

# WARLOCK

18



**BLOOD KINGDOMS**

# WARLOCK

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# THE BAND OF THE TWICE DAMNED

*Six infamous outriders in the service of King Lucan  
and Emperor Nicoforus the Pale.*

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*by Christopher Lockey*

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The following serves as a grim dossier, detailing six unique non-player characters (NPCs) who prowl the shadow-haunted realms of Midgard's Blood Kingdom. These villainous outriders are united by their allegiance to a sinister mercenary company known as the Band of the Twice Damned, a cruel and cunning cadre of elite vampire spawn and other denizens of the night led by the undead warrior Vilém Erzov.

If you're a stranger to the Midgard setting, the Band of the Twice Damned can find a home in your own game world with the slightest modicum of effort. Rest assured, these horrific, headstrong characters belong anywhere they roam.

## Scaling Encounters with the Twice Damned

The characters and creatures that comprise the ranks of the Band of the Twice Damned feature challenge ratings between 2 and 6, so gamemasters (GMs) should find them readily accessible for encounters throughout low- to mid-level campaigns. But that doesn't mean the Twice Damned can't

give higher-level characters a run for their money as well.

You may find it somewhat difficult to scale these NPCs to 1st-level encounters without sacrificing many of the traits and abilities that make them unique, but you should run into very little trouble in your attempts to scale them upward for higher-level adventures. A few extra hit dice, a handful of minions, and a couple of interesting magic items can go a long way when it comes to balancing your encounters.

## Dramatis Personae

Below are the members of the Band of the Twice Damned.

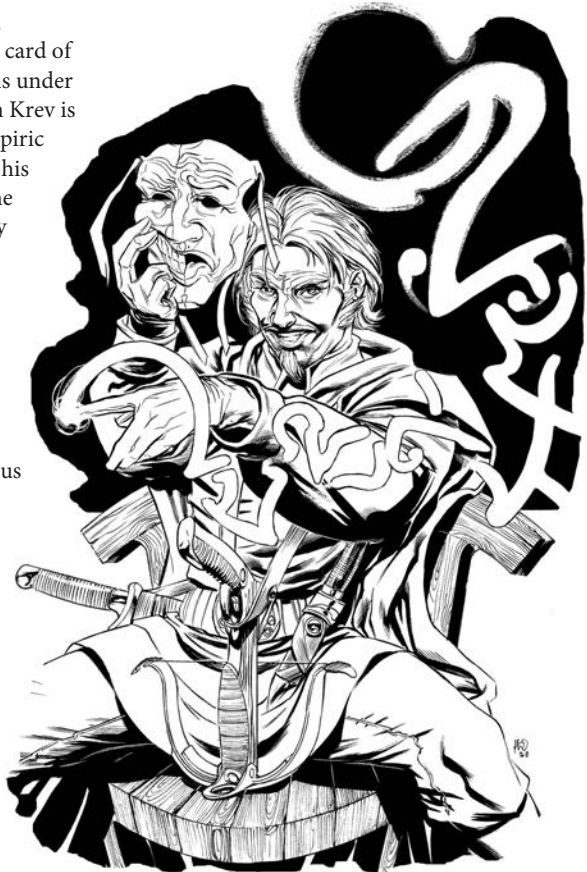
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### HAVRAN KREV, THE HARLEQUIN

*An alabaster mask hides the face of this enigmatic fellow clad in a hooded black robe. The mask is a stark combination of features: a manic smile on the left gives way to a grotesque frown on the right. The fellow removes the mask to reveal the wily countenance of a middle-aged man. His eyes burn with unsettling anticipation, and he cackles senselessly as his hands trace arcane symbols in the air.*

**Tenebrous Altars.** This Krakovan rogue-turned-warlock is the wild card of the group. One of the few humans under Vilém Erzov's command, Havran Krev is almost as bloodthirsty as his vampiric brethren. Yet instead of satiating his own appetites, Havran kills for the entropic glory of his otherworldly patron: a mask of the Great Old One Nyarlathotep known as the Crawling Chaos.

**Unlikely Allies.** As the highest-ranking human mercenary in the Band of the Twice Damned, Havran is exceptionally poised for duplicitous interactions with Midgard's less sinister peoples. Whenever Sister Radana Nohc is unable to broker parley or pacify the weak, the Twice Damned call upon Havran to dispense his peculiar brand of civility. In tandem with Havran's allegiance to the Crawling Chaos, this has made for some interesting (and often aberrant) allies throughout the band's sordid history.



**HAVRAN KREV**

*Medium humanoid (human), chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 13 (16 with *mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 49 (9d8 + 9)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12(+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Str +5, Con +4

**Skills** Deception +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5

**Senses** passive Perception 16

**Languages** Common, Darakhul, Elvish, telepathy 30 ft.

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

**Cunning Action.** On each of his turns, Havran can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

**Dark Devotion.** Havran has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Havran's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

**At will:** *detect magic*, *mage armor* (self only)

**Sneak Attack (1/Turn).** Havran deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of his who isn't incapacitated and Havran doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

**Spellcasting.** Havran is a 4th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has two 2nd-level spell slots, which he regains after finishing a short or long rest, and he knows the following warlock spells:

**Cantrips (at will):** *chill touch, eldritch blast, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation, true strike*

**1st level:** *dissonant whispers, hideous laughter*

**2nd level:** *detect thoughts, invisibility, phantasmal force*

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Havran makes two melee attacks.

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

**Hand Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

## HAVRAN KREV'S PERSONALITY TRAITS

**Ideal.** "Only the gods that were can tell."

**Bond.** "Servitude is just a means to an end."

**Flaw.** "My body is not my own, for there are greater gifts than these."

## OLD BRIMSTONE, THE BLACKSMITH

*The smell of forge fire clings to this aged derro soldier, who wears a strange set of ebony goggles upon his ashen face. He throws down a pair of battered tongs, produces a massive silver warhammer from behind his back, and charges headlong into battle with a guttural roar.*

**From the Depths.** Nicknamed "Old Brimstone" by his compatriots, this insane derro blacksmith hones his craft in service to the Twice Damned. From the forge to the field of battle, his prowess with hammers is unparalleled, and though he thoroughly enjoys tossing a hammer or two, Old Brimstone is most satisfied when swinging his trademark silver warhammer.

**Forge Madness.** Old Brimstone's backstory is a mystery to his allies, partly

due to the mélange of insanities that riddle his dark dwarven mind. In addition to his delusions of grandeur and an array of auditory hallucinations, Old Brimstone mutters constantly to himself in Deep Speech—a habit that raises the suspicions of even the diehard killers of the Band of the Twice Damned.

