in spirals and other patterns as if the constellations had fallen from the sky above—a magical sight, indeed. The nautilid is living proof that the Universe loves beauty above all things.

Like its kin the squid and the octopus, the nautilid has ten tentacles, bulbous eyes, and a hard beak nestled in the midst of its limbs. Two of its tentacles are much longer than the others and tipped with broad, sensitive pads. When alive, the creature's flesh seems to shimmer and can change color rapidly. The flesh of a dead nautilid turns white and rubbery and loses its piquant flavor—they are much tastier alive and squiggling. Unlike the squid, the nautilid shows only its tentacle-covered head. The rest of its soft body lies inside a spiral shell, much like a snail's. Though this pearl-pink shell appears thin and delicate, almost translucent under certain circumstances, it is hard and resilient. Indeed, no armor I have ever heard of protects its wearer as well as this shell shields the nautilid. The bigger the nautilid, the older and thicker the shell; smaller nautilids

crunch nicely between my fangs, but I've chipped a tooth more than once on the larger ones. To eat them, I have to pull the squirming thing out of the shell—not always easy, because they're quite tightly wedged in!

Newly hatched nautilids are shell-less, resembling tiny squids no larger than the smallest joint of a human's little finger. They quickly secrete the substance with which they form their first shell, a spiral little larger than themselves. As they grow, they add new chambers to the shell, into which their bodies expand. An average adult nautilid's shell measures perhaps two feet across the spiral, and its longest tentacles trail almost three feet beyond the shell. Of course, some full-grown nautilids are smaller and a few rare ones are much larger. The biggest nautilid I ever saw had a shell six feet around, with seven-foot tentacles. (That was the one on which I first chipped a tooth.)

Like squid, nautilids move by spraying powerful jets of water through a muscular organ I call the "siphon." They usually move shell-first, tentacles trailing, but can pivot the siphon to move tentacles-first if necessary. Nautilids have little endurance, but in short sprints of a hundred feet or so they are among the swiftest creatures in the



CHAPTER 2: CREATURES

ocean. Carnivorous by nature, nautilids hunt fish of all kinds, hanging motionless beneath rocky overhangs until their prey comes close and then bursting forth in a blindingly fast sprint. Once a nautilid wraps its sucker-lined tentacles around its meal, only the strongest fish can break its grip before the creature's beak tears it to shreds.

Nautilids seem to be social beasts and often hunt together in groups of up to a dozen. I have heard travelers' tales of nautilids attacking Namegivers, but I have never seen one do so. Though they hunt together, they do not cooperate terribly well, and so I have my doubts about their intelligence. By day, nautilids prefer to hunt at depths of thirty feet or more (unless prey on the surface particularly attracts them, of course). After sundown, however, they come within two or three feet of the surface—not to hunt, but apparently simply to gather. These gatherings are the most fascinating aspect of nautilid behavior.

The part of the nautilid protected by the shell contains some kind of light-producing organ or substance, with which the nautilids glow when the sea grows dark. Up to a hundred of them gather together, swimming slowly in ever-changing geometrical patterns. From above, as I can see them, these patterns seem complex and incredibly precise. They also change color, beginning with a blue-green light and shifting to various hues in ways that almost suggest purposeful communication (though I cannot quite believe such a thing of these creatures). I cannot guess the purpose of this behavior, but it amuses and entertains me, so I care little for the reasons behind it.

Though it is hardly my place to contradict a dragon, I am not so certain of Vasdenjas' opinion of the nautilid's intelligence. If they change colors in order to communicate, does not communication require intelligence? And what of the geometrical patterns the beasts make? Are these, too, some form of language? I wonder if perhaps the nautilid is a far more intelligent creature than Vasdenjas believes.

NAUTILID

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Swimming d12

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Special Abilities

• **Aquatic:** Pace 12.

• **Armor +4:** Shell.

• **Bite:** Str+d4.

• **Tentacles:** A nautilid suffers no penalties and can act freely while grappling an opponent.

ADVENTURE SEED

A certain dwarf scholar believes that the geometrical patterns created by nautilids have some deep meaning, and decides to study them as close to firsthand as he or she can get. However, the patterns can only be viewed from the air—and this particular scholar is scared to death of setting foot in an airship or going out over the vast sea far from the sight of land. The scholar hires the characters to fly over the sea in his or her stead and record as many nautilid patterns as possible. Of course, flying out over the sea at night is not a particularly safe thing to do...

PANGOLUS

Some notable sages claim that the pangolus is the ancestor of all the Namegiver races. Others, equally notable, insist that the pangolus is actually a degenerate form of Namegiver. I can't quite believe either theory, though the pangolus is almost certainly akin somehow to Namegivers. I believe that pangoli and you weaker Namegivers all derived from some common ancestor, but what kind or when I cannot tell. Even I have not lived quite that long! It hardly matters where the pangolus came from, anyway—what matters, for this book, is how it behaves and whether or not it poses a threat.

Noble sir, I really must take exception to your comments. I know something of the pangolus myself—admittedly, not nearly so much as you do—and I am certain this... creature... is in no way related to Namegivers. My own community of scholars, in concert with the Great Library of Throal, has undertaken considerable research upon the subject—my own mother was one of the principal scholars. I have read a great deal of their research, and nothing in it suggests that a primitive animal like the pangolus has anything to do with us! Really, the notion is absurd. I know you did not mean anything slighting in suggesting it, but the idea verges upon insult!

CREATURES OF BARSAIVE

Your research? Well. The less said about that, the better, my friend. Hmmm?

The pangolus is the height of a dwarf, but has the slender body and limbs of a human or an elf. Its arms are longer and its legs shorter in comparison to its height than is true of elves or most humans, and it has a useless stump of a tail. Its thin muscles are disproportionately strong, and an average pangolus weighs no more than 80 pounds. The creature's small head has a sharply sloping forehead, leaving relatively little space for a brain. I doubt the pangolus has (or ever will have) any more intelligence than, say, a hunting dog. Pangoli spend much of their time in the branches of large trees, climbing them by means of long hooked claws on their hands and feet. In addition to climbing, they use their claws to tear open rotting trunks in search of their favorite food—grubs and other insects. Pangoli are swift and dexterous, almost graceful, in the treetops—they have no fear of falling and easily leap great distances from one tree to another. Few predators can match a pangolus for climbing speed. On the ground, however, they are slow and clumsy. Their short legs and long arms slow them down to a waddling walk. Only by crouching can they move with any kind of stealth.

In addition to grubs, leaves, and fruit, pangoli also eat tree rats and other small living creatures. They stalk and frequently catch nesting birds, including such dangerous predators as cloud owls. On the ground, they dig up small burrowing creatures with their claws—they seem to like star moles and rock squirrels more than anything else. Sometimes they even feed on carrion. I remember once leaving behind a half-eaten lion—the carcass was covered with ravenous pangoli within a few heartbeats.

Among their own kind, male pangoli are almost as territorial as jungle griffins. Females are always welcome, but the arrival of another male in a pangolus's territory prompts a threatening display. The pangolus whose territory is invaded hangs from a large branch and gives a strange, piercing, hooting cry—one of the oddest noises I have ever heard. If the rival does not give ground, the defending pangolus starts to charge. If the intruder refuses to flee, the charging pangolus pulls up and hoots again. If the rival runs from the charge, however, the defending pangolus pursues it and attacks, often killing the



unfortunate beast. The only way for the intruder to safely back down from a challenge is to voice its own battle cry and then slowly and deliberately depart. Most challenges end this way, though a few lead to dreadful clawing duels that end when one pangolus gives up or dies. Interestingly, on several occasions I've seen pangoli challenge a Namegiver as if he or she were one of its own kind. The beasts apparently cannot distinguish between Namegivers and their fellow pangoli, or between a male and a female Namegiver. Adventurers passing near pangolus territory had best be cautious.

Young pangoli can fend for themselves almost from birth, quite unlike the younglings of Namegiver races. (This difference supports my point that pangoli are not close kin to Namegivers—the relationship is much more distant. If you really want to know the truth of something, ask a dragon—we know far more than any of you can learn in your short lifetimes.) The mother pangolus protects and helps feed her young for almost a year, but the father has nothing to do with mother or offspring after mating.

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PANGOLUS

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d12, Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6, Swimming d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities

- **Bite/Claw:** Str.
- **Brachiation:** Swinging from tree to tree, the pangolus' Pace increases to 7.
- **Size -1:** A pangolus stands only as tall as a dwarf.

ADVENTURE SEED

Reacting to rumors that somewhere on the fringes of the Wastes exists a colony of pangoli that uses a primitive language, a sage hires the characters to investigate. They find the colony, only to discover that a village in the region is fighting the pangoli because the villagers want to hunt on the land. In defense of their territory, the pangoli have recently raided the village and harmed a few inhabitants. The villagers responded by hiring a band of hunters to eliminate the creatures.

PLAGUE LIZARD

Adventurers should be wary of the plague lizard, against which few defenses will protect you. You may be the world's greatest swordsman or have the strength of a dragon (though I can scarcely imagine such a thing of any weaker race), or possess enough endurance to run or fight for days on end. But no matter what gift you have, you cannot withstand the plague lizard, or perhaps I should say, you cannot withstand what the plague lizard carries.

How well do you know the collection of creatures that cause diseases? How many of your friends or loved ones have died because of a creature too small to see, let alone to fight or flee from? The plague lizard collects diseases, breeds them, and spreads them. It remains unaffected by the contagion it carries, so it can live for years and slay countless numbers of other creatures and Namegivers. Many people who have met plague lizards and survived believe the lizards are Horrors, but they are not. A Horror, after all, maims and kills for the joy of it (as a Horror defines joy—but I will speak no more of those loathsome beings. Not a fit subject with which to soil my mouth). A plague lizard kills simply

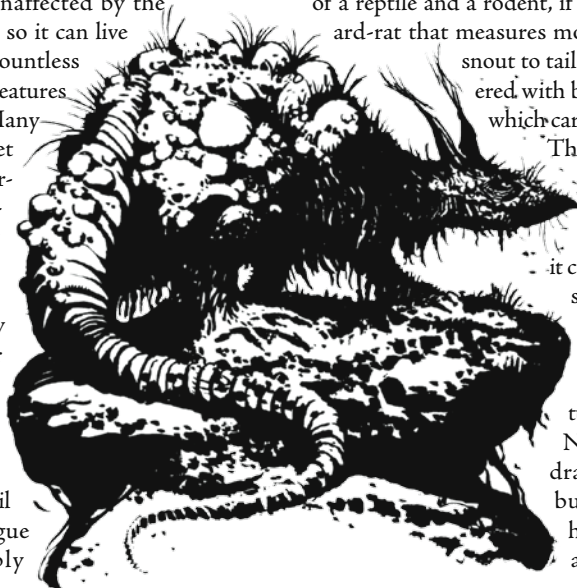
because spreading disease is part of its nature. Some scholars of my acquaintance believe that the plague lizard is a creation of one of the Mad Passions, and they may be right. (That question is one of the few I cannot answer, but it hardly matters. Whatever their origin, the disgusting creatures are just as deadly.)

Vasdenjas' description reminds me of the tale of Kaer Caerndell. When a band of adventurers stumbled across the kaer in 1499 TH, they found the entire community dead, their bodies frozen in terrible contortions as if an agonizing disease had struck them down. We have always believed that the people of Caerndell succumbed to a Horror, but now I am not so sure.

A plague lizard looks like the twisted offspring of a reptile and a rodent, if one can imagine a lizard-rat that measures more than ten feet from

snout to tail. Its entire body is covered with boils and welts, each of which carries a different disease.

The lizard actually likes contagion, and often seeks out contaminated places where it can browse among filthy sicknesses as a gourmet Namegiver might browse at a banquet. Of course, the unfortunate tendency of most Namegivers (excluding dragons, mercifully) to build and live in cities has given the plague lizard any number of such





banquets to choose from. Nowhere in the world can a plague lizard find such a delicious variety of diseases as in your garbage heaps and overcrowded streets. (If you little folk lived more like dragons, in nice, clean caves, the plague lizards would go elsewhere. Alas, nothing is so little heeded as good advice.)

Once a plague lizard makes its nest in a garbage heap, Namegivers living nearby start sickening and dying in great numbers. The hallmark of lizard-borne illness is the variety of plagues that afflict the luckless population at once, as well as their virulence. More than once, I have seen an entire civilization pass away from sickness within weeks—the mere blink of an eye to a dragon. (Not that some of them were any great loss. Ustrect, for example—not a lick of decent goldwork out of that pathetic collection of jumped-up trolls until the Second Thag'ustra Dynasty. First one mercifully died off.)

May I respectfully remind you, Master of Secrets, that some trolls may read this work?

And I should curb my tongue for a lot of oversensitive great louts? Nonsense. None of your trolls will know or care about ancient Ustrect, anyway.

As I was saying, unless the afflicted have powerful magical and mundane defenses against the lizard's diseases—all of them—death is inevitable. The only way to stop the spread of contagion is to root the lizard out of its nest and kill it, then burn the stinking corpse in a red-hot kiln to destroy all trace of its plagues.

Would one also burn clothing and bed sheets, as is usual with fatal illness?

Ah, yes. You other Namegivers use those things, don't you? I'd simply do without them—it makes

life so much more convenient—but I suppose you can't, can you? Yes, burn them, by all means.

Eating utensils as well? Knives, forks, plates, and flagons, that kind of thing?

Yes, those too. What a lot of clutter you surround yourselves with... oh, and disinfecting spells come in quite handy. You all have weak constitutions compared to dragons... I recommend using as many disinfecting spells as possible. Better yet, clean up your garbage heaps. Then the dreadful beasts will have no reason to come near you.

PLAGUE LIZARD

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +2:** Thick skin.

- **Bite/Claw:** Str+d4.

- **Plague Bite:** Any creature damaged by a plague lizard's bite or claw must succeed at a Vigor roll with a -1 penalty for each raise on the attack and damage rolls combined or suffer from a short term lethal disease. See the *Savage Worlds Core Rulebook* for disease effects.

- **Size +2:** Plague lizards weigh between 800 and 1,000 pounds.

ADVENTURE SEED

The Throal government learns of a small village whose inhabitants have died of a variety of diseases almost overnight and hires the characters to protect a group of magical healers sent to relieve the suffering. One of the healers has seen a similar outbreak before and tells the characters that they must hunt down the plague lizard responsible and kill it.

