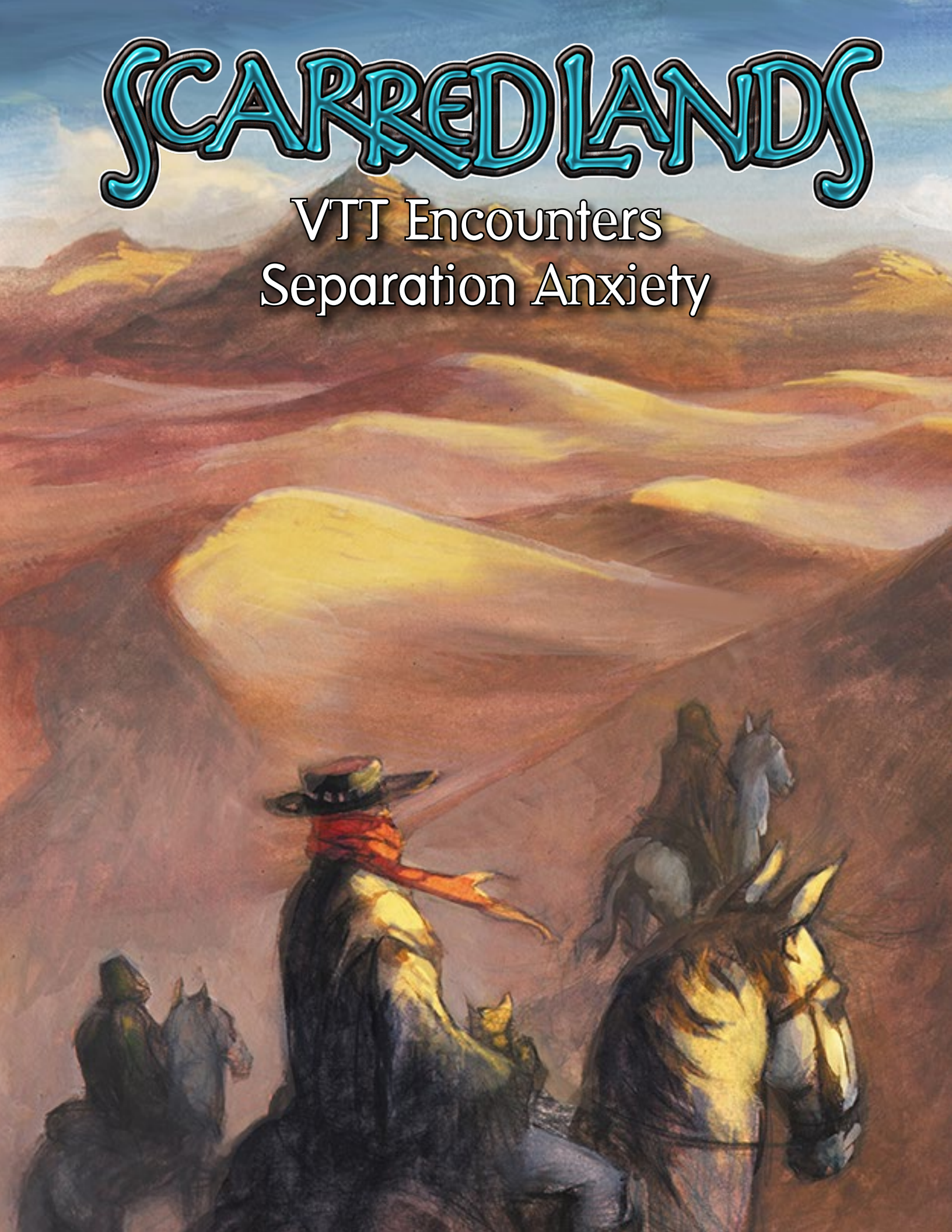


SCARRED LANDS

VTT Encounters
Separation Anxiety



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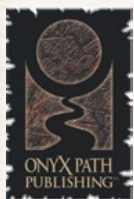
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Sources

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It has been adapted for 5th Edition and for use with VTT by Travis Legge

