

OBSIDIAN APOCALYPSE: PANDEMIC CONTAGION



LPJ9261



HISTORY

50 YEARS Ago

When the Intruder appeared among the stars, the gods sent signs and portents. They warned their priests and prophets that the Intruder was something strange and new, and that it would bring terrible destruction to Abaddon.

Many scoffed at the predictions of doom. Not because they lacked faith, but because the Intruder was outside the existing prophecies. The scoffers felt that the Intruder was far away, in the night sky, and there were more important things to worry about. Even as the glow of the Intruder intensified in the sky, no one believed that a single comet could destroy the world.

The meteorite called Intruder crashed into the sea. Great waves devastated the nearest shoreline and then...nothing happened. The seas were silent. The scoffers mocked the astrologers and diviners, but still those prophetic individuals warned all who would listen.

A few fishing vessels ventured into the area where the Intruder crashed and did not return. No one saw this as unusual. A rogue wave, a sudden storm, or any of the monsters that dwelt in the Deep might have claimed the ships. A few vanished every year. Sometimes a corpse or some wreckage would float ashore days or weeks later, but more often not.

BREACH

A few months after the Intruder vanished into the Deep, panicked messengers from a coastal village raced into neighboring communities, screaming that their homes were under attack by a monster from the sea.

The monster, they said, crawled out of the waves under the new moon at high tide. It crushed houses beneath its loathsome bulk and devoured stones, thatch, beams, tools, livestock, and people indiscriminately.

As local military forces assembled, scouts reported from the devastated village. Nothing remained alive in the ruins. The scouts likened the tracks left by the monster to those a purple worm might leave. If it was an aquatic worm, it was larger than any ever encountered before. Likewise, if it had truly devoured living and non-living alike, its diet was unlike any worm known.

Furthermore, the scouts said that the ruins appeared to be partially melted, like wax in the summer sun. The scouts reported finding traces of some strange, vibrating residue. Some said that it set their teeth on edge, and others said it was strangely pleasant.

When local leaders consulted prophets and seers, they found the gods and omens silent on the subject of the monster. All

they learned was that the doom foretold by the arrival of the Intruder was happening under their very noses.

CONTAGION

No one knows when the sickness began, exactly. All records from that time are lost. We can suppose, though, that it was similar to what the College of Purity studies today, seeking knowledge of our enemy in order to destroy it.

Some survivors from that first village, or perhaps all of them, succumbed. They cried out, writhing and feverish. Priests summoned to cure the disease found their divine magic ineffective. Some of the infected collapsed into dust. Others rose, changed.

In either case, the infection spread to those who cared for the ill—and from them to others. Undoubtedly, it took but a few days to understand that a new plague had come.

Today, when we observe infection and conversion, we know what we are seeing. Then, they did not.

THE SHAPER PLAGUE

All living things contain whole worlds. A single tree may support several colonies of insects, bird life, and reptiles, or even mammals such as squirrels or monkeys. So too do those living things contain worlds of life, some of it so small as to be invisible to the naked eye.

Over time, we have come to understand the plague in the same way. The great, shapeless beast hatched from the Intruder brought its alien worlds with it when it first came ashore. Those who fled the first village to be attacked already carried the seeds of their own death—and the deaths of millions.

What the College of Purity now calls the Shaper Virus came to Abaddon in the egg we mistook for a meteorite. It gestated in the silt beneath the waves, in the inky depths. The sea life was infected first, and we may count ourselves lucky that local fishing vessels did not return with holds brimming with unknowable death.

The best protections against the Shaper Virus are similar to those most effective against other plagues. Those who become ill must not infect others, and quarantine or exile is required.

However, the magic most efficacious against disease had no effect against the Shaper Virus because it is not truly a disease. Rather, it is an alien species colonizing living things and converting them for its own use.

INVASION

During the struggle with the first outbreak of the Shaper Virus, more and larger ships vanished into the Deep. Seasoned captains and veteran crews went to sea and did not return. Coastal fisher folk began reporting strange behavior in sea life and misshapen catches.