PRECES

The preces has many different names. The name "preces" was bestowed on this creature by the Therrans centuries before the Scourge, and the folk of Barsaive's southern regions still call it that. Further north, local people call it "supplicant," to the west, it is named "prayer rabbit," and the few folk along the borders of the Wastes call it "grassfang." To most people outside the Wastes, the preces is a legendary beast; few Barsaivians have ever seen a living preces, let alone studied it. Until the past several years, the creature has been rare outside the Wastes.

The preces is about the size and shape of a large hare, some two feet long. When it sits on its haunches to observe its surroundings, the top of its head reaches as high as a troll's knee. Its soft, silky fur ranges in color from pale yellow to a rich chestnut brown. From what I have been told, its huge, soft, dark-brown eyes elicit sympathy in many Namegivers. I, of course, feel no such foolish emotions toward the nasty little creatures. (They're not much good for dinner, either—all that running around makes them stringy and tough. I prefer my meat tender.)



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A preces looks and acts much like a rabbit, but you can see differences if you take a closer look. A rabbit's teeth are all the squarish shape needed to crop and chew grass, whereas a preces has in addition a set of sharp incisors and eyeteeth. When extended, these fangs show their tips below the creature's soft, furry lips. The preces' forelegs are also unusual, longer than its hind legs when fully extended. Usually, however, these legs are bent double.

Imagine a Namegiver holding his arms bent at the elbow, palms together so that his fingers are in front of his face as if in prayer.

(Now you understand how this creature got some of its bizarre Names.) The preces holds its forelimbs in just such a pose, its "elbows" bent so that its "forearms" and "upper arms" are close together. When the creature moves—either in a slow, rocking walk or a high-speed dash—its elbows, not its front paws, touch the ground. Some folk in the Wastes hunt them for food and for their soft pelts, but the swift-moving creatures have an uncanny ability to sense approaching danger. Often, they dash to the safety of their burrows before their would-be hunters even see them.

So far, noble sir, you have described quite a harmless-sounding creature—what makes it a "nasty little creature" as you referred to it earlier?

I'm coming to that. You tiny folk are so impatient! Most of the year, the preces is as placid and calm as the rabbit it resembles. It lives peacefully in groups of up to twenty, grazing on succulent wildflowers and fleeing from the smallest threat. For a single month, however, as the days shorten and the harvest approaches, the preces enters its mating season and becomes a crazed carnivore. Males and females both refuse grass and flowers in favor of warm bleeding flesh, and the males battle each other ferociously as the females look on. They tear each other to shreds, continuing to fight long after any other creature would have collapsed from shock, pain, and blood loss.

Any preces in the grip of mating frenzy will attack anything it sees regardless of size. A preces attacks with blinding swiftness, flinging itself at its target and extending its forelimbs to catch its prey in a deadly grip. The beast is far stronger than a creature its size has any right to be, and its small furry feet are tipped with needle-sharp, hooked claws. On the insides of its forearms, usually hidden by its soft pelt, are half a dozen barbs, all tipped with a terrible poison. In a normal-sized being such as myself, this venom causes no more than a slight reddening of the flesh (or rather, it would if the barbs could penetrate my hide). I have heard, however, that it causes agonizing swelling in less substantial creatures such as my fellow Namegivers. As if all this were not dreadful enough—especially for you thin-skinned folk—the preces can also tear great gouts out of your flesh with its incisors and eyeteeth.

A single preces in heat can badly maul or kill an unwary Namegiver, except possibly a troll or obsidianman. I've seen it happen. Though male preceses in a frenzy hunt alone, females often hunt in groups of six or more—such a hunting pack can bring down even the largest of you smaller races. One final warning to readers of this book—recently, I have noticed preceses in various places entering the mating frenzy at times of year other than the harvest season. Do not think yourself safe from these marauding pests after planting time has passed, for their habits may have changed to offer danger at other times of year.

I echo Vasdenjas' admonition not to underestimate these creatures. Readers may think it impossible that a beast the size of a rabbit can harm a Namegiver at least a dozen times its size and many times its weight, but one might say the same of the deadly war-dog, which weighs 90 pounds at most and yet can bring down a brace of trolls. Both creatures attack without holding back, showing no concern for self-preservation. From what Vasdenjas says, the initial charge of a preces can bowl over an unsuspecting victim; an instant later, the rapacious creature is tearing at his or her vitals.



CREATURES OF BARSATIVE

PRECES

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d4

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 2

Special Abilities

- **Bite/Claw:** Str + 1.
- **Estrus:** Frenzy and Fearless Edges when “in heat.”
- **Poisonous Barbs:** Any creature damaged by a preces’ barbed claws must succeed at a Vigor roll or suffer from a Venomous poison (refer to the *Savage Worlds Core Rulebook*).
- **Size** –2: Preces are tiny creatures.

ADVENTURE SEED

In a certain region near the Wastes, where a few buried kaers have high levels of residual magic, bands of adventurers attempting to enter the newly discovered kaers have succumbed to vicious attacks by local colonies of preces, despite the fact that the beasts’ mating season is months past. The characters hear travelers’ tales of these misfortunes, and within days are hired by a friend to help him investigate possible connections between the magic of the kaers and the preces’ abnormal behavior.

PRISMA

Of all the flying creatures native to Barsaive, the prisma is perhaps the most beautiful. As it flies high over the land, its four colorful wings reflect and refract the sunlight, breaking it into ever-shifting rainbows and spears of multicolored light. I can truthfully say that I have seen fewer spectacles more magnificent. Certain artists and artisans pay handsomely for prisma wings, as do mages intent on using the material for I know not what purpose.

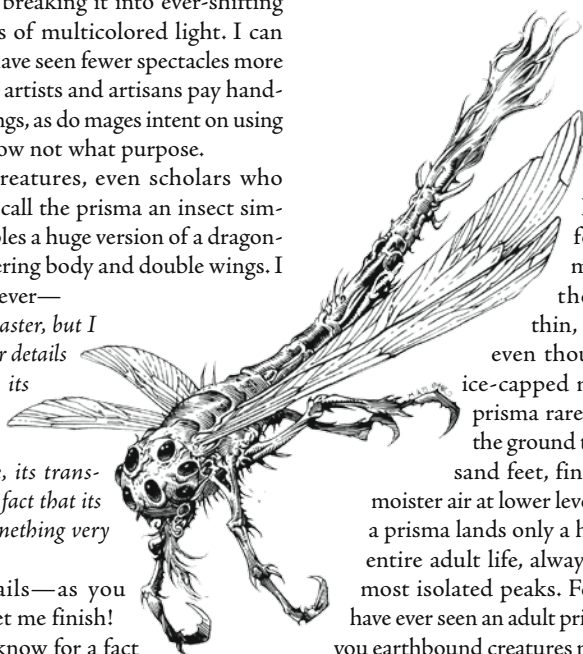
Most terrestrial creatures, even scholars who should know better, call the prisma an insect simply because it resembles a huge version of a dragonfly, with its long, tapering body and double wings. I know for a fact, however—

Forgive me, noble master, but I have read of a few other details that seem to point to its being an insect. The bright metallic blue of its body; for example, its transparent wings, and the fact that its young begin life as something very much like larvae.

Insignificant details—as you would know if you let me finish!

As I was saying, I know for a fact that the prisma is not an insect, but a warm-blooded creature. It has four legs rather than an insect’s customary six, and an internal skeleton rather than a carapace. In addition, its eight eyes are not the compound eyes of a true dragonfly. They do, however, give it a field of vision as wide as many insects’ because they are spaced evenly

around its spherical head. Unlike every other warm-blooded creature of which I know, the prisma has no blind spot.



The prisma’s body is forty feet long and its wingspan spreads almost fifty feet.

Each of its muscular legs ends in a single curved claw the length of a human’s forearm. A fast and maneuverable flyer, the prisma loves the thin, cold air hundreds or even thousands of feet above ice-capped mountains. An adult prisma rarely descends nearer to the ground than four or five thousand feet, finding the thicker and moister air at lower levels distasteful. Indeed, a prisma lands only a handful of times in its entire adult life, always on the highest and most isolated peaks. Few people, therefore, have ever seen an adult prisma up close. At most, you earthbound creatures may have glimpsed the distant glint as the prisma’s wings catch the light, as if a multicolored star had risen in the daytime.

Adult prisma have beaks set in the undersides of their bodies, with which they catch and devour small flying creatures on those rare occasions when they feel hunger (small, to a prisma, being anything the size of a large eagle or less). They enjoy hunting

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and will not pass by easy prey, but they do not kill for enjoyment or in anger. They can survive if necessary on a single eagle a week, drawing strength from the rich fat they store in their long narrow bodies. They build up this fat reserve by voracious feeding in their infant stage, of which I shall say more presently. On occasion, prisma dive down on high-flying airships and snatch crewmen from the decks. Trolls and obsidimen are too large for their tastes, but other Namegivers are at grave risk when the prisma indulges in one of these hunting raids.

Prisma live pitifully short adult lives, four or five months at best. Usually solitary, prisma seem to sense when one of their number is dying and gather around it in its last days. When the creature dies in its last flight, its fellows fall upon it and tear it to shreds before it can strike the ground.

Soon after maturing, adult prisma mate and the female gives birth to a clutch of five or six live offspring, which it deposits in the rugged, broken ground of high mountain passes. These so-called larval prisma are about the size of a large cat and strikingly ugly. Slimy black skin covers their broad, flat bodies, four single-clawed legs, and small heads. Like the adult prisma, the young ones have eight eyes, as well as a pair of tusks that somewhat resemble an insect's mandibles.

The young prisma is an aggressive hunter, easily capable of slaughtering a full-grown mountain sheep (or unlucky mountaineer). It will attack and eat anything that comes near it, including its siblings. To help ensure her young's survival, the mother puts down each larva in her clutch several miles away from its fellows. The creatures feed voraciously and triple in size within a month. Within a year, they reach their full length of fifteen feet, remaining able to move with incredible speed despite weighing a ton or more. The young continue to eat for two or three

more years, though they no longer grow any larger. At the end of this time, they search for a large cave in which to hibernate for another six months. They prefer caves already occupied by bears or other such creatures, because they enjoy a last snack before settling down to sleep.

As it hibernates, the young prisma undergoes a profound change. I have never seen the change firsthand, or I would describe it for you. When the prisma awakes, it possesses its adult form and immediately takes to the air.

PRISMA (ADULT)

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d10

Pace: 2; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 21 (4)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +4:** Chitinous.

- **Bite/Claw:** Str+d6.

- **Flight:** A prisma has a Flying Pace of 20'.

- **Size +9:** Adult prismas are 40 feet long.

PRISMA (LARVAL)

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +2:** Thick skin.

- **Bite:** Str+d6.

- **Size +4:** Larval prismas are 15 feet long and can weight up to a ton.

ADVENTURE SEED

A certain artist or mage has developed a theory that a dying prisma secretes a substance that makes its wings a particularly valuable prize. This person, determined to get his or her hands on such a pair of wings, hires the characters for the almost-impossible task of harvesting wings from a dying prisma.

QUADRILLOBE

The quadrilobe is a truly ancient creature that has existed almost unchanged for countless millennia—in fact, I must admit that this oddity has lived as long as dragonkind, and perhaps longer. Quadrilobes are small even by dwarf standards. For example, the largest I ever saw measured a mere four feet long, and the more common specimens are about

half that big. Broad and flat in shape, the quadrilobe's width averages about two-thirds its length, and its height represents a mere eighth of its length.

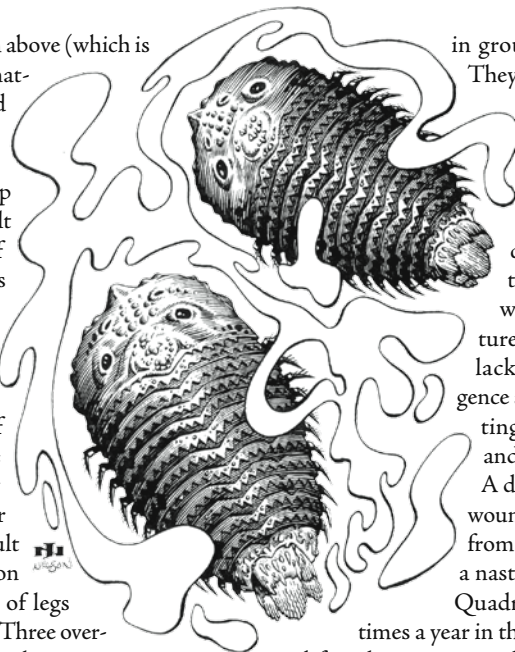
Please, Master Vasdenjas, an explanation containing fewer fractions.

Very well. A four-foot-long quadrilobe is thirty-two inches wide and stands a mere half a foot off

CREATURES OF BARSAlVE

the ground. Viewed from above (which is how I most often see it, naturally), the creature's head looks semicircular, dotted with two tiny eyes and two nostrils set in the top (though it is quite difficult to distinguish one set of organs from the other). Its mouth is hidden below the head, and behind the head extends a central "spine" of overlapping plates and a set of flattened ribs that curve slightly backward. For each of the twenty-four plates in its spine, an adult quadrilobe has two ribs on either side and one pair of legs attached to its underside. Three overlapping fins make up its tail in a manner similar to a lobster or crayfish. The quadrilobe grows additional plates as it reaches maturity; young quadrilobes have fewer spinal plates than an adult creature, and a newly hatched quadrilobe, about the size of a human child's hand, has no more than six. Despite its relatively small size, the quadrilobe is an inordinately heavy beast. An adult of average size can weigh as much as three hundred pounds. The soft, vulnerable parts of its body nestle safely inside a carapace of rock-hard chitin, a shell that is usually more than half an inch thick. Even the heaviest quadrilobe can move remarkably quickly, however, almost as fast as a running human or elf. It usually scuttles forward, but can easily change direction and move just as quickly to either side or to the rear.

Most quadrilobes live on the rocky shores and in the shallows of the Aras Sea. They do not swim, but scurry and scuttle underwater in exactly the same manner as they do on land. They breathe both air and water equally efficiently, but must immerse themselves in water at intervals of roughly one or two hours and so rarely stray more than a spear-cast from the ocean. I have never seen quadrilobes living in fresh water, but they may well do so. Quadrilobes are scavengers, sometimes searching for food alone but often scuttling across the rocks and sand



in groups as large as a dozen. They feed by tearing the flesh of dead animals from the bones using their wickedly sharp and highly specialized teeth, and a group of quadrilobes can strip the body of a cow to the bone in minutes. A word to the wise adventurer, however; quadrilobes lack somewhat for intelligence and so do not always distinguish between the dead and the merely motionless. A downed warrior too badly wounded to drag himself away from the shoreline may suffer a nasty demise.

