

Booklet of Dreadful Beings

Booklet of Beings; Volume Two

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Beings Ranked by

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Baby Zombie

	Small Undead
Hit Dice:	2d12+3 (16 hp)
Initiative:	-4 (-4 Dex)
Speed:	10 ft. (2 squares)
Armor Class:	8 (+1 size, -4 Dex, +1 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 8
Base Attack/Grapple:	+1/-6
Attack:	Slam -1 melee (1d4-3)
Full Attack:	Slam -1 melee (1d4-3)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Demoralize
Special Qualities:	Single actions only, damage reduction 5/slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits
Saves:	Fort +0, Ref -4, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 5, Dex 3, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1
Skills:	-
Feats:	Toughness
Environment:	Any
Organization:	Any
Challenge Rating:	1/6
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral evil
Advancement:	None
Level Adjustment:	-

The sight of a normal zombie, a walking, rotting corpse, is horrible. But when the undead body is that of a baby, it is even worse. The clumsy moving, mindless creature is a mockery of the cute little being it was in life. A baby zombie follows the instructions of its creator. Due to its lack of intelligence, it can only follow simple, one-line orders.

Combat

A baby zombie is unnaturally strong. It can't walk upright, but it can stand on its legs and hit opponents with its small, but powerful, fists.

Demoralize (Ex): At the mere sight of a baby zombie, the viewer must succeed on a DC 11 Will save or be shaken for 2d4 rounds. Whether or not the save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by the same baby zombie's demoralize ability for 24 hours. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Single Actions Only (Ex): Baby zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. A baby zombie can move 10 feet and attack in the same round, but only if it attempts a charge.

Habitat/Ecology

Only the vilest, most despicable necromancers are prepared to animate the corpse of a baby. Most often the weak zombies are not meant to actually defeat any enemies of the necromancer in battle, but to strike fear in the hearts of those who oppose him.

Adventure Seeds

Good/Neutral Party: The PCs are hired to investigate the exhumation of several deceased children from their graves. They find out that a sorceress whose baby-girl passed away a couple of months ago has done this. She has gone mad with grief and is trying to find a way to bring her daughter back to life. The sorceress needed the bodies of other dead children to test her magic. She has killed her husband, blaming him for the death of their child, and uses his animated corpse to dig up dead children. She has not managed to bring a baby back to life with her arcane arts, so when the PCs finally find her, they are confronted with the results of her experiments: baby zombies.

Evil Party: A necromancer wants to know if the baby zombies he created are as terrifying as he thinks. He is afraid that his activities will be discovered if he tests this in the town where he lives, so he hires the PCs to secretly bring his creations to a town far away. They will have to unleash the creatures there, watch what happens, and report back to the necromancer. Naturally, the townsfolk will not be pleased, and they will try to find out who is responsible for the zombie infestation.

Good/Neutral Party: Same hook as above, except that the PCs are hired by the townsfolk. They have to get rid of the baby zombies first, and then they'll have to find out where the creatures came from.

Black Lisk

Medium Magical Beast

Hit Dice:	5d10+5 (32 hp)
Initiative:	+5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed:	50 ft. (10 squares)
Armor Class:	19 (+1 Dex, +8 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 18
Base Attack/Grapple:	+5/+7
Attack:	Bite +7 melee (1d6+5), or claw +7 melee (1d4+2 and life drain), or sting +7 melee (1d4+2 and poison)
Full Attack:	Bite +7 melee (1d6+5) and 2 claws +7 melee (1d4+2 and life drain) and sting +7 melee (1d4+2 and poison)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Life drain, poison
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to poison, low-light vision, spell resistance 15
Saves:	Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 7
Skills:	Hide +3*, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +3, Survival +2
Feats:	Improved Initiative, Multiattack
Environment:	Temperate forests and plains
Organization:	Solitary, pair, or pack (2-5)
Challenge Rating:	6
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Always neutral evil
Advancement:	6-10 HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment:	-

A black lisk stands about 4 1/2 feet tall and can reach a length of about 7 feet, from the snout to the tip of the tail. The slender body of a lisk is covered with dark green, almost black, scales. It's eyes are also green, but a bit lighter. A lisk walks on its two powerful hind legs, which allow it to move very fast. When running, it uses its long, flexible tail to keep balance. The tail ends in a large and poisonous stinger. Besides the tail, a lisk uses its long, sharp teeth and the claws on its forelegs to kill its prey. The claws are a very dangerous weapon, with which a lisk can drain the life force of a creature it attacks.

