

The mystery of Mordecai's MONSTER



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**A FIFTH EDITION-
COMPATIBLE ADVENTURE
FOR 3-5 PCS OF 3RD LEVEL**

GM INTRODUCTION

Baron Polonius Pavel's son is missing.

Everyone in the village of Caer Lucan knows young Evan Pavel as a worthless wastrel of the most egregious sort, but despite years of disappointment, the baron has steadfastly stood by his only son. In desperation, Pavel finally sent Evan to live with the eccentric but well-respected wizard Maximillian Mordecai to serve as the wizard's apprentice. Mordecai's tower sits a few miles outside of town. Evan went there to live with the wizard some time ago but has since disappeared. Now no one has seen either man in months. The baron had hoped Evan's forced apprenticeship would teach his son some manners and maybe provide him with at least the semblance of an education. Instead, it's thrown the future of the barony's succession into question. With Evan missing and the growing threat of orc raiders throughout the countryside, Baron Pavel has been forced to hire a group of outland adventurers to help him find his missing son and heir.

Upon investigation, the party will discover that Mordecai was a madman who spliced together body parts from the corpses of sentient creatures in an ill-advised attempt to "improve" on their natural designs. Unfortunately, he made the mistake of experimenting on young dragons—with disastrous consequences. Now Mordecai's greatest creation seeks to build an army of its own by improving upon its creator's techniques. The party must discover the truth, find Mordecai's monster, and destroy it before the creature's own creations break free and wreak havoc in the area.

BACKGROUND

Though Baron Pavel holds a huge tract of land by grant from the king, his holdings are mostly trackless wilderness. In reality, the baron's rule extends exactly as far as he can deploy his household guard. The baronial seat sits in Caer Lucan, a remote fishing village of some two thousand souls set along a rocky shoreline far from the royal court. The town boasts a tavern, a few small

shops, and a rundown keep, along with the many fishermen and scrub farmers who make up the bulk of the town's inhabitants.

Despite everything, Baron Pavel is not a wealthy man. He keeps less than two dozen men under arms, and of these he has already dispatched a squad to search for his son. The search party never returned, and Pavel cannot now afford to send more. For this reason, he has hired the characters to continue the search. The baron can hardly afford to pay mercenaries, but with his only son missing, he has little choice.

CAER LUCAN

A typical upland fishing village, Caer Lucan has a small but well-maintained wharf set in front of a row of neat houses and local businesses. The wharf is home to the town's fishing fleet while the rest of the settlement consists of a smithy, a temple, and a general store. Baron Pavel's keep stands atop a low rise at the north end of town. The town has one tavern, the Tipsy Mermaid.

Caer Lucan's best asset is its harbor, which is protected by a man-made jetty and a long, skinny island that runs parallel to the shore. Together the jetty and the island make Caer Lucan a safe port in even the roughest storms.

CAER LUCAN NPCs

Baron Polonius Pavel

Race: Human

Profession: Ruler of Caer Lucan

Description: A spindly man of some fifty years, habitually wearing an old silk robe over threadbare leggings. Once his clothes were the height of fashion; now they are another example of Pavel's fading fortunes.

Notable Facts: The baron owns many once-fine things that are now well-used and badly worn. This includes his rugs, the tapestries on his walls, and his furniture. His keep is in a state of general disrepair.

Sounds Like: An aging, desperate professor—and a father.

What the Baron Knows

- ♦ Evan was a nice boy who drank a little too much and loved to flirt with women.
- ♦ The baron arranged an apprenticeship for Evan with the wizard Maximillian Mordecai via written correspondence.
- ♦ Evan left for Mordecai's Tower several months ago.
- ♦ Evan did not send a letter to his father letting him know that he'd arrived safely, but considering Evan's habits, the baron did not consider this at all unusual.
- ♦ Neither Evan nor Mordecai have been seen since Evan departed. Both were notably absent from Caer Lucan's recent High Summer festival.
- ♦ The baron sent a squad of men to check on his son following the festival. That squad never returned.