Quadrilobes mate up to three times a year in the coastal shallows, males and females joining multiple times with different partners. After being impregnated, the female remains underwater until ready to lay her egg pouch. This rubbery, resilient sack is coated with a sticky substance that dries into a stone-hard bond within an hour or so. This "glue" enables the female quadrilobe to attach her pouch to a rock just above the low-water line, thus exposing the pouch to air for only a few minutes at every ebb tide. Once the female has laid her eggs, she often leaves the area entirely.

The pouch has a distinctive odor—reminiscent of both tannin and honey—that repels fish that might otherwise eat the eggs. The smell seems to attract certain airborne predators, but they find it difficult to break open the hardened sack. (I managed it without too much trouble—there are few delicacies as nice as quadrilobe eggs. Oddly enough, the hatched creatures don't have much taste.) The eggs hatch after six to seven weeks, releasing an average clutch of four to nine immature quadrilobes. As a tribute to the creatures' instinct for survival, the young grow rapidly, reaching a length of about two feet within the first year. At this point, their growth slows dramatically, though they continue to grow in tiny increments all their lives. From my observations of these creatures' growing speed, I would judge the four-foot specimens to be as much as fifty years old.

CHAPTER 2: CREATURES

QUADRILLOBE

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d10

Pace: 3; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +4:** Shell.

- **Bite:** Str.

- **Devour:** Quadrilobe's are expert scavengers. Against any helpless creature, a quadrilobe's bite attack damage increases to Str+2d6.

- **Scavenger:** A quadrilobe does not attack anything that moves faster than can be accounted for by the tides. If threatened, it attempts to flee into the surf.

ADVENTURE SEED

According to certain legends, the quadrilobes of Barsaive disappeared almost entirely from their accustomed shores throughout the decade or so before the Horrors arrived. Some people argue that the primitive creatures sensed the approaching Scourge and hid from the destruction. Shortly after learning of this legend, the characters hear that the quadrilobes have vanished from a particular portion of the Aras Sea coast... and no one can explain why.

RELAN

The loathsome little parasite called the relan is incredibly dangerous, simply because it often hides inside a familiar and harmless being. The relan cannot eat on its own, but must use the digestive tract of a larger, more complex creature to turn food into strength. It accomplishes this feat by burrowing into a deceased creature and reanimating it. Therefore, any creature—or Namegiver, for that matter—you see may be controlled by a relan (especially if the possibility exists that the person or creature in question may have died recently).

As long as the relan is concerned only with making its host eat, there is little danger to fear from it, but if confronted, the host may become a powerful threat. Relans can send a powerful venom through the host body that in time causes irreparable damage, but until then gives the host immense strength and endurance. The relan then uses its host to fight its opponent or else makes the body flee to wherever the dreadful little beast can find a new host.

In looks, the relan is a squat worm, rarely growing longer than a foot or so. Six small black orbs that I assume are eyes, as well as other sense organs

I can't even guess at, dot its tiny head. Each of its six legs ends in small, sharp claws which the repulsive little pest uses to burrow into its host. On its underside is a small, thin tube that it extends into its host's intestines.

The relan nestles at the base of the corpse's spine, from which it can control all parts of the body. Using its ample supply of magic, it can reanimate the corpse sufficiently to get it moving again, at which point it sends the dead thing in search of food. As the animated corpse eats, the relan siphons off what it wishes through its feeding tube.

In choosing its host, the relan prefers as recent a death as possible and an intact body, so that the reanimated host will be in fine working order, and a powerful physique so that the worm will not be forced to change hosts too often. If a relan must change hosts, it can survive on its own internal stores of food for a week. After that, the little worm begins to starve. Before the Scourge, they mostly used to haunt battlefields, where an endless supply of food lay on the ground for the taking. Now, one may find these disgusting worms everywhere.





Over time, the relan as a species has gained greater and greater skill at controlling their hosts. Long ago, they could use their hosts only for the rudimentary task of eating anything in sight. As time went on, however, the relan apparently learned to force its host body to walk, run, and perform complicated physical acts. It even learned to slow down—perhaps to halt, I can't tell—the decomposition of dead flesh. With these abilities, relans that took over Namegiver corpses could almost blend in with society. However, dead Namegivers animated in this way are slow to speak and cannot act in a normal manner.

I've heard of a realm in which the people see relans as the Passions in physical form. They actually leave their dead where relans can easily find them, and sometimes they even breed the little creatures. They believe that if they can't bring their loved ones back from the grave, the walking corpse is an acceptable substitute. (They must be kin to the Therans—only Therans would think like that.)

RELAN

Attributes: Agility (as host), Smarts (as host), Spirit (as host -2), Strength (as host +4), Vigor (as host +4)

Skills: As Host

Pace: As Host; **Parry:** As Host; **Toughness:** As Host

Gear: As Host

Special Abilities

♦ **Control Corpse:** Relans can only enter and reanimate bodies of creatures or people dead for two days

or less. In the case of creatures, a relan can easily assume the habits common to its host when living. If a relan chooses a Namegiver as a host, however, it must convincingly pass as its host or else avoid society altogether. Relans are not particularly good at mimicking Namegiver behavior, which tends to be more complex than the behavior of beasts; therefore, any characters encountering a fellow Namegiver under a relan's control may make a Notice roll opposed by the host's Spirit to notice that something is wrong.

♦ **Poison:** Adds +2 steps to Host's Strength and Vigor for 10 minutes, but roll for Incapacitation (*Savage Worlds Core Rulebook*) as if the host had taken 3 wounds.

♦ **Vulnerable:** Outside a host, a relan is quite vulnerable. It has a Pace of 2, a Toughness of 2, and no attacks.

ADVENTURE SEED

During a savage battle against a foe of the Game Master's choice, a Game Master-character friend of the characters goes down under a mass of the enemy. Understandably, the characters assume their comrade is dead. Two days later, however, the fallen comrade returns, wounded but apparently alive. Gradually, the characters notice small but strange changes in their companion, and decide to find out what really happened after they saw him or her cut down. Unknown to the characters, their companion is in fact dead, and has been reanimated by a relan.

SAURAL

A strange creature indeed is the saural, a creature halfway between frog and lizard that can burn with the slightest touch. If you have ever seen long, winding paths seemingly burned into the ground or have cast your eyes on the heat-blackened rocks that dot the shores of the Serpent River, you have seen the trail of the saural.

The grayish-green saural is about four feet long and can breathe on land and in the water through the gills at the base of its thick neck. Thick, armor-like scales protect it against most natural predators. Its most powerful protection, however, is the burning acid that covers its entire body.

(Needless to say, I have never attempted to eat a saural—I know of one dragon who did, and the blisters on his tongue and lips took months to heal.

Really, some of my kin can be quite foolish.) From a distance, the acid looks like sticky slime, but it is nothing so harmless as that. No matter what surface the saural sits on, a constant cloud of steam rises around it as its natural acid eats through whatever it touches.

Though a cold-blooded creature, the saural can live in extremely high temperatures. I believe its acid somehow allows it to thrive in heat, though I can't imagine how. I have seen groups of saural basking in the heat of the noon sun by the shores of the Serpent, leaving half-melted black rocks behind when the sun sinks and they hop away. Often, a saural will spend so much time on a certain rock that its acid eats all the way through. The melted rocks look as if they were as soft as river clay and some



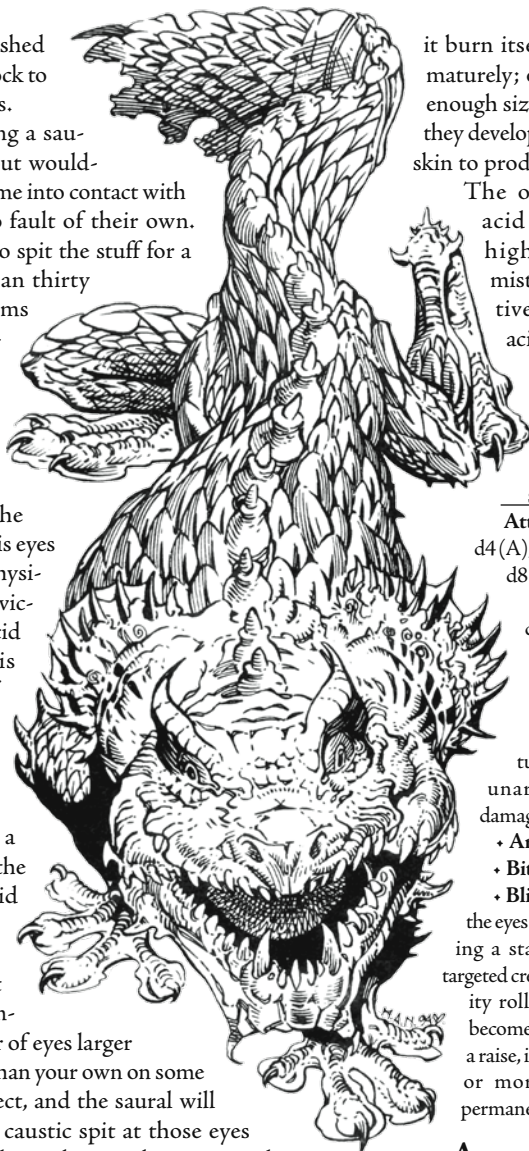
huge artist's hand pushed the saurals into the rock to form the impressions.

Obviously, touching a saural is a foolish act, but would-be heroes can also come into contact with the acid through no fault of their own. The creature can also spit the stuff for a distance of more than thirty feet. By instinct, it aims for the eyes whenever it can. The lucky victim of such an attack is merely blinded for life, and strong healing magic can restore the mess that was once his eyes to a semblance of physical wholeness. If the victim is unlucky, the acid will eat through his eyes and the front of his skull, dissolving his brain within minutes. Only by immediately bathing his or her eyes in a running stream can the victim wash the acid away. Luckily for those who encounter a saural, the beast can be fooled by a simple trick. Draw a pair of eyes larger and more menacing than your own on some other surface or object, and the saural will instinctively aim its caustic spit at those eyes instead of yours. While it is distracted, you can easily flame it to—er, kill it through attacks at long range.

As to the question of why saurals don't melt themselves into piles of slime, the beast appears to have a protective layer of liquid underneath the acid that seems to neutralize the burning effect. This second liquid also allows saurals to mate; both males and females seem able to exude this protective substance outside the acid layer so that they do not harm each other. An infant saural exudes no acid at all, lest

it burn itself out of its eggshell prematurely; only upon reaching a large enough size to fend for themselves do they develop the necessary organs in the skin to produce the substance.

The organs that produce the acid and its antidote are in high demand from alchemists and adventurers, respectively—alchemists find the acid extremely useful in their experiments, and adventurers use the antidote to protect themselves against all manner of irritants.



SAURAL

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Special Abilities

- **Acidic Coating:** Any creature striking a saural with an unarmed attack suffers 2d4 damage.
- **Armor +2:** Leathery hide.
- **Bite/Claw:** Str+d4.
- **Blind:** A saural can spit acid into the eyes of any creature within 3", making a standard ranged attack. The targeted creature must succeed at an Agility roll or suffer 2d4 damage and become blinded for 2d6 minutes. On a raise, it becomes 2d6 hours. On two or more raises, the blinding is permanent.

ADVENTURE SEED

T'skrang merchants near a busy port on the Serpent River discover a colony of saurals near their docks and hire the characters to exterminate the beasts before they manage to burn the docks away. The t'skrang are willing to pay a handsome fee and allow the characters to keep the valuable skin organs from any saural they kill. Killing a saural, however, is much easier said than done.

SEA SNAKE

The sea snake is a curious creature, at home both on the land and in the sea. In my travels, I have encountered sea snakes in some of the strangest and most inhospitable places: at the top of Mount Wyrmspire, in the Wastes, in the Blood Wood, and in most of Barsaive's lakes, rivers, and seas. A large serpent, the slender sea snake is often as long as ten feet, covered in luminescent blue-green scales that glimmer like jewels in the sun. Its large jaws can unhinge to swallow prey much larger than the width of its head. Just behind its jaws lie the sea snake's gills, with which it breathes water as easily as air.

Anyone who has ever fought a sea snake (assuming he or she lived) knows that the beast is made almost entirely of muscle. The sea snake can flatten its muscular body to an incredible thinness and race through water at prodigious speeds. When the creature wishes to leave the water, it resumes a rounder shape and slithers up onto the land. Unlike every other serpent I have ever heard of, the sea snake is warm-blooded. To my regret, I can't explain this oddity; it seems to be another of the Universe's mysteries.

Not at all, noble sir. My colleagues at the Great Library of Throal have studied the matter and have hit upon a most ingenious explanation. The gills to which you refer possess a membrane on the inside; I myself have seen this, being present for a most interesting dissection of a sea snake found dead by a party of t'skrang merchants on the Serpent River. This membrane absorbs a certain amount of magical energy from the air—or water—and changes it into the heat that the creature

needs to warm its blood and survive in a multiplicity of places. How the membrane performs this transformation, we have yet to discover—but that it does work as I have described is attested to by its color. The membrane is a pale pink at the far edge, shading into deep, fiery red at the end furthest from the gill-slit—just the spectrum of color common to things that catch fire and burn ever hotter... sir, am I correct in assuming that the rumbling noise you are making is laughter?

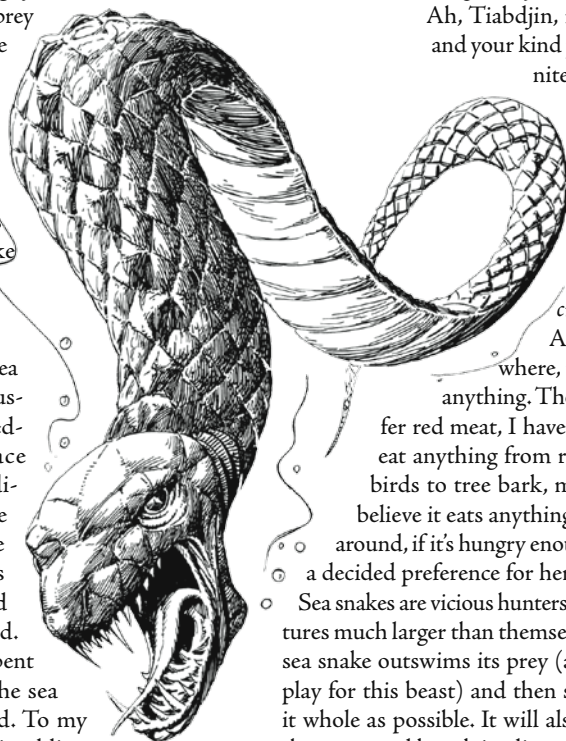
Ah, Tiabdjin, my dear friend! You and your kind provide me with infinite entertainment!