## OLD BRIMSTONE

*Small humanoid (derro), chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 17 (splint mail)

**Hit Points** 64 (10d8 + 20)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)





**Saving Throws** Str +5, Con +4

**Skills** Arcana +2, Athletics +5, Perception +4

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Dwarvish, Undercommon

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

**Eldritch Resilience.** Old Brimstone has advantage on Constitution saving throws against spells.

**Insanity.** Old Brimstone has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, Old Brimstone has disadvantage on attack rolls and on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight unless he is wearing his *goggles of shade*.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiaction.** Old Brimstone makes two melee attacks with his warhammer or two ranged attacks with light hammers.

**Two-Handed Bash.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Warhammer.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

**Light Hammer.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

**Field Repair (3/Day).** Old Brimstone can use his action to temporarily improve the quality of one weapon or one piece of armor he can touch. Until the end of the encounter,

an improved weapon receives a +1 bonus to damage rolls and a repaired piece of armor receives a +1 bonus to AC. A weapon or piece of armor can only be improved this way once, and the temporary improvement ends immediately following the final turn of combat.

#### OLD BRIMSTONE'S PERSONALITY TRAITS

**Ideal.** "A life of battle is a life well lived."

**Bond.** "I was born to craft blades for the world's most powerful armies."

**Flaw.** "Perfect is never good enough."

#### SISTER RADANA NOHC, THE CHAPLAIN

*A lithe, garnet-eyed woman clad in crimson robes surveys the battlefield with cold calculation before raising a strange silver censer above her head. As incense wafts away from the orb, the air around her darkens with supernatural shadow. She raises her head in gleeful mockery before the gloom obscures her sultry form, and all that remains is her cruel laugh.*

**Sanguine Sister.** This dhampir cleric of the Blood Goddess Marena is a valuable member of Vilém Erzov's crew whose delicate demeanor obscures her deadly nature. Although Erzov trusts her completely, Radana's true fealty remains with her coven of Red Sisters at Cantri Abbey—who have instructed her to ride with the Band of the Twice Damned so that she can monitor (and report) their ongoing activities.

**Umbral Sentinel.** Sister Radana's dhampir heritage is well-suited for her assignment to Erzov's vampiric warband. Not only are her divine magics a potent asset on the battlefield, she is unhindered by the sunlight that so righteously assaults many of her allies. When they must travel overland during sunlight hours, the Twice Damned operate under the protections of Sister Radana Nohc and her censer of dark shadows.

#### GOGGLES OF SHADE

*Wondrous item, uncommon*

While wearing these dark lenses, you have advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks. If you have sunlight sensitivity, wearing these goggles negates the disadvantage on attack rolls and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight when you, the target of your attack, or whatever you are trying to perceive is in direct sunlight.

## SISTER RADANA NOHC

*Medium undead (dhampir), lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 14 (leather)

**Hit Points** 52 (8d8 + 16)

**Speed** 30 ft.

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STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13(+1)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

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**Saving Throws** Dex +4, Cha +5

**Skills** Athletics +3, Deception +5, Medicine +7, Persuasion +5, Religion +3, Stealth +4

**Damage Resistances** necrotic

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Darakhul

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

**Spellcasting.** Radana is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following cleric spells prepared:

**Cantrips (at will):** *guidance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

**1st level (4 slots):** *cure wounds, guiding bolt, shield of faith*

**2nd level (3 slots):** *blindness/deafness, spiritual weapon*

**3rd level (2 slots):** *animate dead, dispel magic*

**Undead Resistance.** Radana has advantage on saving throws against disease.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Radana makes two rapier or two shortbow attacks. She can make a grapple attack or Dark Thirst attack in place of any attack.

**Dark Thirst.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature that is grappled by Radana, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) necrotic damage. Radana regains hp equal to the amount of necrotic damage dealt.

**Rapier.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

**Censer of Dark Shadows (3/Day).** Radana conjures a 30-foot-radius sphere of magical shadow for 1 hour. Bright light and sunlight within this area is reduced

to dim light, and dim light within this area is reduced to darkness. The shadow spreads around corners, and nonmagical light can't illuminate it. The shadow emanates from the censer and moves with it. Completely enveloping the censer within another sealed object, such as a lidded pot or a leather bag, blocks the shadow. If any of this effect's area overlaps with an area of light created by a spell of 2nd level or lower, the spell that created the light is dispelled.

**Predatory Charm.** Radana magically beguiles the mind of one humanoid she can see within 30 feet for 1 hour. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw, or Radana has advantage on Charisma checks against the target. If Radana or any of her allies damage the target, the effect ends. If the target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends, the target is immune to Radana's Predatory Charm for the next 24 hours. A creature immune to being charmed is immune to this effect. Radana can have only one target affected by



## CENSER OF DARK SHADOWS

*Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)*

This enchanted censer paints the air with magical, smoky shadow. While you hold it, you can use an action to speak its command word to conjure a 30-foot-radius sphere of magical shadow for 1 hour. Bright light and sunlight within this area is reduced to dim light, and dim light within this area is reduced to darkness. The shadow spreads around corners, and nonmagical light can't illuminate this shadow.

The shadow emanates from the censer and moves with it. Completely enveloping the censer within another sealed object, such as a lidded pot or a leather bag, blocks the shadow. If any of this effect's area overlaps with an area of light created by a spell of 2nd level or lower, the spell that created the light is dispelled. Once this ability of the censer is used three times, it can't be used again until the next dawn.

her Predatory Charm at a time. If she uses her Predatory Charm on another target, the effect on the previous target ends.

### RADANA NOHC'S PERSONALITY TRAITS

**Ideal.** "Ecstasy through pain."

**Bond.** "All things are possible with the blessings of the Red Goddess."

**Flaw.** "I have little respect for anyone who does not show fealty to Marena's will."

### VARRATIR V'AL, THE HUNTER

*A slate-skinned elven archer emerges from the shadows with uncanny grace. Two wicked horns—like the subtly curved antlers of an impala—protrude from beneath the folds of the fellow's long silver mane, which is pulled back into a handsome topknot. As the shadow fey ranger takes aim, a wolf made of dusk itself darts out from behind him and quickly closes in.*

**Unseelie Emissary.** This callous shadow fey hunter is the scourge of northern woodlands and serves as the dutiful and demented scout of Erzov's terrifying troupe of vampiric villains. With the benefit of Varratir's expert orienteering, the Band of the Twice Damned navigate the shadow roads (both known and unknown) that weave their umbral way through the Blood Kingdom's unholy hinterlands with preternatural ease.

**A Tooth for a Tooth.** Varratir is allied with a special undead animal companion—the hateful lupine shade named Forathas. The origin of Varratir's strange symbiosis with spectral beasts is a mystery but is no doubt connected to his shadow fey ancestry. With or without the combat support of their Blood Kingdom comrades, Varratir and Forathas make a formidable team and are nigh inseparable.

