

Monsters of Twilight

Curse Monsters



by Chris Caran

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“O chariot-race of Pelops long ago, source of many a sorrow, what disaster you have brought upon this land! For ever since Myrtilus sank to rest beneath the waves, hurled to utter destruction from his golden chariot in disgraceful outrage, from that time to this, outrage and its many sorrows were never yet gone from this house.”

-Mycenaean women. Sophocles, Electra 504

Monsters of Twilight

The Monsters of Twilight series are compendiums of creatures fitting a certain theme or idea. Each edition intends to explore a new theme and come up with new and unique monsters to use in your game. Each monster will have full statistics and ability descriptions, background information, and story hooks to easily integrate them into your game.

Curses and the Cursed

Curses have long played a pivotal role in narratives and popular culture from the stories of the ancient world to the Curse of the Bambino. A curse is retributive evil or misfortune: bad things happening to those who commit some grave sin or crime. Some would call it bad karma, while others attribute it to the prayers or invoked curses of those seeking to harm transgressors. It is this sense of “just desserts” that keeps people believing in them. People want to believe that the bad guy always gets what is coming to him. Anyone who suffers a disproportionate amount of bad luck when compared to the rest of the populace is commonly believed to be cursed.

Odysseus was cursed in Odyssey by Poseidon for tormenting Poseidon’s son, the Cyclops Polyphemus, and did not make it home for ten years. Many myths and ancient stories revolved around curses, blaming any and all misfortune on the gods. Modern and ancient literature is rife with curses, from the Curse of Ham in the bible (Genesis 9: 18-29) to the Unforgivable Curses of Harry Potter.

In this book you will find twelve unique monsters all having to do with curses. This book also contains cursed creatures, monsters that are utilized in a curse or those who use curses to target their foes.

Anathema Weed

"Destroy The Seed Of Evil, Or It Will Grow Up To Your Ruin."

-The Swallow and the Other Birds, Aesop's Fables

Anathema weed is an otherworldly parasite that feeds on plantlife. It has enough sentience to be self-aware and kill anything that threatens it. An anathema weed has one purpose: to grow. With the single-minded instincts of a predator, it grows and infects any plant life in the area. It attracts nearby creatures with delicious fruit that makes them too weak to resist. Once an anathema weed selects a tree, it attaches a tendril into the root structure and begins to grow fruit. This takes several days and the anathema is relatively immobile. If an anathema weed has the time and space to grow, it can completely destroy the wildlife in a large area and curse any creatures to a slow and drawn-out death.

Anathema Weed	
Size/Type	Medium Plant (Extraplanar, Earth)
Hit Dice	8d8 + 24 (60 hp)
Initiative	+3
Speed	5 ft. (1 square), burrow 15 ft. (3 squares)
Armor Class	18 (+3 Dex, +5 Natural)
Base Attack/ Grapple	+6/+9
Attack	Tendrils +10 melee (1d4+3 plus poison)
Full Attack	2 Tendrils +10 melee (1d4+3 plus poison)
Space/Reach	5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks	Improved grab, poison
Special Qualities	Anathema fruit, constrict 1d6+3, enticement, low-light vision, plant traits, restricted movement, spawn, tendrils, tremorsense
Saves	Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +5
Abilities	Str 16, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 16
Skills	Hide +13, Listen +3, Move Silently +12, Spot +3
Feats	Ability Focus (Poison), Iron Will, Weapon Focus (Tendrils)
Environment	Temperate Forests
Organization	Solitary or Orchard (2-24)
Challenge Rating	8
Treasure	None
Alignment	Always neutral
Advancement	9 HD (Medium), 10-12 HD (Large), 13-15 HD (Huge), 16-18 HD (Gargantuan), 19-21 HD (Colossal)
Level Adjustment	-



A typical anathema weed is five feet in diameter and perhaps one foot high, weighing around three hundred pounds. It is very rarely seen, however, as it spends all of its time beneath the soil. It is an alien plant with brownish grey coloring and multiple thorny protrusions. The most telling sign that an anathema weed exists is the beautiful fruit blossoming on nearby trees - trees that normally do not produce such fruit.

COMBAT

The anathema weed does not attack unless it is threatened or it believes a target to be helpless. Attempting to destroy a tree infected with anathema weed will provoke an attack. Taking anathema fruit from a tree will not provoke an attack, however. The main body of the anathema weed remains under the surface, so the creature almost always has total cover and concealment.

Anathema Fruit (Su): Anathema weeds reproduce by creating cursed fruit. The fruit is beautiful and nourishing. It is also highly addictive. Anathema Fruit Poison: Ingested, Will DC 17; Initial and secondary damage Special. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Upon initially ingesting anathema fruit, the subject gains 1d6 points of Strength and Constitution. This benefit lasts for one minute per Hit Die of the anathema weed. After that period of time, the subject crashes, losing the Strength and Constitution bonus and taking the same amount in Constitution damage. The second saving throw is made at this time and if unsuccessful, results in addiction.

If the addiction saving throw fails, the Constitution damage is permanent. Each successive use of Anathema fruit increases the

saving throw DC by 1. Once a subject is addicted, any further Constitution damage is temporary and no secondary saving throws need be made.

An addicted creature must make a Will saving throw each time anathema fruit is available or be compelled to eat the fruit as if affected by the Enticement ability. Additionally, the subject must make a successful Will saving throw each week without having eaten the fruit – an unsuccessful check gives the subject the sickened condition until the fruit is ingested again. If already sickened, a failed check will give the subject the nauseated condition for 2d6 hours. The addiction cannot be dispelled, but it can be removed with a break enchantment, limited wish, miracle, remove curse, or wish spell.

Creatures immune to poison can still be affected by anathema fruit, although they receive a +4 bonus to the saving throw. When an anathema weed connects with a tree, it will sprout fruit within 1d6 days. This process does not destroy any naturally growing fruit on the tree in question and the fruit's appearance tends to be very similar to anything already in place.

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple, an anathema weed inflicts 1d6+3 points of damage. A successful opposed grapple check or Escape Artist check against the Anathema weed's grapple result will undo the grapple as normal.

Enticement (Su): Anyone within range (100 ft. + 10 ft. per hit die) gazing upon an anathema fruit-bearing tree must make a successful DC 17 Will save or be compelled to approach the tree and eat a piece of fruit as if affected by a Mass Suggestion spell. The save DC is Charisma-based. This is a mind-affecting enchantment and will not affect creatures with more Hit Dice than the anathema weed. Creatures making a successful saving throw will be immune to this effect for 24 hours. The enchantment is smell-based, so creatures that cannot smell are not affected. Anyone positively identifying the tree as a host for anathema weed (Knowledge Nature DC 18) gets a +2 bonus to the saving throw. Anyone particularly hungry may receive a -2 penalty, at the DM's discretion.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, an anathema weed must hit with a tentacle. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 19, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Restricted Movement (Ex): When an anathema weed is connected to a host tree, it may only move up to 30 feet from the root base. If the anathema weed chooses to go past this range, the connection to the tree is severed and the fruit will wither and die in 1d6 hours.

Spawn (Ex): A creature dying from anathema weed poison (tentacle or fruit) will produce a new anathema weed in 1d6 days.

Tendrils (Ex): Anathema weeds have five tendrils used to attach to trees and destroy any predators. A tendril can take 1 hit point of damage per hit die of the creature before being severed. Only ½ of this damage affects the creature and the anathema weed can re-grow a tendril as a move action. Damaging a tree that a tendril is attached to, the tree that bears anathema fruit, causes the anathema weed will take ½ of that damage without a saving throw. Once the tree is destroyed or the creature has detached, the link is severed and the creature will not take further damage. The tendrils have extended reach, allowing the anathema weed to strike targets 10 feet away.

Skills: Anathema weeds have +8 to hide checks in forests (included above) and +4 to move silently checks.

Anathema Weeds in Your Game

Anathema weed is a very dangerous creature that can destroy an entire ecosystem in a matter of weeks. It is native to the Elemental Plane of Earth, but can be found on several other extraplanar locations. The creature can be summoned with Summon Nature's Ally VIII or brought into the game another way.

The following adventure hooks can be used to bring the Anathema weed into your game:

Druid's Revenge

A powerful druid has been spurned and driven out of an area by local townsfolk and merchants looking to build a lumber mill. They want to increase their lumber production and increase the size of the town, bringing money and prosperity to all of the townsfolk. The druid sees the natural order shifting out of balance, endangering the local wildlife. His objections to the town led to his banishment and subsequent resentment. He summons the anathema weed as punishment for the townsfolk, as the creature will destroy the local farms and curse the short-sighted inhabitants.

Several locals have happened upon the tree and tasted the intoxicating fruit. Word has spread of the fruit's invigorating qualities and more are flocking to try it. If it is not stopped soon, the cursed fruit will cause an epidemic and the town will surely be destroyed.

The Tree of Plenty

A magical tree with special fruit is the goal of the adventurers' quest. The guardians of the tree have an anathema in place as a final measure. The weak-minded will end up choosing the anathema fruit instead of the true object of the quest. The curse will afflict those who do not have clarity of purpose and doom the quest to failure.

Blood Crows

"Death shall come on swift wings to him that toucheth the tomb of Pharaoh"

- Tutankhamun curse, invented by Victorian newspapers

In the outer planes, blood crows are fearsome predators that relentlessly track prey to exhaustion. Traveling in huge hunting packs called murders, they cover many square miles in search of prey. They are especially fond of battlefields and will descend on the wounded at first opportunity. The blood crows are often the last thing a dying soldier sees in the many wars of the outer planes.

Battlefields are often the spawning grounds of these creatures, as the mass carnage acts as an impromptu mating season. The blood crows lay hundreds of eggs in the corpses and move on. The eggs hatch within a few days and the young devour whatever remains in the area, living or dead.

Once a murder of blood crows begins to track a target, they are relentless. The target begins to suffer from hallucinations, imagining that any avian is part of the pack and trying to get him. More often than not, the irrational fear of birds flushes the target out and allows the murder to find him more easily.