When you have finished expressing your opinion of our research regarding the sea snake, perhaps you will deign to speak more of that creature.

As well as living anywhere, the sea snake can eat anything. Though it seems to prefer red meat, I have known this beast to eat anything from rodents, humans and birds to tree bark, mollusks, and fruit. I believe it eats anything it can get its mouth

- around, if it's hungry enough. (It seems to have
- a decided preference for heroes, however.)

- Sea snakes are vicious hunters, often taking on creatures much larger than themselves. In the water, the sea snake outswims its prey (as easy as hatchling's play for this beast) and then swallows as much of it whole as possible. It will also leap briefly out of the water and knock its dinner into the surf, where it can easily swallow its catch. The sea snake builds up tremendous speed under the water, then launches itself upward—I once saw one knock a sailor overboard this way. It then grabbed her by one limb and dragged her deep below the surface, drowning the poor woman. I know of no Namegiver among you smaller races, not even a troll, who can break the sea snake's grip. Certainly this poor t'skrang sailor couldn't; one moment she was treading water, the next she had disappeared as if giant talons had yanked her downward.



CHAPTER 2: CREATURES

SEA SNAKE

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities

• **Aquatic:** Pace 10.

• **Bite:** Str.

• **Constrict:** These creatures bite when they succeed at a Fighting roll, and entangle when they succeed with a raise. The round they entangle and each round thereafter, they cause damage to their prey equal to Str+d6. The prey may attempt to escape on his action by getting a raise on an opposed Strength roll.

• **Drown:** The sea snake can continue to move unperturbed while grappling, dragging victims deeper and deeper under the waves.

ADVENTURE SEED

A scholar who wishes to discover whether all sea snakes are actually the same species hires the characters to bring back live specimens from all across Barsaive. The Game Master can send the characters anywhere in Barsaive he wishes to capture the huge snakes, exposing them to all kinds of danger and giving them a chance to explore the entire province.

SELACHI

These shark-like creatures measure at least twenty-five feet from nose to tail, making them good-sized even to a dragon's way of thinking. Their rough skins easily draw blood from your thin hides; even the slightest brush against one will surely open your soft flesh to the cold of the sea. Unlike a common shark, the selachi has a squarish nose covered with layer upon layer of iron-hard bone. Below this bone-ram is the creature's huge mouth, big enough to swallow a large human whole. Row upon row of dagger-length teeth line the monster's jaws, and the selachi continually grows new ones as the old teeth break off in the bodies of their prey. Interestingly, selachi are also notorious for attempting to bite and chew objects that they cannot eat—ship hulls, sunken treasures, and such.

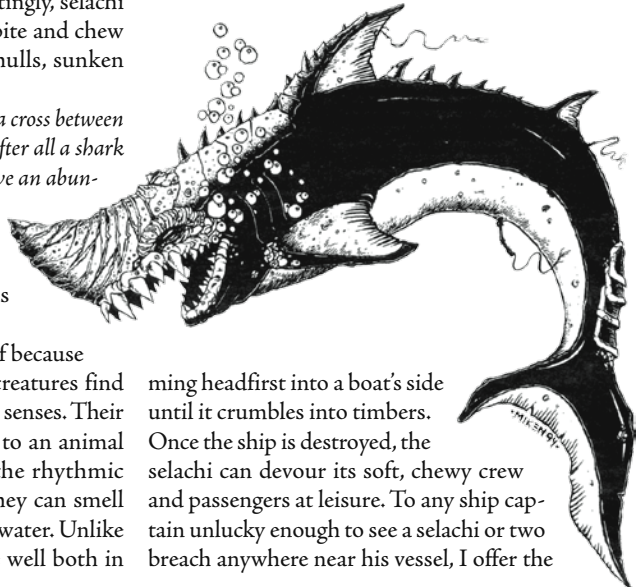
Is it not more accurate to call the selachi a cross between a shark and a whale, noble Vasdenjas? After all a shark has no bones in it, and selachi seem to have an abundance of them.

I was speaking of its looks, scribe. It looks like a shark, bones or no bones. A little knowledge really is a dangerous thing with you scholars, isn't it?

Some folk call the selachi the sea wolf because it hunts in packs of five to ten. The creatures find their prey by means of amazingly acute senses. Their keen hearing can as easily lead them to an animal splashing in the water as it can to the rhythmic churning of a t'skrang fire engine. They can smell even the faintest trace of blood in the water. Unlike other sea creatures, they can also see well both in

water and out of it. Indeed, a selachi will often swim toward the surface at a great speed and launch itself several feet into the air, so that it may see any nearby ships, leviathans, or pods of whales before it plunges back beneath the waves.

Once a selachi has found its prey, the entire pack swims toward the luckless meal as fast as possible and rams it with their armored noses. The vicious carnivores will strike whales or leviathans again and again, hoping to daze the creatures enough to tear them apart with their terrible jaws. Selachi packs also hunt wooden ships, leaping out of the water and slam-



ming headfirst into a boat's side until it crumbles into timbers. Once the ship is destroyed, the selachi can devour its soft, chewy crew and passengers at leisure. To any ship captain unlucky enough to see a selachi or two breach anywhere near his vessel, I offer the



following advice: escape. If you see them, they have certainly seen you, and will batter your ship to splinters within minutes unless you can get away.

The most successful method of keeping selachi away from your ship—indeed, the only successful method I know of—requires attracting them to you first. As mad as that no doubt sounds, I assure you it works. When you plan a short ocean voyage, bring along several live animals—cows or pigs will do nicely. After a day or so under sail—or whenever you see selachi in the distance—kill one of the cattle and pour some of its blood over the side. The pack of selachi will swim toward the blood and drift aimlessly around in it in search of the animal from which it came until the blood disperses. All this time, of course, you are sailing swiftly away. After enough time has passed for the blood to have vanished (a difficult judgment at best, I know), pour more blood into the water to distract the creatures again. By this means, you should stay one step ahead of the selachi throughout your voyage. I caution you, however, that waiting until you see selachi in the distance is more dangerous than simply spilling blood at regular intervals whether you see them or not. They can swim so fast that you may not have time to slaughter your cow or pig before the ravenous pack is upon you.

I also have a warning for the reader; playing “follow the leader” with these vicious beasts in the manner he

describes may have terrible consequences if they follow your ship into port. There, they will wreak havoc not only on your ship but on every ship in the harbor. I advise having powerful enough weapons on your vessel to kill these creatures.

SELACHI

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d12, Swimming d10

Pace: —; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 12

Special Abilities

- **Aquatic:** Pace 10.
- **Bite:** Str+d8.
- **Hardy:** The creature does not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Large:** Attackers add +2 to their attack rolls when attacking a selachi due to its large size.
- **Ram:** Selachi use the charge maneuver to ram their opponents with their horns. If they can move at least 6" before attacking, they add +4 to their damage total.
- **Size +4:** Selachi can grow up to 25' in length.

ADVENTURE SEED

A ship docks in a busy harbor, and the ship's hands are beginning their work just as the characters board the vessel. Minutes later, the dockmaster shouts a dire warning: a school of selachi has entered the bay. As the creatures start smashing into boats and start sending them to the bottom, the terrified ship owner begs the characters to drive them off or kill them.

SHADOW

Of all the creatures that I have called abominations during our discourse, the shadow is by far the most dreadful. These monstrous things are slaves of the Horrors, created from the souls of their pitiful victims. Only in the service of my fellow Namegivers, as a timely warning, do I consent to mention these terrible creatures and their foul masters.

When a Horror kills a victim's body, it can create a shadow by capturing the slain Namegiver's spirit. With a terrible wrenching sound, the Horror sucks the soul from the dead or dying body and corrupts it. A terrible blackness slowly passes over the poor victim's astral self, until the only bit of the wretch still visible is the dull glow of his or her eyes. Nothing remains of the victim, not the smallest shred of his or her soul—the victim has died, completely

and irrevocably Driven mad by the sundering of spirit and body, magically enslaved by the Horror, the shadow becomes a fearsome tool for its master's dread designs.

A shadow does not have the kind of physical being it once had as a Namegiver—it has no depth, no thickness, none of the bulk of living flesh. It appears to have no more substance than the harmless shadow of any object or person; only the closest gaze at an ordinary patch of shade can reveal the slightly darker shape of the Horror's shadow-servant. A shadow can assume whatever shape its master pleases, matching the exact outlines of a common shadow cast by any object. It can also dim its glowing red eyes, becoming almost invisible within normal shade. The only thing that gives it away is this: the affected object or



CREATING A SHADOW

Only a Horror (see the *Game Master's Guide*) can create a shadow, and it can only make one from a dead victim. To do so, the Horror must have previously Horror-marked the victim. Once linked with the victim this way, the Horror gains new insights into the victim's guiltiest secret thoughts. It uses these thoughts to create the shadow once the victim has died. The victim becomes a shadow under the Horror's control.

person seems to cast a slightly darker shadow than the other objects in the room. Shadows can only exist within the shade cast by an object or person; they cannot exist in total darkness or in direct light. They have not enough substance to affect the physical world directly, but can easily act as spies for their dreadful masters. Able to blend in perfectly with almost any surroundings, shadows enable Horrors to keep watch over whomever they choose. If necessary, these terrible beings can even skitter from shadow to shadow to avoid detection.

Shadows also aid the Horrors in taking control of victims. If a shadow-servant shapes itself to match a real person's shadow, the shadow-servant can attempt to possess that person. If it succeeds in its foul purpose, the shadow controls the victim's body, though it cannot possess the victim's mind. A shadow often stalks its intended victim for some time, carefully learning exactly how he or she behaves before taking possession, lest the victim manage to use its mind against the shadow in some subtle way.

Of course, controlling a body while leaving the mind free offers the Horrors a chance to cause pain and suffering in ways they find especially delicious. The victim is compelled by the shadow to do dreadful things, and all his will to rebel cannot prevent him from committing whatever atrocity the controlling Horror desires. By playing one person against another and making diabolical use of its shadow-controlled puppets, a Horror can often tear an entire town or village apart from within and feed on the anguish of all the inhabitants.

Other than some spell designed to strike directly at the shadow, I know of only one way to kill it. If you shed light on the shadow's hiding

place before it can leap to a new pool of darkness, you will destroy it.

SHADOW

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d12, Stealth d12

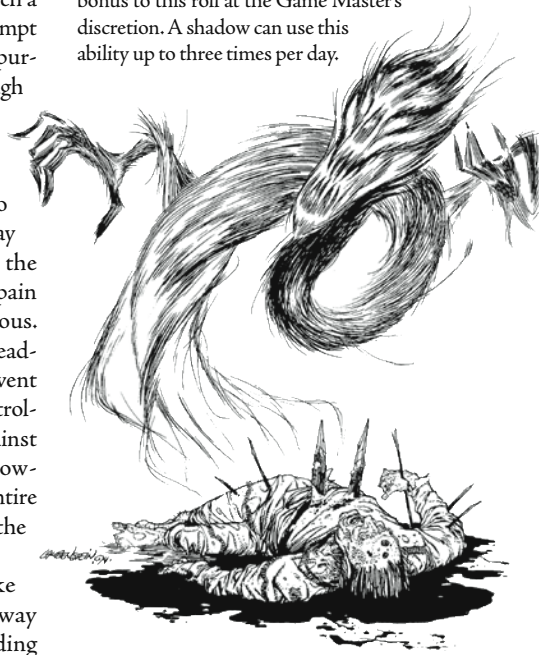
Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

• **Deathly Touch:** 2d4 damage.

• **Ethereal:** Shadows are immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks.

• **Possess:** By replacing the victim's shadow, a shadow can control it. When first attacked in this way, the victim must make an opposed Spirit roll or become completely under the shadow's control. Every 24 hours, a possessed creature can attempt to regain control of itself by making an opposed Spirit roll. Because shadows are no longer Namegivers, characters under their control often act strangely. They may exhibit subtle differences in speech patterns or mannerisms, or do something blatantly out of character like attacking a loved one. Depending on the oddness of the behavior, other characters may notice something wrong with a shadow's victim by making a Notice roll. If the victim's odd behavior is subtle, the Notice roll receives no modifiers. If, however, the shadow's victim lashes out at friends and companions, characters may get a +3 or +4 bonus to this roll at the Game Master's discretion. A shadow can use this ability up to three times per day.



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ADVENTURE SEED

In a city of the Game Master's choice, a politician who is also a close friend of the characters has begun to act extremely unlike him- or herself. He or she makes confusing and often contradictory decisions, as if in the grip of some internal struggle. The characters decide to find out why, and if possible to help their friend through his or her trouble.

Unfortunately, their friend has fallen victim to a shadow. To save their friend, the characters must confront and destroy the shadow and the Horror who created it. As they search for answers and try to take action, the Horror is consolidating its control over others in local government and forcing them to commit horrible acts—the characters must stop the Horror before it destroys the entire city.