#### VARRATIR V'AL

*Medium humanoid (shadow fey elf), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 54 (10d8 + 10)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11(+0)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Dex +6, Con +4, Cha +4

**Skills** Arcana +2, Perception +4, Stealth +8, Survival +4

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Umbral

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

**Colossus Slayer.** When Varratir hits a creature with a weapon attack, the creature takes an extra 1d8 damage if it's below its hit point maximum. Varratir can deal this extra damage only once per turn.





**Fey Ancestry.** Varratir has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put him to sleep.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Varratir's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. He can cast the following spell innately, requiring no material components:

**1/day:** *misty step* (when in shadows, dim light, or darkness only)

**Spellcasting.** Varratir is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +4 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

**1st level (4 slots):** *fog*  
*cloud*, *hunter's mark*,  
*longstrider*

**2nd level (2 slots):** *pass*  
*without trace*

**Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, Varratir has disadvantage on attack rolls and on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

**Steel Will.** Varratir has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

**Traveler in Darkness.** Varratir has advantage on Intelligence (Arcana) checks made to know about shadow roads and shadow magic spells or items.

**Undead Companion.** Varratir can use a bonus action to verbally command the lupine shade Forathas to take the Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge, or Help action. If Forathas dies, Varratir can obtain a new companion by spending 8 hours magically bonding with a lupine shade that isn't hostile to him.



## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Varratir makes two shortsword or shortbow attacks.

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

**Shortbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

## FORATHAS, THE LUPINE SHADE

Varratir V'al is closely linked to a lupine shade named Forathas, which serves as the shadow fey ranger's companion. Forathas is a lupine shade with an AC of 14, 30 hit points, and an additional +2 proficiency bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, saving throws, and Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Forathas obeys Varratir's commands as best it can and takes its turn on Varratir's initiative. Varratir can use a bonus action to verbally command Forathas to take the Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge, or Help action. If Varratir is incapacitated, absent, or doesn't issue a command, the lupine shade acts on its own.

## VARRATIR V'AL'S PERSONALITY TRAITS

**Ideal.** "The hunt is the greatest thrill."

**Bond.** "Show respect to the shadow roads and the dark ways lest ye be taken by them."

**Flaw.** "Others need me more than I need them."

## VILÉM ERZOV, THE COMMANDER

*A pallid yet imposing warrior clad in blackened mithral plate mail sits atop a pale undead warhorse draped in rusted barding. This rugged, long-haired mercenary—whose yellow eyes and semi-translucent skin betray his vampiric nature—flashes a cruel smile to reveal two prodigious fangs before raising a bloodstained lance from his side. He seems thirsty. And prepared.*

**Grim Allegiances.** Vilém Erzov is the spawn of a powerful vampire lord of ill repute:

Commander Baleneus of Cantri Abbey. Instead of servitude to Lucan's Ghost Knights however, Erzov sought to continue his life as a freebooting mercenary. As the self-appointed leader of the Twice Damned, he commands his cutthroat band of macabre mercenaries with an iron fist and ill will.

**Accursed Methods.** Erzov is a cunning tactician and a skilled fighter who exploits every advantage and opportunity on the battlefield he can find. Not only has Erzov surrounded himself with some of the fiercest cutthroats in Midgard, he's begun to amass a small collection of arcane curiosities that will no doubt help the tides of fate flow in his favor: among these are his accursed sanguine lance, his mithral armor, and his grim destrier.

**Undead Nature.** Vilém Erzov doesn't require air.

### VILÉM ERZOV

*spawn), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (mithral plate mail)

**Hit Points** 82 (11d8 + 33)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	11(+0)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Con +6, Wis +4

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +6

**Damage Resistances** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

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



**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Darakhul

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

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**Brave.** Vilém has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

**Regeneration.** Vilém regains 10 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If he takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn.

**Spider Climb.** Vilém can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Vampire Weaknesses.** Vilém has the following flaws:

**Forbiddance.** He can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

**Harmed by Running Water.** He takes 20 acid damage when he ends his turn in running water.

**Stake to the Heart.** He is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into his heart while he is incapacitated in his resting place.

**Sunlight Hypersensitivity.** He takes 20 radiant damage when he starts his turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, he has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

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## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Vilém makes two melee attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature or a creature that is grappled by Vilém, incapacitated, or restrained.

*Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Vilém regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) slashing damage. Instead of dealing damage, Vilém can grapple the target (escape DC 13).

**Longsword +1.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) magical slashing damage.

**Heavy Crossbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

**Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest).** For 1 minute, Vilém can utter a special command or warning whenever a non-hostile creature that he can see within 30 feet of him makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand Vilém. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if Vilém is incapacitated.

**Sanguine Lance.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Vilém regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

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## SANGUINE LANCE

*Magic weapon (lance), uncommon (requires attunement)*

This fiendish lance runs red with blood. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

Whenever you hit a target with this lance, the target takes an additional 1d6 necrotic damage, and you regain hit points equal to half the amount of necrotic damage dealt. The extra damage lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

**Curse.** This lance is cursed, and becoming attuned to it extends the curse to you. Each day, as long as you remain cursed, you have disadvantage on Constitution saving throws until you draw blood from another creature with the lance. Once the lance has done damage to another creature or its surface has contacted the blood of another creature, this effect of the curse is negated until the next dawn.

## REACTIONS

**Parry.** Vilém adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, he must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

## VILÉM ERZOV'S PERSONALITY TRAITS

**Ideal.** "Who dares, wins."

**Bond.** "I'll never forget the immortal power my vampire lord has given me."

**Flaw.** "I have little respect for anyone who is not a soldier."

## ŽRAVIKA, THE MANGLER

*A tangled mane of black hair obscures the feminine face of this imposing vampire spawn. A feral ferocity is evident in the bloodstains on her shredded garments and by her curious blood-soaked arsenal: a chain that dangles menacingly at her side, its far end fused to a rusty hunting trap. She lurches forward with a hiss, dragging the hefty iron trap along the ground before winding up the chain for a toss.*

**Hook and Pull.** Žravika utilizes a crude and brutal arsenal to capture and savage her victims, including her supernaturally gifted claws and fangs as well as a bear trap hooked to a 20-foot chain. She almost *prefers* to snare her victims with the trap instead of her bare hands if only for the distress it seeps into their doomed and frantic souls. As Žravika is fond of saying, "Terror makes the blood taste sweet."

**Unholy Hunger.** Žravika is nicknamed "the Mangler" by her allies because of the blood frenzy that drives her chaotic style of combat. It is a rare circumstance that a victim of Žravika's is left whole enough to re-animate, and she is quite often drenched in blood after feeding. This untamed approach to battle is an effective one however—that is, when Žravika's ruthless appetites don't spook the quarry or needlessly hurry the chase.

