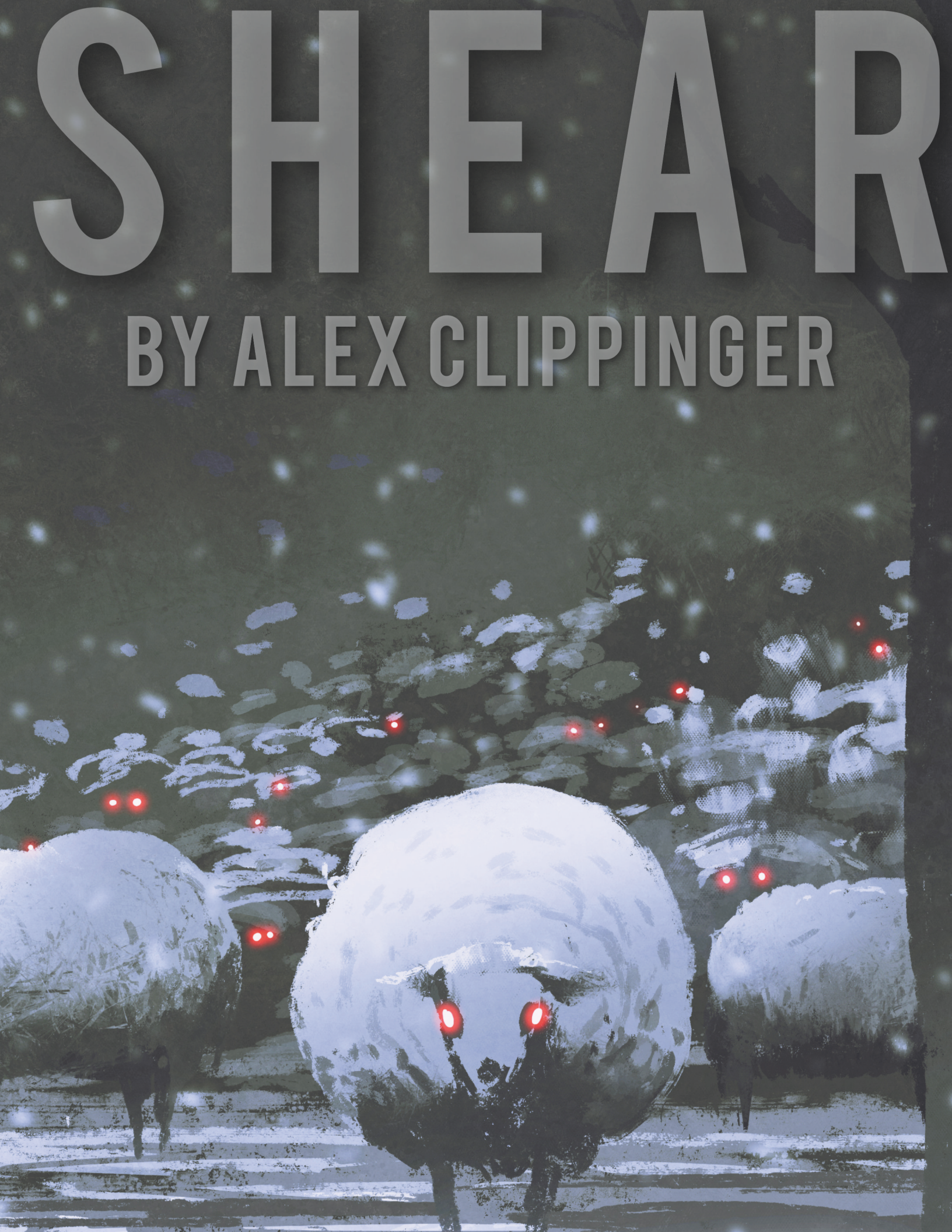


SHEAR

BY ALEX CLIPPINGER





RUNNING THE ADVENTURE



hear is an adventure for a party of 1st-level characters that should take approximately 2–3 hours to complete. Any adventure that takes place at 1st level can quickly become dangerous. The characters have one built-in opportunity for a short rest; even so, the final confrontation is intentionally deadly for 1st-level characters.

At your discretion, you can elect to run the adventure for characters of 2nd level, or allow characters to level up during the built-in short rest (which takes place after multiple combat encounters and before the finale).

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Simon Button owns a sheep farm where he cares for his sixteen-year-old twins, Carissa and Piotyr. The twins have secretly been learning magic rituals from a dangerous book, the Book of Baphomet, behind their father's back. When Simon finds evidence of their rituals, he storms out to find and confront Carissa.

Afraid for his sister, Piotyr goes to the basement and performs a ritual that goes terribly wrong. A demonic entity from Baphomet's domain possesses Piotyr. Before the young man gives in to the fiend, he seals the basement with magic. Piotyr is transformed into the horrendous wendigoat, and its Abyssal presence causes the Button family's sheep to turn into feral, bloodthirsty creatures.