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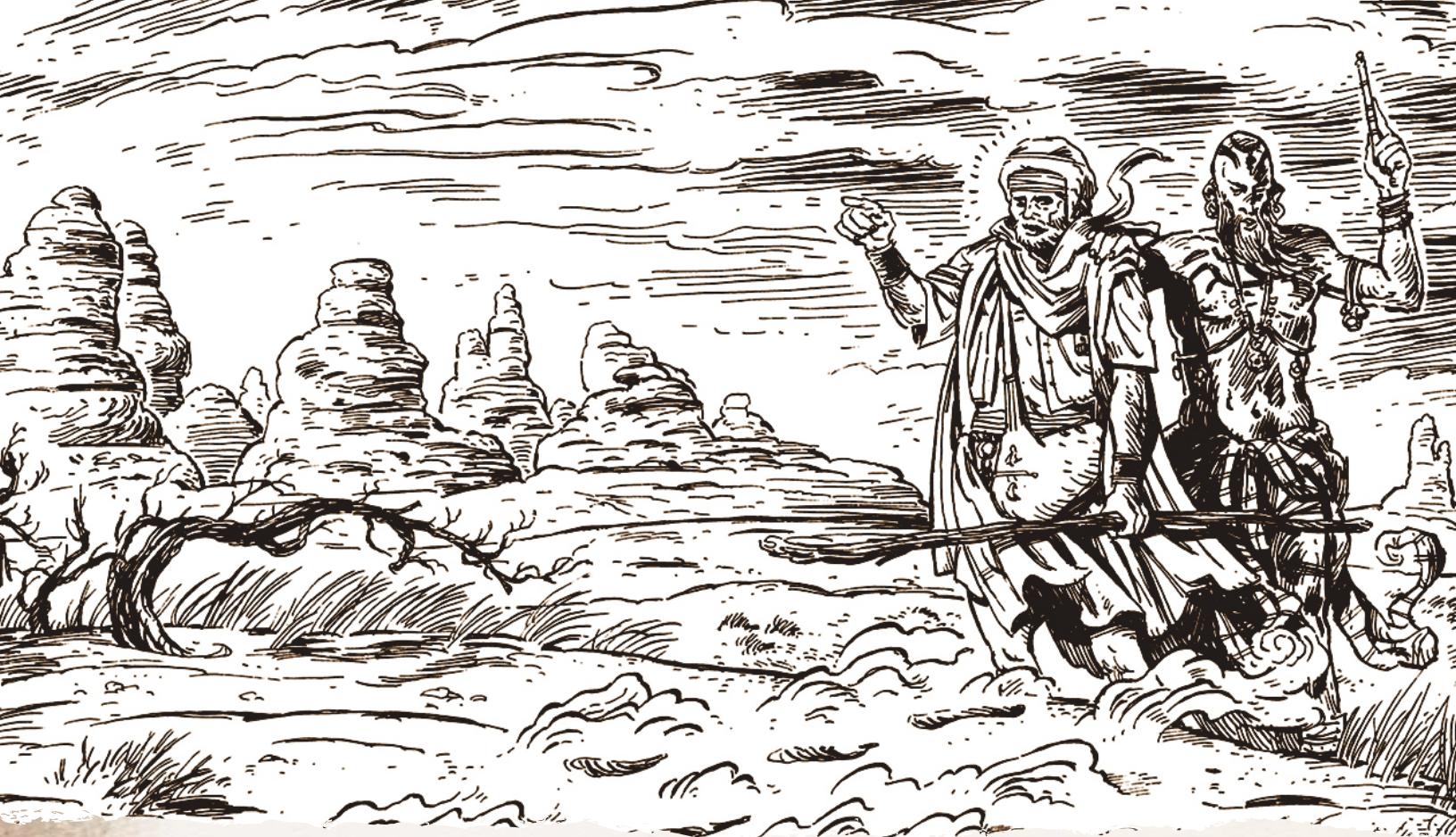
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SEPARATION ANXIETY

A short encounter for 4 characters of levels 5-8

INTRODUCTION

Separation Anxiety is a short encounter designed to divide a party of adventurers and pit them against the dangers of the desert in smaller groups. It is designed for four 6th-level characters and focuses on a section of collapsing giant ant tunnels that are inhabited by a sandstone basilisk, and the unstable dunes above. The encounter is meant to serve as an interlude that can be dropped into a larger desert-crossing adventure and works best if it takes place during the daytime.