Blood Crows	
Size/Type	Tiny Magical Beast (Extraplanar, Fiendish, Swarm)
Hit Dice	6d10 (33 hp)
Initiative	+6
Speed	10 ft. (2 squares), fly 40 ft. (average)
Armor Class	14 (+2 size, +2 Dex), touch 14, flat-footed 12
Base Attack/Grapple	+6/--
Attack	Swarm (2d6)
Full Attack	Swarm (2d6)
Space/Reach	10 ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks	Distraction, ornithophobia
Special Qualities	Damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., dispersed search, half damage from weapons, low-light vision, resistance to cold/fire 5, spell resistance 11, swarm traits
Saves	Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +6
Abilities	Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 6
Skills	Listen +11, Spot +14, Survival +2 (+10 following tracks)
Feats	Ability Focus (Ornithophobia), Alertness ^B , Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Track ^B
Environment	Any evil-aligned plane
Organization	Murder (1-6 swarms)
Challenge Rating	6
Treasure	None
Alignment	Always neutral evil
Advancement	7-12 HD (Tiny)
Level Adjustment	--

These glossy black birds are about 2-3 feet long and have wingspans of about 5 feet. They are slightly larger than normal crows and have an unnatural air about them. The swarm itself is a group of hundreds upon hundreds of the birds encompassing a ten foot cube. Creatures caught in the swarm cannot see the sun due to the sheer numbers.

COMBAT

Like any swarm, a blood crow swarm seeks to surround and attack when it encounters its prey. A swarm deals 2d6 points of damage to any creature whose space it occupies at the end of its move.

A blood crow swarm's attack is treated as an evil-aligned weapon and a magic weapon for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Dispersed Search (Ex): A blood crow swarm can spread out over a wide area, one square mile per hit die, in order to search for prey. An individual crow can be killed, but it does not affect the status of the swarm. Once a target is spotted, the entire swarm converges and reforms in 4d10 rounds. When the swarm is

Blood Crow Curse

Conjuration (Calling)

Lvl: Brd 6, Clr 6, Sor/Wiz 6

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: 1 Creature

Duration: Special

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

You place the curse of the blood crows on the subject. Large crows start to appear in the area. If in an enclosed space, the crows begin gathering outside. In 4d10 rounds, the crows will form into a swarm and attack the subject. If the subject has used the time to escape, the crows will follow and track the subject until they are destroyed, the curse is broken, or the subject has been killed.

This is not a curse in the normal sense and it cannot be dispelled with remove curse. Rather, the touch marks the target. If the caster fails to touch a target, he is the blood crow's target instead. A break enchantment, limited wish, miracle, remove curse, or wish spell can stop the murder from hunting the subject. Remove curse works only if its caster level is equal to or higher than your caster level.

When the subject or subjects of the curse are killed, the crows disperse in all directions.

whole again, it may be attacked normally. While dispersed, the blood crows gain a +8 bonus to survival checks for purposes of tracking prey.

Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with a blood crow swarm in its space must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Ornithophobia (Su): Any living creature actively pursued by blood crows must succeed on a DC 15 Will save any time a bird (of any kind) is seen or be shaken while the bird is in view and for 1d4 rounds after. The creature becomes paranoid and suspects birds are watching and following him. The shaken condition does not stack with itself when multiple birds are seen, although fear from another source stacks normally.

Blood Crows in your game

Blood crows make a good tension builder and are easily used as a curse trap. Here are some examples of plot-hooks to get blood crows in your game:

Pharaoh's Curse

The characters are in a ruined temple after the Pharaoh's burial mask, rumored to grant life beyond death. Above the pharaoh's casket is inscribed "They who defile this sacred tomb shall swift be visited by wings of death." Handling the burial mask will not cause any obvious discomfort and the party can pillage the tomb to their hearts' content.

The curse takes effect when the Pharaoh's mask is removed from the tomb and the adventurers finally exit the burial complex.. The characters get no saving throw to resist the curse as they willingly remove it from its rightful place. Casting a spell to dispel the curse (as described above) on the mask prior to leaving the tomb will remove it, however.

If the curse remains, the characters notice a large crow landing noisily nearby soon after they exit. This is when they make their first Will saving throw for the Ornithophobia effect and realize something is horribly wrong. The swarm will form completely in 4d10 rounds.

Cult of the Crow King

A fanatic cult dedicated to a mysterious crow-like god has taken hold in the fringes of society. Poor and downtrodden peasants have flocked to a charismatic leader who promises food and protection. The cult has made inroads against more established religions as certain outspoken priests have been killed by flocks of blood-thirsty birds. Locals say the priests were ranting and raving like madmen prior to the attacks and the majority of the populace is terrified.

The high priest of the Crow King is using the curse to make examples of those who would oppose his rule and his god. The adventurers can become involved in this in any number of ways.

Caern Dragon

"And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child"

- Revelations (12:13)

The caern dragon is native to the elemental plane of earth and renowned for its avarice, even among dragonkind. Caern dragons eat stone, separating precious metals and valuables as they gain sustenance. It is this part of their nature that they are primarily used from a curse perspective.

The caern dragon gets its name due to several incidents of the creatures inhabiting dwarven strongholds and causing them to collapse after months of wear and tear. These ancient dwarven cities are now nothing more than elaborate tombs, the caern dragon the only thing left.

Caern dragons are very territorial, refusing to give up ground they believe to be theirs by right. When introduced to a new habitat, they dig, eat, grow, and expand their territory. If there is another natural predator nearby, the dragon will hide until it believes itself to be strong enough to handle the threat and strike from surprise.

This is especially devastating when the new habitat is a stone structure, such as a castle or a cave. A site or structure with a caern dragon will rapidly begin to deteriorate as the creature eats, eventually collapsing as if the structure was victim of an earthquake. When the caern dragon ages, it will begin to strengthen and fortify its surroundings.

Any structure takes the dragon's bite damage once per month, ignoring hardness, until the strain forces the structure to cave in on itself. Caern dragons who are discovered may attempt to cow the locals into submission and demand tribute if they believe themselves powerful enough. If there is enough resistance to the dragon, it will go underground and fight on its own terms.

Caern Dragon

Size/Type	Dragon (Earth, Extraplanar)
Environment	Mountains, Subterranean
Organization	Solitary
Challenge Rating	Wyrmling 3; very young 5; young 7; juvenile 9; young adult 11; adult 14; mature adult 16; old 19; very old 20; ancient 22; wurm 23; great wurm 25
Treasure	Triple normal
Alignment	Always neutral evil
Advancement	Wyrmling 7 HD; very young 9-10 HD; young 12-13 HD; juvenile 15-16 HD; young adult 18-19 HD; adult 21-22 HD; mature adult 24-25 HD; old 27-28 HD; very old 30-31 HD; ancient 33-34 HD; wurm 36-37 HD; great wurm 39+ HD
Level Adjustment	Wyrmling +2; very young +3; young +4; juvenile +4; others —

At birth, a caern dragon's scales are smooth and have a stony grey color. As the dragon gets older, the scales become finer and more rock-like, assuming a hard, naturally hewn appearance by young adult age. A very old dragon's scales pick up the jagged natural features of stone. A caern dragon's pupils fade with age, and the eyes of great wyrms resemble glowing fiery orbs. As caern dragons age, they use their wings less and less. Eventually, as wyrms, the stunted wings are not able to support flight at all.



Caern Curse

Conjuration (Calling)

Lvl: Clr 5, Sor/Wiz 5**Components:** V, S, M**Casting Time:** 10 minutes**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)**Target:** Caern dragon wyrmling (6 HD)**Duration:** Instantaneous**Saving Throw:** None**Spell Resistance:** No

By casting this spell, you call a wyrmling caern dragon into being. The dragon accepts the current location as its territory and begins to eat and grow. The dragon is brought into being in the middle of a large stone. This stone does not have to be separate from the structure, so the caster can cast it on a castle or cave.

Material component

A large stone from the structure or site the dragon is to inhabit (2½ feet across minimum), 12 gems and jewels with a total combined value of 6,000 gp or more.

COMBAT

A caern dragon cares about one thing and one thing only – wealth. Jewels, gems, and precious metals are all that matter. Anyone who can get the beast more wealth merit passing notice; everyone else is insignificant. Caern dragons are quick and direct in combat, preferring the most expedient and efficient means of dealing with an enemy.

An angry caern dragon prefers to mire foes using transmute rock to mud. The dragon pushes trapped opponents into the mud or snatches and carries them aloft. A caern dragon tries to draw airborne enemies into narrow, stony gorges where it can use its spider climb ability and maneuver them into colliding with the walls. It also will use its burrowing ability to strike particularly difficult opponents from under the ground.

Breath Weapon (Su): A caern dragon has one type of breath weapon, a line of lava. This is half fire damage and half bludgeoning.

Sample Caern Dragon

Caern Dragon	
Size/Type	Tiny dragon wyrmling (earth, extraplanar)
Hit Dice	6d12+6 (45 hp)
Initiative	+4
Speed	40 ft., burrow 40 ft., fly 100 ft. (average)
Armor Class	16 (+2 size, +4 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 16
Base Attack/Grapple	+6/-2
Attack	Bite +8 (1d4)
Full Attack	Bite +8 (1d4) and 2 Claws +6 (1d3)
Space/Reach	2½ ft./0 ft. (5 ft. with bite)
Special Attacks	Breath weapon (line of lava) 2d8 (DC 13)
Special Qualities	Blind sense, darkvision 120 ft., immunity to fire, keen senses, spider climb
Saves	Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +6
Abilities	Str 10, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12
Skills	Appraise +10, Bluff +6, Diplomacy +5, Escape Artist +5, Intimidate +5, Listen +12, Search +10, Spot +12
Feats	Alertness, Improved Initiative, Multiattack
Environment	Mountains, subterranean
Organization	Solitary
Challenge Rating	3
Treasure	Triple normal
Alignment	Neutral evil

Caern dragons by age

Age	Size	Hit Dice (hp)	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha	Batt/Grp	Att	Fort	Ref	Will	Breath (DC)	Presence DC
Wyrmling	T	6d12+6 (45)	11	10	13	12	13	12	+6/-2	8	6	5	6	2d8 (13)	--
Very Young	S	8d12+8 (60)	13	10	13	12	13	12	+8/+5	10	7	6	7	4d8 (15)	--
Young	M	11d12+22 (93)	15	10	15	14	15	14	+11/+13	13	9	7	9	6d8 (17)	--
Juvenile	M	14d12+28 (119)	17	10	15	14	15	14	+14/+17	17	11	9	11	8d8 (19)	--
Young Adult	L	17d12+51 (161)	19	10	17	16	17	16	+17/+25	20	13	10	13	10d8 (21)	21
Adult	L	20d12+80 (210)	23	10	19	16	17	16	+20/+30	25	16	12	15	12d8 (24)	23
Mature Adult	H	23d12+115 (264)	27	10	21	18	19	18	+23/+39	29	18	13	17	14d8 (26)	25
Old	H	26d12+130 (299)	29	10	21	18	19	18	+26/+43	33	20	15	19	16d8 (28)	27
Very Old	H	29d12+174 (362)	31	10	23	20	21	20	+29/+47	37	22	16	21	18d8 (30)	29
Ancient	H	32d12+192 (400)	33	10	23	20	21	20	+32/+51	41	24	18	23	20d8 (32)	31
Wyrm	G	35d12+245 (472)	35	10	25	22	23	22	+35/+59	43	26	19	25	22d8 (34)	33
Great Wyrm	G	38d12+304 (551)	37	10	27	22	23	22	+38/+63	47	29	21	27	24d8 (37)	35