PEOPLE OF CAER LUCAN

Evan Pavel

Race: Human

Profession: Noble Wastrel

Description: A young man in his late teens. Athletic and handsome, and if his clothes are sometimes a little worn, at least he wears them well.

Notable Facts: Drinks a lot and flirts outrageously with every female who will listen.

Sounds Like: A fraternity brother at any major university.

Torbella Ironhide

Race: Dwarf

Profession: Barkeep at the Topsy Mermaid

Description: A stout female dwarf, notably younger than her husband, Adrick. Habitually wears an apron over a wool sweater and swishing skirts.

Notable Facts: Resents humans, especially the baron. They've betrayed her trust too many times, unlike the dwarves she once knew back home.

Rumors

If the party asks around town for information, they hear one or more of the following rumors (roll 1d8 or choose):

1d8 Rumor

- 1–3** The mountain orcs have been growing bolder. Now they've been spotted recently near the farms outside of town. (True.)
- 4** There's a wyvern living on top of Titan's Tor. (False; the "wyvern" is Takaziel the dragon in her true form.)
- 5–6** The baron is broke. He owes back taxes to the king and will be lucky if he's able to pay his guards this month. (True.)
- 7** The baron owes money to Adrick Ironhide. Evan used to run up quite a tab at the Mermaid before he went missing. (True.)
- 8** Evan never made it to Mordecai's Tower. He was captured by pirates. (False; Evan studied at Mordecai's Tower for over six months before being kidnapped by the Monster.)

Resents the fact that she's stuck tending bar in a human town instead of going on great quests.

Sounds Like: A young southern belle who's tired of putting up with *you*.

Adrick Ironhide

Race: Dwarf

Profession: Proprietor of the Topsy Mermaid

Description: A tall, serious dwarf in the late prime of his life. Adrick has greying hair but a stout physique and a voice to match.

Notable Facts: Baron Pavel owes Adrick money for Evan's old bar tab. It's a considerable sum, and it's made Adrick's wife resentful.

Sounds Like: A successful businessman with a thick southern accent. When he says, "I'm just a poor country dwarf from a podunk fishing village," he means, "I'm the most successful man in this town, and you'd best not forget it."

Takaziel

Race: Young Bronze Dragon

Profession: Self-appointed guardian of Caer Lucan

Description: A little larger than an adult stallion. When she disguises herself, she appears as a young elf maiden wearing a beautiful bronze-colored dress.

Notable Facts: Recently began building a lair atop Titan's Tor, a few miles outside of town.

Sounds Like: A particularly belligerent fairy godmother.



ADVENTURE START

This adventure takes place primarily in the hinterlands surrounding Caer Lucan, but it can begin in town at the GM's discretion. If it begins *after* the party agrees to find Evan Pavel, go straight to Scene 1.

If the adventure begins in town, read the following:

The tiny village of Caer Lucan offers little in the way of creature comforts. Viewed from the wharf, the town is little more than a collection of timber and stone buildings, ending in a rise atop which stands an old rundown stone keep. A few rude huts lie closer to the waterline. These are home to the town's many fishermen and scrub farmers. The largest building in town is a tavern with saloon-style doors and a sign reading "The Topsy Mermaid."

If the PCs explore town, they will hear some of the rumors noted above, but eventually they will need to make their way to the baron's keep to negotiate the terms for finding his son. The baron will initially offer the party 300 gp, but will go as high as 500 gp on a successful DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

SCENE 1. UNUSUAL ORCS

The road from Caer Lucan starts as a gravel wagon path but soon degenerates into a rutted dirt track. Stands of pine and birch trees line the road, broken occasionally by rocky open spaces dominated by rough granite tors. A line of smoke rises nearly a mile to the north, but a sudden rustling in the trees

That's Unusual...

Everything about this encounter should strike the characters as being extremely odd. GMs should ensure that the players understand how strange it is to see an orc wearing half-plate armor, carrying a powerful but imperfectly crafted magic axe, and riding a chainmail-clad dinosaur.

sends a flock of small birds shooting across the sky. A giant lizard bursts from the trees, and a pungent humanoid brandishes a lance from its mount atop the beast—an orc riding a dinosaur! He lowers his lance and makes ready to charge as a line of his fellows comes howling out of the trees.