**Undead Nature.** Žravika doesn't require air.

## ŽRAVIKA

*Medium undead (vampire spawn), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 110 (12d8 + 56)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	11(+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Dex +6, Wis +3

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +6

**Damage Resistances** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Darakhul

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Blood Frenzy.** Žravika has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

**Regeneration.** Žravika regains 10 hit points at the start of her turn if she has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If she takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of her next turn.

**Spider Climb.** Žravika can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Vampire Weaknesses.** Žravika has the following flaws:

**Forbiddance.** She can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

**Harmed by Running Water.** She takes 20 acid damage when she ends her turn in running water.

**Stake to the Heart.** She is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into her heart while she is incapacitated in her resting place.

**Sunlight Hypersensitivity.** She takes 20 radiant damage when she starts her turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, she has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Žravika makes two melee attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack.



**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature or a creature that is grappled by Žravika, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Žravika regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage. Instead of dealing damage, Žravika can grapple the target (escape DC 14).

**Bear Trap Bola.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) piercing damage plus the target is grappled (escape DC 13).



### ŽRAVIKA'S PERSONALITY TRAITS

**Ideal.** "The greatest pleasures are derived from inflicting pain."

**Bond.** "I thirst for the glory of the master."

**Flaw.** "All living creatures are cattle and should be treated as such."

## Encounters with the Band of the Twice Damned

Whether presented as allies or enemies, there are many ways characters could come into contact with Vilém Erzov's Band of the Twice Damned. Here are a few scenarios (both within and outside the Blood Kingdom) that could draw the party into a conflict or confrontation:

- The characters are soldiers in King Lucan's army, training among the lower ranks of the Ghost Knights of Morgau.

As part of their training, Commander Baleneus of Cantri Abbey has ordered the party to meet up with the Band of the Twice Damned outside of Heiderbirg. Here, they will collectively plan an assault against several barbarian tribes of the Wolfmark that have risen up against their vampiric invaders. Once the uprising has been adequately stamped out, the characters are promoted in rank



by Commander Baleneus who stations them near Cantri Abbey for a new campaign alongside the Red Sisters.

- A wealthy merchant from the Free City of Jozht hires the characters to disprove a despicable rumor: that his offspring—a brash cleric of Thor named Magni Magnason—has not only fallen in battle against the dread armies of King Lucan but has been re-animated to serve their abyssal ranks in damnable perpetuity. With the name and last known location of the Band of the Twice Damned as his only leads, the elder Magnason offers the party a handsome fee to find his boy and either bring him home or put him out of his undead misery.
- The characters are all residents of a Blood Kingdom border town (such as Skogarholm, Lingenau, or the Obertal Freehold) that is sacked by the Band of the Twice Damned and allied soldiers in Lucan's army. Instead of slaughter, the party members face a life of servitude to the Twice Damned. How they survive is entirely up to them.

## Other Warbands of the Blood Kingdoms

The Band of the Twice Damned aren't the only outriders operating throughout the wilds of Morgau, Doresh, and Krakovar. The Blood Kingdom—and the lightless realms beneath—are home to many undead warbands who serve one lord or another (if not many at the same time).

### THE FELL RIDERS

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This group of ghoulish mercenaries stationed near Lengrove is known for the foul, winged mounts that carry its woeful warriors into battle (featuring creatures such as giant bats and skull drakes). An eccentric darakhul commander named Barron Sefton Wurm leads this putrid horde

from atop his nightgaunt steed (see *Creature Codex*). Increasing numbers of Fell Rider patrols have been seen outside the borders of the Blood Kingdom—a grim development that is alarming to many of the fair peoples of greater Midgard, to say the least.

### ROT COMPANY

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The soldiers of Rot Company are comprised of a legion of zombies and skeletons led by a triumvirate of masked necromancer overlords—referred to simply as the Three. Rot Company continues a slow and perpetual march across the Blood Kingdom from their Necropolis headquarters south of Bratislor, returning to the capital at least once a year to celebrate their spoils. Massive skeletal beasts are rumored to support their numbers, along with the divine assistance of an unholy relic of Vardesain known as the *Crucible of the Hunger God*.

## New Creatures

Amidst their legions of lesser minions, the armies of King Lucan and Nicoforus the Pale are often reinforced by special undead animal companions. The grim destrier and the lupine shade are but two of these creatures. Larger warbands of the Blood Kingdom have been known to boast a wide array of exotic undead beasts and uniquely horrifying entities, all of which serve to frighten their enemies as much as bolster their ranks.

### GRIM DESTRIER

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A grim destrier is an undead warhorse bred utilizing the loathsome magic of powerful necromancers. These dreadful steeds are immune to the effects of exhaustion and will tirelessly serve any riders both brave and malevolent enough to mount them.

**Undead Nature.** A grim destrier doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

## GRIM DESTRIER

*Large undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (breastplate barding)

**Hit Points** 75 (10d10 + 20)

**Speed** 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	6 (–2)	12 (+1)	7 (–2)

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

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

**Languages** understands Abyssal and Common but can't speak them

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Trampling Charge.** If the grim destrier moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits with its hooves on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the destrier can make another attack against it with its hooves as a bonus action.

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the grim destrier to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 5 + damage taken) unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the grim destrier drops to 1 hit point instead.

### ACTIONS

**Hooves.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 5 (2d4) necrotic damage.

## LUPINE SHADE

Lupine shades are undead beasts resembling dark exaggerations of wolf shadows. Like shadows and shrouds, lupine shades hunger for the vitality of living creatures but are particularly drawn to those unpolled by the taint of evil. Long tied to the unseelie courts of the shadow fey, these wolfish creatures also make exceptional minions for undead and necromantic masters.

**Undead Nature.** A lupine shade doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

## LUPINE SHADE

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 30 (5d8 + 5)

**Speed** 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (–2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	6 (–2)	12 (+1)	8 (–1)

**Skills** Stealth +6

**Damage Vulnerabilities** radiant

**Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

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

**Languages** understands Common and Umbral but can't speak them

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Amorphous.** The lupine shade can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

**Keen Hearing and Smell.** The lupine shade has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

**Pack Tactics.** The lupine shade has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the lupine shade's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

**Shadow Stealth.** While in dim light or darkness, the lupine shade can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

**Sunlight Weakness.** While in sunlight, the lupine shade has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

### ACTIONS

**Strength Drain.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a shadow or a shroud (50% chance; see *Tome of Beasts*) rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

# ABOMINATIONS OF THE BLOOD KINGDOM

*Three legendary creatures of ill repute from the Greater Duchy of Morgau, Doresh, and Krakovar.*

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*by Christopher Lockey*

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The Blood Kingdom of Midgard is an accursed realm unlike any other, home to horrors both unspeakable and spectacular. The amalgamated lands of Morgau, Doresh, and Krakovar persist under the cruel reign of King Lucan, vampire lord of Bratislor. Meanwhile, the subterranean realms beneath these federated kingdoms serve as the dominion of Nicoforus the Pale and his Ghoul Imperium. A grim yet fortuitous alliance between these two despots has fueled a steady rise in the proliferation of powerful undead in the region, which has no doubt made the Blood Kingdom even more inhospitable for the weak of will and the faint of heart.