Caern dragon abilities by age

Age	Speed	Initiative	AC	Special Abilities	Caster Level	SR
Wyrmling	40 ft., burrow 80 ft., fly 100 ft. (average)	0	16 (+2 size, +4 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 16	Immunity to Fire, Spider climb		
Very Young	40 ft., burrow 80 ft., fly 100 ft. (average)	0	18 (+1 size, +7 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 18			
Young	40 ft., burrow 80 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor)	0	20 (+10 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 20		1	
Juvenile	40 ft., burrow 80 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor)	0	23 (+13 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 23		3	
Young Adult	40 ft., burrow 80 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor)	0	25 (-1 size, +16 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 25	DR 5/magic	5	19
Adult	40 ft., burrow 80 ft., fly 100 ft. (poor)	0	28 (-1 size, +19 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 28	Stone shape	7	21
Mature Adult	40 ft., burrow 80 ft., fly 100 ft. (clumsy)	0	30 (-2 size, +22 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 30	DR 10/magic	9	23
Old	40 ft., burrow 80 ft., fly 100 ft. (clumsy)	0	33 (-2 size, +25 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 33	Transmute rock to mud/ mud to rock	11	25
Very Old	40 ft., burrow 80 ft., fly 100 ft. (clumsy)	0	36 (-2 size, +28 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 36	DR 15/magic	13	26
Ancient	40 ft., burrow 80 ft., fly 100 ft. (clumsy)	0	39 (-2 size, +31 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 39	Wall of stone	15	28
Wyrm	40 ft., burrow 100 ft.	0	40 (-4 size, +34 natural), touch 6, flat-footed 40	DR 20/magic	17	29
Great Wyrm	40 ft., burrow 100 ft.	0	43 (-4 size, +37 natural), touch 6, flat-footed 43	Move earth	19	31

1. Can also cast cleric spells and those from the Earth, Evil, and Knowledge domains as arcane spells.

Spider Climb (Ex): A caern dragon can climb on stone surfaces as though using the spider climb spell.

Spell-like abilities

2/day—stone shape (adult or older); 1/day—transmute rock to mud or mud to rock (old or older), wall of stone (ancient or older), move earth (great wyrm).

Skills

Appraise and Bluff are considered class skills for caern dragons.

Caern dragons in your game

Caern dragons, if unchecked, can be the doom of any settlement. When a dragon of any type is introduced to an area, it can cause multiple problems.

The Tomb

Rumors of an ancient dwarven fortress have existed in an area for hundreds of years, but treasure seekers either have not gone deep enough or have not returned. The dwarven citadel is now the home of a large caern dragon, summoned by enemies of the dwarves to become their eventual downfall.

Siege Engineering

While defending a fortress against a sizeable force, engineers notice several structural flaws in the walls. A little investigation reveals that there are holes throughout the walls and there are a few places that are in serious danger of crumbling. Someone needs to find the cause before a wall falls down.

Cursed Familiar

"The devil will cause him or her to kill themselves, accomplished through a familiar."

- Malleus Malificarum

Magic is about power. Sometimes, the best way to punish those who seek power over all other things is to take it away. A familiar curse uses the sympathetic link between wizards or sorcerers and their familiar and changes the relationship. Arrogant and boastful mages are forced to act according to the whims of a small animal in order to get the most menial magical tasks completed.

This spell is especially harmful to evil spellcasters with improved familiars, such as imps and quasits. These creatures enjoy their newfound power and lord it over their "masters" with impunity.

Creating a Cursed Familiar

"Cursed Familiar" is an acquired template that can be added to any aberration, animal, construct, dragon, elemental, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, ooze, outsider, plant, undead, or vermin. The creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature) must be a familiar or improved familiar. The template is applied to both the master spellcaster and the familiar.

A cursed familiar and the familiar's master use all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Special Attacks

The cursed familiar retains all special attacks of the base creature.

Special Qualities

The cursed familiar retains all special qualities of the base creature as well as those described below.

Alertness (Ex): While the master is within arm's reach, the familiar gains the Alertness feat. The master loses this ability.

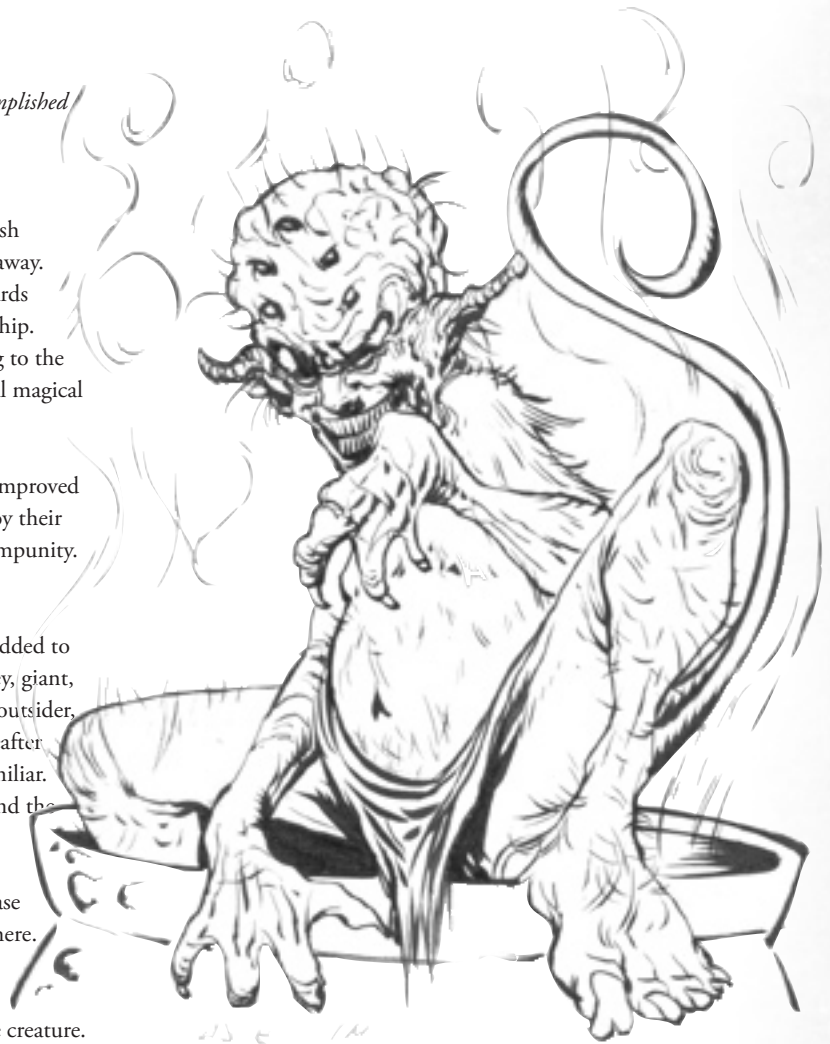
Deny Spells

The master must beat the familiar's spell resistance to cast any spell. If the familiar is within 5 feet or the spell affects the familiar directly, it may deny the spell outright if it so wishes. Any spell that will undo the curse will automatically be denied if the familiar is within range. If the familiar is not within a mile, the spellcaster loses the ability to cast spells. This effect remains if the familiar is killed, although a remove curse will eliminate all negative effects.

Share Spells

At the familiar's option, he may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) the master casts on himself also affect the familiar. The familiar must be within 5 feet at the time of casting to receive the benefit.

If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting the master if the familiar moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect the master again even if it returns to



Curse Familiar

Necromancy [Evil]

Level: Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

You curse a target familiar, applying the template and effects as described in the Cursed Familiar monster description. The familiar becomes completely self-serving and will withhold magic if not treated well.

The curse bestowed by this spell cannot be dispelled, but it can be removed with a break enchantment, limited wish, miracle, remove curse, or wish spell.

the familiar before the duration expires. Additionally, the master may cast a spell with a target of “You” on his familiar (as a touch range spell) instead of on himself.

A master and his familiar can share spells even if the spells normally do not affect creatures of the familiar’s type (magical beast).

Scry on Master (Sp): If the master is 13th level or higher, the familiar may scry on his master (as if casting the scrying spell) once per day.

Example of a Cursed Familiar

Endirion: Male half-elf wizard 7; CR 7; Medium humanoid (half-elf); HD 7d4+7; hp 24; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1/19-20, +1 dagger); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4+1/19-20, +1 dagger); SQ Elven blood, immunity to sleep spells and similar magical effects, +2 racial bonus on saving throws against enchantment spells or effects, low-light vision, summon familiar; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12, Decipher Script +14, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +3, Knowledge (Arcana) +13, Listen +1, Move Silently +3, Search +4, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +13, Spot +1; Combat Casting, Eschew Materials, Improved Familiar, Scribe Scroll[®], Silent Spell.

Languages: Common, Elven, Celestial, Draconic, Infernal.

Spells Known: 1st—*cause fear, charm person, comprehend languages, endure elements, identify, mage armor, mount, protection from good, protection from evil, shield, sleep, true strike;* 2nd—*blindness/deafness, command undead, detect thoughts, fog cloud, ghoul touch, invisibility, knock, locate object, mirror image, protection from arrows, scorching ray;* 3rd—*arcane sight, clairaudience/clairvoyance, dispel magic, hold person, lightning bolt, suggestion, tongues, wind wall, vampiric touch;* 4th—*animate dead, arcane eye, black tentacles, dimension door, locate creature, phantasmal killer, remove curse, stoneskin, summon monster IV.*

Wizard Spells Prepared (4/5/4/3/1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*detect magic (4);* 1st—*charm person (2), sleep, shield, true strike;* 2nd—*detect thoughts, invisibility, mirror image, scorching ray;* 3rd—*dispel magic, hold person, vampiric touch;* 4th—*stoneskin.*

Possessions: +1 dagger, ring of protection +2, spellbook, wand of fireball (CL 5) (15 charges), 150 gp.