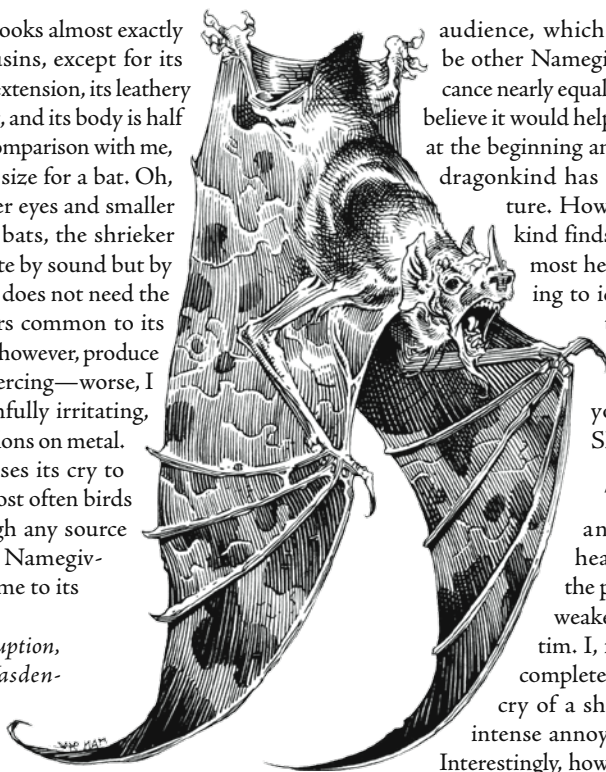
SHRIEKER BAT

The shrieker bat looks almost exactly like its smaller cousins, except for its greater size. At full extension, its leathery wings span four feet, and its body is half that size—tiny by comparison with me, but quite a healthy size for a bat. Oh, and it also has larger eyes and smaller ears. Unlike other bats, the shrieker bat does not navigate by sound but by sight—therefore, it does not need the large mouselike ears common to its tiny kindred. It can, however, produce a cry every bit as piercing—worse, I think. I find it painfully irritating, worse than sharp talons on metal. The shrieker bat uses its cry to paralyze its prey, most often birds and rodents (though any source of meat, including Namegivers, are quite welcome to its palate).

Forgive the interruption, most benevolent Vasdendas, but my scholar's mind frets at the description you have given for this apparently misnamed creature. If it resembles ordinary bats only by a chance similarity in the make-up of its wings but is unique in every other way, why does it not also have a unique name that better reflects its nature and powers?

[Here my host subjected me to an intense, curious stare, as if he was suddenly wondering how I might taste.]

As you have reminded me yourself on many tedious occasions, Tiabdjin, I must tailor my narrative to the interests and understandings of my primary



audience, which must by necessity be other Namegivers of an insignificance nearly equal to yours. If you truly believe it would help, I could begin again at the beginning and provide the name dragonkind has given to each creature. However, it seems your kind finds a descriptive name most helpful when attempting to identify the creature that is trying to separate your head from the rest of your pathetic body. Shall I continue?

Please.

The shriek affects any animal within hearing range, though the paralysis effect grows weaker the bigger the victim. I, for example, remain completely unaffected by the cry of a shrieker bat (save for intense annoyance at the sound).

Interestingly, however, the shriek also affects inanimate objects. Weapons, glassware, pottery, and other objects made of similar materials may well shatter into slivers when the shrieker bat flies near. (It occurs to me that those smaller races who surround themselves with such objects that they consider essential to daily life might use this shattering phenomenon as a warning that a shrieker bat is near.)

This creature is quite dangerous when hunting; its dull black fur makes it almost impossible to see in the dark, and its high-pitched cry is beyond the

CHAPTER 2: CREATURES

ability of you smaller races to hear. (You don't know how lucky you are.) Only the rush of its wings give its presence away, and by the time you hear them its cry has probably paralyzed you or shattered all your weapons. Unlike other bats, the shrieker bat also flies in daylight—most often to protect its nest from harm, but I'd wager that a ravenous bat will also hunt in sunlight if it must.

Once the bat paralyzes its prey, it lands on its victim and begins to tear out great chunks of flesh with its sharp claws and teeth. The effects of its cry last for at least a couple of minutes, so you can't hope for it to wear off and allow you to run before the bat starts to eat you. Any traveler unlucky enough to fall victim to a shrieker bat had best hope his companions have intact weapons left with which to battle it until he can move again. Of course, these bats travel in packs of ten—defeating them should prove quite a challenge for even the most experienced heroes.

SHRIEKER BAT

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10

Pace: 1; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities

• **Bite:** Str.

• **Flight:** Shrieker bats have a Flying Pace of 10".

• **Paralyzing Shriek:** Once per day, a shrieker bat can let out a piercing shriek that paralyzes all creatures within a large burst template. All creatures within the area must succeed at a Vigor roll or become Shaken.

• **Shattering Shriek:** Three times per day, a shrieker bat can release a shriek that shatters pottery, glass, and other similar materials within a large burst template.

ADVENTURE SEED

The characters go in search of a long-forgotten kaer that reports say contains a valuable store of gems. The characters find and enter the kaer and even find the gemstones—along with a colony of shrieker bats, who have built a nest in the walls of the gem room. Before the characters can retrieve the precious stones, the bats attack them. The characters must not only defeat the bats, but also draw them far enough away from the gemstones so that their cries do not shatter the gems.

SKEORX

The skeorx is one of the most brutal and dangerous beasts in Barsaive. I have several scars on my right forearm to prove it. Does the thought of a carnivorous beast that can harm a great dragon frighten you? It should.

I met my first—and sadly, not my last—skeorx when I was scarcely more than a hatchling. I was soaring over the Liaj Jungle, hoping to nab a lion or a bear for a light lunch, when I noticed something rustling in the bushes below. The wind carried no smell to me of any creature. As I was incurably curious in my younger days, I landed to investigate. I knew such an act might be perilous, but I believed (wrongly, as it turned out) that the strange beast would flee in terror because of my great size.

I soon learned my mistake. The rustling came from an adult skeorx, perhaps a fifth as large as I was then, gorging itself on a fresh kill. When the beast saw me, it charged straight at me. Shocked by its daring, I couldn't move for a heartbeat or two. Before I could so much as step backward,

the powerful creature leaped on my shoulders and tried to tear at my wings. Ignoring the savage pain of the beast's claws, I sprang into the air, taking the terrible creature with me. Once aloft, I shook the skeorx off my shoulder with a mighty effort and watched it plunge a hundred feet into the jungle below. Within seconds I saw the undergrowth rustling—the thing had survived and gone back to its unfinished meal.

Since that fateful day, I have twice met skeorxes, both of which charged me as the first one did. I had learned a valuable lesson, however, and flamed them to charred lumps before they reached me.

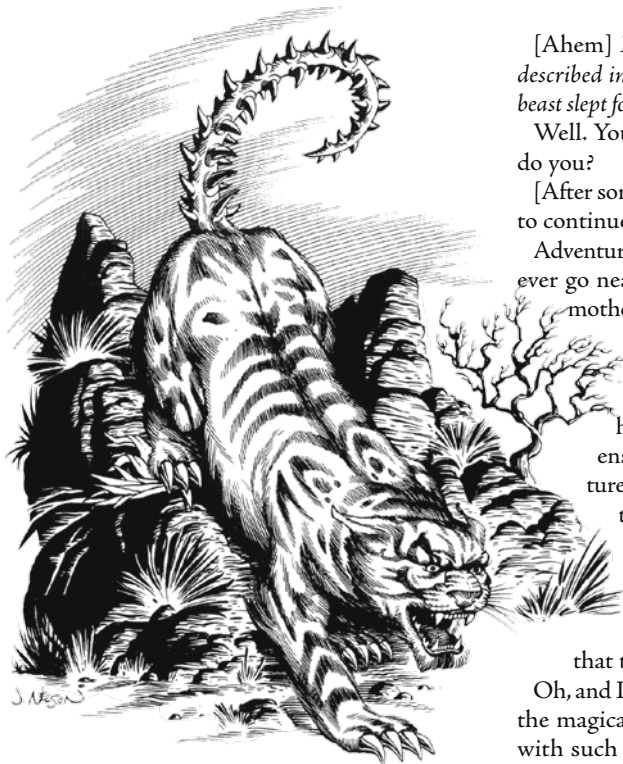
[Here ensued a pause, after which the dragon began to talk of manticores.]

Excuse me, noble sir—but you have not yet told me what these skeorxes are actually like.

After my terrifying tale, you don't know?

Er, the story was most entertainingly suspenseful but somewhat lacking in details.

Hmmmmph.



A skeorx is a four-legged creature with a tiger-like head, commonly eight feet long from snout to tail. I have heard of some as long as fifteen feet and will live a happy dragon indeed if I never meet such a one. Their bodies are covered with short fur of a drab, brownish-green shade that blends well with the dark jungle undergrowth. On each of the skeorx's feet are huge claws, with which it can rip through even dragon hide (as was clear from my story). Finally, it has a snakelike tail from which row upon row of razor-sharp bones extend. When fighting smaller creatures, the skeorx rarely brings its tail into play; however, when attacking creatures larger than itself, it attempts to wrap the tail around its opponent's neck. Such a grip gives the skeorx a stable position from which to rake its claws across its enemy's flesh—and if the victim attempts to shake the skeorx free, it will cut its own throat.

The skeorx is always ravenous, almost always feeding. If it is not hunched over a fresh kill, gorging noisily, it is hunting for something else to kill. I don't think the things even sleep.

[Ahem] I have heard something like these beasts described in an adventurer's journal, and it says the beast slept for around three hours in the early morning.

Well. You don't need me to tell you anything, do you?

[After some moments, the dragon was persuaded to continue.]

Adventurers and travelers, take heed: do not ever, ever go near a mother skeorx and her young. A mother skeorx will so eagerly charge forward to destroy any threat to her babes that she often tramples the infants themselves without noticing. The young have developed an interesting habit to ensure their survival—if they spy a creature which the mother might see as a threat to them, they dash away in a direction perpendicular to the creature in question. If they cannot dodge their mother's charge, the young skeorxes flatten themselves to the ground in the hope that their mother will miss them.

Oh, and I have also heard that skeorxes can resist the magical abilities of Beastmasters. Explorers with such abilities should therefore be wary—your talents will not save you from this ravaging beast. Fleet feet and a good, strong bow—or better yet, flaming breath—will serve you much better.

SKEORX

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities

- ♦ **Barbed Tail:** Skeorx may grapple with their barbed tails, automatically dealing Str+d6 damage each round. Skeorx can continue to use their bite and claw attacks against grappled opponents.

- ♦ **Bite/Claw:** Str+d8, AP 2

- ♦ **Improved Frenzy:** Skeorx may make two Fighting attacks each action at no penalty.

- ♦ **Low Light Vision:** Skeorx ignore penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.

- ♦ **Pounce:** Skeorx often pounce on their prey to best bring their mass and claws to bear. It can leap 1d6" to gain +4 to its attack and damage. Its Parry is reduced by -2 until its next action when performing this maneuver, however.

- ♦ **Size +2:** Skeorx can weigh over 500 pounds.

CHAPTER 2: CREATURES

ADVENTURE SEED

As the characters are walking through a forest, they come across a half-grown skeorx. They do not know that the creature is practicing its hunting skills while its mother watches from the shadows. The young skeorx attacks the characters, and

the mother initially holds back to see how well her offspring fights against such weak opponents. The minute the tide of battle turns in the characters' favor, the mother skeorx leaps into the fray. If the characters kill the youngling, they find themselves in real trouble.

SNOW BADGER

Only in Barsaive's tallest mountains, where snow falls deep and lingers throughout the year, can the snow badger still be found. Thousands of years ago, when large portions of Barsaive lay under a white blanket for months at a time, snow badgers were numerous and fat. Now, our land is temperate and growing ever warmer, and I believe that within a few hundred years the snow badger will disappear altogether.

This badger strongly resembles its mundane brethren, though it is somewhat larger. Its pelt is almost entirely white, crossed with a few darker stripes. The badger's coloring allows it to blend perfectly with the shadows on the snowy landscape; often, the only clue to a snow badger's presence is its squeal of alarm just before you tread on it. Its short

muzzle hides small sharp teeth, though its bite does little damage. At most, snow badgers only dull their teeth on my scales... though I suppose you weaker folk might find the same bite quite painful. A snow badger also has claws—short, sharp ones on its back feet and long, curving front claws that can burrow into the earth as easily as they dig into an unlucky predator's flesh.

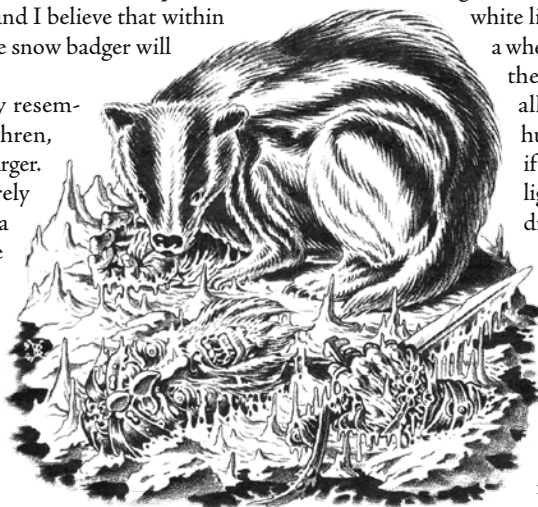
The snow badger's real weapon is not teeth or claws, but its magical ability to give off waves of biting cold. The badger somehow sucks up the cold from the surrounding snow and concentrates it around itself. The creature can lower the temperature so far that the thin skin of most Namegivers will freeze, and fingers and toes grow brittle with frostbite and

fall off. Most adventurers don't prepare for such extreme concentrated cold and will quickly succumb to it unless they kill the creature or flee.

If you watch the landscape, you may actually see the badger using its magical power. When the beast begins to draw in the cold, blue-white lines form in the snow in a wheel-spoke pattern around the creature, extending in all directions for several hundred feet. It looks as if the badger is drawing in lightning from the snowdrifts—the lines seem to crackle and snap with power. Don't stay to watch the spectacle too long, though. If you do, you may well freeze to death.

In many troll communities of Barsaive's mountain ranges, the pelts of snow badgers are highly prized. As one can imagine, obtaining such a pelt requires great stealth and cunning and has become even more difficult as the population of snow badgers has dwindled. As a result, they confer great status on their wearers—mostly powerful chieftains and warriors who wear them as ceremonial dress. Troll legends also claim that a snow badger pelt confers the creature's unique power on its wearer, but it seems improbable that the dried pelt of a living creature would retain any of the creature's magical powers.

One can find merchants selling snow badger pelts in most of the marketplaces of Barsaive. But almost all of these are simply the pelts of mundane badgers, dyed to resemble the coats of snow badgers.



CREATURES OF BARSAlVE

Snow badgers mate for life. Therefore, if you see one snow badger, you will likely soon meet another one. They couple during the spring and usually produce a litter of six to eight dark-gray or black cubs. For the first half year of their lives, young snow badgers do not leave the hidden burrow dug by their parents—their dark coloring, though useless in the snow, perfectly hides them from snooping predators in the darkness of their holes. Many of these burrows are large enough to admit a human and extend downward for several feet, though they are only about three feet across. Of course, the parents are never far off—any predator that tries to crawl inside the burrow will face a couple of angry adult badgers within seconds. (I've snacked on snow badger, though not often—don't care much for the cold I have to face to catch them—and they taste remarkably like chicken. They're little more than a mouthful, though.)