The head of a black lisk resembles that of a large lizard. A lisk has a short, flexible tongue, that enables it to make a lot of different sounds. This allows lisks to communicate with each other on a surprisingly high level.

Combat

Black lisks usually hunt in packs. Their tactics are simple but efficient. They try to get as close to prey without being noticed as possible, surrounding the creature(s) if they can. When they're all in the right position, they dash forward and attack their prey from all sides. If a creature flees, the lisks chase after it and try to force it to the ground. If they're fighting more than one creature at a time, lisks tend to focus on killing one victim together, before moving on to the next.

Life Drain (Su): A black lisk that damages a living creature with a claw attack gains temporary hit points equal to the damage dealt. It cannot gain more hit points than the victim's current hit points. The temporary hit points disappear 1 hour later.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 15, initial and secondary damage 2d4 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Skills: A black lisk receives a +4 racial bonus to Hide checks in dark area's.

Habitat/Ecology

Black lisks are nocturnal predators that live in forests and on plains. The carnivorous creatures prey on anything they are capable of killing, and they have a whole arsenal of natural weaponry to accomplish that feat.

The claws on the hind legs of lisks are great for digging. Lisks dig long, winding tunnels usually ending in one large chamber. Some have several smaller chambers linked by tunnels. The creatures sleep in these chambers during the day. It is also where they stash the items they take from some of their prey, and where the females bury their eggs.

Black lisks make their lairs in places where there is enough food for them. Sometimes the local wildlife nourishes them, but they are often attracted to roads in desolate area's, where they can sneak up on campers in the middle of the night.

When black lisks kill civilized travellers, they take all things they find interesting to their lairs. They are especially interested in the weaponry of prey they defeat, although they can't use these themselves. Lisks are intelligent beings and sometimes use items more civilized creatures forged, such as magical rings and necklaces. With their scaly hides and other reptilian features, black lisks look a lot like lizards, but they are not related to such creatures. Lisks are in fact warm-blooded.

Adventure Seeds

Good/Neutral Party: A couple of months ago, a black lisk found a *Headband of Intellect*. The creature managed to put the magical item on and instantly found enlightenment. The lisk has now gathered over a hundred of his kind and is leading them to a remote village. The creature hopes to find more items that can make him and the other lisks smarter and stronger.

The villagers are desperate and hire the PCs to stop the black lisks.

Good/Neutral Party: A blackguard was recently killed and eaten by black lisks, who took the sword of the fallen paladin to their lair. This sword grants the wielder access to great unholy powers. The PCs are hired to find the black lisks and retrieve the sword before the forces of evil do.

Evil Party: As above, except that this time the PCs *are* the forces of evil.

Fever Rat Master

	Large Monstrous Humanoid
Hit Dice:	6d8+4 (31 hp)
Initiative:	+5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class:	16 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +6 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 16
Base Attack/Grapple:	+6/+14
Attack:	Claw +9 melee (1d6+4 and poison)
Full Attack:	2 claws +9 melee (1d6+4 and poison), bite +4 melee (1d8+2)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Cloud of disease, poison
Special Qualities:	Create spawn, darkvision 60 ft., immunities
Saves:	Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +6
Abilities:	Str 18, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 13
Skills:	Climb +5, Handle Animal +8, Hide +4, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Search +6, Spot +6
Feats:	Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative
Environment:	Any
Organization:	Solitary, with 10-100 fever rats
Challenge Rating:	7
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral evil
Advancement:	7-12 HD (Large)
Level Adjustment:	-

A fever rat masters appears as a tall, thin human with the head of a rat. It is completely bald. Its skin has a sickly pink-white color, with yellow lumps in places. The eyes of a fever rat master are very large and pale green. It stands between 11 and 15 feet tall.

These creatures never use any weapons besides their teeth and claws, and they don't wear any clothing.

Fever rat masters speak common.

Combat

These cowardly creatures prefer to stay out of combat. When a fever rat master encounters a creature that may form a threat, it will send its rats to fight, while running and hiding itself.

A fever rat master will attack only when it has nowhere to turn. When cornered by multiple enemies, a master prefers to attack the weakest foe first.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 15, initial damage 1d4 Con, secondary damage 2d4 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +1 racial bonus.

Cloud of Disease (Ex): An invisible cloud of the rat fever virus surrounds a fever rat master at all time. The cloud has a radius of 30 feet, centered on the fever rat master.