Taliander: Cursed Familiar (Imp); CR -; Tiny outsider; HD 7d8; hp 15; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., Fly 50 ft. (Perfect); AC 24, touch 15, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +3; Grp -5; Atk +8 melee (1d4 plus poison, sting); Full Atk +8 melee (1d4 plus poison, sting); SA deliver touch spells, poison, spell-like abilities; SQ alertness (when near Master), alternate form, damage reduction 5/good or silver, darkvision 60 ft., deny spells, empathic link (master), fast healing 2, immunity to poison, improved evasion, resistance to fire 5, share spells; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14.
Skills and Feats: Concentration +10, Decipher Script +11, Diplomacy +8, Hide +17, Knowledge (Arcana) +10, Knowledge (Outer Planes) +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Search +6, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +10, Spot +7, Survival +1 (+3

following tracks); Dodge, Weapon Finesse (Sting).

Alternate Form (Su): An imp can assume other forms at will as a standard action. This ability functions as a polymorph spell cast on itself (caster level 12th), except that an imp does not regain hit points for changing form, and an individual imp can assume only one or two forms no larger than Medium.

Common forms include monstrous spider, raven, rat, and boar.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 13, initial damage 1d4 Dex, secondary damage 2d4 Dex. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Spell-like Abilities (Sp): At will—detect good, detect magic, invisibility (self only); 1/day—suggestion (DC 15). Caster level 6th. The save DC is Charisma-based. Once per week an imp can use commune to ask six questions. The ability otherwise works as the spell (caster level 12th).

Using Cursed Familiars in your game

The Cursed Familiar spell is a great way to punish player wizards or sorcerers who need a lesson in humility. The familiar becomes completely self-centered and will deny spells if not treated well, often forcing the affected wizards to pamper them with expensive foods and lodging. It is not unknown for a familiar to demand a bed and make the wizard sleep on the floor or feed it the best morsels of any meal.

Endirion and Taliander

Endirion was targeted by the Familiar Curse when he tried to steal sensitive magical documents from his guild. Ever since that time, his Imp familiar Taliander has relentlessly and mercilessly forced the wizard to perform all sorts of menial and degrading tasks. Endirion cannot break the curse himself even though he knows remove curse, because the imp simply does not allow it. He is desperate and will try to locate anyone, even the PCs, who can help him when the imp is not around.

Prima Donna

A party spellcaster is targeted with this curse and must deal with the endless needs of a pampered familiar, day after day, until a cure is found. This effect can be delivered in any number of ways.

Cursed Forest

“As Ichabod approached this fearful tree, he began to whistle: he thought his whistle was answered—it was but a blast sweeping sharply through the dry branches.”

-The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, Irving Washington

The cursed forest is a staple in tales of evil, twisting the land into a nightmarish version of itself. The animals are twisted along with the rest of the land. The forest becomes a breeding ground for evil and undead, luring travelers to their doom. Any creatures not initially affected by the curse try to flee the area, but are not often successful. Eventually, everything in the forest is affected.

Powerful spellcasters wishing to use the cursed forest as a buffer will often include any henchmen in the ritual so they can come and go from the forest without being affected by the evil magic. Evil clerics, necromancers and intelligent undead are particularly dangerous in a cursed forest as they are more likely able to control the vast quantities of undead found in the area.

Creating a Cursed Forest Denzien and Cursed Spawn

“Cursed Forest Denzien” is an acquired template that can be added to any creature (hereafter referred to as the base creature) with the following types: aberration, animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, plant, or vermin.

“Cursed Spawn” is an acquired template that can be added to any creature (hereafter referred to as the base creature) with the following types: aberration, animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, plant, or vermin. The creature must have the cursed forest denzien template in order to acquire the cursed spawn template.

Cursed forest denizens and cursed spawn use all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type

The base creature’s size and type are unchanged when acquiring the cursed forest denizen template. When becoming cursed spawn, the base creature’s type is changed to Undead.

Hit Dice

Cursed forest denizens do not change their hit dice. Cursed spawn change all current and future hit dice to d12s.

Armor Class

Cursed forest denizens and cursed spawn have a -2 rage penalty to armor class.



Attack

Creatures with either template do not change their attack values.

Full Attack

Creatures with either template do not change their attack values.

Special Attacks

Cursed forest denizens and cursed spawn retain all special attacks of the base creature.

Special Qualities

Cursed forest denizens and cursed spawn retain all special qualities of the base creature as well as those described below.

Cursed Spawn (Ex): Any cursed forest denzien that is killed rises as cursed spawn on its next action, regaining full hit points as the new creature. Cursed spawn do not rise from the dead after being destroyed. Cursed spawn gain the following undead traits:

No Constitution score.

Darkvision out to 60 feet.

Immunity to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, and death effects.

Not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, or energy drain. Immune to damage to its physical ability

Curse Forest

Necromancy [Evil]

Lvl: Clr 9, Drd 9, Sor/Wiz 9

Components: V, S, M, XP

Casting Time: 24 hours

Range: Touch

Area: 1 mile radius per level emanating from point touched.

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: See text.

Spell Resistance: See text.

Curse forest makes a particular area twisted and unholy, warping all creatures that live within it. The spellcaster may select certain creatures to be unaffected by the curse – each, including the spellcaster, must donate a drop of blood during the initial casting of the curse. There are several effects caused by this curse.

First, all creatures in the area of effect receive a Fortitude saving throw to resist being transformed. Creatures who are unsuccessful in the saving throw gain the cursed forest denizen template as described below. Each week that a creature remains in the area, it requires an additional saving throw to avoid the effects of the spell. Saving Throw: Fortitude negates. Spell Resistance: Yes.

Second, the area is guarded by a magic circle against good. Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless). Spell Resistance: None.

Third, all turning checks made to turn undead take a -4 penalty, and turning checks to rebuke undead gain a +4 profane bonus.

Spell resistance does not apply to this effect. (This provision does not apply to the druid version of the spell.)

Fourth, where there are choices in direction—such as a split path in the forest—a minor confusion-type effect functions so as to make it 50% probable that creatures believe they are going in the opposite direction from the one they actually chose. This is an enchantment, mind-affecting effect. If members of a group separate, the confusion will always try to keep them apart. Cursed creatures are not affected by this. Saving Throw: None. Spell Resistance: Yes.

The curse bestowed by this spell cannot be dispelled, but it can be removed with a miracle or wish spell. The spell is targeted on a specific part of the forest, usually the oldest tree. Any spell used to counter the curse must be on this target. When the curse is removed, all creatures with the cursed forest denizen revert to normal. All cursed spawn are immediately destroyed. Each forest is also intrinsically tied to the caster. When the caster is killed, the forest's curse dies with him.

Material Component

A piece of the oldest tree in the forest, a drop of blood, the powder of a crushed black pearl with a minimum value of 500 gp, and a black onyx gem with a minimum value of 500 gp.

XP Cost
300 XP

scores (Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution), as well as to fatigue and exhaustion effects.

Cannot heal damage on its own if it has no Intelligence score, although it can be healed. Negative energy (such as an *inflict* spell) can heal undead creatures. The fast healing special quality works regardless of the creature's Intelligence score.

Immunity to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects or is harmless).

Uses its Charisma modifier for Concentration checks.

Not at risk of death from massive damage, but when reduced to 0 hit points or less, it is immediately destroyed.

Not affected by raise dead and reincarnate spells or abilities. Resurrection and true resurrection can affect undead creatures. These spells turn cursed spawn back into cursed forest denizens. If the curse has been lifted, this spell turns them back into the base creature.

Undead do not breathe, eat, or sleep.

Daylight Sensitivity (Ex): Cursed forest denizens and cursed spawn are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a daylight spell.

Immunity to mind-affecting effects (Ex): Cursed forest denizens and cursed spawn are immune to all mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).

Saving Throws

Increase from the base creature as follows: Will +1.

Abilities

Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +2, Con +2. As an undead creature, a cursed spawn has no Constitution score.

Environment

Cursed forest denizens any, as base creature. Cursed spawn any.

Challenge Rating

Same as base creature +1.

Treasure

Same as base creature.

Alignment

Always evil (any).

Advancement

As character class.

Level adjustment

Same as base creature +1.

Wolf are pack hunters known for their persistence and hunting. Cursed forest denizens are haggard and emaciated with a crazed

look in their eyes. Cursed spawn are decaying versions of their former selves.

COMBAT

The tactics of the base creature do not change in either form. A favorite tactic is to send a few individuals against the foe's front while the rest of the pack circles and attacks from the flanks or rear.

Trip (Ex): A cursed wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+2 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the cursed wolf.

Skills

*Wolves have a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

Cursed Forests in your game

A cursed forest can easily be a game unto itself. The following adventure hooks could be used as adventures or campaigns.

Stronghold of Evil

A powerful wizard has built a stronghold in the middle of a nearby forest, cursing it to drive off interlopers and create a controllable army. From his secure position, he begins to conduct his dangerous necromantic experiments on neighboring villages.

Lost Kingdom

The elven lands of a nearby forest have been cursed by a vile necromancer, dooming the inhabitants to a tortured existence. The elves, once peaceful neighbors, have become twisted and evil. A few have managed to escape the foul magic and are searching for heroes to free their land from evil.

Sample cursed forest denizen and cursed spawn

	Cursed Forest Denizen (Wolf)	Cursed Spawn (Wolf)
Size/Type	Medium animal	Medium undead
Hit Dice	2d8+6 (15 hp)	2d12 (13 hp)
Initiative	+2	+2
Speed	50 ft. (10 squares)	50 ft. (10 squares)
Armor Class	12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural, -2 rage), touch 10, flat-footed 10	12 (+2 Dex, +2 natural, -2 rage), touch 10, flat-footed 10
Base Attack/Grapple	+1/+2	+1/+2
Attack	Bite +4 melee (1d6+2)	Bite +4 melee (1d6+2)
Full Attack	Bite +4 melee (1d6+2)	Bite +4 melee (1d6+2)
Space/Reach	5 ft./5 ft.	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks	Trip	Trip
Special Qualities	Cursed spawn, daylight sensitivity, immunity to mind-affecting effects, low-light vision, scent	Cursed spawn traits, darkvision 60 ft., daylight sensitivity, immunity to mind-affecting effects, low-light vision, scent
Saves	Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2	Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2
Abilities	Str 15, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6	Str 15, Dex 15, Con -, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6
Skills	Hide +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3, Survival +1*	Hide +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3, Survival +1*
Feats	Track ^B , Weapon Focus (bite)	Track ^B , Weapon Focus (bite)
Environment	Temperate forests	Temperate forests
Organization	Solitary, pair, or pack (7-16)	Solitary, pair, or pack (7-16)
Challenge Rating	2	2
Treasure	None	None
Alignment	Neutral evil	Neutral evil
Advancement	3 HD (Medium); 4-6 HD (Large)	3 HD (Medium); 4-6 HD (Large)
Level Adjustment	--	--

Eye Eater

"Woe to the worthless shepherd who leaves the flock! The sword will be on his arm, and on his right eye. His arm will be completely withered, and his right eye will be totally blinded!"