Following the smoke will lead the party to Mordecai's Tower, but a party of orc raiders blocks their way a few miles out of town. The attacking group consists of five **orcs** led by an **orog** mounted on an **allosaurus**. The orog wears half-plate armor and carries a shield (AC 18), a lance, and a *+1 cursed battleaxe*. The allosaurus is wearing chain-mail barding (AC 16). The **orog** has the following attacks:

Melee Attack—Lance: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage. If the orog is mounted, and its mount moves at least 10 ft. in a straight line towards the target before the attack, then the attack deals an additional 5 points of piercing damage.

Melee Attack—+1 Cursed Battleaxe: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Tactics

The orog starts combat by charging with his lance, allowing his allosaurus to pounce at the same time. After the first pass, he will drop the lance and draw his axe, using it and his mount's natural attacks to try to take down the party's strongest member first.

Treasure

The *+1 cursed battleaxe* is a powerful but imperfectly-enchanted weapon. Characters who can read or write Infernal or who succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognize the axe's markings as Infernal runes of power and sacrifice. Once attuned, the axe inflicts a painful but non-injurious burn scar on its wielder every time it is drawn. As a bonus action while attuned, the

axe's wielder can suffer one Hit Die worth of fire damage in order to deal an equal amount of fire damage to its target whenever it hits with a melee attack using the *+1 cursed battleaxe*. This is an at-best mediocre exchange driven by the imperfect nature of the axe's enchantment. Characters who succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognize the flaw in the axe's enchantments.

The orcs each carry 2d4 + 2 gp and 2d10 sp. The orog carries twice as much.

SCENE 2. MORDECAI'S TOWER

The road opens onto a clearing, and there stands Mordecai's tower. What once was once a proud two-story stone structure with a nicely thatched roof is now a smoking ruin. The thatching has been charred to ash and the windows are broken. A little smoke still leaks from within. The stone of the tower itself is still serviceable, however, and a set of wooden steps leads up to its front door.

Mordecai's "tower" is a grandiose exaggeration on the late wizard's part. In truth, Mordecai's dwelling is a small stone structure with two main levels and a basement laboratory. A short flight of rickety steps leads from ground level up to the first floor.

OUTDOORS: THE WYRMLING'S PRISON

The steps leading up to the tower's front entrance will collapse. PCs can avoid falling with a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigate) or Wisdom (Perception) check. The fall is approximately ten feet, straight into an improvised prison cell hidden beneath the steps. Falling PCs take 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

Two **white dragon wyrmlings** have been trapped in this cell for quite some time, the victims of hideous wizardly experimentation. They are chained in place by their necks, their wings have been surgically—if haphazardly—removed, and the resulting wounds have been roughly cauterized. These wyrmlings are now half-starved and mad with grief and pain. They attack immediately.

FOYER: THE SPIDER'S LAIR

Once the party gets inside the tower's superstructure, read:

The inside of the structure is in shambles. Most of the furniture is wrecked and at least partially burned, but the door leading into the tower itself appears to be intact. Thick strands of webbing cover the walls and ceiling, and the floor is littered with wooden debris. The stench of old smoke is thick in the air.

This entry room is thirty feet long and twenty feet wide, with a wooden door leading to the tower itself. As the party enters the tower, two **phase spiders** attack from hiding. These spiders have been the subjects of magical experimentation, giving them the ability to blend in with their surroundings. This gives them advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. At least half party must succeed on a Wisdom (Perception) check opposed by the spiders' stealth checks to detect the spiders. If undetected, the spiders gain a surprise round when they attack.