Rat fever - inhaled, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 2d4 Con. Each day after the first, on a failed save, an afflicted creature must immediately succeed on another DC 15 Fortitude save or take 1 point of Constitution drain. As a side effect, all hair of a person suffering from rat fever will fall in a couple of days. The skin color of the infected person changes to a sickly pink-white, and soon yellow lumps start to sprout everywhere.

Anyone who succeeds at the first saving throw, or recovers from it later (either with the aid of healing, or with successful saving throws), becomes immune to rat fever for 1d4+1 days.

The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +1 racial bonus.

Create Spawn (Su): Any rat slain by a fever rat master becomes a fever rat (see below) in 1d4 rounds. Fever rats are under the command of the fever rat master that created them until its death, or until it sends them away.

Immunities (Ex): A fever rat master is immune to poison and all diseases, including supernatural and magical diseases.

Habitat/Ecology

Most fever rat masters are nomadic creatures that use their fever rats to hunt for food. They are carnivorous and prefer the flesh of sentient beings to that of animals. Favorite hunting grounds of these cowardly beings are remote villages and small cities, preferably with a sewer, so they can easily hide and find more rats. When a fever rat master cannot find such a place, it will hide near a village, in a forest or a mountain range, where it kills all animals and then preys on the village.

Fever rat masters unleash their rats to spread the deadly disease they carry, while they hide in a safe place themselves, always keeping at least ten rats nearby for protection. When most people or animals in the area are dead, the master calls its rats back. The pack then searches the area, killing all living creatures encountered. All kills are dragged to a well hidden place nearby. There the rats and their master feed on them for quite a long time, since they can all eat flesh that has started to decay, due to their immunities. When everything is gone, they travel further.

A few fever rat masters hide in the sewers of large cities. They feed on thieves sneaking around in the sewers and on people their rats kill at night in the slum area's of the city. Clever masters sometimes live in a city for years, without being discovered.

When a fever rat master commands more rats than it can feed, it dismisses a number of them. These rats quickly travel to a nearby settlement, where they attack a male human. If they manage to infect him with rat fever, he turns into a fever rat master in 1d4 rounds. See fever rats below for more details. This is the only way for fever rat masters to propagate.

These creatures first came into being when a wizard tried to cure his brother, a wererat, from his affliction. This went horribly wrong and spawned the first fever rat master.

	Fever Rat
	Small Undead
Hit Dice:	1d12 (6 hp)
Initiative:	+3 (+3 Dex)
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares), climb 15 ft.
Armor Class:	14 (+1 size, +3 Dex), touch 14, flat-footed 11
Base Attack/Grapple:	+0/-6
Attack:	Bite +3 melee (1d4-2 and poison)
Full Attack:	Bite +3 melee (1d4-2 and poison)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Cloud of disease, poison
Special Qualities:	Create spawn, regain master, undead traits
Saves:	Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 6, Dex 16, Con -, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 1
Skills:	Climb +4, Hide +8, Move Silently +5
Feats:	Weapon Finesse
Environment:	Any
Organization:	Plague (10-100)
Challenge Rating:	2
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral evil
Advancement:	2-3 HD (Small); 4-6 HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment:	-

These creatures look like 3 foot long, bald rats. They have large, pale green eyes. Their skin has a sickly pink-white color, with yellow spots.

Combat

Unlike their cowardly masters, fever rats are ferocious fighters. They attack everything they encounter, spreading the disease as they go.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 12, initial and secondary damage 1d4 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Cloud of Disease (Ex): An invisible cloud of the rat fever virus surrounds fever rats at all time. The cloud has a radius of 10 feet, centered on the fever rat.

Rat fever - inhaled, Fortitude DC 15, incubation period 1 day, damage 2d4 Con. Each day after the first, on a failed save, an afflicted creature must immediately succeed on another DC 15 Fortitude save or take 1 point of Constitution drain. As a side effect, all hair of a person suffering from rat fever will fall in a couple of days. The skin color of the infected person changes to a sickly pink-white, and soon yellow lumps start to sprout everywhere.

Anyone who succeeds at the first saving throw, or recovers from it later (either with the aid of healing, or with successful saving throws), becomes immune to rat fever for 1d4+1 days.

The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +5 racial bonus.

Create Spawn (Su): Any rat slain by a fever rat becomes a fever rat in 1d4 rounds. These fever rats are under the command of the same fever rat master as the rats that spawned them, until its master's death, or until its master sends them away.

