

THE STONE PATH

A man with a beard and a red cape is shown in a dimly lit room. He is wearing goggles and holding a small, glowing device in his right hand. He is surrounded by several white, stylized figurines and candles, creating a mysterious and atmospheric scene.

EN World EN5IDER | Intriguing Organizations: The Stone Path

If a person of sufficient wealth and influence wanted to wait out an unfavorable season, hide in plain sight, or even preserve themselves for years beyond their normal lifespan, petrification provides a near perfect passage into the future, seemingly instantaneous for the would-be time traveler. Thus for the discerning and wealthy there lay The Stone Path, an exclusive and secret organization offering to preserve the living via petrification, restoring them to flesh at an agreed upon time.

HISTORY

The Stone Path is obscure and secretive but clues of its existence appear in records thousands of years old. Those who study the breadth of history find myths of the Seer Sorceress Meridia, said to have predicted a world ending calamity and ‘preserved’ to be ready when the time comes for her return. Students of alchemy might come across mention of treatise by the monsterologist Bornaban Voole on the uses of cockatrice saliva and gorgon gas, but such works themselves have never been found. Most notable is the tale of the Living Statue of Lady Aranelle Nylor—an exquisite carving of a noble woman, the one remaining relic of an ancient civilization said to come to life every century to celebrate a night of the full moon.

Founded many thousands of years ago in the name of prophecy, the modern organization is less concerned with the end of the world. Instead they serve the wealthiest and most exclusive patrons, offering a seemingly instantaneous path into the future and escape from the woes of the

present. Throughout history, the Stone Path has established monasteries, libraries, museums, and banks to preserve not only the bodies of their patrons but also precise records as to when they are to be restored (and secure places to store their wealth). The current overseer, Rebecca Myverna (a black haired half-elf of indeterminate age) has seen a massive expansion of operations over the last several decades that threatens to undermine the exclusivity of The Stone Path, but thus far its secrecy has been maintained and they’ve generated obscene wealth from the increased business.

MOTIVATIONS

The Stone Path is primarily a business that provides a unique service to the fabulously wealthy. While many benefit from their research their ultimate concern is to acquire money, using secrecy and exclusivity to appeal to the rich. Those who ‘Walk the Stone Path’ are members of an exclusive club that gets to enjoy the future at their leisure.

The organization pays a fortune to keep itself out of the public eye. Through elaborate conspiracies, anti-divination magics, modify memory, and even assassinations they remain an enticing enigma. Nonetheless amongst the wealthy rumors abound—firstly of the existence of such a group and secondly of the conspiracies about what their motives might be! Is it a matter of prophecy? Are people being stored until some future time of need? Is it cover for a coven of vampires? Are they cheating death? Those who work with the Stone Path may believe what they like—as long as money is made and secrets are kept.

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ACTIVITIES

The Stone Path has a diverse portfolio of activities and many people may not even be aware that they’re performing duties on the group’s behalf. On the one hand there are the travelers themselves, wealthy individuals promised a trip into the future. For them the organization acts as a travel consultant and financial institution,

promising a trouble-free journey and facilitating long term monetary plans to ensure their estates persist in one form or another until they are ready to be restored.

Then there's administrative concerns--record keeping, training members, recruiting promising magic-users, and accruing items of power that can aid the restoration of the petrified traveler. If someone requests a sleep of 300 years, the Stonekeepers must know when that day has come and have the resources to restore them to life. The last thing The Stone Path needs is a disgruntled rich man who missed his 300th birthday! Long-lived races are often especially valued administrators and the Stone Path operates libraries, monasteries, and museums to preserve their records.

Finally there's the capture and care of creatures capable of petrifying the living. Adventurers are often employed to assist with this aspect of the Stone Path, although the true nature of the organization is no doubt obscured, hired by "eccentric collectors" or master librarians. The Stone Path mostly makes use of **gorgons** and **cockatrices** for their petrification needs but occasionally resort to employing a **medusa** or **basilisk** as required.

MODUS OPERANDI

Petrification of Stone Path time travelers is preferably achieved using potions so clients never have to be actively exposed to a monstrous creature—the group seeks to keep clientele as comfortable, safe, and happy as possible. Short-term tinctures made from cockatrice saliva are perfect introductory products, their petrification effects expiring after a short period of time and needing no separate method of restoration to flesh. A standard *cockatrice poison* only petrifies for 1 day, and although concentration of the poison is possible with alchemy, the *enhanced cockatrice poison* still only lasts at most one week.

When a concoction is unsuitable the organization turns to monsters, some Stonekeepers even offering the petrifying gaze of medusae to clients. Patrons that use gorgon gas often find themselves

building a resistance to the effect, which can be frustrating to the frequent traveler. The medusa's gaze on the other hand does not lose its potency, although arrangements with those creatures depend greatly upon the personality and motives of the individual, rarely lasting very long.