What follows is a macabre treatise on three unique monsters that reside within various corners of Midgard's Blood Kingdom (but who are also perfectly at home in any dark fantasy setting with a proper penchant for gothic horror and the phantasmagorical). Herein you will find examinations of the legendary creatures known as the Bloodstone Gargoyle of Bratislor Pass, Scythe Tail the Undying Wyvern, and the Heiderbirg Horror. During your scrutiny of these abominable beasts, you may

very well discover various customs of the Blood Kingdom themselves along with information on notable personages, local legends, and an enchanted item or two.

But hear you this and remember, whether questing across the bloodstained Field of Slesh or braving the boundless corners of your own mortal mind... tread carefully when walking among the dead, for the eyes of Lucan lurk in every shadow.

## **Horror in Roleplaying: Genre and the Blood Kingdom**

Chances are you'll only take a trip to Midgard's Blood Kingdom if your gaming group enjoys a fair bit of horror in your shared roleplaying experience. If this is the case, you're in for a treat, for the Blood Kingdom is rife with dread. If you're relatively new to the horror genre or simply reluctant to taste of its forbidden fruits, then rest assured: a little fear in your storytelling makes the light-hearted fare taste oh so sweeter. But whether you're an experienced gore hound or a fledgling fear chaser, the Blood Kingdom beckons with open arms and eager fangs.

This material encourages you to embrace the darker side of your roleplaying, and it draws inspiration from a wide variety of grim and gothic tales—fitting with the dark fantasy surrounding the Midgard setting itself. Below ground, Nicoforus the Pale’s ghoulish minions toil for a grim future in which the Midgard they inhabit is less governed by the sun-loving nations of the surface. (If this means allegiance to Lucan and his bloodthirsty kin, then so be it.) In the realms above, an evil army of vampires has expanded from the seclusion of their mountain keeps, establishing one of the largest and most powerful dominions in the known world. The existence of the Blood Kingdom establishes a new normal.

Adventures in Morgau, Doresh, and Krakovar (as well as the caverns beneath) can be as convention-laden or as free of tropes as you’d like them to be. But don’t be afraid to lean on trope because a genre as nuanced as horror demands a certain amount of discipline to feel authentic and sincere, and this discipline is informed at every turn by the generations of horror storytellers that came before—how they innovated and what we can learn from them—stretching all the way back to the campfires of time immemorial. Study your favorites, and bring what they teach you to the table.

## Fearful Omens

With the advent of the alliance between King Lucan and Nicoforus the Pale, the confederated Blood Kingdoms have ushered in a new era of prosperity for evil means and the monsters who perpetuate them. In the days and nights since Lucan’s grim treaty has come to pass, the denizens of the foul lands between Dornig and Neimheim have grown increasingly aware of their rising station. And this supernatural momentum is almost tangible. After all, the Ghost Knights

of Lucan’s army couldn’t have stormed the northern coasts of the Wolfmark without darakhul warriors in their midst, and the ghouls of the Imperium can only expand so far without the aid of their surface-dwelling brethren. More than a mere political current, this is the movement of a society—an entire undead civilization—whose motivations are predominantly questionable, if not altogether evil. The psychic, supernatural, and metaphysical maelstrom this has wrought is one of epic proportions.

One result of this confluence is the ongoing emergence of new and otherwise long-dormant creatures of legend. There are entities who prefer to skulk furtively in the shadows, and there are those whose reputations precede them like the doom winds of a plague storm. The Blood Kingdom is the sum of its parts: the essence of every abominable horror that crawls within the lands of Morgau, Doresh, Krakovar, and the realms beneath. And they are ultimately defined by the denizens who defend (and expand) their shared borders.

We’re all familiar with the mythological trappings of the classic vampire lair: coffins draped in cobwebs in silent dungeons, creatures of the night prowling misty moorlands full of foreboding shadows. By its very nature, a nation full of vampires betrays some of the mystery and pageantry of the vampire myth (as defined in the current and previous editions of the game). Since vampires of the Blood Kingdom occupy a more “normal” place in society, it falls on the abnormal to take up their traditional roles. The emergence of Midgard’s abominations has often been preceded by calamitous events that herald their arrival, like storms, plagues, famines, or fires. How the abominations contained herein manifest themselves in your campaign is entirely up to you.

## Rumors and Legends

Extensive travel through Midgard is bound to stir up some chatter about the Blood Kingdom and the peculiar horrors that haunt its tortured landscapes. Furthermore, passing through a border town or investigating local legends could reveal all sorts of details. Roll a d12 or choose from the following list of rumors to determine what kind of information characters might discover:

1. Merchants traveling south from Bratislor along the Great Northern Road talk of a haunted mountain pass that calls lonely travelers to their dooms.
2. Traders who ferry along the River Brocken speak of a foul wind that stirs off the western banks of the river near Lengrove.
3. Pirates of the Nieder Straights whisper tales of a doomed ship that was savaged by a strange form of vampiric plague it picked up near Heiderbirg.
4. Dozens of pale infants in the lands surrounding Morgau and Doresh are being born with an irregular, triangle-shaped birthmark—a blemish that resembles a map of Bratislor Pass.
5. On the day preceding each full moonrise, the northern waters of the River Yoshtula run red with blood.
6. Trees of the Siarka Swamp bleed a loathsome crimson sap.
7. One in nineteen horses birthed in the Blood Kingdom are born pale and gaunt but harbor strange supernatural gifts.
8. The sacking of Heiderbirg has angered the ancient Wolfmark gods; as a result, the skies above the marshes west of Heiderbirg are wracked by weird storms.
9. A temple to Marena south of Bratislor trains its Red Sister devotees to supplicate themselves to strange earthen idols.
10. The winged beasts and feral ghouls of the Cloudwall Mountains worship an elder wyvern god.
11. Children who die under a new or full moon are cursed and must serve the Red Goddess and her minions in the afterlife.
12. Earthquakes in the Great Necropolis have begun waking strange horrors from the shadowy depths of the earth.