FLOOR 1: LIVING QUARTERS

Beyond the foyer, most of the tower's lower level is an open living area. There is a kitchen area, a set of book shelves, and a small sitting space with the remnants of an old rocking chair next to a large stone hearth. The book shelves and the rocking chair were both smashed and burned some time ago and then liberally covered with webbing. None of the books are salvageable. The wreckage of an old wooden cot lies next to the rocking chair. A DC 5 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that Mordecai was a confirmed bachelor who cared little for creature comforts. The cot was for Evan, who would have tended house for the wizard as part of his apprenticeship.

Stone steps leading up to the tower's upper level begin a little more than ten feet past the tower's front door. These are charred but essentially undamaged. A vague scent of decay wafts down from above.

There is a stout wooden door on the backside of the stairway. The door has been smashed outward, however, and its metal hinges are now broken and useless. Beyond the doorway there are steps that lead down to the basement. It's dark down there, but characters with darkvision or a light source can see that some kind of liquid has puddled on the foundation stones.

The desiccated bodies of three of Baron Pavel's guards hang, mummified and wrapped in webs, in the tower's kitchen area. A thorough search reveals that each man still has 1d4 gp and 3d6 sp stashed in his pockets.

FLOOR 2: MORDECAI'S CHAMBERS

When the party ascends the stairs, read:

The air in the tower's upper level is foul. The iron scent of blood mixes with the unmistakable reek of death and decay. There is only one room in the tower's upper level—a bedroom. A body is chained to the bed, but it is decapitated. Blood lies everywhere, but it has long since dried. Beside the bed, there is a single nightstand. A small book sits next to a broken oil lamp.

The body is that of Maximillian Mordecai, though this is not immediately obvious. A cursory examination reveals that the body is male. A DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check shows him to be middle-aged, and a DC 15 check shows that he was near starvation when he died. A DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies his clothes as wizard's robes. A DC 10 Intelligence (Investigate) shows that the body was tortured before it died, and a DC 13 check shows that the body's fingers lack the calluses of hard labor.

The book on the nightstand is Evan Pavel's journal. It details Evan's knowledge of Mordecai's experiments, starting a little more than half a year ago. At the beginning, Evan shows the arrogance typical of a man who is both young and proud. He did not like being Mordecai's apprentice. However, his frustration soon gives way to interest and then horror as Evan finally realizes what

Anti-Magic Handcuffs

Wondrous item, rare

These handcuffs were made from cold-forged iron and inscribed with sigils of power. When placed on an individual's wrists and locked, they prevent the bound creature from using any magic, including the magic from magic items and consumables. They cannot be used to *banish* a summoned creature or to disable a golem or similarly complicated construct, but they will end any specific spells affecting such creatures when applied. As an action, a creature may attempt a DC 25 Strength check to break the handcuffs and end the anti-magic effect.

the wizard is doing. Mordecai was a transmuter whose life's work was the creation of "new" and "better" forms of life using components from spliced-together, reanimated cadavers. Mordecai began his work with spiders, but then he began working with other, more powerful creatures.

Towards the end of the journal, Evan mentions a "monster" that lives in the basement but which he has never seen. His last entry is scrawled in haste: "The monster is loose!"

Treasure

The handcuffs chaining Mordecai to the bed are *anti-magic handcuffs* of the late wizard's own design.

BASEMENT: THE LABORATORY

When the party descends into the basement, read:

The basement is dark, but you can see that there is more webbing down here, even in the meager light from the stairway. The fire did not reach this area, thankfully, but still the place is a wreck. All of the furniture is smashed, and there are overturned potion decanters lying everywhere. Puddles of old potions and other arcane concoctions have sloshed across the floor, making the room damp and giving it a pungent stench overlying a deeper scent of decay. In the shadows, you see something moving.

The basement is home to a **half-spider monstrosity**. A madman has sewn an elf corpse's torso and upper body onto a giant spider's thorax. The whole was then reanimated, creating a new, horrifying creation. The elf's eyes have been replaced with a giant spider's eyes, giving it a distinctly alien appearance. Its teeth have grown into fangs. The creature is mechanically similar to a **driider**, but it has two legendary actions which it can use to spit poison. It can use only one legendary action at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. The half-spider monstrosity regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Ranged Attack—Spit Poison. Range 10 ft. The target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 2d12 poison damage.