Finally there are basilisks; while they are not necessarily hard to keep in captivity, they are unreliable as a source of petrification and the most dangerous to expose to clients. The monsters are useful as a source of anti-petrification salves (their saliva possesses the fundamental natural properties) and should the need arise they're useful with the disposal of unwanted petrified persons. By and large however the Stone Path seeks alternative restoration and petrification methods before keeping basilisks in house.

POTIONS AND POISONS

Monsterologist Bornaban Voole created the first petrification potions used by the Stone Path and his alchemical studies provide the basis upon which modern tinctures are produced. A Stone Path agent (as required to assist their client's journey through time) may have access to any of the following concoctions, carefully protected inside of stone carvings often marked with the intended recipient or the duration of petrification.

Cockatrice Poison

Potion, rare

This tincture appears to be a viscous, opaque, pale gray slime and has a dusty aroma. When you drink this potion, you must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become petrified for 24 hours. Alternatively, it can be applied as poison to a piercing or slashing weapon, or up to 3 pieces of ammunition. Applying the poison takes an action and for the next minute, when the weapon deals damage it causes the target to make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become petrified for 24 hours.

Enhanced Cockatrice Poison

Potion, very rare

This potion has a syrupy, cloudy, dark gray sludge appearance with a strong dusty odor. When you drink this potion, you must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become petrified for 1 week. Alternatively, it can be applied as poison to a piercing or slashing weapon, or up to 3 pieces of ammunition. Applying the poison takes an action and for the next minute, when the weapon deals damage it causes the target to make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become petrified for 24 hours.

Potion of Petrification

Potion, legendary

This heavy potion is transparent and watery with swirling streaks of bright green throughout. When you drink this potion, you must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or become petrified.

Potion of Susceptibility

Potion, rare

This creamy white potion smells faintly of lavender. After drinking this potion, for 1 hour you have disadvantage on saving throws to resist effects that cause petrification.

Vial of Gorgon Gas

Potion, rare

This vial contains a fast moving, greenish-yellow swirling gas. When the vial containing this potion is opened or broken, it produces a 5-foot-cube cloud of gas. A creature that enters the area or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the target is restrained and begins to turn to stone. The restrained target must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends on the target. On a failure, the target is petrified. The gas disperses after 1 round.

Stone Ancient Template

Using petrification the stone ancient has endured long past their usual lifespan. Their body has changed from flesh to stone and back again numerous times, the transmutations causing odd side effects on their physiology.

A beast, dragon, giant, humanoid, or monstrosity can become an stone ancient. When a creature becomes an ancient, it retains all its statistics except as noted below:

Challenge. Recalculate the stone ancient’s challenge rating after you apply the template.

Natural Armor. The stone ancient’s Armor Class is 17 (natural armor) if it isn’t already higher.

Ability Scores. The stone ancient gains a Constitution of 17 if its score isn’t already higher.

Hit Dice and Hit Points. The stone ancient gains three Hit Dice, and its maximum hit points increase accordingly.

Senses. The stone ancient gains tremorsense with a radius of 60 feet.

Stone Skin. The stone ancient gains resistance to bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons.

Immutable Shape. The stone ancient is immune to any spells or effects that would change its size or shape.

New Action: Slam. The stone ancient’s fists are natural weapons. A stone ancient of Small size or larger gains a Strength-based melee slam attack, dealing bludgeoning damage according to its size (see Table: Slam Attack).

New Action: Multiattack. The stone ancient makes two slam attacks. If the base form already has multiattack it may replace any of its attacks with a slam attack.

TABLE: SLAM ATTACK

Size	Reach	Damage
Small	5 ft.	1d6 + Strength modifier (minimum 1 damage)
Medium	5 ft.	1d8 + Strength modifier
Large	10 ft.	2d8 + Strength modifier
Huge	10 ft.	2d10 + Strength modifier
Gargantuan	15 ft.	3d10 + Strength modifier

Stone Ancient Noble

Medium humanoid (human), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 37 (5d8+15)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Persuasion +5

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages any two languages

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Immutable Shape. The noble is immune to any spell or effect that would change its size or shape.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The noble makes two slam attacks.

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

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

REACTIONS

Parry. The noble adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the noble must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Stonekeeper

Medium humanoid (any race), lawful neutral

Armor Class 14 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 36 (7d8+5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws CON +4

Skills Animal Handling +4, History +6, Investigation +6, Medicine +4

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages any two languages

Challenge 3 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The Stonekeeper is a 7th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The Stonekeeper has the following wizard spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): *mending, prestidigitation, ray of frost, shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *alarm, shield, unseen servant*

2nd level (3 slots): *enlarge/reduce, scorching ray*

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, glyph of warding, slow*

4th level (1 slot): *private sanctum, stone shape*

ACTIONS

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

These specialized magic users watch over the petrified clients of The Stone Path, ensuring they stay in perfect condition during their petrification. The Stonekeeper may also be required to care for basilisks, cockatrice, or gorgons as necessary. Due to the unique tasks of their station they are trained to work without sight, both to preserve the anonymity of their clients and as protection against petrification from basilisks and medusae. 🧙