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# Introduction

The Pathfinder Bestiary, and the long line of monstrous encyclopedia that came before it, do a great job of attacking the problem of providing game statistics and mechanical information for a very wide variety of creatures. There are a lot of strange creatures from fantasy novels and movies, from ancient mythology, and, as time went on, from the twisted minds of game designers and even GMs, for that matter. Anyone today who tried to go about creating an extensive bestiary of all the different cool and interesting fantasy monsters could fill three or four volumes with three hundred monsters each, and still have a long way left to go, with fans crying out for various "forgotten" monsters to get some attention. That kind of breadth doesn't leave a whole lot of room for depth, and that's where *Exotic Encounters* comes in.

There are all kinds of reasons why you might not want to use a monster stat-block straight from the core rules. For one thing, if your players have a habit of browsing through such books, or are long-time veterans who know the basic ins and outs of most fantasy staples, you may need an unusual stat-block just to throw them a curve ball and teach them that they can't count on their out of character knowledge to take all the mystery out of the game. Alternatively, many GMs can recall a time when they wanted to make use of a certain monster in their game, only to find that it was a few CRs too high or low for what they had in mind. *Exotic Encounters* takes a single, iconic monster, and creates three new variants on that theme. These variants aren't simple tweaks, and are more than simply advancing or removing Hit Dice, though that occurs as well. Each of these three variations on the monster's theme has a specific, flavorful goal in mind, and a role to play, and their statistics entries are gently massaged in order to make them fit those roles. Further, each of these variants comes with brand new specially-crafted special abilities, which are unique to *Exotic Encounters* and not found anywhere else.

This particular installment of *Exotic Encounters* focuses on the vargouille. These strange bodiless fiends date back to the first edition Monster Manual II, and are one of the stranger creatures of the lower planes, feared far and wide for their deadly kiss, which provides a very unforgiving "save or die" experience at a very low level, a terrible fate that is only compounded by the fact that the transformation is detailed in particularly macabre fashion as the character's hair falls out and their facial features slowly twist over the course of one or more days. The first vargouille in this book, the singing vargouille (CR 3) can also cause such a transformation, though in this case, it is done by a haunting lullaby, instead. Singing vargouilles can also unleash powerful and damaging sonic shrieks, and their bite inflicts a curse of silence. These terrors pale before the **bloodsucking vargouille** (CR 5) however, which does not kiss its victims but instead attaches to them and drains their blood, transforming their victims into wights, whose heads separate from their bodies and become vargouilles when they are destroyed. Finally, the giant vargouille (CR 7) is a vargouille of titanic proportions, with a propensity for swooping down and swallowing human prey whole in a single gulp, and either allowing them to be digested by powerful acid that inflicts difficult-to-heal wounds, or simply spitting them back out again in the air, leaving the victim to fall to his doom.

# Singing Vargouille

The creature before you appears to be the severed head of what once might have been a beautiful woman, though her features are now gaunt and her skin pallid, her hair lank and greasy. Her mouth forms a permanent snarl, and her ears have been twisted into some kind of strange, leathery wings, which allow her to flit about in the air.

### VARGOUILLE, SINGING

XP 800

NE Small outsider (evil, extraplanar) Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7 Aura aura of subversive sound (60 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +1 size) hp 26 (4d10+4)

Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (good) Melee bite +6 (1d4 plus curse of silence) Special Attacks lullaby

STATISTICS

# Str 10, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 14 Base Atk +4; CMB +3; CMD 14 Feats Ability Focus (lullaby), Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon

Finesse Skills Fly +14, Intimidate +9, Perception +8, Stealth +8

Languages Infernal

ECOLOGY

#### Environment any

**Organization** solitary, cluster (1-2 and 4-8 standard vargouilles) or mob (3-4 and 6 – 12 standard vargouilles) **Treasure** none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aura of Subversive Sound (Su): A singing vargouille is constantly surrounded by an aura that manipulates sound, enhancing the power of its own voice and weakening any other audible effects. Any sonic or language-dependent effects, as well as spells and abilities that require the target be able to hear the spell or ability's originator in order to function, automatically fail if either the originator or the target is within 60 feet of the singing vargouille. This makes the singing vargouille immune to all such abilities. Any sonic or language-dependent effects of vargouilles are not affected by this ability. This effect can be temporarily suppressed by a *dispel magic* spell, which causes the effect to cease for 1 hour.

**Curse of Silence (Su):** Any creature struck by a singing vargouille's bite attack must succeed on a Will save (DC 14) or be unable to speak or otherwise communicate verbally for 24 hours. This also prevents the creature from casting spells with verbal components. A *remove curse* spell, or more powerful magic, ends the effect.

