

# THE GRAVEN SCULPTORS

**A** **HOODED TRAVELER**

arrives with an enticing offer and a cart laden with clay. Though his words are simple and brief his promises speak volumes: for a mere drop of blood and a few meager coins he claims that his magical servants will do the labors of many. One man bravely steps forward and slams down his gold, fully confident he's about to unmask a charlatan. With a sickening quickness the traveler's

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needle finds purchase and extracts its price. The hooded man retreats into his cart and the townsfolk watch with great interest as flashes of arcane light escape alongside the odor of baked clay. What emerges is a winged creature, small in stature but with knowing, intelligent eyes. It bows before that first courageous fellow, standing at attention as a perfect little servant. It doesn't take long for the traveler to unburden his cart of clay and leave the settlement aflutter with the sound of tiny wings—marvelous things these little servants are but only the gods know why the mysterious man was so eager to part with them.

## HISTORY

Famed alchemist Marius Villman was baffled when he discovered that his mild-mannered employee Endring Ni was a doppelganger. Marius enslaved the 'monster' and for several years conducted numerous painful experiments upon Endring, assisted by his bemused homunculus Gniffel. Eventually the shapeshifter finds an opportunity while the aging alchemist is distracted, killing him and taking his place to pose as Marius Villman for decades to come.

To keep up appearances they continued Villman's alchemical research and when they attempted to recreate a replacement for Villman's homunculus they made a discovery. As a doppelganger Endring's oddly mutable soul allowed them to sculpt as many homunculi into whatever shape or size they desired, using another's blood but linking its senses to their own. Endring found that these 'masterpiece homunculi' acted as the perfect spies,

servants who would dutifully do as commanded by their master and mentally transmit their secrets directly to him.

Endring amassed a horde of wealth and knowledge by stealing countless alchemical secrets from Villman's colleagues through his homunculi spies before the wary eye of suspicion turned their way. The impersonating alchemist went silent, regarded as a hermit and reclusive genius by peers as Endring began seeking out other shapeshifters to extend his reach. The Graven Sculptors began as 'Villman' discovered more of their kind and tutored new recruits in their honed techniques. Their students now proliferate outward, creating thousands of hard-working and diligent spies, every sight and sound telepathically reported back to be collected by the Graven Sculptors.

## ACTIVITIES

The Graven Sculptor arrives riding a cart pulled by lumbering gray homunculi and offers an odd service: in exchange for only a few paltry coins and a drop of blood they'll sculpt anyone a homunculus all their own. They usually charge whatever price seems low enough to risk—but not so cheap as to arouse suspicion. The organization rarely stays long, leaving newly-fashioned homunculi servants behind them. Once safely outside of a settlement they stash their cart, adopting a new face and quietly traveling back to begin absorbing all the citizenry's most valuable secrets.

For small towns the Graven Sculptors usually exploit the most tantalizing secrets and move on but in some larger cities the temptation to stay is too great, and many graven sculptors blackmail or steal themselves into positions of office and wealth. Thief kings, information brokers, and politicians are counted among the organizations' numbers, all of them still savoring the tantalizing secrets of their innumerable winged spies.

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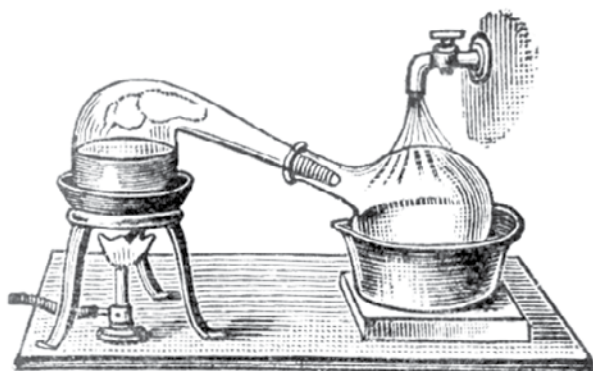
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## MOTIVATIONS

Endring's stolen research and later discoveries provide doppelgangers with unparalleled nefarious opportunities and it is rare for anyone to turn down their training. Either by scamming, blackmailing, or otherwise utilizing their stolen information, towns visited by a graven sculptor are often quite poorer not long after. Each graven sculptor may have their own particularities when it comes to taste, but riches and power ultimately drive them all.

However, their desire for wealth and luxury comes second to their fear of discovery. Each graven sculptor mercilessly eliminates anyone that discovers or even suspects their true nature as the indiscretion of even one of their kind can threaten them all—and Endring means to keep what they've built. Every member has been told exactly what Endring will do if they're discovered, and they know Villman's old torture machines are still running perfectly.

Endring's motivations are his own, shrouded in endless layers of lies and misdirection, but when the deceptions are peeled back they want to matter, to feel themselves at the vital core of events they are able to influence or control. They have worn many faces of power and prestige yet their own face has only adorned that of a slave and specimen. Endring has toiled for countless hours, experimenting and studying their vast collection of stolen secrets and it's only a matter of time before their coveted breakthrough is made. None of the doppelganger's operatives know what their master is really working on, but it's been hinted that it is something that will change the nature of all their species for the rest of time.



## LESSER AGENTS

Graven sculptors in training ([doppelgangers](#)) making simpler [homunculi](#) may be more appropriate for introducing this Intriguing Organization to lower level parties.