SNOW BADGER

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Swimming d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities

• **Claws:** Str+d6.

• **Cold Aura:** Temperatures drop to cold in a large burst remplate around a snow badger. Living creatures within this range must succeed at a Vigor roll at the start of its turn or suffer a level of Fatigue.

ADVENTURE SEED

The characters are traveling in the mountains when they come across a large snow badger burrow, which they mistake for the entrance to a nearby kaer. The characters climb down into the burrow just as the adult badgers are returning. Once they realize their mistake, the characters must fight their way past the angry and frightened mother and father of the helpless badger cubs.

STINGER

Small and rodentlike, the stinger stands a mere four feet tall, with much of its body drooping over its short hind legs. Its upper half tapers into a narrow head, flanked on either side by vicious barbs. The beast has two even shorter front legs, which it uses to dig tunnels, climb walls (though rarely), and attack prey. These limbs end in long, sharp claws that can swiftly make a bloody mess of soft flesh (such as that of most Namegivers). The creature's lower half tapers into a sturdy tail, also tipped with a sharp barb. Its back legs, slightly longer than the front ones, give it an amazingly fast running speed.

Stingers tend to gather in swarms of fifteen to twenty,

preferring underground spots such as natural caves (and also kaers, so let the adventurer beware). Unlike many creatures, these beasts do not shy away from Horror-taint; more than a few swarms of them roam the Badlands in search of food. The stinger uses

its front claws to dig long, intricate tunnels through the soil that makes up its home. They are also appallingly swift—faster than almost any other landbound creature in Barsaive, in my opinion—and a group of Namegivers can succumb to a swarm of these tiny beasts as easily as any other animal on which they prey. Stingers will eat any type of living animal, from small rats and mice to thundra beasts and even elephants. (In its turn,



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the stinger is a favorite food of the cave crab, which in its turn is one of my favorite delicacies. Truly the most wonderful food in the Universe, the cave crab... have I told you about this delicacy, Tiabdjinn? Nothing else like it exists. Truly, it must have been the first food of the noblest Passions. Excuse me, friend Tiabdjinn... I feel a certain craving coming on...)

Here Vasdenjas padded out of his lair—most unfortunately drooling a trifle as he went, which forced me to scale a pile of coins and gems in search of higher ground—and disappeared in search of a cave crab. I can only assume the hunt was unsuccessful, for he was both empty-handed and cross when he returned.

The small stinger can bring down such a variety of beasts larger than itself because it always hunts in swarms and because its poison is unbelievably potent. Stingers attack in groups of five or more from all directions at once, dashing by their prey and raking it with their curved front claws. I recall watching a swarm of the creatures—perhaps ten or a dozen of them—bring down a manticore, a truly impressive feat. The death of the poor manticore was a terrible sight... they were such noble creatures in bygone ages!... But I will speak of their tragedy another day. The stingers simply rushed toward the poor beast, from too many directions for it to attack them all at once. It struck out with its claws and tail, and killed a stinger or two, but three more got to its face and slashed at its eyes and mouth. The manticore was in such terrible pain, it couldn't speak to cast any defensive spell; it could only roar out its anguish. The rest of the stingers kept stinging it, and it soon succumbed.

So they sting as well as claw?

Of course! Why else do you suppose they are called stingers?!

Your fatigue seems to be making you a trifle testy, noble sir. Perhaps we should resume our discourse in the morning?

Nonsense. I'm perfectly well. (Ahem) As the creature passes by, it also strikes with its tail stinger, injecting the victim with venom that eats away at the prey's flesh. This poison can burn through flesh and bone as easily as fire burns human hair. Alchemists and magicians prize stinger venom greatly, but many an adventurer has met death attempting to harvest it from a stinger swarm. If you want my advice, don't try—stick with some safer scheme for getting rich, like picking a rich Thera's pocket.

STINGER

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d8, Swimming d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

• **Acid Venom:** Any creature stung by a stinger must succeed at a Vigor roll or suffer an additional 2d4 damage from acid.

• **Stinger:** Str + d6.

ADVENTURE SEED

When the characters venture into a forgotten kaer, they notice a number of holes about three to four feet high in the walls of many of the kaer's passageways. As they move deeper within the kaer, the characters stumble on a large swarm of stingers that has lived there since the last years of the Scourge. To get out alive, the characters must defeat the stingers.

UNICORN

The Scourge wiped out many of Barsaive's wondrous beasts and transformed others nearly beyond recognition. The latter fate befell the unicorn, though it was greatly improved rather than corrupted (why, I can't imagine, though it's lucky for Barsaive that things happened as they did). Before the Scourge, the unicorn was one of Barsaive's most feared predators. Even the mere sight of the foul beasts, with their matted fur and blood-encrusted horns, struck fear in the hearts of most Namegivers. Unlike most predators, the unicorns did not hunt merely to feed themselves;

they seemed to enjoy killing for its own sake. These unicorns hunted in packs and showed an uncanny intelligence that allowed them to take on much larger and more powerful creatures. They often hunted thundra beasts, manticores, and even an occasional dragon, surrounding their prey and wearing it down with sheer numbers. Some of these vicious, malignant beasts learned to lie in wait along footpaths and trade roads, where they would ambush small bands of adventurers or lone travelers, then feast on their flesh. For Namegivers, these unicorns became a

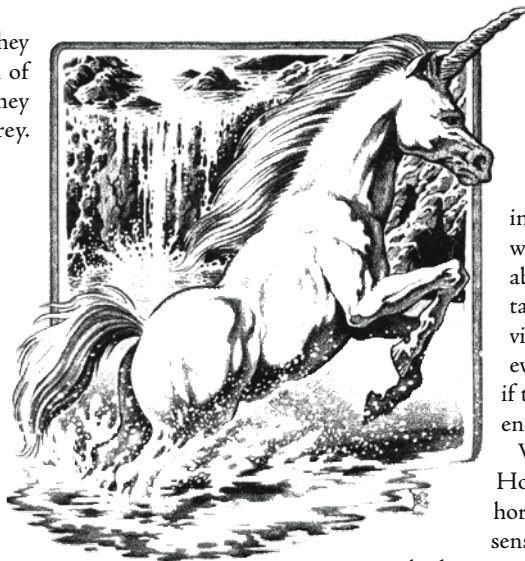
CREATURES OF BARSAIVE

special danger, for once they tasted the tender flesh of humans and the like, they often forsook other prey. Many of these same herds even took to raiding Namegiver villages, attacking under the cover of darkness and using their terrible horns and sharp hooves to devastate all in their paths. Soon, the hamlets of the countryside learned to fear the sound of hoofbeats in the night.

Inexplicably, the Scourge changed the unicorn—or at least, most unicorns I know of—from vicious creatures with a taste for Namegiver flesh to gentle beasts of great beauty. Now, unicorns have become solitary animals that feed on the plants of the forest, rather than its inhabitants. Sadly, they are less tasty than they were—not bad, simply bland by comparison. But I suppose their change has been a blessing nevertheless.

Before I say anything else about unicorns, I shall dispel a myth. To tame one does not require a virtuous maiden. (A terrible waste of fine maiden flesh, if you ask me, but that's another tale.) You will, however, need a swift horse and excellent riding skill to catch a unicorn. Even the slowest unicorn can run as fast as the swiftest horses, and you must take care to avoid its wickedly long horn. I once lost several scales when a unicorn stabbed me while attempting to escape (one of the pre-Scourge animals—delicious). Though unicorns look like large horses with horns on their heads, these noble creatures are nowhere near as docile as the farm beasts with which most of those who read this tome are doubtless accustomed to dealing. They are gentler than they were, it is true, but not if you're trying to capture them. A unicorn still loves its freedom as much as ever.

Most unicorns I know of are pure white, though I've heard of spotted and even black ones. The unicorn's horn is a terrifying weapon, two to three



feet long and supposedly capable of killing a Horror with one blow. I have never seen a unicorn slay a Horror, and the popular belief in the horn's power may well be just another myth about the unicorn. Certainly the horn can cause a vicious stab wound—it can even plunge through bone if the beast is galloping fast enough when it strikes.

Whether or not it can kill Horrors, a fresh unicorn horn possesses a remarkable sensitivity to poisons. When

touched to any substance even the least bit venomous—or at least poisonous enough to harm the unicorn—the horn changes color. The darker it turns, the more dangerous the poison. Also, a tiny sprinkling of powdered unicorn horn can neutralize any poison, no matter how potent.

UNICORN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d8, Spellcasting d12, Stealth d8

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities:

- **Detect Poison:** A unicorn's horn can detect poisons if a large part of the horn is immersed in the substance in question. The horn darkens to indicate that a substance is poisonous; the darker the color, the deadlier the poison. Depending on the type of poison, its potency, and the concentration, the horn can take anywhere from one to 10 minutes to change color. Powdered unicorn horn neutralizes all types of poisons.

- **Fleet-Footed:** Unicorns roll a d10 for their running die, rather than a d6.

- **Horn Gore:** Str+d10

- **Kick:** Str+2.

- **Size +2:** Unicorns weigh between 600 and 800 pounds.

- **Sooth Other:** Up to three times per day, a unicorn can calm a creature within 12". The targeted creature must succeed at an opposed Spirit roll or its attitude immediately turns to Neutral.

CHAPTER 2: CREATURES

ADVENTURE SEED

A band of Theran slavers has taken to killing unicorns wherever they find them, and certain people in southern Barsaive are fearful that a herd of unicorns near their village may fall victim to the marauding Therans. They hire the characters to herd the unicorns far away from the Therans'

usual hunting grounds in hope of saving the gentle beasts. Unfortunately, the well-intentioned locals don't know that their unicorn herd is made up of throwbacks to the pre-Scourge beast—these "gentle" animals are actually vicious killers with sharp teeth and nasty tempers. The characters are in for a very rude awakening.

★ VESTRIVAN

I have included Vestrivan in this book without Vasdenjas' approval—indeed, he threatened to "treat me as a small snack" if I published the following tale. He told me the truth behind fragmentary rumors of the Horror-tainted dragon over a barrel of fine elven brandy, more to ease his spirit than anything else. He had been sad all day, much given to sighing and gazing out of his lair at the cloudy sky. When I asked him why, he said it was his birthday. I am sorry to betray his trust, but I feel that the story of Vestrivan is far too valuable to keep buried in my dragon friend's mind. Knowledge of Vestrivan's existence and territory may well save lives.

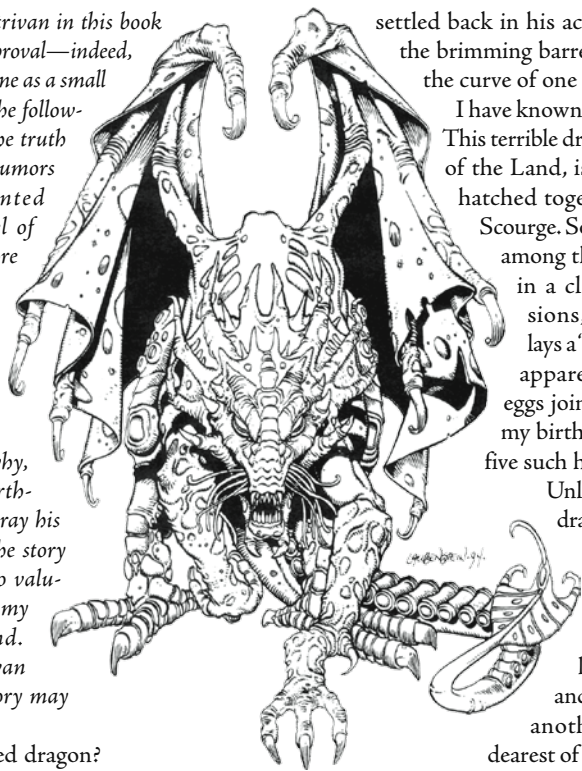
The Horror-marked dragon? Yes, I know him well—too well. Did I not know you so well by now, I might kill you for asking me of him; but then, you don't know how I know Vestrivan. Not your fault if you poke at an old wound, is it? [Here the dragon paused, then padded over to his store of brandy and broke open the top of a barrel.] Don't look so disapproving, scribe. I have no intention of getting drunk. Only fools believe that liquor truly drowns their sorrows. Just one small barrel to warm me, as I tell you of a sorrow that still chills my soul. [He invited me to dip my flagon in, which I did, then

settled back in his accustomed place with the brimming barrel held protectively in the curve of one great talon.]

I have known Vestrivan since birth. This terrible dragon, called Despoiler of the Land, is my broodmate. We hatched together long before the Scourge. Some dragons, my kind among them, lay only one egg in a clutch. On rare occasions, however, a dragon lays a "twin-shelled" egg, two apparently normal dragon eggs joined end to end. Since my birth, I have only heard of five such hatchings.

Unlike other Namegivers, dragons are aware within the egg. Through magic, the mother dragon can speak to her unborn hatchling—and so Vestrivan and I could speak to one another. We became the dearest of friends in the months before birth—I have never known such closeness since. Yet we were very different. I wished to wander far and wide across the land of Barsaive, but Vestrivan wanted only to understand the intricacies of magic. He spent every waking moment practicing his magical skills and likely would have become Barsaive's most powerful magician were it not for his misfortune.

Of all kinds of learning, magic is the most dangerous. Vestrivan understood this, but he underestimated the insidious effect the approaching Horrors would have on his spellweaving. Early on in his





learning, a particularly cruel Horror chose Vestrivan for corruption and spent forty years attempting to Horror-mark him. With every spell he cast, Vestrivan walked ever closer to doom.

This description reminds me of the Horror known as Taint, who often corrupts victims slowly as they use more and more magic.

One day I came home from a lengthy sojourn in the world to find my brother changed. As I crawled through the caverns of our lair, I noticed something wrong. The air smelled strange, or perhaps it was only a dragon's sensitivity to magic, but when I entered the lair I felt corruption. As I approached my own cavern, I saw a pale yellow glow coming from Vestrivan's. No dragon requires light because we can see perfectly in the dark. I knew something was dreadfully wrong. I peered into Vestrivan's cavern and saw him writhing on the floor, terrible shafts of light shooting from his eyes. I could smell the stench of the Horror that possessed my brother. Its foulness filled the room and struck at my heart with terror.