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## Dramatis Personae

Whether by accident or design, those who scour Midgard's forbidden realms are often fate-bound to find what they seek, and if one travels the Great Northern Road long enough, the sinister forces of supernatural evil are never far behind. Here now are three of the most notorious legendary creatures that reside within Midgard's

Blood Kingdom along with descriptions of their lairs, regional effects, plot hooks, and more. If you're looking for more than a mere encounter, consider these unique monsters to be "minibosses" of your own campaign, and try to present them with the narrative pacing and dramatic gravitas a classic horror story deserves.



# THE BLOODSTONE GARGOYLE OF BRATISLOR PASS

*A hulking effigy carved from solid bloodstone clings to the sanctuary steeple. A closer look reveals a sinister winged creature of elemental earth that bears the loathsome likeness of a demonic statue with long, curving horns and a prodigiously wicked grin. The sound of grinding stone and the blinking of two luminous crimson eyes precede the gargoyle's lightning-swift assault.*

**Blood and Stone.** Journeyed pathfinders and loyal servants of the Blood Goddess Marena know of a seldom-used mountain pass, south of Bratislor along the Great Northern Road, where a secluded monastery is situated in grim isolation. Here, the Bloodstone Gargoyle of Bratislor Pass watches balefully over the crumbling walls of the Vermilion Abbey from atop its black granite steeple. A coterie of ghouls and vampire spawn occupy the abbey's lightless sanctuary, patiently awaiting the return of their Red Sister mistresses under the tireless guidance of their unholy sentinel.

**Grim Sentinel.** Born from a massive slab of chalcedony, the Bloodstone Gargoyle of Bratislor Pass gleefully serves the cruel interests of its sanguine masters and has watched over the Vermilion Abbey's mountain sanctuary for at least a century. The precise origin of this peculiar elemental menace remains a mystery, for none quite like it has ever been chronicled. Yet despite this surreptitious history (or perhaps because of it), the tale of the guardian has become a prized fable among Midgard storytellers with a fondness for horror.

**Evil to the Core.** An accursed gemstone known as the *heliotrope heart* is buried deep within the bloodstone gargoyle's stony chest. This magical orb can only be retrieved if the gargoyle is slain, at which point the rest of the earthen creature crumbles to

dust. A scant few entities are even aware of the orb's existence, such as the Arch-Devil Parzelon, Midgard's most learned sages, and the Red Goddess Marena herself.

**Elemental Nature.** The bloodstone gargoyle doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

## BLOODSTONE GARGOYLE

*Large elemental, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 72 (8d10 + 28)

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantite

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +6

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, petrified, poisoned

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

**Languages** Terran, understands Common but can't speak, telepathy 120 ft.

**Challenge** 5 (2,300 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the bloodstone gargoyle remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an inanimate statue.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The bloodstone gargoyle makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the bloodstone gargoyle regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under the bloodstone gargoyle's control.



**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.

**Fiendish Charm.** The bloodstone gargoyle's eyes sparkle with crimson light as it targets one humanoid it can see within 60 feet of it. If the target can see the bloodstone gargoyle, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by the bloodstone gargoyle. The charmed target regards the bloodstone gargoyle as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under the bloodstone gargoyle's control, it takes the gargoyle's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for the gargoyle's bite attack.

Each time the gargoyle or the gargoyle's companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending

the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until the gargoyle is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

#### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The bloodstone gargoyle can take one legendary action, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The bloodstone gargoyle regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Detect.** The bloodstone gargoyle makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

**Hurl Rock.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 40/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

## HELIOTROPE HEART

*Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)*

This polished orb of dark-green stone is latticed with pulsing crimson inclusions that resemble slowly dilating spatters of blood. While attuned to this orb, your hit point maximum is not affected by the necrotic damage of the bite of a vampire or vampire spawn. Additionally, while holding this orb, you can speak its command word as an action to cast *false life* as if it were cast using a spell slot of 2nd level; this property can't be used again until the next dusk.

**Curse.** This orb is cursed, a fact that is revealed only when an *identify* spell is cast on the orb or you attune to it. Attuning to the orb curses you until you are targeted by the *remove curse* spell or similar magic. As long as you remain cursed, you are unwilling to part with the orb, keeping it on your person at all times. While cursed, your shadow seems abnormally gaunt and sometimes moves of its own volition as though alive; as a result, you have disadvantage on Charisma (Performance) and Charisma (Persuasion) checks.

## THE BLOODSTONE GARGOYLE'S LAIR

The Bloodstone Gargoyle of Bratislor Pass serves as the sleepless sentinel of a crumbling mountain temple to the Blood Goddess Marena, where he perches upon an ebon steeple. Known as the Vermillion Abbey, this black granite edifice also houses a restless pack of ghouls and a small cadre of vampire spawn birthed from the gargoyle's sinister bite.

### REGIONAL EFFECTS

The craggy region surrounding the bloodstone gargoyle's lair in Bratislor Pass has been corrupted by its unnatural presence, creating the following effects:

- There's a noticeable increase in the population of bats in the region.
- Plants within 1,000 feet of the lair are withered, and their stems and branches have become twisted and thorny.
- Shadows cast within 1,000 feet of the lair seem abnormally gaunt and sometimes move as though alive.

If the bloodstone gargoyle is destroyed, these effects end after 3d6 days.

## BLOODSTONE GARGOYLE OF BRATISLOR PASS PLOT HOOKS

Characters could find themselves encountering the Bloodstone Gargoyle of Bratislor Pass for a variety of reasons:

- While traveling the Great Northern Road, the characters encounter the lone survivor of an ill-fated adventuring party. Two prodigious bite marks on the fellow's shoulder betray his encounter with the bloodstone gargoyle, which he describes in vivid detail before succumbing to his wounds. As he dies, he beseeches the characters to purify the unholy altars of the Vermillion Abbey by destroying them.
- A cabal of Red Sister acolytes has kidnapped the characters who find themselves imprisoned within the lightless dungeon of the Vermillion Abbey. If they manage to escape their blasphemous jail, will they survive the abbey's bloodstone sentinel and his retinue of undead minions?
- A powerful druid of Wendestal Forest tasks the characters with retrieving the *heliotrope heart* from the bloodstone gargoyle's earthen remains. In return, she promises to reward the characters

with a magical boon (such as the spells *greater restoration*, *reincarnate*, or *scrying* in a time of need) and safe passage through the Wendestal.

- A blistering snowstorm drives the characters into the Bratislor Pass for shelter as they make their way north or south along the Great Northern Road. During their first rest, one of the characters—or perhaps a friendly scout in their midst—is beset by a trio of ghouls who drag the hapless victim toward the shadow-steeped threshold of the Vermillion Abbey.