If the party chooses not to investigate the basement, the **half-spider monstrosity** attacks as they try to exit the tower. It also attacks if they try to rest inside the tower.

Treasure

The **half-spider monstrosity** is wearing *gauntlets of spider-climb*. Deeper in the room, the party finds an *amulet of animal friendship*, two *potions of poison*, and a *periapt of proof against poison* in a trunk in one undamaged corner of the workshop. A large silver urn and a pair of bone dice worth 25 gold gp each are hidden there as well.

SCENE 3. MORE MONSTROUS RAIDERS

As the party exits the tower, they are again beset by monstrous raiders. These are arcane monstrosities created by the monster that escaped the tower, though the party has no easy way to discover this fact. This group has been watching the tower with orders to ambush anyone who leaves. The monstrous party consists of one **fire-breathing ogre**, two **goblin** ogre-handlers, six **zombie-orc archers**, and a **spined devil** in command.

Both the ogre and the zombie-orc archers are the results of crude arcane experimentation. Thick

bands of black iron have been crudely grafted onto the ogre's flesh, leaving seeping red wounds that run all over its body. These glow red right before it breathes fire. A DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that the bands cause intense pain, driving the ogre to rage and madness. Mechanically, the creature is a normal **ogre**, save that it can breathe fire at-will. This effect is identical to the spell *burning hands* when cast as a 2nd-level spell. The zombie-orc archers are mechanically identical to **skeletons**, and a DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check made after the battle reveals that the creatures were recently killed and that only their skeletons were then reanimated. This accounts for the fact that they *look* like zombies but do not behave like normal zombies.

The monsters are hidden in the woods approximately sixty feet from the tower's exit. They attack first with archery from the tree line, targeting the party's least-armored members. The ogre then lumbers forward, attacking the armored PCs to fix them in place while the zombie-orc archers continue to whittle away at the spell casters with ranged fire. Similarly, the spined devil flies forward and engages the party's casters at range with its tail spines. If one of the casters becomes wounded, however, the spined devil closes the distance and finishes the kill hand-to-hand. The goblin ogre-handlers are terrified of this entire situation and do their best to avoid combat however they can.

A Deadly Encounter?

If the party does not rest between fighting the half-spider monstrosity and returning to town, this encounter may be too much for them. Should they flee, only the spined devil will pursue. The zombie-orc archers will stand dumbly at attention and the goblins will either try to corral the ogre or flee in the confusion. If the party is defeated, they will be taken to the Monster's camp (Scene 5) and tied up with Evan (Area 2). The Monster will "deal with them" at next dawn.

SCENE 4. TAKAZIEL

Takaziel is a **young bronze dragon**. She has become aware of Mordecai's Monster and is concerned but also frightened. She feels honor-bound to intervene, but does not want to confront the monster directly. She therefore approaches the PCs. If possible, Takaziel waits until the party is asleep and attempts to sneak up on them as a way of scaring them into submission. If the party goes back to Caer Lucan to rest, Takaziel takes the form of a young elf maiden and sneaks into their room(s). If she must, Takaziel will approach the PCs on the road during daylight hours. If the party was captured while returning from the tower, she will sneak into the camp at night and try to help them escape. She will try to rally them against the Monster when they have escaped.

If the party fought the white dragon wyrmlings, Takaziel can smell the wyrmlings' blood on the PCs' clothes. This gives her an excuse to threaten the party, asking why she should not destroy them immediately. This is merely an intimidation tactic; Takaziel doesn't *actually* want to destroy the PCs, she merely wants to get the upper hand in negotiations. A DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that she is scared of something, and

What Takaziel Knows

- ✦ Maximillian Mordecai was a mean old wizard. Horrid things used to occur inside his tower.
- ✦ He liked to experiment on living creatures, but one of his creations got loose and killed him.
- ✦ Mordecai's Monster took a young man with him, but she doesn't know the man's name. She thinks he may still be alive.
- ✦ The Monster is trying to *build* an army in the literal sense. It wants to improve on its master's methods and create new, better creatures to serve as its foot soldiers.
- ✦ The Monster started by recruiting and experimenting on orcs. More recently, it has begun summoning devils. But this can only lead to disaster. If something isn't done, the entire region is doomed.

a DC 15 check reveals that she is bluffing about her willingness to attack.