BACKGROUND

Many years ago, the area surrounding this part of the desert was the home of a giant ant colony. The giant ants have since been driven from their tunnels by a **sandstone basilisk** that has taken up residence. The sand above the tunnels is very unstable, with many sand traps and dune slide hazards. Little material treasure is available in this adventure, but the location of a previously unknown water source can be a valuable commodity.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

For characters of 5th-level, replace the **sandstone basilisk** with 2 standard **basilisks** and eliminate the dune slide hazards. Remember to alter the descriptions of the petrified ants if the sandstone basilisk is replaced to reflect being made of regular stone. Another way to reduce the risk for an adventurer trapped below ground with the sandstone basilisk is to create more tunnel connections through which to flee.

This encounter can be scaled up by adding 1 standard **basilisk**, which will increase the difficulty to a hard encounter for a level 7 party, and a medium encounter for a level 8 party. If adding any basilisks, it is recommended to place at least one of the basilisks out in the dunes, patrolling its territory, and make sure that the day is windy so the PCs cannot easily track it back to the tunnel entrance.

GENERAL FEATURES

The following features apply to the entirety of the map unless otherwise noted in an area description.

Dunes. The crescent shaped transverse dunes are unstable on their lee sides (the side facing away from the prevailing winds, shaded dark on the map). Climbing or traversing the lee side of these dunes will trigger a sand slide with a bury zone $1d4+1 \times 10$ feet wide and a slide zone of equal distance on all sides of it. Those caught in the bury zone must make a successful **DC 15 Strength** or **Dexterity saving throw** (player's choice) or become buried beneath heavy sand. A character so buried begins suffocating immediately and must be dug out requiring 1 minute of work per 10 feet of the bury zone. This time can be halved with appropriate equipment such as a shovel. Those caught in the slide zone must make a successful **DC 15 Strength** or **Dexterity saving throw** (player's choice) or be knocked prone. The height of the dunes in the area is relatively uniform, peaking at 60 feet. The windward side of the dunes (everything not shaded dark on the map) are merely considered difficult terrain.

Sand Traps. The sand traps located above the tunnels are very unstable, requiring a successful **DC 18 Dexterity saving throw** to avoid being pulled through 12 feet of sand and deposited into the tunnel in one round. The traps above the tunnels stabilize into standard sand traps (treat as **quicksand** in the standard 5e rules) after the first creature has been pulled through. Sand traps not located above the tunnels are also standard.

Tunnels. Within the giant ant tunnels there is no natural light source. The tunnels are 8-foot diameter cylinders, and their ceilings are 12 feet below the surface of the dune valleys unless otherwise noted. Each 10-foot length of tunnel is relatively fragile and will collapse if it takes more than 15 points of damage (AC 16, 27 hp, Damage Threshold 3). A tunnel that collapses below a dune will cause a slide zone above. Where the tunnels are closest to the surface, communication is possible by shouting back and forth through the thick sand and succeeding at **Wisdom (Perception)** checks (DC 15 to hear, and DC 20 to understand). A PC shouting in the tunnel causes $1d4$ points of damage to the structure per round (do not forget to apply the damage threshold).

MAP OF THE OLD ANT COLONY

This key describes the areas in the Basilisk Lair map included with this encounter.

1. SAND TRAP ENTRY POINT

This sand trap is the recommended entry point for this encounter. It gives an adventurer that is pulled through to the tunnels plenty of time to make noise and attract the **sandstone basilisk** from Area 3. If all the characters make the Dexterity save to avoid the sand trap, many other sand traps are in the area, and the party has a chance to find the rock formation located in Area 5. It is left up to the GM to get one or more party members into the tunnels.

2. BAT CHAMBERS

These areas drop off a few feet in a gradual slope and are wider than the tunnels. Adventurers with a light source or darkvision immediately notice that the walls and ceiling are covered with thousands of bats. Loud noises within 30 feet of the bat chambers spook them and cause them to form **4 swarms of bats**. The swarms form within $1d4$ rounds of the disturbance and move rapidly toward the exit in Area 5 as a group.

Those on the surface that are within 100 feet of Area 5 automatically see the bats when they leave the tunnels. Beyond 100 feet, adventurers must make a **DC 12 Wisdom (Perception)** check to see the swarm. Once outside the tunnels, the swarms circle Area 5 for $1d6+1$ rounds before returning to their roost. If the encounter takes place at night, the bats simply disperse into the darkness.