## THE HEIDERBIRG HORROR

*The pallid skin and beady red eyes of this corpulent ogre betray its undead nature, but the slavering, blood-soaked tissue between its gruesome bifurcated jaws suggests something more than mere vampirism. As the creature shambling forward, a ten-foot, toothed proboscis flicks forth from its gory maw. The undulation of a small rasping mouth on the tip of this monstrous tongue is almost as sickening as the smell of carrion rot that clings to it. But not quite.*

**Vile Origins.** The Heiderbirg Horror is the hideous product of foul necromantic experimentation. Conceived as a weaponized form of vampirism, the horror was created by a mad Krakovan surgeon named Vol Vorigrad in the depths of his dingy Heiderbirg laboratory. After slaying its maker in a most brutal fashion, the horror escaped to the streets above and nimbly evaded the local commandery during a blood-soaked exodus through Heiderbirg's western gate. It has stalked the swamp-soaked village known as West Heiderbirg ever since.

**Odious Methods.** Vorigrad introduced a number of strange mutations and “upgrades” to his giantkin subject, including the curse of vampirism, a unique bloodborne

pathogen, and the magically assisted graft of a grotesque, lamprey-like tongue. These alterations have made the Heiderbirg Horror a valuable yet unpredictable asset for those who would benefit from its chaotic brand of destruction.

**Putrid Progeny.** Like other vampires, the Heiderbirg Horror passes on the curse of vampirism to its victims. Vampire spawn created by the horror's distinct virulence carry the abomination's sludge blood disease themselves and are also capable of inflicting it upon others. As a result, the doom of West Heiderbirg owes nearly as much to sludge blood as it owes to the undead mutant itself.

**Undead Nature.** The Heiderbirg Horror doesn't require air.

## THE HEIDERBIRG HORROR

*Large undead (ogre mutant), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 76 (9d10 + 27)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	8 (–1)	10 (+0)	7 (–2)

**Saving Throws** Dex +6, Wis +3

**Skills** Perception +6, Stealth +3

**Damage Resistances** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** understands Common and Giant but can't speak

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Regeneration.** The horror regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If the horror takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of its next turn.

**Vampire Weaknesses.** The horror has the following flaws:

**Forbiddance.** It can't enter a residence without an invitation from one of the occupants.

**Harmed by Running Water.** It takes 20 acid damage when it ends its turn in running water.

**Stake to the Heart.** It is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into its heart while it is incapacitated in its resting place.

**Sunlight Hypersensitivity.** It takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The horror makes two attacks, only one of which can be a toothed proboscis attack.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing

damage. Instead of dealing damage, the horror can grapple the target (escape DC 15).

**Toothed Proboscis.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the horror can't bite another target. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw against disease or become infected with sludge blood until the disease is cured. Additionally, the target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the horror regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a





long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a Heiderbirg vampire spawn under the Heiderbirg Horror's control.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The Heiderbirg Horror can take one legendary action, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The horror regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Charge.** The horror moves up to its speed.

**Vomit Blood.** The horror spews a noxious jet of blood from its bloated gut. Each creature in a 15-foot cone must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned. While poisoned in this way, a target takes 5 (1d10) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. A target can repeat the saving

throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Additionally, each creature in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw against disease or become infected with sludge blood until the disease is cured.

### THE HEIDERBIRG HORROR'S LAIR

The Heiderbirg Horror stalks the swamp-soaked ruins of a doomed village west of Heiderbirg where its insatiable appetite subsides on any warm-blooded creatures it can find. The stagnant waters of this rural marsh surrounding "West Heiderbirg" are quite hospitable to the horror, whose malevolent essence has obscured the very sun itself with a penumbral blanket.

## NEW DISEASE: SLUDGE BLOOD

Sludge blood is a peculiar illness that originates from the Heiderbirg Horror's putrid bite and noxious blood. It is sometimes transmitted by the horror's vampiric spawn and the vermin that dwell within its marshy lair.

When a humanoid creature is bitten by a carrier of the disease or otherwise exposed, the creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become infected.

It takes 1d3 hours for sludge blood's symptoms to manifest in an infected creature. Symptoms include lethargy, contusions, and darkened veins. The infected creature gains vulnerability to necrotic and poison damage and to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage, and it regains only half the normal number of hit points from finishing a long rest.

At the end of each long rest, an infected creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. The creature recovers from the disease following three successful saves. On each failed save, the creature's Dexterity decreases by 1d4 points. If Dexterity loss reduces the infected creature's Dexterity below 1, the creature dies. A humanoid

slain in this way rises the following night as a Heiderbirg vampire spawn under the Heiderbirg Horror's control.

### VARIANT: HEIDERBIRG VAMPIRE SPAWN

A casualty of the Heiderbirg Horror's bite attack or of the deadly effects of sludge blood can animate as a variant vampire spawn. Heiderbirg vampire spawn are considered CR 6 monsters and gain the following attack:

**Diseased Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature or a creature that is grappled by the vampire, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the vampire regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. Additionally, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw against disease or contract sludge blood until the disease is cured.

## REGIONAL EFFECTS

The region surrounding the Heiderbirg Horror's boggy lair has been corrupted by the creature's unnatural presence, creating the following effects:

- There's a noticeable increase in the populations of rats, snakes, and leeches in the region.
- Plants within 1,000 feet of the lair are rotted, and their stems and branches are covered in black knots and festering wounds.
- Stagnant water within 1,000 feet of the lair is covered in a cloudy layer of scum that sometimes roils and moves as though alive.
- A storm cloud clings to the sky within 1,000 feet of the horror's lair where sheet lightning and moaning winds herald intermittent downpours.

If the Heiderbirg Horror is destroyed, these effects end after 2d6 days.

## HEIDERBIRG HORROR PLOT HOOKS

Characters could find themselves encountering the Heiderbirg Horror for a variety of reasons:

- A few citizens of the village west of Heiderbirg have survived the horror's onslaught by hiding in the swamp-soaked basements and moldy attics of their ramshackle dwellings. Desperate to escape but too timid to leave, they remain fearfully out of sight and wait for salvation as they slowly starve to death. One of these villagers—a malnourished teen named Kóri Myrrström—has made his safe exodus out of the West Heiderbirg swamp and beseeches the party for aid.
- An infamous Bemmean warlock named Yorick Lesch desires a sample of the Heiderbirg Horror's vital fluids for his own perverse experiments and will pay the characters handsomely if they can

retrieve a liter or more of the creature's noxious blood.

- Wandering vampire spawn who carry the noxious disease known as sludge blood have taken up residence along the mouth of the Yoshtula River. The scattered clans of Wolfmark barbarians who roam these lands are eager to remove the vampiric pestilence from their shores and welcome any outlanders who would take arms against the invasive undead and help locate the source of their profane origin.
- An upstart lieutenant from the Order of the Bloody Blade at Heiderbirg Castle views the Heiderbirg Horror as a valuable asset in the war against Lucan's enemies. This obstinate dhampir noble—a warrior named Saoirse Khet—is keen on capturing the abomination for study in her dungeon far beneath Heiderbirg. She offers the characters generous rewards from her enchanted armory in return for successful exfiltration and enslavement of the legendary creature.