- Zechariah 11:17

Eye eaters are tiny constructs meant to deliver a very pointed curse. If someone has seen something they were not meant to see, they lose their eyes. If they heard something they were not meant to hear, they lose their ears. If they say something they were not meant to say, they lose their tongue.

The construct was originally devised as a means to seal contracts, a tangible reminder of the repercussions of breaking an agreement or deal. Sometimes a curse was placed on a holy book or secret ledger to keep prying eyes away. Either way, the results of an eye eater are as much a message to others as to the recipient of the curse itself.

Eye Eater	
Size/Type	Tiny Construct
Hit Dice	6d10 (33 hp)
Initiative	+7
Speed	20 ft. (4 squares)
Armor Class	18 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 15
Base Attack/Grapple	+4/-5
Attack	Claw +9 melee (1d3 plus paralysis)
Full Attack	2 claws +9 melee (1d3 plus paralysis) and bite +4 melee (1d4)
Space/Reach	2½ ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks	Maim, Paralysis
Special Qualities	Construct traits, DR 2/magic, darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 2, locate cursed, low-light vision, statue
Saves	Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3
Abilities	Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14
Skills	Hide +15, Listen +5, Move Silently +9, Spot +5
Feats	Ability Focus (Paralysis), Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse
Environment	Any evil-aligned plane
Organization	Solitary
Challenge Rating	5
Treasure	None
Alignment	Always neutral
Advancement	--
Level Adjustment	--



An eye eater usually resembles a tiny demon with long, hooked fingers and long, thin teeth. The constructs are typically around 2 to 3 feet high and weigh about 15 lbs. The specific features are up to the creator.

COMBAT

Eye eaters prefer to attack when their opponent is alone and unsuspecting or sleeping. The paralytic touch enables them to quickly and efficiently carry out their task. If the eye eater loses the element of surprise and is being damaged, it will sometimes choose to “play possum” by turning to stone if it cannot otherwise escape.

Fast Healing (Ex): While in statue form, the eye eater regains 2 hit points per round. When healing, the eye eater is helpless. If the eye eater is destroyed, it will no longer heal.

Locate Cursed (Ex): The eye eater can locate anyone affected by the curse at will. The affected target cannot hide from the eye eater unless the curse is removed.

Maim (Ex): The eye eater can permanently maim a helpless target with a full round action as a coup de grace. The eye eater can pluck a target’s eyes (blindness), remove their ears (deafness), or remove their tongue (muteness). The body part must be regenerated, but such a spell will not work until the curse is removed. Each body part requires a full round action, so it takes two full rounds to remove a target’s eyes, etc. This is a claw

attack and does critical damage. The eye eater devours whatever body part it removes.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by an eye eater's claw attack must succeed on a DC 17 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Statue (Ex): The eye eater can turn to solid stone. In statue form, the construct gains hardness 8 and retains its own hit points. The eye eater can turn to a statue or become normal as a standard action. If an eye eater is turned to stone by some other effect, it can change back to normal with a full round action as normal. While in statue form, the eye eater heals as described in fast healing above.

Construction

An eye eater is sculpted from stone. The materials cost 50 gp. The creature's master may assemble the body or hire someone else to do the job. Creating the body requires a DC 12 Craft (sculpting).

After the body is sculpted, it is animated through an extended magical ritual that requires a specially prepared laboratory or workroom, similar to an alchemist's laboratory and costing 500 gp to establish. If the creator is personally constructing the creature's body, the building and ritual can be performed together.

An eye eater with more than 6 Hit Dice can be created, but each additional Hit Die adds +2,000 gp to the cost to create.

Craft Construct, Eye eater curse, ghoul touch, statue, caster must be at least 11th level. Price 20,500gp; Cost 10,500gp + 800 XP.

Eye eaters in your game

Eye eaters can be encountered wherever there is powerful enough magic to create them. They can be used as an extreme form of justice or for nefarious purposes.

Loose lips sink ships

The chamberlain of a kingdom at war has a "binding stone," a rock enchanted with the eye eater curse that enchants anyone making a promise or oath while holding the stone. The chamberlain is cursing couriers that are captured by the enemy to have their tongues torn out. The couriers are not literate, so no secrets can be divulged. When the party captures one of the couriers he begins to suffer the effects of the curse. The eye eater sneaks into the camp at night to carry out its mission.

The punishment fits the crime

A member of the party is captured by a very strict church and he is charged with killing a member of the clergy. The punishment is the eye eater curse, stipulating that he shall lose any hand raised in anger against a member of the church.

Eye Eater Curse

Necromancy

Lvl: Clr 5, Sor/Wiz 6

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Touch

Target: One person, object, or room

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: Yes

You draw an indelible mark on the subject and state some behavior on the part of the subject that will activate the mark. When activated, the mark curses the subject. The act is specific and always involves the senses. For example, the mark can be placed in a room and anyone eavesdropping will lose their ears; it can be placed on a book and anyone but the caster reading it will lose their eyes; it can be placed on a money purse and anyone but the caster touching it will lose their hands; or it can be placed on a person and that target revealing a secret will lose their tongue.

Since this spell takes 10 minutes to cast and involves writing on the target, you can cast it only on a creature that is willing or restrained. If the spell is cast on a creature, it gets no saving throw. Spells cast on objects or rooms get a Will saving throw to negate.

Those affected by the curse have a -2 penalty to saving throws against the eye eater. The creature can always locate those affected by the curse and the target is affected by a doom effect, causing them to be permanently shaken. A shaken character takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. The eye eater will hunt down the affected target and remove the stated body part at the best opportunity. The other effects of the curse remain even if the eye eater successfully completes the assigned removal.

The curse bestowed by this spell cannot be dispelled, but it can be removed with a break enchantment, limited wish, miracle, remove curse, or wish spell. Remove curse works only if its caster level is equal to or higher than the caster's level. These restrictions apply regardless of whether the curse has activated.

Forsaken

"You shall not bring an abomination into your house, and become a devoted thing like it. You shall utterly detest it, and you shall utterly abhor it; for it is a devoted thing."

- Deuteronomy 7:26

Forsaken are victims of a horrible curse that twists their bodies and minds, leaving them unable to communicate with others. The original curse was used on Aldemar Guyien, a powerful wizard who betrayed his homeland. Instead of killing him, he was cast out and left to fend for himself on the edges of civilization like vermin. Aldemar lived for five years before he was beaten to death by terrified villagers.

Creating a Forsaken

"Forsaken" is an acquired template that can be added to any fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, or monstrous humanoid. The creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature) must have an Intelligence score of at least 6. A forsaken uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type

The creature's type changes to aberration. Do not recalculate the creature's base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. It gains the augmented subtype. Size is unchanged.

Speed

Forsaken lose all special movement abilities and reduce their normal base movement by 10 feet.

Armor Class

Forsaken cannot wear armor, but gain a natural armor bonus of +4.

Attack

Forsaken gain natural attacks, two claws and a bite attack appropriate for their size, but lose the ability to wield weapons due to the deformities. If the base creature already has natural attacks, it improves by one level.

Damage

Damage for natural claw attacks is 1d4 for a medium-sized creature. Damage for natural bite attacks is 1d6 for a medium-sized creature.

Special Attacks

The Forsaken retain all special attacks of the base creature.

Special Qualities

The Forsaken retain all special qualities of the base creature as well as those described below.

Bestial Speech (Ex): Forsaken lose the ability to speak coherently and may not use any ability relying on sound, including casting spells with verbal components. The creature may not communicate with spoken languages.



Create Forsaken

Transmutation

Lvl: Clr 5, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: Touch

Target: 1 Creature

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

You transform the subject into a Forsaken, applying the template to his creature type.

The curse bestowed by this spell cannot be dispelled, but it can be removed with a break enchantment, limited wish, miracle, remove curse, or wish spell. Transmutation spells to alter the shape of the subject automatically fail until the curse is broken. Shapechangers, such as lycanthropes, cannot change forms while under the effect of this curse.

Material components

A pinch of wolfsbane, mercury and phosphorus, plus powdered diamond and opal with a total value of at least 1,000 gp.

Darkvision (Ex): Forsaken gain darkvision out to 60 feet.

Deformity (Ex): The limbs and appendages of a Forsaken are twisted and deformed. The creature cannot manipulate tools or use any weapons. This includes casting spells with somatic components. The creature cannot wear armor.

Fearsome (Ex): Anyone seeing a Forsaken must make a Will save or be affected by Cause Fear. The DC of the saving throw equals 10 + ½ the Forsaken's hit dice + Constitution modifier.

Immunity to Transmutation (Ex): Forsaken are immune to all transmutation effects and cannot change their shape with any effect, magical or otherwise.

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Forsaken are dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a daylight spell.

Abilities

Change the base creature as follows: Wis -2, Cha -4.

Skills

Forsaken have a +6 racial bonus to Intimidation and a -2 racial penalty to Bluff and Diplomacy.

Environment

Any, often as base creature.

Challenge Rating

As base creature or as base creature -1 if the base creature was a Sorcerer or Wizard.

Treasure

As base creature.

Alignment

Any.

Level Adjustment

As base creature.

Sample Forsaken

Roten the Black: Male forsaken (augmented human) rogue 5; CR 5; Medium aberration (augmented human); HD 5d6+10; hp 27; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d4+2/x2, claw); Full Atk +7 melee (1d4+2/x2, 2 claws) and +2 melee (1d6+1/x2, bite); SA Sneak attack +3d6; SQ Bestial speech, darkvision 60 ft., deformity, evasion, fearsome, immunity to transmutation, light sensitive, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +4, Bluff +3, Diplomacy +7, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Gather Information +2, Hide +10, Intimidate +16, Listen +10, Move Silently +14, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +10, Spot +10; Alertness, Combat Reflexes.

Languages: Common, Dwarven, Elven.