As the adventure begins, the crazed sheep are already claiming their first victim.

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I. BLOOD ON THE SNOW

The characters are traveling cross-country between farming settlements:

You're walking through a pastoral landscape of rolling hills and patches of forest, keeping to a rough-cut dirt road with wooden livestock fence on either side. Clouds bring night early as a steady fall of snow paints the world white. A lumpy shape lies ahead on the snowy road, white-on-white with unmistakable splashes of deep red.

The shape ahead on the road is a dead sheep, its thick wool covered in blood. The characters can notice the following about the sheep and the environment around it:

SHEEP

The sheep has blood on its wool at multiple points on its body, and on its snout.

A DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check of the sheep's corpse indicates it was stabbed multiple times by a pitchfork, or a similar tool not meant for combat.

A creature that beats this DC by 5 or more also realizes there's no wound around the sheep's mouth, but the sheep has some tiny pieces of bloody cloth and flesh in its teeth; the sheep must have bitten its attacker in self-defense.

A character with proficiency with Intelligence (Nature) checks knows that biting is a rare behavior for sheep.

ENVIRONMENT

The fence section on both sides of the road here is broken, and there are numerous tracks in the area. There is a small nickel coat button on the ground beside the sheep's body. The button has a leaf pattern embossed on its surface.

A DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check determines that numerous sheep passed through this area within the last hour or so, going from the field, through the broken fence area, across the road, and through the other broken fence into the next field.

A character that beats this check by 5 or more sees two sets of boot prints—one larger than the other—following this same route, all but erased by the sheep hoofprints overtop it.

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

Splashes of blood are obvious against the snow along the path made by the passage of sheep, continuing into the next

field. Any character can follow the wide swath of sheep tracks and intermittent spots of blood. The trail leads over the next hill, towards a group of trees.

Added Incentive. If characters aren't certain about following the trail, the still air is pierced by a terrified scream. It seems to be coming from the copse of trees over the next hill, in the tracks' direction of travel.

GORY GRAZERS

As the characters near the copse of trees, they can hear the bleating of sheep. When the group of trees is fully within view, the characters see a few dozen sheep gathered at the base of the trees. Several are huddled together, bleating occasionally as they worry at something on the ground. The rest are standing stock-still with their backs to the characters, looking up at one of the trees.



As the characters appear over the hill, the huddled sheep look up from what they're doing, eyes glowing red. They're surrounding an eviscerated humanoid corpse on the ground and their muzzles are covered with blood; as the characters watch, one of them dips its head to tear another piece from the body.

BA-A-AD NEWS

The attacking sheep have the statistics of **goats**. The first group of 8 sheep start 50 feet away from the characters; after the first round of combat another 2 sheep join the battle on initiative count 20 of each round. The remaining sheep scatter and flee once 12 sheep are killed or after 4 rounds of combat, whichever comes first.

CARISSA BUTTON

When the sheep are defeated, a voice calls out from a nearby tree; "Are they gone?"

The voice belongs to Carissa Button (Neutral female human **commoner**), who climbed a tree to escape the feral sheep herd. Carissa is a girl of sixteen; the body on the ground belongs to Simon Button, her father. Carissa sobs at the sight of her father's mangled corpse.

Carissa tells the characters that she and her father were travelling through their fields when the sheep attacked. She says her family owns a sizeable herd; if all of the sheep are affected like this, the only safe place right now is at their farmstead. She says her twin bother Piotyr should still be there; she needs to be sure he's all right.

WHAT HAPPENED?

Carissa and her twin brother Piotyr have been dabbling in demonic magic. Their father, Simon, discovered evidence of the rites they've performed went to the fields to confront Carissa; after he left, Piotyr attempted to perform a ritual on his own to protect his sister, with disastrous results.

The sheep became feral and Carissa fled. Believing Carissa

responsible for the sheep's sudden behavior, Simon gave chase with the sheep close behind. Carissa climbed a tree to escape while Simon was ultimately brought down by the crazed livestock.

Carissa is certain Piotyr is responsible for the sheep's behavior and is worried that something terrible happened to him. She hopes the characters can protect her on the way back to the farmstead to discover her twin's fate.

THE BUTTON FARMSTEAD

It's not a far walk to the Button home. When the characters reach the farmstead with Carissa, they can see the buildings that comprise it: the house, a traditional red hay barn, and a long, rectangular barn for livestock.

The hills surrounding the farm are quickly lined with red pinpricks of light as the Button sheep herds appear, watching the farmstead with their glowing eyes. It's clear from their sheer numbers that a head-on battle would likely be suicide; Carissa quickly leads the characters to the house.