Takaziel has been patrolling the countryside around Caer Lucan in an effort to keep the town safe, but she knows that she hasn't gotten all of the monstrosities that have come down from the mountains. She proposes to continue her patrols while the party goes into the mountains to confront Mordecai's Monster. She first notes that even a single band of monsters could wreak havoc on the Caer Lucan, and if pressed admits that she is afraid of the corrupting influence of the Monster's summoned devils. A DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that she is deeply intimidated by the very existence of Mordecai's Monster and is loath to face it. Takaziel therefore offers treasure in exchange for the party's help. If all else fails, this by itself should convince the party that whatever is up there, the dragon does not want to confront it directly.

SCENE 5. MORDECAI'S MONSTER

The Monster's camp is not hard to find. The party knows from Takaziel that the camp is up in the mountains. They further know that the monster has been sending out various monstrous patrols in its bid to gain regional hegemony. With a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check or Intelligence (Search) check, they find orc and goblin tracks leading into the mountains, and once they've started their journey, they quickly find small groups of monstrous bodies scattered along the trail, most showing signs of diabolic experimentation. The bodies have two sources—Takaziel's patrols and the uncertain nature of the Monster's experiments. A DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check or Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that at least half of the reanimated bodies failed from natural causes; the reanimation process itself is faulty, often leaving the creatures it creates little more than badly sewn together collections of once-living parts.

After a half-day of traveling, the party sees smoke rising in the mountains, and PCs with an affinity for arcane, divine, or natural magic begin

to sense magical corruption in the air. It feels as if the very laws of nature are being violated. Druids will sense this most keenly and may become nauseated. Druids who become nauseated must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution check or suffer one level of exhaustion.

As the party travels, the PCs will need to take positive actions to avoid wandering patrols. A single PC may make a DC 13 Wisdom (Survival) check to guide the party safely through the area without issue, or the party itself can make a group Dexterity (Stealth) check (DC 11). If half the party or more succeed on the group check, they successfully sneak by any monsters they might have encountered. Failure results in being discovered by a patrol of 1d6 orc zombies.

THE MONSTER'S CAMP

1. THE MONSTER'S CAMP

The camp itself is little more than a burned-out clearing carved into the forest on the side of a mountain. Orc bodies and orc body parts litter the camp alongside the carcasses of other creatures. Some of these bodies and parts markings indicating arcane experimentation. Four **orc zombies** stand guard at the camp's perimeter, along with one **ogre zombie**. Two **bearded devils** sit around a campfire deeper in the camp itself.

The devils watch as the party approaches, but they do not engage until the party attacks them or until a few of the zombie guardians fall.

2. EVAN'S PRISON

A cave entrance stands on the far side of the camp, near where the devils were sitting. A young man lies chained to a tree nearby. This is what's left of Evan Pavel.

Evan is still alive, but the devils have been tormenting him relentlessly. He is missing an arm, one ear, and both feet, and like the white dragon wyrmlings, his wounds have been crudely cauterized by someone who obviously cares nothing for his pain. Evan is unconscious and feverish, but he

The Monster's Camp



can be revived with simple healing magic, though nothing short of a *regenerate* spell can regrow his limbs. When questioned, Evan reveals that Mordecai's Monster is in the cave. He then says the following with more than a little bitterness:

"Mordecai was a fool to think he could experiment on dragons. He created a monster, but he couldn't control it! Now that...thing wants to outdo its creator, to prove that it's more than just the sum of its parts. It wants to destroy all of humanity!"

After this, Evan starts crying. The monster has been using him as a source of "spare parts", but lately it has also begun summoning devils. In the long run, though, Mordecai's Monster won't be able to control the devils any better than Mordecai himself was able to control his Monster.