Possessions: None

Forsaken in your game

Forsaken and the curse that creates them can easily be inserted into a game. The following adventure hooks can be used in any campaign:

Bait and Switch

The Baron Darilens came to power when his brother, Kafil, mysteriously disappeared. The Baron has proclaimed that a horrible beast has killed his brother and he will offer a substantial reward for the creature's head. The beast, of course, is his brother – transformed by the Forsaken Curse into a twisted monster.

Punishment

A very evil cult uses the curse to punish those who defy them – the Forsaken are cast into a catacomb to live off the waste of the city, like rats. The PCs encounter them when acting against the cult in some way.

Hex Cat

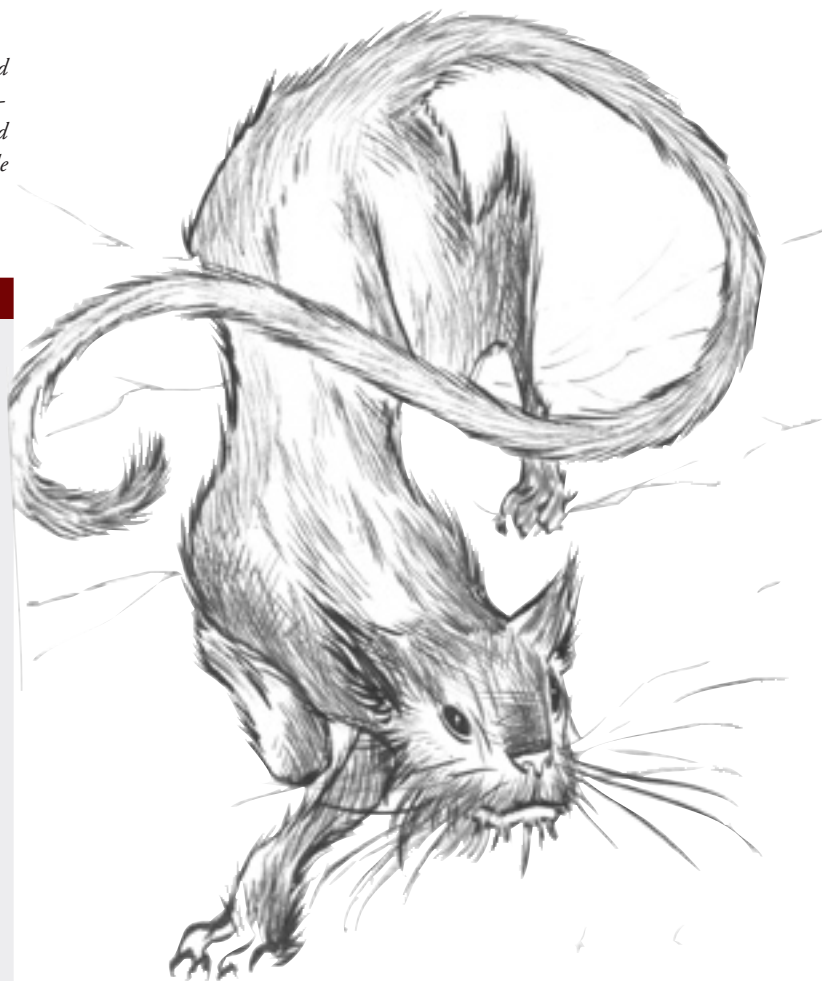
“This dread was not exactly a dread of physical evil--and yet I should be at a loss how otherwise to define it. I am almost ashamed to own--yes, even in this felon’s cell, I am almost ashamed to own--that the terror and horror with which the animal inspired me, had been heightened by one of the merest chimaeras it would be possible to conceive.”

-Edgar Allan Poe, *The Black Cat*

Hex Cat	
Size/Type	Tiny Magical Beast
Hit Dice	3d10 (16 hp)
Initiative	+2
Speed	30 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class	18 (+2 size, +2 Dex, +4 deflection), touch 18, flat-footed 16
Base Attack/Grapple	+3/-9
Attack	Claw +7 (1d2-4)
Full Attack	2 Claws +7 (1d2-4) and Bite +0 (1d3-4)
Space/Reach	2½ ft./0 ft.
Special Attacks	-
Special Qualities	Cursed aura, darkvision 60 ft., dying curse, low-light vision, scent
Saves	Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1
Abilities	Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 14
Skills	Balance +10, Climb +6, Hide +16*, Jump +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Spot +3
Feats	Ability Focus (dying curse), Stealthy, Weapon Finesse ^B
Environment	Temperate plains
Organization	Solitary
Challenge Rating	4
Treasure	None
Alignment	Always Chaotic Neutral
Advancement	-
Level Adjustment	-

Stories about black cats and the problems they cause are rampant in folk lore and fireside tales. Not all such stories are tall tales, however. Every once in a while a special cat is born – a black cat with all of the bad luck, or curse, attributed to the breed. These “hex cats” are harbingers of ill fortune and doom. When they are spotted, they are blamed for every misfortune and mishap around them.

Hex cats are smarter than the average cat, able to reason and use rudimentary logic. They can even speak, a fact they mostly keep



to themselves. The primary interest of a hex cat is indulgence. If the cat is happy, it stays out of trouble. If the cat is tired, hungry, or upset then it seeks to spread that experience until it is gone.

While having a hex cat nearby is bad luck, killing one is even worse. Stories tell of those killing a hex cat having the act follow them around for the rest of their lives. Unexplained accidents leave the cursed soul unhappy and alone in their misfortune.

A hex cat resembles a normal domesticated housecat, sometimes slightly larger. They are always completely black in color. Approximately 1% of black cats are actually hex cats. Hex cats speak Common, but rarely let on to this fact.

COMBAT

Hex cats prefer to stalk their prey, as normal cats. Being more intelligent than their kin, they sometimes lurk around towns and villages, living off the handouts of superstitious villagers wanting to appease the “evil spirit.” Over time, these hex cats will get fat and indolent, much like domesticated cats. A hex cat will only fight if cornered.

Cursed Aura (Su): Any creature that is within 60 ft. of a hex cat or that sees the hex cat suffers a -4 penalty on attack rolls, saves, ability checks, and skill checks. Any creature attempting to harm

a hex cat must succeed in a DC 13 Will save or be confused, as the spell. The save DC is Charisma-based. The -4 penalty to saving throws from the aura is applied to this check. The hex cat can suppress this ability for specific individuals if it is treated well or mollified by giving it what it wants.

Dying Curse (Su): A creature slaying a hex cat must succeed in a DC 15 Will save or be cursed, as the spell bestow curse. The save DC is Charisma-based. The effects of the curse are identical to the cursed aura: a -4 penalty to attack rolls, ability checks, and skill checks. The curse bestowed by this spell cannot be dispelled, but it can be removed with a break enchantment, limited wish, miracle, remove curse, or wish spell. The -4 penalty to saving throws from the aura is applied to this check.

Skills: Hex cats have a +4 racial bonus on Climb, Hide, Listen, and Move Silently checks and a +8 racial bonus on Jump checks. Hex cats have a +8 racial bonus on Balance checks. They use their Dexterity modifier instead of their Strength modifier for Climb and Jump checks. *In areas of deep shadow, the Hide bonus rises to +8.

Hex cats in your game

The hex cat is more of a constant nuisance than a direct threat. Still, the nuisance can prove to be very costly if the creature takes up residence in a village. It is primarily concerned with satisfying its own needs and wants, caring little for the hardships of others.

Mouse Trap

A hex cat is part of a trapped labyrinth, wandering the corridors and hampering the efforts of anyone trying to navigate it. The cat has a soft and cushy life at the center of the maze and actively seeks to keep it that way by leading adventurers into dangerous traps.

Saucers

The townsfolk of a small village habitually leave saucers of milk on their front porches in the evening. They are being blackmailed by a hex cat who wanders the area. As long as the villagers keep supplying the cat with milk and the occasional chicken, it leaves them alone. When the adventuring party passes through, the cat decides to play a trick on the party and begins harassing them so they will leave. The villagers plead with the party to just let it go and leave.

Malfasant

"La vengeance est un plat qui se mange froid"
("Revenge is a dish best served cold.")

- Pierre Ambroise Francois Choderios de LaClos, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*

A malfasant is a spirit of vengeance, created when a particularly strong personality is unjustly or horrifically murdered. The victim curses his killers with his dying breath and sometimes becomes a malfasant, forever linked together with those that killed him. Malfasants are rare, even more than ghosts. They are patient and relentless, plotting the perfect time to strike and get their vengeance.

Creating a Malfasant

"Malfasant" is an acquired template that can be added to any aberration, animal, dragon, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, or plant. The creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature) must have an Intelligence score of at least 10 and a Charisma score of at least 14. A malfasant uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type

The creature's type changes to undead. Do not recalculate the creature's base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. It gains the incorporeal subtype. Size is unchanged.

Hit Dice

All current and future Hit Dice become d12s.

Speed

Malfasants have a fly speed of 30 feet, unless the base creature has a higher fly speed, with perfect maneuverability.

Armor Class

Natural armor is the same as the base creature's but applies only to ethereal encounters. When the malfasant manifests (see below), its natural armor bonus is +0, but it gains a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma modifier or +1, whichever is higher.

Attack

Attack is the same as the base creature's but applies only to ethereal encounters. The malfasant may only attack corporeal creatures if it can see their reflections as it manifests.

Damage

Against ethereal creatures, a malfasant uses the base creature's damage values. Against nonethereal creatures, the malfasant usually cannot deal physical damage at all but can use its special attacks, if any, when it manifests (see below).

Special Attacks

A malfasant retains all the special attacks of the base creature, although those affecting corporeal creatures only work on the target's reflection. The malfasant also gains the mirror manifestation ability plus the special attacks as described



below. The save DC against a special attack is equal to $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ malfasant's HD + malfasant's Cha modifier unless otherwise noted.

Draining Touch (Su): A malfasant that hits a living target with its incorporeal touch attack does 1d6 points of damage and drains 1d4 points from any one ability score it selects. On each such successful attack, the malfasant heals 5 points of damage to itself. It adds its Dexterity modifier to attack rolls instead of Strength.

Fear (Su): Any living creature within 30 feet of the malfasant must make a saving throw versus fear (DC $10 + \frac{1}{2}$ malfasant HD + Cha mod) or be frightened. A successful save will leave the creature shaken for 1 round. A creature with more hit dice than the malfasant is unaffected. The cursed creature only makes a saving throw when he perceives the malfasant, otherwise is always considered shaken - even if he has more hit dice than the malfasant.