II. SHEEP SIEGE

The feral sheep herds descend from the hills to surround the Button farm. Carissa Button leads the group into the house with a few minutes to spare before the herd reaches the farmstead.

FARMHOUSE LAYOUT

The farmhouse is a two-story building. The first and second floors are described in brief here; the basement is described in section III.

Windows. The windows of the house have AC 13 and 4 hit points. All of the windows are large enough for a Medium-sized creature to pass through unless otherwise noted. Barricading a window with a suitable piece of furniture forces a creature to suitably damage it before they can pass through that space. Alternatively, you might allow a creature to make a Strength check to force the object aside; a creature trying to keep a barricade object in place can make a contested Strength check to prevent the barricade from falling.

1. FRONT DOOR

The main entrance to the house is a heavy wooden door with small windows to either side. Only a Tiny creature could hope to fit through these windows, which stand five feet above the floor.

Door. The front door has AC 14 and 16 hit points.

2. LIVING ROOM

The family gathering space contains two small end tables, three armchairs, and small shelves.

Windows. There are two windows on the west wall.

Barricades. The chairs are Medium sized objects with AC 14 and 10 hit points. The end tables are Small objects with AC 13 and 6 hit points.

3. DINING ROOM

The dining room's main features are its large windows and central table.

Windows. There are two standard-size windows on the east wall. There is an eight-foot-wide alcove window on the south wall with AC 13 and 8 hit points.

Barricades. The dining room table is twelve feet long and six feet wide and can effectively barricade a space 15 feet long; it has AC 14 and 12 hit points. There are five dining room chairs; each has AC 12 and 8 hit points.

4. KITCHEN AND PANTRY

The kitchen and pantry contains fixed shelves and cabinets that can't be used as a barricade.

Windows. There is a single window on the east wall.

5. BACK DOOR

The rear door leads from the back of the house and into the yard. The window to the right of the door is too small for anything other than a Tiny creature to pass through.

Door. The rear door has AC 14 and 12 hit points.

6. BASEMENT DOOR

The door to the basement is stuck and won't move. No amount of force can open it and it is immune to all damage.

What's Going On? Piotyr Button created a magical barrier before being possessed by a demonic entity, hoping to seal himself in the basement where he can't harm anyone. The creature that used to be Piotyr is biding its time, trusting that Carissa's familial love will lead to its freedom.

SECOND FLOOR

The second floor consists of three bedrooms: Simon's master bedroom and a bedroom for each Piotyr and Carissa. If the characters think of it, you can improvise suitable bedroom furniture (end tables, one or two arm chairs, and so on) to shore up the first-floor barricades.

The Book of Baphomet. The twins stole a book from a traveling vendor over a year ago and have used it to learn ritual magic. The Book of Baphomet is a dangerous tome written in a mixture of Common and Abyssal. It was kept in Piotyr's room, but he brought it to the basement for his ritual when Simon left the house to confront Carissa.



THE WOOLS ARE CLOSING IN

Within minutes of the characters entering the home, there's a cacophony of maddened bleats as the sheep begin swarming around the house. An attack on the home has begun.

A **battering ram** (see Appendix A) and three **possessed sheep** seek to break in. The possessed sheep have statistics of goats with the following changes:

- They have 9 (2d8) hit points.
- They have resistance to fire damage.
- They have missing patches of wool and red, mutated skin.
- Their Challenge Rating is 1/8 (25 XP).

The ram attempts to break down the front or back door. The sheep either follow behind it or break through unbarricaded windows in adjacent rooms, if possible.

On initiative count 20 of the second round of combat, two more possessed sheep enter through available breaches or attempt to break through unsecured windows in another area of the house.

AFTERMATH

Once the incursion is defeated, the herd outside retreats as if by some unspoken command. They surround the farmhouse within a few hundred feet, their glowing red eyes just visible in the growing dark of night.

The characters have ample time to take a short rest during this downtime. Should they do so, Carissa prepares an herbal tea that grants any character that expends one or more Hit Dice 2d4 temporary hit points. These temporary hit points last for 4 hours.

CARISSA'S SEARCH

The teenager slips upstairs when she can to search Piotyr's room for the Book of Baphomet (see 'Second Floor,' above). Her increasingly desperate searches become impossible for the characters to overlook.

Confronting Carissa. If the characters confront Carissa, she breaks down and admits to the magic she's been practicing with her twin. She says truthfully that she doesn't know exactly why the sheep have gone berserk, but she's certain it has to do with her missing brother. The twins aren't evil; they're talented and toyed with magic beyond their level of competence. Carissa vows to help the characters solve their shared predicament.

III. THE BASEMENT

With Carissa's aid, the characters can access the basement and root out the mystery of the feral sheep.