Regain Master (Su): Only fever rats that are dismissed by their master (see above) have this ability. The fever they carry becomes much more potent, with an incubation period of one round. If a male human enters the cloud of disease of one of these rats, and fails the save, he becomes a fever rat master in 1d4 rounds. The transformation is irreversible. A new master loses all memory of its previous life, and all its abilities. It throws away its clothes and gear.

Skills: A fever rat uses its Dexterity modifier instead of its Strength modifier for Climb checks.

Adventure Seeds

Good/Neutral Party: A scholar approaches the PCs and tells them all people in the hamlet he grew up in have been killed. He rightly suspects that a fever rat master is responsible for this. He happens to know quite a lot about these creatures, and informs the PCs of their habits, strengths, and weaknesses. Based on their reputation, or things they have achieved in the past, the scholar thinks the PCs could defeat the fever rat master and his pack without suffering casualties themselves. He wants the head of the master and offers the PCs a handsome reward for it.

The PCs would indeed be able to kill a normal fever rat master without too much trouble, but this is an unusually strong individual (12 HD), commanding not only normal, but also dire fever rats (6 HD)...

Good/Neutral Party: The PCs are on board of a ship with some unusual stowaways: a dozen or so fever rats that have recently been dismissed by their master. They crawl out of the cargo space at night, spreading rat fever, and try to get a new master. The PCs now have to fight the rats and the disease. Even if they succeed, the rest of the journey is going to be tough. They're still on a ship with a lot of ill, and probably some dead, sailors.

Evil Party: A wererat approaches the PCs with what he calls a terrific offer. He has joined forces with a fever rat master, who is searching for powerful people. The master needs them for protection as it attacks a city with his rats. It wants to have all the bodies, and the PCs and the wererat can take everything else they can find in the city. Of course they do need to bring plenty of *potions of cure disease*. It's a dangerous job, but if successful, the PCs can pillage an entire city.

What they don't know, is that a group of paladins is tracking the fever rat master. These holy warriors are immune to diseases and they will attack the master as soon as they find it. Whether it got some extra protection or not.

Magma Folk

	Young	Adult	Elder
	Small Elemental (Earth, Fire)	Medium Elemental (Earth, Fire)	Large Elemental (Earth, Fire)
Hit Dice:	3d8+3 (16 hp)	6d8+12 (39 hp)	12d8+48 (102 hp)
Initiative:	+1 (+1 Dex)	+1 (+1 Dex)	+1 (+1 Dex)
Speed:	20 ft. (4 squares), burrow 15 ft.	30 ft. (6 squares), burrow 20 ft.	40 ft (8 squares), burrow 30 ft.
Armor Class:	16 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 15	17 (+1 Dex, +6 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 15	19 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +9 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 18
Base			
Attack/Grapple:	+2/-1	+4/+7	+9/+20
Attack:	Slam +4 melee (1d6+1 plus 1d4 fire)	Slam +7 melee (1d8+4 plus 1d6 fire)	Slam +15 melee (2d6+7 plus 1d8 fire)
Full Attack:	Slam +4 melee (1d6+1 plus 1d4 fire)	Slam +7 melee (1d8+4 plus 1d6 fire)	2 slams +15 melee (2d6+7 plus 1d8 fire)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.	5 ft./5 ft.	10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Burn, spell-like abilities	Burn, spell-like abilities	Burn, spell-like abilities
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, extinguish, immunity to fire, vulnerability to cold	Darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, extinguish, immunity to fire, vulnerability to cold	Darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, extinguish, immunity to fire, vulnerability to cold
Saves:	Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +3	Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +5	Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +9
Abilities:	Str 13, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 14	Str 17, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 16	Str 25, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 18
Skills:	Concentration +7, Intimidate +7	Concentration +11, Intimidate +11, Listen +6, Spot +6	Concentration +19, Intimidate +19, Listen +17, Spot +17
Feats:	Iron Will, Power Attack	Iron Will, Power Attack, Spell Focus (evocation)	Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Iron Will, Power Attack, Spell Focus (evocation)
Environment:	Underground	Underground	Underground
Organization:	Solitary, team (2-4)	Solitary, team (2-4), or squad (1-3 plus 6-9 young)	Solitary or tribe (1 plus 7-12 adults and 21-36 young)
Challenge Rating:	3	6	9
Treasure:	No coins, triple goods (gems only), no items	No coins, triple goods (gems only), no items	No coins, triple goods (gems only), no items
Alignment:	Always lawful evil	Always lawful evil	Always lawful evil
Advancement:	4-5 HD (Small)	7-11 HD (Medium)	13-20 HD (Large)

Consisting of earth and fire, the body of a magma folk is a swirling mass of molten sand and stone, with flames bursting out at all sides. Magma folk have squat humanoid forms, which is why they're also known as magma dwarves. Magma folk speak Terran.