Special Qualities

The malfasant retains all special qualities of the base creature as well as those described below. Any ability affecting corporeal creatures only work on the target's reflection.

Dying Curse (Su): A malfessant is a product of an unjust and horrific death. The dying creature curses his tormenter and the tormenter must make a will saving throw with a DC of 16 + 1/2 the creature's HD + Cha mod. If the saving throw fails, the tormenter is cursed and the creature becomes a malfessant. The malfessant cannot be permanently destroyed while the curse is in place. Like any curse, it cannot be dispelled, but it can be removed with a break enchantment, limited wish, miracle, remove curse, or wish spell. The removing of the curse will not banish the malfessant, but it can be turned and otherwise be destroyed.

Horrific Appearance (Su): Any living creature within 60 feet that views a malfessant must succeed on a Fortitude save or immediately take 1d4 points of Strength damage, 1d4 points of Dexterity damage, and 1d4 points of Constitution damage. A creature that successfully saves against this effect cannot be affected by the same malfessant's horrific appearance for 24 hours.

Mirror Manifestation (Ex): The malfessant may not manifest normally, but will always appear near the cursed creature when seen in a reflective surface. Anyone seeing the malfessant in the reflective surface is affected by the horrific appearance. The malfessant is always considered invisible, even if the reflection is seen.

Rejuvenation (Ex): In most cases, it is difficult to destroy a malfessant through simple combat: The "destroyed" spirit will often restore itself in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. A malfessant that would otherwise be destroyed returns to haunt the targets with a successful level check (1d20 + malfessant's HD) against DC 16. The curse affecting the target must be removed prior to destroying the malfessant in order to be permanently successful. Even then, a successful check as above will transform the target into a ghost. The malfessant is a spirit of guilt and vengeance and will only be laid to rest when the guilty party is punished.

Turn Resistance (Ex): The malfessant cannot be turned if the curse is intact. If the curse is broken, the malfessant has a +4 resistance to turning.

Abilities

Same as the base creature, except that the malfessant has no Constitution score, and its Charisma score increases by +4.

Skills

Malfessants have a +8 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Search, and Spot checks. Concentration is based off Charisma instead of Constitution. Otherwise same as the base creature.

Environment

Any, often as base creature.

Challenge Rating

Same as base creature +2.

Treasure

None

Alignment

Any

Level Adjustment

Same as base creature +5.

Ghostly equipment

When a malfessant forms, all its equipment and carried items usually become ethereal along with it. In addition, the malfessant retains 2d4 items that it particularly valued in life (provided they are not in another creature's possession). The equipment works normally on the Ethereal Plane but passes harmlessly through material objects or creatures. A weapon of +1 or better magical enhancement, however, can harm reflected material creatures when the ghost mirror manifests.

The original material items remain behind, just as the malfessant's physical remains do. If another creature seizes the original, the ethereal copy fades away. This loss invariably angers the malfessant, who stops at nothing to return the item to its original resting place.

Sample malfessant

Madame Lavelle: Female malfessant sorcerer 8; CR 10; Medium undead (augmented human, incorporeal); HD 8d12; hp 52; Init +5; Spd 30 ft., Fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +4; Grp -; Atk +5 melee (1d6 plus ability drain, incorporeal touch); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6 plus ability drain, incorporeal touch); SA Draining touch, fear, spells; SQ Dying curse, horrific appearance, mirror manifestation, rejuvenation, turning resistance, summon familiar, undead traits; AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +11; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 0, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 22.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +14, Concentration +13, Listen +7, Knowledge (Arcana) +10, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +10, Spot +7; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Spell Penetration.

Languages: Common, Draconic, Elven.

Spells Known (8/5/3/2/1): 0-Dancing Lights, Daze, Detect Magic, Ghost Sound, Message, Open/Close, Read Magic, Resistance; 1st-Color Spray, Disguise Self, Silent Image, Obscuring Mist, Ventriloquism; 2nd-Hypnotic Pattern, Misdirection, Summon Swarm; 3rd-Dispel Magic, Major Image; 4th-Phantasmal Killer.

Sorcerer Spells Available (6/6/6/5/3; save DC 14 + spell level).

Possessions: None.

Malfessants in your game

Malfessants are a rare type of cursed undead that shouldn't affect the players without strong evil actions on their part. Still, there are other ways to encounter the creatures during the course of an adventure.

Balancing the scales

Madame Lavelle, a country witch and sorceress, is burned at the stake by a religious inquisition. With her dying breath, she cursed the corrupt organization including its leader, Count Drakus. Since then, members of the inquisition that day have been turning up dead – one shaving in the morning, another in the bath, a third at a glassblower. The Count hires the characters to protect him from whatever is killing these men.

Retribution

One of the players commits an unspeakable act and the victim seeks vengeance from beyond the grave. The player catches glimpses of his victim in mirrors and in water, thinking at first he is feeling guilty. Finally, the creature attacks his reflection and attempts to kill him. If it fails, an ongoing battle resumes every time the character sees a reflective surface.

Shadow Stalker

"Nor can it be denied that many of the family have been unhappy in their deaths, which have been sudden, bloody, and mysterious."

-Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, The Hound of the Baskervilles

Shadow Stalker	
Size/Type	Large Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Evil)
Hit Dice	12d8 + 36 (90 hp)
Initiative	+6
Speed	40 ft. (8 squares)
Armor Class	19 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +8 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 17
Base Attack/Grapple	+12/+24
Attack	Bite +20 melee (2d6+8)
Full Attack	Bite +20 melee (2d6+8)
Space/Reach	10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks	Trip
Special Qualities	Darkvision 60 ft., DR 5/good or silver, immune to electricity, immunity to poison, outsider traits, resistance to acid 10, resistance to cold 10, resistance to fire 10, scent, smite 3/day, taste of blood
Saves	Fort +11, Ref +10, Will +9
Abilities	Str 27, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 10
Skills	Hide +12, Jump +20, Listen +20, Move Silently +16, Spot +17, Survival +16*, Swim +20
Feats	Alertness, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (Bite), Run, Track ^B , Weapon Focus (Bite)
Environment	Any evil-aligned plane
Organization	Solitary
Challenge Rating	8
Treasure	None
Alignment	Always Chaotic Evil
Advancement	13-16 HD (Large), 17-24 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment	-

The shadow stalker is a fearsome and relentless hunter from the lower planes. Powerful demons keep packs of them as pets and use them to hunt down those who have fallen out of favor. The beasts have a curious single-minded obsession with their prey once they taste blood and continue to seek out a target until it has been killed.



Evil wizards have at times unleashed a shadow stalker on an enemy and the swath of destruction left behind has been memorable. Shadow stalkers hunt their prey patiently, killing off any who have come into contact with their chosen prey. The beast prefers to whittle down any protection that a target may have, picking off allies one at a time until the prey is alone and terrified. Each extra death it causes to drive the prey is an added bonus.

Shadow stalkers are solitary hunters that kill anything in their paths. They are 9 to 10 feet long and weigh as much as 1000 lbs. Shadow stalkers appear to be large feral dogs with demonic features and large, sharp teeth.

Shadow stalkers' natural weapons are treated as chaotic-aligned and evil-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Shadow stalkers speak Abyssal, Celestial, and Draconic.

COMBAT

Smite (Su): Three times per day, a shadow stalker may attempt to smite a target affected by the taste of blood ability with one normal melee attack. He adds his Charisma bonus (if any) to his attack roll and deals 1 extra point of damage per hit die.

Taste of Blood (Su): If a shadow stalker successfully tastes the blood of an opponent (through a bite attack or other means) it will track that target until it is dead. It gets a +8 bonus to tracking the target. Anything with a strong scent of the target will be attacked. Only the death of the shadow stalker will halt this tracking.

Trip (Ex): A shadow stalker that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip its opponent (+12 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the shadow stalker.

Skills

A shadow stalker has a +2 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Move Silently, and Spot checks.

*It also has a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

The Shadow Stalker in your game

The shadow stalker is a killing machine, pure and simple. The only role of the creature is to hunt and destroy, often leaving a huge mess. There are several ways to integrate such a monster into a game.

Path of Destruction

The adventurers hear tales at an Inn of a monstrous beast selectively destroying dwellings and people. Just last week an enormous black feral dog burst into a county fair and ripped apart a young girl. It sniffed the air and several terrified villagers before loping off.

The beast is tracking an adventurer who passed through the town. He spent some time with the girl, which is why she was targeted. The beast picked up the scent and continued on. This pattern continues for several villages, each noting that a small adventuring party passed through prior to the beast's appearance. The villagers are blaming the adventurers and future towns begin looking at the PCs askance as well.

The Most Dangerous Game

The easiest adventure hook is to have a PC as the target of the curse. Perhaps the party is in a pitched battle with an evil cleric who escapes, but not without first getting a sample of blood from the party – easily done by confiscating a bladed or edged weapon from one of the cleric's bodyguards. The cleric casts the spell and sets the beast upon the party. The beast then begins to track the character, killing those who come into contact with him.

Stalking Curse

Conjuration (Summoning)

Lvl: Brd 7, Clr 7, Sor/Wiz 7

Components: V, S, M, F/DF

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Effect: One summoned creature

Duration: Special

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell summons Shadow Stalker. It appears where you designate and acts immediately, on your turn. The Shadow Stalker immediately sets out after the target whose blood is included in the spell. The beast will track and kill the target, not stopping until the target or the creature is dead. This spell is considered both chaotic and evil.

Arcane Focus

A tiny bag and a small (not necessarily lit) candle.

Material Component

A drop of blood from the intended target, a bit of fur from a bloodhound and a crushed pearl worth at least 500 gp.

Skin Stealer

"For the demon waits and waits and will be satisfied."

-Friedrich Nietzsche

Skin Stealer	
Size/Type	Medium Undead (Extraplanar, Incorporeal)
Hit Dice	10d12 (65 hp)
Initiative	+7
Speed	Fly 60 ft. (good) (12 squares)
Armor Class	17 (+3 Dex, +4 deflection), touch 17, flat-footed 14
Base Attack/Grapple	+5/--
Attack	Incorporeal touch +8 melee (1d6 plus fatigue)
Full Attack	Incorporeal touch +8 melee (1d6 plus fatigue)
Space/Reach	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks	Fatigue, Malevolence
Special Qualities	Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, sunlight powerlessness, turning resistance, undead traits
Saves	Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +9
Abilities	Str -, Dex 16, Con -, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15
Skills	Diplomacy +13, Hide +14, Intimidate +13, Listen +15, Search +13, Sense Motive +14, Spot +15
Feats	Ability Focus (Malevolence), Alertness ^B , Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative ^B , Improved Natural Attack (Incorporeal Touch)
Environment	Any
Organization	Solitary
Challenge Rating	8
Treasure	None
Alignment	Always chaotic evil
Advancement	11-18 HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment	--

Skin stealers are incorporeal creatures from the outer planes that live off the life energy of others. Moving from body to body, they utilize their host bodies while they slumber. Most hosts do not realize they are possessed, instead believing they have a debilitating illness that causes them to be constantly fatigued.