Lullaby (Su): As a standard action, a singing vargouille can sing a soothing song that causes nearby humanoid creatures that hear it to fall asleep. All humanoid creatures within 60 feet of the singing vargouille that can hear it must succeed on a Will save (DC 16) or be rendered unconscious for as long as the singing vargouille maintains the song (a standard action), and for 1d4 rounds thereafter. No amount of noise can awaken a creature that has fallen asleep in this way, but any physical damage will awaken the creature immediately, and the creature's allies can awaken him by shaking or slapping him, as a full-round action, as long as they are adjacent. Additionally, creatures put to sleep in this way may make a new Will save (at the same DC) every 2d4 rounds in order to wake up. For each full minute that a creature continues to sleep in this way, he must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 16) or have his head suddenly detach from his body (which promptly dies) and transform into a standard vargouille.

A creature that succeeds on its Will save to resist the singing vargouille's lullaby ability, or that succeeds on a Will save to wake up after being put to sleep, is immune to the effects of that vargouille's lullaby for 24 hours. The lullaby's initial effect is a language-dependent sonic sleep effect, but the effect of transforming into a vargouille is not. In all cases, the saving throw DC is Charisma-based.

**Shattering Song (Su):** As a standard action, a singing vargouille can direct its voice with destructive force. This takes the form of a 30-ft. cone. Creatures and objects within the cone suffer 5d6 points of sonic damage. A successful Reflex save (DC 14) halves this damage. The singing vargouille can use this ability once every 1d4 rounds.

# Ecology

CR 3

Sometimes referred to as "matron vargouilles" or "mother vargouilles," due to the fact that they are always feminine in appearance and that they are able to spawn standard vargouilles, but cannot produce more of their own kind, singing vargouilles are much deadlier than their lesser kin. While standard vargouilles spread through their terrible and deadly kiss, which can only affect one creature at a time and takes hours to completely transform a victim, singing vargouilles propagate with their unearthly, haunting lullaby, allowing them to affect whole villages in short order, and transforming their victims in a matter of minutes. It typically takes several days for the vargouilles formed in this way to take on the appearance of vargouilles, and during this time they look largely like severed heads, but they are able to use all of their abilities immediately on separating from the victim's shoulders.

There are several different beliefs about the origins of singing vargouilles. The most popular belief is that they are born from the souls of women who sell their soul to become talented and popular singers and performers. Others believe that singing vargouilles were simply the original vargouilles, and that their lesser spawn (standard vargouilles) are simply so numerous that they seem to be the "parent" race.

# **Bloodsucking Vargouille**

The creature before you resembles a severed human head, but its skin is an unnatural shade of white, as though it had never been exposed to the sun. Its eves gleam with a malevolent red glow, and its black hair is slicked back over its milky-white scalp. Its bloated, lifeless lips hid two pairs of oversized, needle-sharp fangs, and a pair of black, leathery bat wings extend from the sides of its head.

# VARGOUILLE, BLOODSUCKING

CR 5

XP 1,600

NE Small outsider (evil, extraplanar) Init +2; Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +5 natural, +1 size) hp 51 (6d10+18)

Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +3

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (good)

**Melee** bite +9 (1d4+2 plus attach)

Special Attacks blood drain, create spawn, stunning shriek STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 8 Base Atk +6; CMB +7; CMD 18

Feats Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness, Weapon Finesse Skills Fly +17, Intimidate +8, Perception +10, Stealth +9 Languages Infernal

ECOLOGY

#### **Environment** any

Organization solitary, solitary with spawn (2-4 wights and/ or 2-4 standard vargouilles) or mob (3-6 plus 6-12 wights and/or 6-12 standard vargouilles) Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Attach (Ex): Whenever a bloodsucking vargouille damages a creature with its bite attack, it can sink its fangs into the target's flesh, automatically starting a grapple with that creature. The bloodsucking vargouille loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 16, but holds on with great tenacity. An attached bloodsucking vargouille can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. If the creature it is attached to succeeds on a combat maneuver check or Escape Artist check made to escape the grapple, the bloodsucking vargouille is removed. Each round that the bloodsucking vargouille maintains the grapple, it automatically inflicts bite damage to the target.