3. BASILISK'S LAIR

Fifty feet before entering the west side of this chamber, the tunnel begins a gradual downward slope. The chamber itself is 80 feet wide, with the same low ceilings as the tunnels. At the entrance is a giant sandstone ant, perfectly preserved by the sandstone basilisk's gaze. From a distance of more than 30 feet, the ant looks real and requires a **Wisdom (Perception)** or **Wisdom (Nature)** check at DC 12 to determine otherwise. The floor is littered with smaller pieces of other sandstone ants that have been mostly consumed by the sandstone basilisk. If noise from the adventurers somehow did not attract the **sandstone basilisk**, or if it retreats from combat, it can be found in this area.

Moisture is obvious in the air of the chamber, and a small 4-foot diameter tunnel branches off the north side, leading to Area 4. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** check of the southeast corner reveals a rocky nest with 3 stone like sandstone basilisk eggs partially buried in the sand.

4. WATER CHAMBER

The narrow tunnel leading into this area slopes downward to a moist sandy floor. The chamber slopes down further to the north into a 2-foot deep pool of water leeching up through the sand. The water is fresh, cool, and potable.

5. ROCK FORMATION

A large pile of sandstone juts from the sand, rising 30 feet at its highest point. On the west side of the rock formation stands the remains of a giant sandstone ant. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)**, **Wisdom (Perception)**,

or **Wisdom (Survival)** check along the south side of the formation reveals the entrance to the tunnels. The opening is beneath a short ledge and partially filled with blown sand, making it only 3 feet high and 4 feet wide. The tunnel gradually opens to full size at a distance of 50 feet from the entrance.

REWARDS

The location of the hidden water supply can be a valuable resource to characters that adventure frequently within the desert. Caravan masters and traders may pay or trade favors for this knowledge, although they may request it be kept confidential.

If this encounter takes place in the Ukrudan Desert or if PCs are familiar with the necromancers of Hollowfaust, they may realize the potential value of a sandstone basilisk corpse. With the price of basilisk eyes and eyelashes at 300 gp and 25 gp respectively in the City of Necromancers' Bone Market, PCs with the means to transport the 300 lb. creature could greatly benefit from its sale.

With the right contacts, the sandstone basilisk eggs can fetch a high price on the market as well. The eggs are quite durable (AC 17, 15 hp Damage Threshold 3), and will hatch in 3d6+6 days unless they are destroyed.

CREATURES

The following creatures are used in this adventure

BASILISK

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 77 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	8 (-1)	7 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 9

Languages –

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Petrifying Gaze. If a creature starts its turn within 30 feet of the basilisk and the two of them can see each other, the basilisk can force the creature to make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw if the basilisk isn't incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature magically begins to turn to stone and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified until freed by the greater restoration spell or other magic.

A creature that isn't surprised can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If it does so, it can't see the basilisk until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again.

If it looks at the basilisk in the meantime, it must immediately make the save. If the basilisk sees its reflection within 30 feet of it in bright light, it mistakes itself for a rival and targets itself with its gaze.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

SANDSTONE BASILISK

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 77 (14d8 + 14)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +4

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances cold, fire, piercing, slashing

Damage Immunity necrotic, psychic

Damage vulnerabilities bludgeoning, force

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 15

Languages –

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Sandstone's Gaze. If a creature starts its turn within 30 feet of the sandstone basilisk and the two of them can see each other, the sandstone basilisk can force the creature to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw if the sandstone basilisk isn't incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature magically begins to turn to sandstone and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified until freed by the greater restoration spell or other magic. While the creature is petrified in this fashion it is considered to be made of sandstone. The sandstone creature has AC 15, 17 hp, a Damage Threshold of 3 and suffers vulnerability to bludgeoning and force damage, but gains resistance to cold, fire, slashing, piercing, and necrotic damage. A petrified character reduced to 0 hit points in this form is killed. Body parts maimed or broken off prior to the victim being restored to flesh remain so after the casting of greater restoration, requiring magic that can regrow limbs.

A creature that isn't surprised can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If it does so, it can't see the sandstone basilisk until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If it looks at the sandstone basilisk in the meantime, it must immediately make the save. If the sandstone basilisk sees its reflection within 30 feet of itself in bright light, it mistakes itself for a rival and targets itself with its gaze.

Desert Camouflage. The sandstone basilisk has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in desert or sandy terrain.