3. THE MONSTER'S LAIR

Mordecai's Monster is a white draconic flesh golem. It has two sets of white wyrmlings' wings sewn into its back, along with a full-sized young white dragon's tail. Strips of draconic flesh run along its head, neck, and torso, and there are signs that the monster has continued experimenting on itself since its escape. It now sports the arms of an ogre, tipped with massive draconic claws, along with a white dragon's head. If the PCs look, they will see Maximilian Mordecai's head atop a nearby workbench, though the top of Mordecai's skull and brain have been removed. A DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that the monster expanded its cranium so that it could stuff its creator's brains into its own living skull. Crude sewing closes makeshift cranial incisions.

The monster is pleased when the PCs enter its cave. They offer him better flesh for his experiments than the orcs and ogres he's been forced to use up to now, and poor Evan is almost exhausted as a source of raw materials. After some taunting, the monster attacks.

Mordecai's Monster

Neutral evil

Challenge 6

Large construct

XP 2,300

DEFENSES

AC: 12

HP: 105 (11d10 + 44)

Saving Throws: Con +6

OFFENSE

Speed: 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

Melee Attack—Multiattack: The monster makes two *trident of terror* +1 attacks and one claw attack.

Melee Attack—+1 Trident of Terror: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Melee Attack—Claw: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Ranged Attack (Blast)—Cold Breath (Recharge 5–6): The monster exhales a 30 ft. cone of frost. Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 22 (5d8) cold damage, or half damage on a successful save.

STATISTICS

Str 18 (+4) **Dex** 9 (–1) **Con** 18 (+4)

Int 15 (+3) **Wis** 6 (–2) **Cha** 13 (+1)

Languages: Common, Draconic, Infernal

Skills: Arcana +5

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft.; passive Perception 8

Damage Resistance: poison, cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical, non-silvered weapons.

TRAITS

Fear of Fire: If the monster takes fire damage, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks to the end of its next turn.

Immutable Form: The monster is immune to spells and spell-like effects that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance: The monster has advantage on saves against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Claws: The monster's claws are magical.

+1 Trident of Terror: Once per day, the monster can use its +1 *trident of terror* to cast *fear* as a bonus action.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The monster can take up to two legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Legendary actions must be used one at a time at the end of another creature's turn. Spent legendary actions recharge at the start of the monster's turn.

Melee Attack—Tail: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Ranged Attack (Blast)—Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions): The monster beats its wings. Creatures within 20 ft. must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 6 (2d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. The monster may then take the Disengage action.

Note

If the PCs are still 3rd level when they reach the monster, it may be too much for them. In this case, GMs should remove the Legendary Actions and replace them with the following Reaction:

REACTIONS

When the monster is hit by a melee attack, it may make a tail attack.

Melee Attack—Tail: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

4. THE WORKSHOP

A large arcane workspace sits further back in the cave. There are workbenches, potions, beakers, and a summoning circle, along with bodies and parts of bodies stacked haphazardly for future experimentation. There is also a forge for the creation of magic items, though this is empty.

Treasure

Mordecai's Monster has no use for gold, but his +1 *trident of terror* is a finely crafted magic item. At the GM's discretion, various potions and consumables can be added to its workspace as well.

SCENE 6. AFTERMATH

The party returns to Caer Lucan with what's left of Evan. The young noble will need a series of expensive healing spells to recover, spells for which his father can ill afford to pay. Nothing can cure the trauma to his mind. Seeing Evan's condition devastates Baron Pavel, but he pays the PCs as agreed despite his limited resources and seems grateful to have what's left of his son.

Takaziel is pleased. She offers the PCs the location of hidden treasure that Mordecai stashed in the hills in case he ever needed to escape an angry mob. She boasts—with more than a little humor—that her “keen draconic senses” detected this treasure the instant he buried it. The contents of this chest are equal to two rolls on Magic Item Table A and two rolls on Magic Item Table B. The search for Mordecai's hidden treasure is on. Adventure awaits!