Skin stealers are very patient and methodical, waiting out their hosts to accomplish particular goals. The skin stealers crave power and tangible reminders of wealth to offset their normal



incorporeal form. They will use their host to increase their holdings over generations.

The creatures are normally very particular about which host they select. If for some reason they do not approve of their host, they will attempt to put the host in danger, as once the host dies the skin stealer is free to choose another more suitable body.

Skin stealers are incorporeal creatures of evil, appearing to be hazy shadows with glowing malevolent eyes. Skin stealers are approximately human-sized and because they are incorporeal, they are weightless.

Skin stealers speak Common, Abyssal, and Draconic.

COMBAT

While controlling the target host, the skin stealer can utilize any special attacks and special qualities available to the host creature. When a host body is sleeping or is subject to a mind-affecting ability, the skin stealer can take control of the body. A skin stealer, being undead, is immune to mind-affecting effects. If the host body is unconscious from wounds, the skin stealer cannot take over. When a host body is damaged in any way, the skin stealer will lose control unless the body is unable to awaken. A skin stealer will often employ poisons or magic to keep a host body asleep for extended periods of time.

Fatigue (Su): Living creatures hit by a skin stealer's incorporeal touch attack must succeed on a DC 17 Fortitude save or become fatigued. The save DC is Charisma-based. Multiple touch attacks do not stack fatigue effects, although fatigue occurring from another source will stack as usual. On each such successful attack, the skin stealer gains 5 temporary hit points. Inhabited host bodies are permanently fatigued while the skin stealer is present, a condition that cannot be removed with any amount of rest. The skin stealer cannot use the incorporeal touch while inhabiting a body.

Malevolence (Su): Once per round, a skin stealer can merge its body with a creature on the Material Plane. This ability is similar to a magic jar spell (caster level equal to the skin stealer's Hit Dice), except that it does not require a receptacle. To use this ability, the skin stealer must try move into the target's space; moving into the target's space to use the malevolence ability does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (DC 19). A creature that successfully saves is immune to that same skin stealer's malevolence for 24 hours, and the skin stealer cannot enter the target's space. If the save fails, the skin stealer vanishes into the target's body.

The target host is immediately fatigued. If the target host is already fatigued, he becomes exhausted. Other than this, there is no obvious effect and the skin stealer is simply gone. When the target goes to sleep, the skin stealer takes control of the target's body. The character is always fatigued and cannot recover since there is no rest. Fatigued characters have a -2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity and can neither run nor charge.

Any activity that would normally cause a character to be fatigued will cause them to be exhausted instead. The skin stealer's malevolence is considered a curse and can only be removed as such. The skin stealer cannot remove itself from a target body until the curse is removed or the target host body dies.

Sunlight powerlessness (Ex): Skin stealers are powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a daylight spell) and flee from it. A skin stealer caught in sunlight cannot attack and can take only a single move action or standard action in a round. If a skin stealer inhabits a host body, the host is dazzled in natural sunlight. A dazzled creature takes a -1 penalty on attack rolls, Search checks, and Spot checks.

Turning resistance (Ex): A skin stealer inhabiting a body cannot be turned. A free skin stealer gets a +4 bonus to resist turning.

Skin stealers in your game

Skin stealers are subtle and malevolent and sometimes a host body is not aware the creature exists.

Touch of fatigue

A wizard or cleric opposing the party has this spell and uses it as revenge before he is defeated. The character does not know what the spellcaster did, but the fatigue will not go away. Eventually, the rest of the party may notice odd nocturnal activities and

suspect something else is going on. The cursed character may often find himself in dangerous situations without realizing how he got there.

Imposter

A powerful noble is a changed ruler, becoming much more authoritative and strict. There are rumors that he has contracted an odd sickness. He will be completely fine most of the time, then suddenly collapse and start mumbling. He is currently taking medicine for the condition and the episodes have become less and less frequent. The truth is that the skin stealer inhabiting the body started the noble on a very powerful sleeping draught, leaving the creature in control for most of the time. When the noble collapses and starts mumbling, the true noble emerges. The poor man is worn out and there are standing orders for his chamberlain to get his medicine, really the sleeping draught, and give it to him so he can "recover." Friends of the noble are concerned at his illness and his change in demeanor, getting the party involved.

Skin Stealer Curse

Conjuration (Calling)

Lvl: Clr 5, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: Touch

Target: 1 Creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: Yes

By casting this spell, you attempt to summon a skin stealer directly into a target. The target must make a successful DC 19 Will save or become inhabited by the creature as if it used the Malevolence ability. If the target is successful, the skin stealer is free to act immediately, usually by attacking the caster.

If the initial attempt to merge the skin stealer into the target is successful, the spell is likely to be mistaken for touch of fatigue. The target is immediately fatigued and, if in sunlight, dazzled.

The possession by a skin stealer cannot be dispelled, but it can be removed with a break enchantment, limited wish, miracle, remove curse, or wish spell.

Material Component

A jacinth worth at least 5000 gp.

Vault Guardian

"that stone of all the treasure I name unto myself, and I will be avenged on anyone who finds it and withholds it."

-J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit*

The Vault Guardian is a specialized type of golem meant for protecting valuable treasures. It not only defends the treasure, but also will track down anything that is taken. It is relentless, powerful and, unlike most golems, intelligent.

When it leaves a vault to track down missing treasure, the vault guardian will attempt to seal off the treasure room to the best of its ability. Some treasure rooms may be sealed off anyway if no one is meant to visit, like burial chambers. In these cases, vault guardian will just attempt to seal anything it can on the way out to retrieve what was lost.

Vault Guardian	
Size/Type	Large Construct
Hit Dice	24d10 + 30 (162 hp)
Initiative	-1
Speed	20 ft. (4 squares)
Armor Class	20 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +22 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 30
Base Attack/Grapple	+18/+33
Attack	Slam +28 (2d10+11)
Full Attack	2 Slams +28 (2d10+11)
Space/Reach	10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks	Trample 2d10+16
Special Qualities	Accounting, construct traits, damage reduction 15/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision, recall, scry, swift tracker
Saves	Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +8
Abilities	Str 33, Dex 9, Con -, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 1
Skills	Listen +8, Search +4, Spot +8, Survival +9
Feats	Alertness, Awesome Blow, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Track
Environment	Any
Organization	Solitary or gang (2-4)
Challenge Rating	16
Treasure	None
Alignment	Always neutral
Advancement	25-54 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment	---



This golem has a humanoid body made from iron, plated with gold and other precious metals. A vault guardian can be fashioned in any manner, just like an iron or stone golem, although it always displays armor of some sort. It has smooth features and a very stylized, expressive face. A vault guardian is 12 feet tall and weighs about 5,000 pounds, often wielding a weapon of some sort. A vault guardian can speak Common and one additional language (usually the creator's native tongue) and it does not have any distinguishable odor. It moves with a ponderous but smooth gait. Each step causes the floor to tremble unless it is on a thick, solid foundation.

COMBAT

Accounting (Su): A vault guardian is attuned to the contents of any treasure it is protecting. It knows immediately when any treasure is removed from the vault and can locate missing treasure at will, just as if locate object was cast except with unlimited range. The vault guardian also gets a +8 bonus to tracking anyone with treasure from the vault. Anyone who takes treasure from the vault is targeted by the vault guardian, who will claim any treasure they possess for the vault. The vault guardian will track and follow any thief non-stop until the treasure is recovered. Since the vault guardian is intelligent, it

will eliminate any local threats to the remaining treasure before pursuing thieves.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): A vault guardian is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A magical attack that deals electricity damage slows a vault guardian (as the slow spell) for 3 rounds, with no saving throw.

A magical attack that deals fire damage breaks any slow effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for each 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the vault guardian to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. For example, an iron golem hit by a fireball gains back 6 hit points if the damage total is 18 points. A vault guardian gets no saving throw against fire effects.

A vault guardian is affected normally by rust attacks, such as that of a rust monster or a rusting grasp spell.

Recall (Su): The vault guardian can instantly return to the treasure vault by uttering a special command word. It can do this once a month.

Scry (Su): A vault guardian can scry on a location where any of the treasure is located (stolen or otherwise) once a day.

Swift Tracker (Ex): A vault guardian can move at his normal speed while following tracks without taking the normal -5 penalty. It takes only a -10 penalty (instead of the normal -20) when moving at up to twice normal speed while tracking.

Construction

A vault guardian's body is sculpted from 5,000 pounds of pure iron, smelted with rare tinctures and admixtures costing at least 15,000 gp. Assembling the body requires a DC 23 Craft (armorsmithing) check or a DC 23 Craft (weaponsmithing) check.

CL 16th; Craft Construct, fox's cunning, geas/quest, greater teleport, limited wish, locate object, polymorph any object, scry, caster must be at least 16th level; Price 185,000 gp; Cost 100,000 gp + 6,800 XP.

Using a Vault Guardian in your game

The primary purpose of a vault guardian is as clear as its name. They can generally be encountered guarding a treasure or seeking to retrieve one.

Repo Man

While the adventurers are relaxing in a tavern, they hear a scream followed by a man flying through the wall. Increasing the size of the hole is a vault guardian searching for stolen money spent at the tavern. Once the vault guardian retrieves the coins spent at the tavern, he will ask where the thief went and continue on. He will remove anything and anyone in his way, but will not attempt to kill anyone not involved in the theft

unless they are trying to protect the thieves or will not stand down from a fight.

Three card monte

An ingenious wizard has managed to conceal himself from a vault guardian for some time through use of powerful concealment spells and luck. He keeps all of his treasure surrounded by lead to confound the golem's accounting ability and uses screen spells to confound its scrying. Every time he spends the money, however, the vault guardian gets a bearing on him. The wizard has many shady dealings and at some point encounters the players. At some point, money is exchanged and the vault guardian starts tracking the players.

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