**Blood Drain** (Ex): At the beginning of each round in which a bloodsucking vargouille is attached to a creature, it inflicts 1d4 points of Constitution damage to that creature. For every point of Constitution damage inflicted in this way, the bloodsucking vargouille heals 5 hit points (or gains 5 temporary hit points, if the bloodsucking vargouille has not suffered any damage). Creatures with 4 or more points of Constitution damage that were inflicted in this way become fatigued, while creatures with 8 or more points of Constitution damage that were inflicted in this way become exhausted. These conditions cannot be healed normally, but are cured automatically as the Constitution damage heals. Creatures that die as a result of Constitution damage inflicted in this way die and rise as spawn.

Create Spawn (Su): A creature that dies as a result of a bloodsucking vargouille's blood drain ability rises as a wight 1d4 rounds later. Wights created in this way have two unique qualities. First, they cannot create spawn of their own. Second, if the wight is destroyed, its head separates and becomes a standard vargouille. Characters can attempt to deliberately sever the wight's head with a special melee attack. This is a standard action, and if the attack hits, and deals at least 10 points of slashing damage, the wight is destroyed automatically, though its head still becomes a standard vargouille. Wights created in this way obey the bloodsucking vargouille's commands, as do vargouilles created by the destruction of such wights, although the bloodsucking vargouille cannot control more than 24 total Hit Dice of wights and vargouilles.

Stunning Shriek (Su): A vargouille can release a high-pitched shriek which stuns its victims, making them easy prey. As a standard action, the vargouille can force all creatures in a 60-ft. cone to succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 12) or be stunned for 1d4 rounds. A creature that is stunned in this way that suffers damage is automatically cured of the stunned condition. Regardless of whether or not a creature succeeds on its Fortitude save, it gains a +4 competence bonus on saving throws made to resist the stunning shriek ability of all bloodsucking vargouilles for 24 hours.

# Ecology

Originally mistaken as a strange breed of vampire, or the result of some obscure shape-shifting power available to certain rare kinds of vampires, bloodsucking vargouilles are not undead at all, and, in fact, do not need blood to survive, though they do find it intoxicating, and ingesting it allows them to heal their wounds, providing a powerful boost to their metabolism. Bloodsucking vargouilles do not kiss their victims quite like their more common cousins do, but they do lock their lips onto their targets bodies, and it is no less horrifying to watch a bloodsucking vargouille literally drain the life from their victims than it is to watch the victim of a standard vargouille's kiss slowly undergo that dread transformation.

It is unknown exactly how bloodsucking vargouilles propagate, as their spawn become standard vargouilles, rather than bloodsucking vargouilles. While it was once believed that bloodsucking vargouilles might be vargouilles that had somehow contracted vampirism, this is simply not true, as the creatures are clearly alive, horrific though they may be.

# **Giant Vargouille**

This creature resembles a humanoid head, but it is the size of a boulder, with rows of needle-sharp teeth as long as swords filling its gaping maw. Its skin is red and leathery, and its eyes glow with an unholy green light, while its long ears from giant bat-like wings that allow it to glide through the air. Where its neck should be there is a slightly bulbous sac of semi-transparent green skin, which appears to be full of a foul, sloshing liquid.

#### VARGOUILLE, GIANT

CR<sub>7</sub>

#### XP 3,200

NE Huge outsider (evil, extraplanar) Init -1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 7, flat-footed 19 (-1 Dex, +12 natural, -2 size) hp 85 (9d10+36)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Speed fly 50 ft. (average)
Melee bite +12 (2d8+9 plus 1d6 acid plus grab)
Special Attacks flesh-eating acid, spit up, swallow whole (5d6 acid damage, AC 16, 8 hp), weakening wail

# STATISTICS

### Str 22, Dex 9, Con 17, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 8 Base Atk +9; CMB +17; CMD 26 Feats Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Snatch, Toughness Skills Fly +9, Intimidate +11, Perception +13 Languages Infernal ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, murder (3–9) Treasure none SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Flesh-Eating Acid** (Ex): A giant vargouille's saliva and digestive juices are particularly nasty, and wounds inflicted by them are difficult to heal. Any acid damage inflicted by the giant vargouille's bite attack or swallow whole ability does not heal naturally, and any attempts to heal it magically fail unless the caster succeeds on a caster level check (DC 25).

Spit Up (Ex): As a standard action, a giant vargouille that currently has a creature grabbed in its mouth or swallowed whole can violently spit that creature out of its mouth, launching it through the air at high speed. In order to do so, the giant vargouille must first succeed on a combat maneuver check, although it gains a +4 bonus on this check. The target is propelled 1d8 x 10 feet horizontally through the air, in the direction of the giant vargouille's choice, and then falls to the ground. For every 5 points by which the giant vargouille's combat maneuver check exceeds the victim's CMD, the target moves an additional 10 feet

horizontally before falling. The victim suffers a total amount of damage equal to 1d6 per 20 feet travelled horizontally (to a maximum of 10d6) plus 1d6 per 10 feet fallen (to a maximum of 10d6).