BREAKING THE BARRIER

Carissa is familiar enough with the rituals in the *Book of Baphomet* to attempt the sealed cellar door. She is able to do so, though the backlash renders her unconscious. The characters can secure or hide her elsewhere; should they revive her, or if you want her to be present for the confrontation in the basement, she attempts to stay out of combat where possible.

CONFRONTING PIOTYR

The Button cellar has a simple two-room layout; as the characters go down the stairs they enter a large storage room lined with shelves. A door on the far side of the room leads to the other half of the basement, where Piotyr brought the *Book of Baphomet* and conducted his ill-fated ritual. The creature he has become realizes the basement has been breached and moves to confront the newcomers:

A deep, grating voice calls out from beyond the doorway. "Carissaa-aa-aah? Is thaa-aah-t you?" A hooved, shaggy-haired figure creeps into the room, hunching under the entryway. A mutated, goat-like face looks at you with a grotesque leer. "You're not my sister. Intruders? That really gets my goat."

A demonic entity is possessing Piotyr Button, who normally has the statistics of a **commoner**. With the demon inhabiting his body, Piotyr has been warped into an evil **wendigoat** (see Appendix A). Barring a viable alternative, the characters will be forced to kill the wendigoat to end its effect on the Button sheep herds. Some suggested alternatives to combat include:

MAGIC

A spell such as *protection from evil and good* will give Piotyr a chance to shake off the fiend's control, making a DC 14 Charisma saving throw to do so.

ROLEPLAY

This solution works best if Carissa is conscious and accompanies the characters to the basement. The human part of Piotyr is still alive, albeit trapped behind the fiend's influence. Characters can try to appeal to the wendigoat's humanity with a series of Charisma checks; characters must succeed cumulatively on three DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) checks before three cumulative failures over the course of the social encounter.

If the characters successfully pass the skill challenge, you can either have Piotyr attempt a DC 14 Charisma saving throw to throw off the fiend's possession, or rule that he automatically succeeds on the save.

ADVENTURE AFTERMATH

The end of the adventure depends on the way events occur during the climax:

EVIL SHEEP

No matter how the wendigoat was defeated, the Button sheep herds return to normal. The gathered herds around the farmhouse disperse, aimless morons once more.

THE BUTTONS

If Carissa survives the final encounter with the wendigoat, she inherits the Button farmstead. She might watch after the sheep alongside Piotyr, should he survive his possession.

THE BOOK OF BAPHOMET

The surviving Button family hope to destroy the *Book of Baphomet*. A character might convince them to surrender the book, steal it, or take it by force. The *Book of Baphomet* is considered a spellbook containing the following spells in Abyssal: *burning hands*, *planar binding*, and *summon lesser demons*.



APPENDIX A: STAT BLOCKS

BATTERING RAM

Medium beast, chaotic evil

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 40 ft.

STR 14 (+2) **DEX** 10 (+0) **CON** 12 (+1)

INT 2 (-4) **WIS** 10 (+0) **CHA** 5 (-3)

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages -

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Charge. If the ram moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Siege Monster. The ram deals double damage to objects and structures.

Sure-Footed. The ram has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

ACTIONS

Ram. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 5 (1d6+2) bludgeoning damage.

WENDIGOAT

Followers of the demon lord Baphomet wrote a book inspired by their fiendish overlord, the *Book of Baphomet*. Nestled among its common rites and feverish scrawlings of madness lie rituals to summon demons from the Abyss itself. To the uninitiated and the unwary, these rites allow a demonic entity from Baphomet's labyrinthine layer to possess the foolish summoner, warping their flesh and turning them into the hateful wendigoat.

LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the wendigoat takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; the wendigoat can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- Each creature of the wendigoat's choice must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or have its feet transformed into ungainly hooves, halving its walking speed until initiative count 20 of the following round.
- One creature of the wendigoat's choice must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or have its head transfigured into that of a sheep for 1 minute or until the wendigoat causes another creature to undergo this transformation. During this time the target creature can only bleat and must succeed on a DC 11 check using its spellcasting ability to cast spells with a verbal component. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on

a success.

- Each creature of the wendigoat's choice must succeed on a DC X Dexterity saving throw or become restrained as wool envelops them.

WENDIGOAT

Medium fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 12 (+1) **DEX** 16 (+3) **CON** 14 (+2)

INT 10 (+0) **WIS** 12 (+1) **CHA** 13 (+1)

Damage Resistances cold, fire; bludgeoning from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Sure-Footed. The wendigoat has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wendigoat makes two claw attacks. It can replace one claw attack with its murderous bleat.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 6 (1d6+3) slashing damage.

Murderous Bleat. The wendigoat forces a creature it can see within 60 feet of it to make a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. While frightened in this manner, the target has disadvantage on saving throws against the wendigoat's lair actions. An affected creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.