Combat

Magma folk like to weaken their opponents with their spell like abilities. When a foe is lit like a torch, the magma folk closes in and uses its flaming fists to finish the job.

If an enemy turns out to be stronger than anticipated a magma folk uses its extinguish ability and flees. It also uses the ability when facing an opponent who deals cold damage, or cannot be hurt by fire.

Burn (Ex): A magma folk's slam attack deals bludgeoning damage plus fire damage from the magma folk's flaming body. Those hit by a magma folk's slam attack also must succeed on a Reflex save or catch on fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds. The save DC varies with the magma folk's size (see the magma folk's individual descriptions below). A burning creature can take a move action to put out the flame. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Creatures hitting a magma folk with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take fire damage as though hit by the magma folk's attack, and also catch on fire unless they succeed on a Reflex save.

Extinguish (Su): As a standard action, a magma folk stop the burning of its own body. The magma folk's molten body cools down and turns into stone.

When the flames are gone, the magma folk does not have its spell-like abilities, nor its burn ability (so its slam attacks do not deal fire damage). It is not vulnerable to cold. The magma folk's natural armor bonus is raised by +3, and it gains damage reduction 5/-.

A magma folk can rekindle the flames as a standard action.

Vulnerability to Cold: Magma folk take half again as much (+50%) damage as normal from cold, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed, or if the save is a success or failure.

Young Magma Folk

Young magma folk stand between three and four feet tall, and weigh some sixty pounds.

Combat

Burn (Ex): Save DC 12.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day – *burning hands* (DC 13), 1/day – *scorching ray*. Caster level 3rd. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Adult

An adult magma folk stands between four and eight feet tall, and can weigh up to 550 pounds.

Combat

Burn (Ex): Save DC 15.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day – *burning hands* (DC 15), *flaming sphere* (DC 16), *scorching ray*. 1/day – *fireball* (DC 17). Caster level 5th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Elder

Elder magma folk stand over eight feet tall, but are rarely taller than fifteen feet. Their weight depends on their exact size, and varies between 500 and 4,000 pounds.

Combat

Burn (Ex): Save DC 20.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day – *burning hands* (DC 17), *fireball* (DC 19), *flaming sphere* (DC 18), *scorching ray*. 1/day – *wall of fire*. Caster level 7th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Habitat/Ecology

Little is known about magma folk among other people. Some scholars believe that magma folk are cursed beings, expelled from the Elemental Planes by good elemental deities. Whether this is true or not, magma folk behave like one would expect from evil elemental creatures who've been banned to the Material Plane. They search environments similar to that of the Elemental Planes to live in, and destroy everything that is different.

A magma folk slowly grows as its body absorbs material when it burrows through the earth, or bathes in lava. The humanoid form of a magma folk limits its size. If a magma folk would grow taller than eight feet, and weigh over 4,000 pounds, the body would collapse. When a magma folk's body becomes too big, the creature simply tears a small part off. This does not hurt the magma folk at all. Like all elemental creatures, a magma folk's soul and body are one. When a large magma folk throws away a lump of magma it is usually just a piece of material, but on rare occasions the essence of the creature splits and the lump becomes a magma folk.

Tribes of magma folk are led by the biggest and strongest individual. This leader picks a place to live for the tribe. This is usually a huge cave, with several passages leading away from it. There is often a lava-stream nearby, because magma folk like to bathe in lava. Magma folk tolerate some creatures in their territory, like earth and fire elementals, and some kinds of mephits. Most magma folk live deep underground, but some tribes inhabit volcanoes, close to the surface.

Magma folk spend much of their time decorating the caverns in which they live. They smoothen the walls and use veins in the rock to make all kinds of patterns. They also gather gems and decorate their homes with the precious stones.

Magma folk hate everything that is not composed of earth and fire, as if they'd like to turn the Material Plane into an elemental world. They actively search things and beings that are not elementals and kill and burn them. When they encounter settlements of creatures they want to destroy, like dwarfs or dark elves, magma folk often distract the inhabitants by creating a fire somewhere. When the adult population is busy putting out the fire, the magma folk attack. They burrow till they're underneath a building and burst through the floor. The evil beings kill as much people as possible, but focus on baby's, children, and women who can give birth. If the town still exists some years later, the magma folk strike again. This is an effective way to make sure the community dies. It often takes the magma folk decades to achieve this, but they are patient.