Swooping Gobble (Ex): As a full-round action, a giant vargouille can move up to twice its speed in a straight line. If this movement would cause the giant vargouille to move through the square of a Large or smaller creature, the vargouille can attempt to catch that creature in its mouth as a free action. To do so, the vargouille must succeed on a combat maneuver check, and attempting to swallow a creature in this way provokes an attack of opportunity from the target. If the vargouille succeeds on the combat maneuver check, the target is automatically held in the vargouille's mouth, as though the vargouille had successfully used its grab ability. If the vargouille's combat maneuver check beats the target's CMD by 10 or more, the target is automatically swallowed whole. The vargouille cannot grab or swallow creatures with this ability of there is no room for them in its mouth or stomach.

Weakening Wail (Su): As a standard action, a giant vargouille can unleash a terrible moaning wail, forcing all creatures that can hear it to succeed on a Will save (DC 15) or suffer a -2 penalty to AC and CMD for 1 minute, as the horrible sound saps the victim's will to resist. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. That saving throw DC is Wisdom-based.

# Ecology

Terrors of the skies of several lower planes, giant vargouilles are both more and less than simply large versions of their more common smaller kin. Thankfully, these creatures lack the ability to transform their victims with a kiss, like standard vargouilles are, though some scholars theorize that this is simply because most humanoid creatures are too small to properly be kissed by such a large mouth, and that Gargantuan and Colossal creatures may very well be able to be transformed through a similar kissing ability.

Their lack of a kiss hardly defangs these horrific monstrosities, however, and giant vargouilles make a habit of swooping down and swallowing humanoid creatures whole. Swallowed creatures wind up in the transparent sac of green skin at the base of the vargouille's body, which is filled with foul and cursed acid that inflicts wounds that are difficult to heal. While it was originally believed that this sac was the giant vargouille's stomach, further study indicates that the creatures do not typically eat their swallowed victims, and derive no sustenance from devouring such creatures, other than the sadistic pleasure that they feel as the trapped victim continues to struggle inside them. In fact, if their prey becomes too quarrelsome, they frequently spit them out, causing them to fly through the air to a sudden, violent death. Permission to copy, modify and distribute the files collectively known as the System Reference Document ("SRD") is granted solely through the use of the Open Gaming License, Version 1.0a.

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# Exotic Encounters: Vargouilles

There are all kinds of reasons why you might not want to use a monster stat-block straight from the core rules. For one thing, if your players have a habit of browsing through such books, or are long-time veterans who know the basic ins and outs of most fantasy staples, you may need an unusual stat-block just to throw them a curve ball and teach them that they can't count on their out of character knowledge to take all the mystery out of the game. Alternatively, many GMs can recall a time when they wanted to make use of a certain monster in their game, only to find that it was a few CRs too high or low for what they had in mind.

Exotic Encounters takes a single, iconic monster, and creates three new variants on that theme. These variants aren't simple tweaks, and are more than simply advancing or removing hit Dice, though that occurs as well. Each of these three variations on the monster's theme has a specific, flavorful goal in mind, and a role to play, and their statistics entries are gently massaged in order to make them fit those roles. Further, each of these variants comes with brand new specially-crafted special abilities, which are unique to Exotic Encounters and not found anywhere else.

This particular installment of Exotic Encounters focuses on the vargouille. These strange bodiless fiends date back to the first edition Monster Manual II, and are one of the stranger creatures of the lower planes, feared far and wide for their deadly kiss, which provides a very unforgiving "save or die" experience at a very low level, a terrible fate that is only compounded by the fact that the transformation is detailed in particularly macabre fashion as the character's hair falls out and their facial features slowly twist over the course of one or more days. The first vargouille in this book, the singing vargouille (CR 2) can also cause such a transformation, though in this case, it is done by a haunting lullaby, instead. Binging vargouilles can also unleash powerful and damaging sonic shrieks, and their bite inflicts a curse of silence. These terrors pale before the bloodsucking vargouille (CR 5) however, which does not kiss its victims but instead attaches to them and drains their blood, transforming their victims into wights, whose heads separate from their bodies and become vargouilles when they are destroyed. Finally, the giant vargouille (CR 7) is a vargouille of titanic proportions, with a propensity for swooping down and swallowing human prey whole in a single gulp, and either allowing them to be digested by powerful acid that inflicts difficult-to-heal wounds, or simply spitting them back our again in the air, leaving the victim to fall to his doom.