Actions

Wounded Frenzy. If the sandstone basilisk has 30 or fewer hit points it makes two bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

SWARM OF BATS

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	4 (-3)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses Blindsight 60ft., passive Perception 11

Languages –

Challenge 1/4 (25 XP)

Echolocation. The swarm can't use its blindsight while deafened.

Keen Hearing. The swarm has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny bat. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

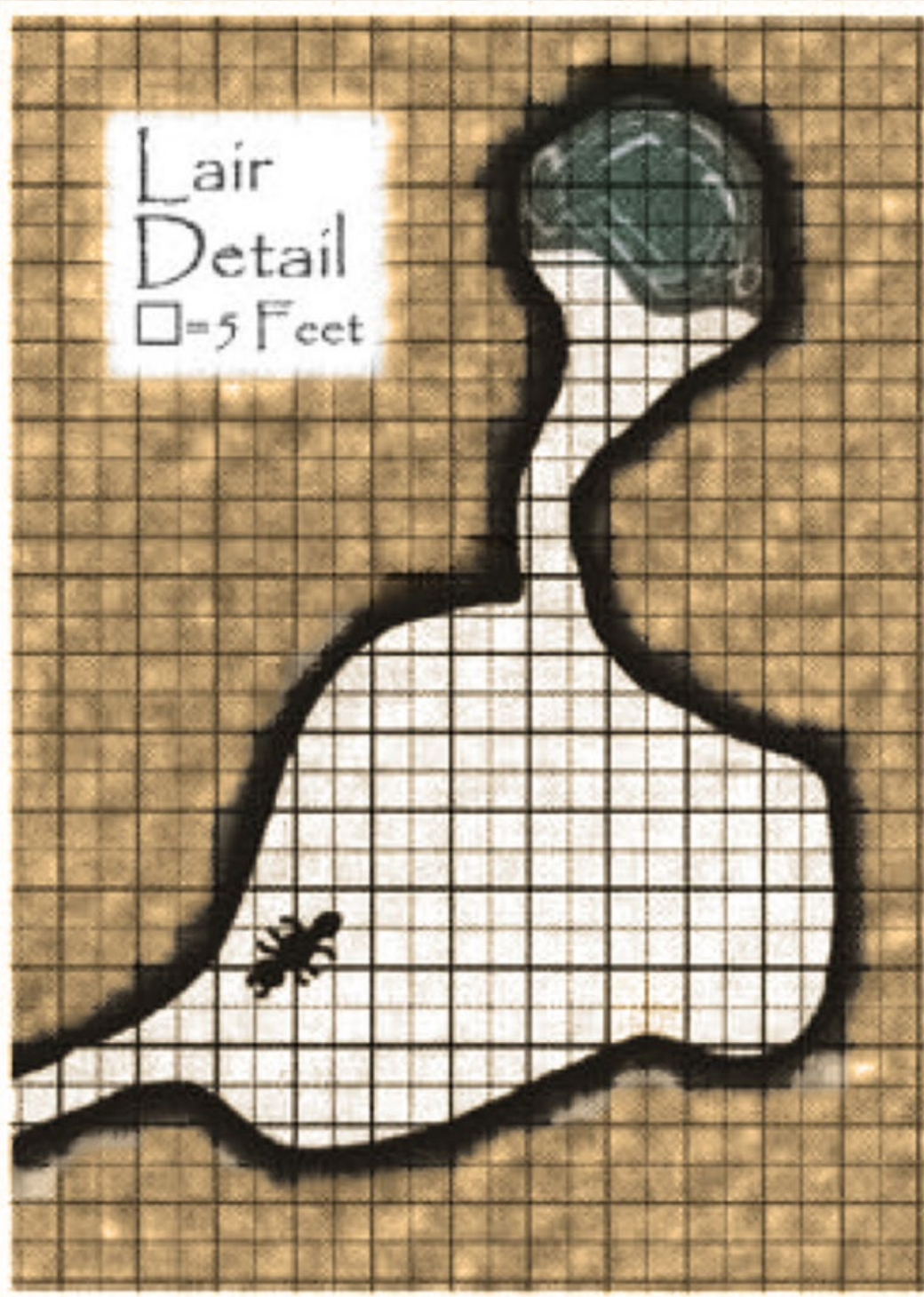
Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) piercing damage, or 2 (1d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Basilisk's Lair

-  Water
-  Sand Trap
-  Rock Formation
-  Stone Ant
-  = 10 Feet





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