## MODUS OPERANDI

A graven sculptor selects a town—usually one without too much of an arcane intellectual presence or any strict regulators that may start asking too many questions—then purchases a cart's worth of cheap clay from somewhere nearby, riding in anonymously to make their miraculous offer. Typically they charge 15 gp which is enough to cover their material components. They often charge more if the chosen town is opulent or less if the price is too prohibitive, but in the end they're not really trying to make a profit on the actual creation of the homunculi.

If threatened or suspected a graven sculptor attempts to melt into a crowd by quickly adopting a new face and then rapidly extracting themselves from any risky locations. Inherently these shapechangers are cowardly, cutting and running rather than facing confrontation (after all there are plenty of other towns).

Each graven sculptor operates independently from one another but regularly reports back to Endring with the information they obtain through their homunculi although most of them utilize their stolen information towards their own ends. Each has their favorite secrets to abuse (such as blackmailing unfaithful lovers or stealing hidden treasures) but ultimately the graven sculptors are opportunists abusing whatever way seems the most profitable.

For their part the homunculi function for their false masters exactly the way they are expected to—with silent and diligent obedience. Each homunculus is intelligent but their personality and attitudes are a blank slate often filled in by their false master. Many homunculi begin to seem like extensions of their masters after a time, extensions of themselves that are simply useful tools that are available in even the most delicate of situations.

## GRAVEN SCULPTOR

MEDIUM MONSTROSITY (SHAPECHANGER),  
CHAOTIC NEUTRAL

**Armor Class** 15 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 58 (9d8+18)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 18 (+4) | 15 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 12 (+1) | 15 (+2) |

**Skills** Arcana +3, Deception +6, Insight +3, Intimidation +6, Medicine +3, Persuasion +6, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6

**Condition Immunities** charmed

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Thieves' Cant

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Ambusher.** The graven sculptor has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised.

**Multifarious Telepathic Bond.** The graven sculptor's doppelganger nature allows it to act as the master for an unlimited number of masterpiece homunculi. It can use an action to focus and absorb the information from a masterpiece homunculus but only one at a time.

**Sculpt Homunculus.** The graven sculptor can perform an arcane procedure that sculpts a masterpiece homunculus. This sculpting requires a drop of the graven sculptor's blood, a drop of the false master's blood, and 15 gp worth of ashes, mandrake root, and purified clay. The sculpting process takes 10 minutes of uninterrupted work and results in a masterpiece homunculus with a masterwork trait of the sculptor's choice. No more than 1 masterpiece homunculus can be created for each false master.

**Shapechanger.** The graven sculptor can use its action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid it has seen, or back into its true form. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

**Surprise Attack.** If the doppelganger surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 10 (3d6) damage from the attack.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The graven sculptor makes two melee attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) bludgeoning damage.

**Read Thoughts.** The graven sculptor magically reads the surface thoughts of one creature within 60 feet of it. The effect can penetrate barriers, but 3 feet of wood or dirt, 2 feet of stone, 2 inches of metal, or a thin sheet of lead blocks it. While the target is in range, the graven sculptor can continue reading its thoughts, as long as the graven sculptor's concentration isn't broken (as if concentrating on a spell). While reading the target's mind, the graven sculptor has advantage on Wisdom (Insight) and Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion) checks against the target.

## MASTERPIECE HOMUNCULUS

TINY CONSTRUCT, NEUTRAL

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 21 (6d4+6)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA    |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| 6 (-2) | 15 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 10 (+0) | 10 (+0) | 7 (-2) |

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** understands the languages of its creator and its false master but can't speak.

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**False Master.** The homunculus serves its creator but is also linked to another creature whose blood was added in its creation called a false master. The homunculus will obey the orders of its creator over those of its false master and will ignore any orders its false master gives if they contradict orders given by its creator.

**Masterwork Trait.** The graven sculptors have mastered the art of homunculus crafting and know the tricks and intricacies needed to create a wide variety of homunculi. Masterpiece Homunculi have one of the following traits, chosen by their creator during their sculpting.

**Bright & Studious.** The homunculus possesses an intellect that can rival its master's. The homunculus' Intelligence changes to 12 and it gains advantage on any Intelligence checks made to read or research information.

**Bulky & Broad.** The homunculus has a build akin to a pack animal, larger and heavier than their kin. The



homunculus' Strength changes to 10, and it counts as one size larger when determining its carrying capacity and the weight it can push, drag, or lift.

**Elegant & Filigreed.** The homunculus is an eloquent speaker and a gorgeous work of art. The homunculus' Charisma changes to 12 and it can speak one language that the creator or false master knows (chosen by its creator).

**Fanged & Toxic.** The homunculus' jaws are filled with grizzly fangs and its inherent poisons are far more potent. The damage inflicted by the homunculus' bite increases to 3d4 piercing damage and the DC of the bite's Constitution saving throw is increased to 12.

**Gilled & Finned.** The homunculus has long tapering fins and gill slits around its neck. The homunculus gains a swim speed of 30 feet and can breathe underwater.

**Lithe & Sly.** The homunculus is thin and lanky, moving quickly and quietly. It gains a +3 bonus on Stealth (Dexterity) and Sleight of Hand (Dexterity) checks. In addition, when it is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

**Telepathic Bond.** While the homunculus is on the same plane of existence as its creator or its false master, it can magically convey what it senses to either master, and the two can communicate telepathically.

#### ACTIONS

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* (1d4) piercing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is instead poisoned for 5 (1d10) minutes and unconscious while poisoned in this way. 🐍