## SCYTHE TAIL, THE UNDYING WYVERN

Cobwebs and mold cover the decrepit scales of this hulking undead wyvern who sits menacingly upon a scattered mound of rotting bones. The tip of its razor-sharp stinger drips a noxious black poison upon the skeletal heap, and its milk-white eyes pierce the darkness in hungry anticipation. As the undead wyvern shifts atop its makeshift throne, you spy the hilt of a colorful blade protruding from the creature's left shoulder.

**Grim Hunter.** In life, the wyvern Scythe Tail was the scourge of the Lengrove hinterlands. After a short-lived death, it now presides as a tyrant of the caverns below. Its once-leathery wings, now gaunt and thin as parchment, help it patrol the subterranean

sprawl beneath the Cloudwall Mountains with ease. And the poison stinger at the tip of the undead wyvern's eponymous tail has become a foul perversion of its original form—a blade-like barb that injects a deadly necrotic venom.

**Cruel and Conniving.** Scythe Tail's transformation was the result of potent darakhul necromancy, but the covenant between the undying wyvern and his ghoulish creators is tenuous at best. The alliance between Scythe Tail and the ghouls of the Great Necropolis has served their mutual interests for nearly a century, but while the ghouls continue to benefit from the terrifying presence of their immortal

warden, the undead wyvern itself has grown increasingly restless. Scythe Tail hungers for more than the wealth of wayward outlanders and carefully plots a dreadful ascension from the depths of its fetid subterranean lair.

**The Hexen Blade.** An adamantite short sword known as the *hexen blade* has remained curiously lodged above Scythe Tail's right shoulder following a long-forgotten foray with the weapon's previous owner. This magic sword grants its wielder the ability to master certain uncanny illusions and would make a prized addition to any enchanted armory. Despite the hexen blade's modest renown, none who have set out to claim it have returned



from the wyvern's lair alive. One certainly wonders what other treasures have heaped themselves upon Scythe Tail's hide or hoard since.

**Undead Nature.** Scythe Tail doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

### SCYTHE TAIL, THE UNDYING WYVERN

*Large undead (wyvern), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 142 (15d10 + 60)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 80 ft.

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STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	8 (–1)	14 (+2)	6 (–2)

---

**Damage Resistances** cold, lightning, necrotic

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Skills** Perception +5

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** understands Common and Darakhul but can't speak

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

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**Legendary Resistance (1/Day).** If Scythe Tail fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Scythe Tail makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its stinger. While flying, it can use its claws in place of one other attack.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.

**Stinger.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) necrotic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature who suffers necrotic damage from this attack becomes poisoned until the start of Scythe Tail's next turn.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

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Scythe Tail can take 2 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Scythe Tail regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Detect.** Scythe Tail makes a Wisdom (Perception) check with advantage.

**Melee Attack.** Scythe Tail makes one melee attack.

**Frightening Gaze (Costs 2 Actions).** Scythe Tail fixes its gaze on one creature it can see within 80 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Scythe Tail's Frightening Gaze for the next 24 hours.

### SCYTHE TAIL'S LAIR

The Undying Wyvern occupies a shadow-haunted cave within the Lengrove hinterlands where he presides over a

## HEXEN BLADE

*Weapon (shortsword), rare (requires attunement)*

The colorful surface of this sleek adamantine shortsword exhibits a perpetually shifting, iridescent sheen.

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

This magic weapon has 3 charges. While holding it, you can use an action and expend 1 charge to cast *disguise self*, *hypnotic pattern*, or *mirror image* (save DC 15).

The sword regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

cold subterranean lake from atop a nest of timeworn bones. A bizarre species of pallid, carnivorous fish patrols the rimy lake. Opposite the cavern's twisting eastern entrance, tunnels spider out mazelike from the central cave toward the lightless depths of the Great Necropolis and beyond.

### REGIONAL EFFECTS

The cavernous region surrounding Scythe Tail's lair has been corrupted by the creature's unnatural presence, creating the following effects:

- There's a noticeable increase in the populations of bats, scorpions, and snakes in the region.
- Plants will not grow within 500 feet of the lair, and any vegetation that once grew here has long been replaced by moldy fungal rot.
- A creeping mist clings to the ground within 500 feet of Scythe Tail's lair. The mist occasionally takes eerie forms, such as grasping talons and writhing serpents.
- Undead within 500 feet of the lair have advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

If Scythe Tail is destroyed, these effects end after 2d10 days.

### SCYTHE TAIL PLOT HOOKS

Characters could find themselves encountering the undying wyvern for a variety of reasons:

- A headstrong descendant of the *hexen blade's* gnomish creator seeks to retrieve the magical shortsword to honor his family and gain favor with various lords of Neimheim. This perilous quest requires a dauntless group of explorers, and the characters are no doubt precisely the party for the job.
- Scythe Tail has grown increasingly ornery over time, and his once-fruitful symbiosis with the ghouls and other renegades of the Great Necropolis has

been compromised by his feral nature. A coalition of devious Fretlock merchants and their patrons have pooled their resources to hire a group of sellswords to slay the beast or rout him out of the Lengrove hinterlands.

- In a perverse attempt to intimidate her darakhul allies, a contentious vampire baroness of Lengrove wants to mount Scythe Tail's head above her mantle. She is willing to pay the characters a handsome reward of 1,000 gp if they can deliver the undying wyvern's skull intact.
- The characters have been incarcerated by darakhul slavers within the Great Necropolis below Lengrove. After successfully liberating themselves from a nefarious Necropolis prison known as Skarhold, the only thing between the characters and the surface world is the carefully guarded chamber of Scythe Tail—who is eager to eviscerate any interlopers who cross its path.

## Other Abominations of the Blood Kingdoms

The Bloodstone Gargoyle, the Heiderbirg Horror, and Scythe Tail are not the only abominations of Midgard's Blood Kingdom. Scores of various legendary creatures are rumored to exist in the outlying lands of Morgau, Doresh, and Krakovar—including the Spawn Mother of Sales, the Demon Bat of Castle Bruvik, and the Lurker of Lodezig, among others. And there most certainly are others.

What unknown evils prowl the blood-soaked lands between Dornig and Neimheim? And what new atrocities will the unholy alliance of Lucan and Nicoforus yield? A world of remarkable horrors lies waiting to be found. Will Midgard's would-be heroes and villains be mighty enough to survive them? Only time and your fiendish imagination will tell...



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