I should have killed him then. I knew much about Horrors by that time in my life, and I knew that the thing in Vestrivan's shape was no longer my broodmate. The Horror's bid for control had weakened the dragon I used to love, and I knew I could have defeated him. But I could not bring myself to do it.

And so I watched helplessly as my Horror-tainted broodmate walked past me and flew into the darkening sky.

Since his disappearance I have heard many rumors of him. Most stories place Vestrivan near the Twilight Peaks, so I assume he lairs there. Of his powers or plans, I know nothing, and I wish to keep it that way

- **Change Shape:** Vestrivan can assume the form of other creatures and animals at will for 1 Karma Point.

- **Claw/Bite:** Str+d10.

- **Disrupt Fate:** Vestrivan use this dragon power once per round.

- **Emotion Drain:** Any time a creature is inflicted with a Wound by one of Vestrivan's attacks, it must immediately make an opposed Spirit roll. If it fails, one of Vestrivan's Wounds heals immediately.

- **Fiery Breath:** Vestrivan may breathe fire in a cone (use the cone template). Every target within this cone may make an Agility roll at -1 to avoid the attack. Those who fail suffer 2d12 damage and must check to see if they catch fire. Vestrivan may not attack with its claws or bite in the round it breathes fire.

- **Flight:** Vestrivan has a Flying Pace of 24" and Climb 0.

- **Hardy:** Vestrivan does not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.

- **Huge:** Attackers add +4 to their Fighting or Shooting rolls when attacking Vestrivan due to its massive size.

- **Improved Frenzy:** If Vestrivan does not use its Fiery Breath ability, it may make two Fighting attacks with no penalty.

- **Karma Points:** Vestrivan has 60 Karma Points.

- **Lair Sense:** Vestrivan gains a +4 bonus to its Notice roll when using this power.

- **Level-Headed:** Act on best of two cards.

- **Mystic Armor +4:** Resistant to magic.

- **Size +9:** Vestrivan is a massive creature, over 120' long from nose to tail, and weighs well over 65,000 pounds.

- **Suppress Magic:** -4 to opponents' use of magic.

- **Tail Lash:** Vestrivan can sweep all opponents in its rear facing in a 3" long by 6" wide square. This is a standard Fighting attack and damage is equal to Vestrivan's Strength.

VESTRIVAN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d12+9, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d12, Healing d12, Intimidation d12, Knowledge (Arcana) d12, Knowledge (Other) d12, Notice d12, Persuasion d12, Shooting d10, Spellcasting d12, Survival d12, Swimming d12, Taunt d12, Throwing d8, Tracking d12

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 21 (4)

Special Abilities

- **Armor +4:** Scaly hide.

- **Armored Scales:** Four points.

- **Bone Shatter:** Up to three times per day, Vestrivan can cast this Nethermancy spell.

ADVENTURE SEED

The characters have attained legendary status, and so Vestrivan fears they may track him down and slay him to add to their exploits. To nip this threat in the bud, he decides to corrupt them and sends several Horrors after them to shake them up. Along with the more obvious Horrors, Vestrivan sends a subtle one that feeds on anger and hate and then replaces these emotions with its own. With every battle the characters fight, they fall deeper into the clutches of Vestrivan's Horror. (Play this adventure over a long period of time.)



VETTA

Like the unicorn, the vetta owes its modern-day appearance and behavior to the Scourge. The vetta, however, suffered terribly from the Horrors' influence, becoming an ugly changeling version of its former self.

The ancient vettas were a perfect source of food for many denizens of Barsaive, being slow and stupid and meaty enough to feed several people. I have heard they are delectable, though I can't say I care for so ugly a snack. The modern-day vetta is still slow and stupid, but it possesses a powerful magical enchantment that keeps it safe from harm. It seems to have gained this ability as it lost every natural defense it once had, which suggests that even Horror-tainted creatures must bow to the essential harmony of the Universe.

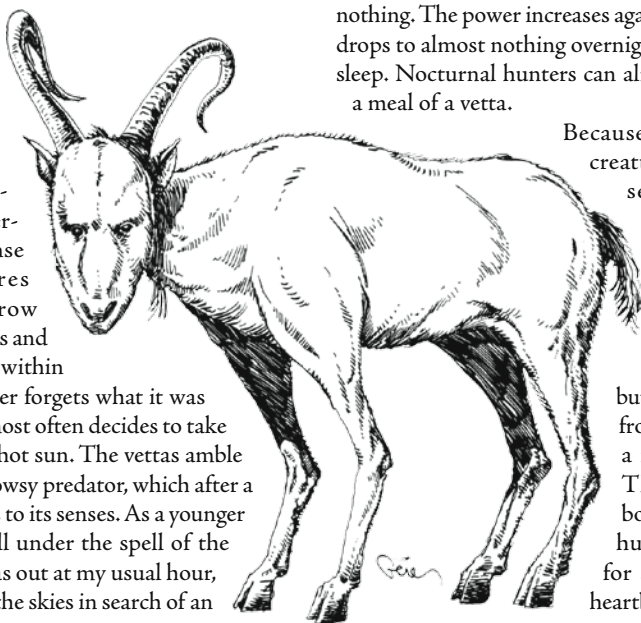
Vettas resemble large gazelles, standing five to six feet tall at the shoulder. The beast prefers mountains to plains and grasslands, and its legs end in hooves. The beast's long, curved horns have grown too tangled to be used in its defense, made so by the corruption of the Horrors. Its once-graceful, long legs have grown so short that the animal can no longer run fast except in brief spurts. Its eyes have grown small, almost beady. Its ears are perhaps half the size of a deer's, and it reacts sluggishly to loud noises or nearby predators.

The modern-day vetta's powerful magical defense causes creatures around it to grow unnaturally listless and tired. A predator within range of this power forgets what it was hunting for and most often decides to take a long nap in the hot sun. The vettas amble away from the drowsy predator, which after a time slowly comes to its senses. As a younger dragon, even I fell under the spell of the vetta's power. I was out at my usual hour, cruising through the skies in search of an

early morning snack. Imagine my delight upon spotting a herd of deer grazing peacefully near the foot of a mountain. I also saw a herd of the unappealing vetta nearby, but I was determined not to let their ugliness affect my breakfast. As I swooped down toward the deer, prepared to scoop up a mouthful and fly away, I suddenly felt as tired as if I'd been flying for hours, rather than minutes. It seemed reasonable at the time to take a nap before breakfast, so I landed a few yards away and settled in for forty winks. I failed to notice the deer moving off a few minutes later, and when I awoke near lunchtime I found myself ravenously hungry. I also found three mountain lions sleeping curled up under my wing. While I simply took flight to escape this awkward situation, other Namegivers might find themselves in mortal danger, if they wake up at all.

It was this first experience and others that allowed me to notice that the vetta's power waxes and wanes depending on the time of day. During the early morning, when predators are most active, this power is strong enough to affect any creature that approaches within fifty feet of a vetta herd. At midday, when the temperature is high and most predators usually find a shady spot to sleep, the power wanes to almost nothing. The power increases again at twilight, then drops to almost nothing overnight while the vettas sleep. Nocturnal hunters can almost always make a meal of a vetta.

Because vettas are herd creatures, their power seems to depend on how many of them are using it. A predator stalking a single vetta won't have much trouble catching it, but trying to hunt one from a whole herd is a fruitless exercise. They'll have you bored to death with hunting and ready for a nap within five heartbeats.



CREATURES OF BARSAIVE

VETTA

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Notice d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities

• **Bite:** Str.

• **Fatigue Other:** The vetta makes a Spirit roll against any creature other than a vetta within 6" with a +1 modifier for each additional vetta within 6". If successful, the target gains a level of Fatigue, +1 level for each raise.

• **Size +2:** Vetta are the size of a gazelle.

ADVENTURE SEED

While the characters are traveling through mountains, they run into a herd of vettas. They suddenly become extremely tired and decide to have a quick little nap. Unfortunately for them, a pride of mountain lions also fell into the vettas' trap. When the sun climbs higher and the vettas' power wanes, the characters and the mountain lions begin to awaken—very, very close to each other.

VOLUS

The volus is a truly bizarre creature; I can think of no other beast it resembles. Its entire, fifteen-foot-long body is covered with tough, chitinous plates of varied hues and sizes. The huge claws tipping its front feet are far larger than its rear claws, and its head resembles the bowl of a thick shovel. It uses its strangely shaped head and large front claws to dig vast tunnels beneath the earth in search of food.

The way the volus finds food is truly amazing. The beast can smell magic as a dog follows a scent. ("Smell" isn't really the right way to put it, but I can't think of a better way to make what the volus does understandable to my readers.)

We are capable of a few leaps of the imagination, sir! I think our "understanding" is sufficient to comprehend exactly how a volus detects magic, without the need for inexact analogies.

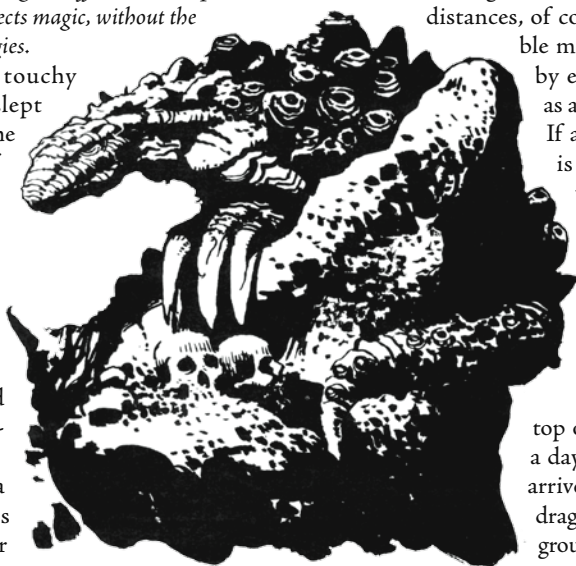
My, but you are touchy when you haven't slept well. (Ahem) Once the volus catches a whiff of its prey, it digs through the earth until it is directly beneath its intended lunch. Then the volus collapses the earth beneath its victim, entrapping and suffocating it underground. The volus rarely fails to catch a meal this way; unless you're as good a digger

as it is, six feet of earth above your head will kill you as surely as claws and teeth. Not many Namegivers can dig half as well as the volus, so travelers beware this beast. One safeguard against it is to stand on solid rock; the volus cannot dig through stone. One indication that you have stumbled onto or near a volus' hunting ground is the presence of several sinkholes in a given area; should you unwittingly walk into such a place, I advise you to run out again. (And for the Passions' sake don't cast any spells!)

The volus' ability to sense magic is highly refined—even the most alert Horror might find it difficult to match this creature's prowess. The volus can sense any use of magic, no matter how small (though it can sense larger uses of magic over longer distances, of course). Even the fee-

ble magical aura given off by enchanted items acts as a beacon for the volus. If a great deal of magic is being used, several voluses might converge on the user from a wide range.

A Wizard of my acquaintance once botched a powerful magical experiment and blew the top of his house off; half a day later, thirty voluses arrived and proceeded to drag the house under the ground. I believe the volus



CHAPTER 2: CREATURES

developed its unique ability over time as the rise of the world's magical energy created many creatures with innate magical powers. All of these the volus can sense, stalk, and eat.

The volus is also a territorial beast, preferring to mark out its own hunting grounds (to which I have already alluded). These hunting grounds may be any region where a good deal of magic is used—towns and villages with too many adepts in them often fall prey to volus infestations. They also often hunt on the high roads of Barsaive, particularly in recent years as more and more of the magically adept travel on those roads in search of adventure. A party of several adepts is often an invitation to dine to any number of voluses, depending on how many of the creatures' hunting grounds they pass on their journey.

Not surprisingly, a volus' magic-sensing organ is prized by magicians and alchemists. The little gland forms a small hard lump at the base of the neck, and can be removed with a sharp knife. It is, however, extremely delicate—one touch of the blade on the gland itself will ruin it. To prevent decay, place it in some magical container or cast a spell over it once a day. Carefully preserved, the organ will retain its magic-sensing abilities indefinitely. The volus can also be trained to act as a sort of hunting dog for magical threats, including Horrors—most convenient for helping travelers avoid such perils. To train a volus, of course, requires catching one first—and once it is trained, its master should keep it well fed.

Of course, would-be volus hunters should keep in mind that the creatures are predators. As you hunt them, they will be hunting you.

VOLUS

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Notice d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 14 (4)

Special Abilities

• **Armor +4:** Armored skin.

• **Bite/Claw:** Str +d4, AP 2.

• **Collapsing Earth:** A volus can burrow underneath a target, causing the ground in a small diameter template area to collapse. Any creature caught in this area must succeed at an Agility roll or fall 10 feet, suffering damage from the fall normally and ending up Prone.

• **Detect Magic:** A volus can detect magic in a 10-mile radius.

• **Size +3:** A volus is over 15 feet long.

ADVENTURE SEED

In an attempt to find a legendary kaer buried by an earthquake or a landslide, the characters take the advice of a sage who suggests that the magic-sensing abilities of the volus might help. The intact kaer is almost certainly full of magical treasures, and a volus will be drawn to it like a bloodhound after a scent. To find the kaer and get their hands on its wealth, the characters must seek out a volus and somehow use it to lead them to their goal—without getting killed and eaten in the attempt.

WILL O' THE WISP

The will o' the wisp began as a magical construct, one of many beings deliberately created by idiot magicians interested in making their own silly lives easier. Why you smaller races insist on bothering with such unnecessary tinkering, I do not understand. We dragons do not use our magical abilities so foolishly. Worse yet, you create these things and then let them slip from your control—folly upon folly! I find it grimly hilarious that the maker of the will o' the wisp let the ridiculous little creatures get away from him. I say "grimly" because, as with so many other magically created creatures, the Scourge turned something harmless into something dreadful... or at least unpleasant.

The first will o' the wisps served as portable light for your weak eyes to see by. (A regrettable necessity when you cannot see in the dark, I suppose.) With one of these little creatures floating beside him, a magician never needed to carry a candle or torch and had his hands free to open doors, cast spells, and so on. I must admit, the way in which these wisps worked was ingeniously simple. To keep itself alive, the little creature drew magic from its surroundings, which it changed into sustenance. This conversion threw off the light the magician needed. Never able to stop once they had created a good thing, many magicians began to experiment with the wisps and created new varieties. One could remember simple instructions and guide people

CREATURES OF BARSVAIVE

from one place to another. Others gave off sound or heat instead of light, for purposes I can't guess at (and don't wish to). Soon, too many varieties of wisps existed for any one person to remember. During the Scourge, most of the wisps were left outside the kaers, where the Horrors slew and ate them. Some of the wisps, however, hid from the Horrors, and thus survived and bred. After five centuries of existence as wild creatures, the wisps have become just that. Most are utterly feral, and many were twisted by the Horrors as well. These latter specimens often dimly remember their ancient duties and perform them to the best of their insane abilities. A few—a very few—are sane and still remember their original purpose. Some of these, created as guides, can still lead people to their master's home (or the remnants of it) and the treasures, if any, that lie within.