Adventure Seeds

Good/Neutral Party: After the PCs encounter magma folk – in the bowels of the earth, or protecting a town on the surface – a magma folk approaches them. The creature claims to have left his people and their evil ways in order to explore the surface world and its inhabitants. The magma folk begs the PCs to let him join their group.

Evil Party: A small town that is located near a volcano has been attacked by magma folk once every five years for the past twenty years. The last attack happened almost five years ago, and the citizens of the town expect an attack soon. They hire the PCs to protect them.

When they've just received payment for the protection of the town, one of the citizens approaches the PCs. He is an evil man, who studied the magma folk and knows that they collect gems. He is willing to lead the PCs to the magma folk's layer to collect the precious stones, right at the moment when the elemental creatures attack, so the PCs can be sure the bulk of the tribe is not there to defend their home.

Striding Vulture

	Medium Magical Beast
Hit Dice:	4d10+4 (26 hp)
Initiative:	+2 (+2 Dex)
Speed:	40 ft. (8 squares)
Armor Class:	14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 12
Base Attack/Grapple:	+4/+4
Attack:	Bite +6 melee (1d6 plus dehydrate)
Full Attack:	Bite +6 melee (1d6 plus dehydrate)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Dehydrate
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision
Saves:	Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 11, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 4
Skills:	Hide +4*, Jump +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +3, Spot +4, Survival +3
Feats:	Alertness, Weapon Finesse, Run ^B
Environment:	Warm deserts
Organization:	Solitary or flock (2-6)
Challenge Rating:	3
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral evil
Advancement:	5-6 HD (Medium); 7-12 (Large)
Level Adjustment:	-

These large, flightless birds of prey look like a cross between an ostrich and a vulture. They have the neck, body, and strong legs of an ostrich, but the head of a vulture. The feathers of striding vultures range in color from light brown to dark grey, and they have a pale head, neck, and legs. A striding vulture stands about 7 feet tall.

The inside of the beak of a striding vulture is serrated, making it look as if the creature has teeth. These long 'teeth' are hollow. When a vulture bites a creature, it sucks blood and other fluids out of the body of the victim, though these hollow notches, into its throat.

Striding vultures cannot speak, but communicate by clicking with their beak and making gestures with their short wings.

Combat

Striding vultures often follow potential prey for days through the desert, waiting for their victims to become exhausted in the harsh environment. The sight of these creatures in the distance has driven many travelers in the desert mad. Sometimes striding vultures hide in a mass of rockwork and ambush any creature that wanders too close.

Dehydrate (Ex): When a striding vulture hits with its bite attack, it quickly sucks fluids out of the victim's body. This deals an additional 1d4 nonlethal damage, and the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or become dehydrated (treat as sickened, see the DMG). The character takes a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks.

Each time a character is bitten, he adds a -2 to these penalties if he fails the save.

The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus. Creatures that don't have fluids in their body, or don't rely on them, are immune to this attack.

Skills: Striding Vultures have a +4 racial bonus on Jump checks. *Striding vultures have a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks made in areas with sand and rocks.

Habitat/Ecology

The carnivorous striding vultures are well adapted to life in the desert. They survive on the meat, blood and water from their prey. When it's getting too hot even for these desert dwellers, the vultures hide in the shadow of large rocks, or cover themselves with sand.

A flock of striding vultures consists of one male and one to five female birds. Male and female vultures look alike. Females bury the eggs in the hot desert sand and let the sun hatch them. Hatchlings must fend for themselves, which causes a lot of early deaths. Only one out of every twenty hatchlings survives the first year. The main source of food in the first week is other hatchlings.

Striding vultures prey on all sorts of creatures, even vultures of other flocks. Vultures of one flock even turn on each other if they're hungry.

Striding vultures like to hunt intelligent beings. They like to drive creatures not native to the desert mad by tailing them at some distance, and will do so even if they're well fed. They suck the blood and water from travelers in the desert and leave them while they're conscious, but doomed to die beneath the burning sun.

Adventure Seeds

Good/Neutral Party: Striding vultures have attacked several caravans lately, and all the goods from those transports were gone when others found them. Since the birds have no use for wealth or items, the merchants suspect the vultures are taking orders from someone else. Maybe a blue dragon found a way to force the vultures to do his bidding, or perhaps the leader of the flock is not really a striding vulture but some kind of shapechanger. Whoever or whatever is causing the unnatural behaviour of the vultures, the merchants want it to stop. They hire the PCs to protect them, and put an end to the attacks.

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