The most dangerous wisps are those meant to paralyze, harm, or even kill those who entered their master's home without permission. The Horrors kept these wisps alive whenever they found them but drove them insane. These wisps now believe that their master's home is all of Barsaive and attack as an intruder any Namegiver they come across. Almost as dangerous are the ones I call magic twisters; these wisps can drastically change the effects of any spells cast within the area of their light. Sometimes they reduce the effects to almost nothing, other times they boost a spell's power so that it flies out of the caster's control.

What makes the wisp particularly hazardous to the traveler or adventurer is the sameness of their looks and the vast difference in what they can do. All wisps emit an unearthly green light, but here any resemblance between them ends. You can't tell by looking which wisp is a still-sane guide, which a harmless light-giver, and which an insane defender of Barsaive. And because will o' the wisps have bred and multiplied on their own for five centuries, many kinds may exist that their creators never envisioned. In short, any wisp may be able to do just about anything you can imagine—and perhaps a few things you can't.



WILL O' THE WISP

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Notice d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 3

Special Abilities

• **Ethereal:** Will o' the wisps can maneuver through any non-solid surface. They can seep through the cracks in doors, bubble through water, and rush through sails.

• **Size -2:** Will o' the wisps are roughly 1 foot in diameter.

• **Small:** Attackers are -2 to attack wisps because of their size.

• **Unpredictable Magic:** No two will o' the wisps are the same. Each has 1d6 random spells—as found in the table below—which they can cast an unlimited amount of times per day. Treat the will o' the wisp as Seasoned for determining any variables.

Roll	Spell
1	crushing will
2	flame flash
3	ignite
4	mind dagger
5	vines
6	notice not
7	dust devil
8	counterspell
9	mage armor
10	slow

ADVENTURE SEED

The characters learn that a will o' the wisp is haunting a nearby region and decide to find out whether it can lead them to anything valuable. They discover that the wisp is one of the fortunate few that survived the Scourge and stayed sane; furthermore, it will lead them to the ruined home of its Wizard master. There, the characters can expect to find at least a few valuable magical items. Unknown to them, however, the wisp was actually created by another Wizard to sneak into his rival's home, kill anything living there, and generally cause massive destruction. When the characters follow the wisp home, it follows its centuries-old orders. It immediately goes berserk and tries to kill them with its powerful spells (determined by the Game Master).

WOOD ELEMENTAL

To understand the wood elemental, you must know something of the magical elements all around us. Most ignorant folk don't realize that everything contains a trace of elemental substance. Every time you take a breath, you fill your lungs with a minute amount of elemental air; when you cook food, your cooking fire contains a trace of elemental fire, and so on. Four of the five elements—air, water, fire, and earth—are connected to their own planes of existence, which are made up almost entirely of elements and where creatures of each element live naturally. When we summon elementals to do our bidding, we draw these creatures from their own planes to ours.

Wood is different. Wood has no other plane of existence; it lives only in our own world. Therefore, wood elementals exist in this plane. They can be summoned in the same manner as other elementals, but with somewhat more ease.

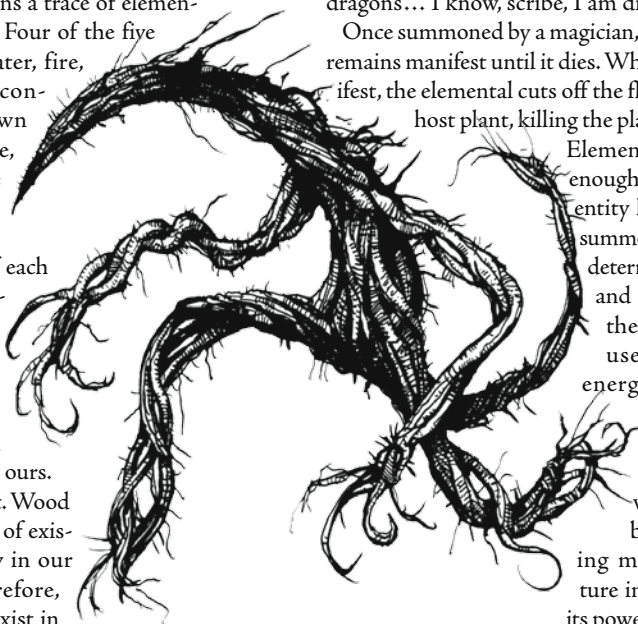
Every plant, no matter how small, contains a spirit of elemental wood—a wood elemental. This magical creature gives the plant its hold on the plane of the living. Without this elemental, plants could not grow. The wood elemental enables the plant to bind various elements together to create a single living entity, which is why growing plants need all of the other elements: earth, water, air, and sunlight (or fire). Of course, this ability to bind other elements to it gives a wood elemental great magical power. To create a tree that grows more than three hundred feet high over the space of five hundred years requires an immense amount of magic.

Fortunately for the living, the wood elemental usually expends this power at an amazingly slow (and

therefore harmless) rate. Unfortunately, some people have learned to force a wood elemental to manifest itself and expend its power much faster. (Just another example of the ill that comes from your insistence on meddling with things. If all Namegivers would simply act with a tenth of the wisdom of dragons... I know, scribe, I am digressing again!)

Once summoned by a magician, a wood elemental remains manifest until it dies. When forced to manifest, the elemental cuts off the flow of magic to its host plant, killing the plant. Assuming the Elemental is powerful enough to command the entity he or she has just summoned, the magician determines how quickly and for what purpose the wood elemental uses its remaining energy. The manifest elemental takes on any form the magician wishes. It may become a towering man-shaped creature intended to use up its power swiftly in a blaze of destruction; or a wooden shelter that can protect its inhabitants from the weather for at least a week; or even a walking stick, which might last forever. Once its energy is gone, the manifestation turns to dust. Obviously, powerful magicians prefer to summon wood elementals that inhabit large trees. Smaller ones can be summoned, but their minimal power has little effect.

I find it hard to believe that an elemental creature exists in every living plant—indeed, I find the entire description of how the elements work in our world most strange. I am, however, less well-schooled than I should be in certain areas of magical theory, and I would not care to wholly doubt a dragon. I advise readers to consider Vasdenjas' description of this creature with some care.



WOOD ELEMENTAL

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (2)

Special Abilities

• **Armor +2:** Solid wood.

• **Bash:** Str+d4.

• **Elemental:** No additional damage from called shots; Fearless; Immune to disease and poison.

• **Weakness (Fire):** Wood elementals suffer an extra +2 damage from fire.

ADVENTURE SEED

Legends say that in protecting themselves from the Horrors, the elves of Blood Wood twisted the wood elementals in their forest to make them manifest spontaneously. A local noble hires the characters to bring him such a wood elemental for his private garden. Unfortunately for the characters, only the elves of Blood Wood know how and when their wood elementals manifest, and they rarely reveal their secrets to outsiders. To collect their fee from the noble, the characters must first convince the elves to point them toward a wood elemental; once they have found one, they must hold onto it and bring it to their employer.

✪ WYVERN

Wyverns are not dragons. They have never been dragons, and they never will be dragons. Dragons are intelligent Namegivers; wyverns, like other beasts, are ruled by instinct. A wyvern is no more a dragon than a salamander is a t'skrang or a blood monkey is a human. The chance resemblance between wyverns and dragons is just that—chance. Never suggest otherwise to a dragon, unless you wish to end your life as a lump of charcoal.

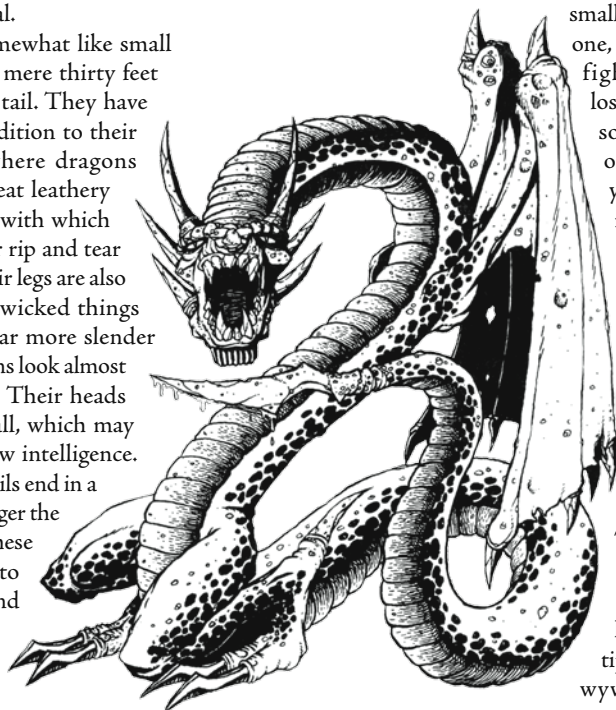
Wyverns look somewhat like small dragons, growing a mere thirty feet or so from head to tail. They have only two legs in addition to their wings, however, where dragons have four. Their great leathery wings end in claws with which they climb things or rip and tear at an opponent. Their legs are also tipped with claws, wicked things a good foot long. Far more slender than dragons, wyverns look almost like winged snakes. Their heads are abnormally small, which may account for their low intelligence. Their long sinewy tails end in a wickedly barbed stinger the size of a harpoon. These creatures are built to kill in the swiftest and deadliest manner.

Though wyverns have no true

intelligence like that granted to we Namegiver races, they have a great deal of low, animal cunning. They hunt in packs, which makes them deadly enough to kill a dragon. I've seen it happen—five of the filthy beasts attacked as one and brought down a truly magnificent specimen of my own race. If these creatures are deadly to one as strong and powerful as I and my kin, they are

that much more dangerous to you smaller races. If you see one, run. Don't bother fighting it—you'll lose. You cannot reason with, fast-talk, or bribe a wyvern as you might one of my kindred.

Of course, some foolish adventurers will insist on battling wyverns. For those demented souls, I will describe something of the wyvern's fighting style. The beast's deadliest weapon is its poisonous tail, as long from root to tip as the rest of the wyvern's body. The





CHAPTER 2: CREATURES

wyvern stands on its hind legs to fight its foes so that it can whip its tail around and sting the hapless victim before he or she ever sees the tail coming. The stinger drips with a disgusting black liquid so poisonous that a single scratch from the barb will almost surely kill a human-sized enemy. Larger creatures might survive one injection of poison (though it will likely make them horribly ill), but will quickly succumb to a pack of wyverns stabbing them again and again.

A wyvern does not swing its tail while flying because the motion of striking unbalances the creature so that it can't fly properly. When fighting a flying creature, the wyvern tries to slam into it and grab hold with its claws, wrapping its tail around the foe as an additional anchor. Once stabilized by its fierce grip, the wyvern stabs at its victim repeatedly as the two creatures plummet to the ground. Often the wyvern is so intent on killing its opponent that it refuses to let go, and both strike the ground together. (Yes, the sight is every bit as disgusting as you may imagine.)

Wyverns are extremely territorial, and they protect their homes against other species (and Namegivers) with frightening ferocity. Between themselves, however, there is little strife. I assume that because wyverns are pack hunters, they are accustomed to gathering in groups; still, it is amazing to me that the same creatures gripped by bloodlust at the sight of any enemy treat each other with something I might call gentleness in an intelligent race of beings.

WYVERN

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 12 (2)

Special Abilities:

• **Armor +2:** Thick scales.

• **Bite/Sting:** Str+2.

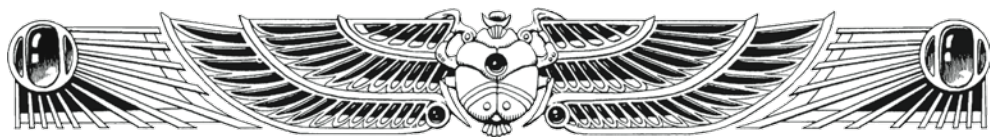
• **Improved Frenzy:** Wyverns may make a bite and sting attack in the same round at no penalty.

• **Poison:** Those struck by a wyvern's stinger are injected with Venomous poison on a Shaken result (refer to the *Savage Worlds Core Rulebook*).

• **Size +3:** Wyverns weigh over 1,200 pounds.

ADVENTURE SEED

An alchemist who specializes in poisons needs a sample of wyvern venom for a select group of clients and hires the characters to get a wyvern's stinger for him. To counter any objections, he tells them that he wants the stinger to create an antidote for wyvern poison. In addition to all the usual hazards of a journey through Barsaive's wilderness, the characters face the almost impossible task of finding and killing a wyvern. If they succeed, they learn that an important official in a major city has died of poisoning soon after they delivered the stinger to their employer. As authorities trace the poison back to its source, the characters must stay one step ahead of the law while they search desperately for evidence proving that they knew nothing of the alchemist's or his clients' sinister plans.



INDEX

An index, no matter how small, may still prove useful.

👁—Merrox, Master of the Hall of Records

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FEARSOME AND FASCINATING!

The contents of this book have been transcribed from the speaking of Vasdenjas, a most noble and intelligent dragon. I have written down his words almost without alteration, as I found his rambling style of speaking most entertaining.

—Tiabdjin the Knower, Scribe and Scholar of the Great Library of Throal

The Horrors are not the only threat to those who travel across Barsaive. The wild creatures of the land, some twisted by the Scourge into living nightmares, pose many dangers to the adventurer unlucky enough to cross their path.

The beautiful death moth, with its fatal sting... the fierce pangolus, whose claws can disembowel a troll with a single stroke... the hell hound, whose magical fire burns everything it touches... all these creatures and more may be the death of the unwary adventurer unless he can defeat them in the pursuit of his quest.

Creatures of Barsaive describes fifty of the most fearsome and fascinating creatures in the province of Barsaive, bringing them to life with a wealth of detail and beautiful illustrations.

Told from the point of view of a great dragon, *Creatures of Barsaive* also offers some insight into that mysterious and powerful species.

Requires use of the Savage Worlds™ Core Rulebook and the Earthdawn Game Master's Guide.

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