On the next coincidence of new moon and high tide, a monster came ashore again. Survivors described it as colossal and ravenous. Some described it as pale and shining in the darkness like subterranean fungi. All agreed that it seemed to absorb what it crushed under its bulk.

By the time adventurous heroes responded to the attack, the monster had vanished beneath the waves. The zone of its destruction was larger than before, and those arriving first at the scene this time found other, smaller monsters left behind.

No one had seen the like of these monsters before, though we are familiar with them now. Some were the size of horses and cows, and others were the size of dogs. A few were humanoid. All were vicious. The heroes killed all they could find, but it was too late.

The survivors had already spread the infection, and the now the heroes were infected, too.

25 YEARS Ago

For decades, armies and heroes threw themselves at the monsters, even as the disease spread inside Abaddon. Where the disease spread, new monsters sprang up.

THE RETREAT

Eventually, the kings and princes of the lands listened to the advisors who said they could not win. In a great summit, they agreed to ignore political boundaries and began to retreat from the growing army of alien creatures.

Traumatized by having to kill spouses, children, parents, and siblings—who rose from their sickbeds changed, vicious, and ravenous—the refugees fled from the growing war zone.

THE CROSSING

The Great River proved at least a temporary sanctuary. The great bridges, built in epic ages past with mighty magics, were destroyed to prevent pursuit.

Patrols rode along the river, slaughtering all those who tried to cross from the Tainted Lands. Hooded Purifiers roamed settlements, identifying the diseased and offering them the choice: be exiled to the Tainted Lands or go to the pyre.

10 YEARS Ago

Volunteers were allowed to cross into the Tainted Lands, scouting the enemy and looking for a chance to kill the

monster that started it all. They were allowed to send reports back across the Great River, but not to cross themselves.

Leaving the Purified Lands was a lifetime sentence then, as it is now.

THE ONLY VICTORY

Eventually, a report reached the sanctuaries, and its news spread like wildfire through the refugee settlements and new towns: the Intruder's Spawn, the first monster, was dead.

An army of adventurous heroes created a trap. Over months, they killed Contaminated and spread supplies of flammable substances. They turned an abandoned city into a firetrap and built barricades to trap the beast.

Eventually, they caused enough devastation among the lesser ranks of the Contaminated that the first monster, the one for whom all other Contaminated were as fleas on a dog, came to destroy them. The heroes lured it into their trap and ignited a conflagration that lit the skies for miles around. Protected from the firestorm by the mightiest spells and charms, the heroes attacked the beast. They toppled walls onto it, pulled meteors from among the stars, called down lightning from clear skies, and held back nothing of their strength.

Most of the heroes fell, but so too did the monster. One surviving hero, horrifically burned by acid and already showing the first signs of infection, relayed a message to one of his companions. His companion carried the message until infection took her. She passed the message to another, and he to another, until at last word reached the sanctuaries.

New

The draconian measures necessary to protect the sanctuaries from infection pass without comment now. The Purifiers take all those even suspected of being contaminated and force them to make the Choice. And still, the contagion appears among us.

From across the river, reports come of strange structures rising in wastes and mountains and ruined cities. Caravans of the Contaminated carry resources to the site of the first monster's death, now said to be a sea of raw chaos and the birthplace of an alien city, populated solely by the Contaminated.

No political structure remains from a mere fifty years ago. Now, a pitiful few uninfected survive in our sanctuaries, praying to the silent gods to deliver them from the Intruder's Spawn.

Some may wonder if they have become their own worst enemies; if so, they do it where no one can hear them.

MAGIC

The schools of evocation and transmutation, both of which contain spells that can affect objects, found that the plague

increased their importance in Abaddon. Their brave efforts to fight the spawn of the Intruder made them heroes to the survivors.

Since then, however, it has become obvious that scholars and wizards are irresistible targets for the Contaminated. Since only the smartest individuals retain their intelligence after becoming Contaminated, scholars and wizards constitute the main source of Primes in the Contaminated Lands. While no one in the Purified Lands truly understands this, they have noticed the frequency with which such individuals are the targets of Contaminated attacks, kidnapping attempts, and infections.

In addition, practitioners of arcane magic are seen as drains on resources. The sanctuaries can ill afford the years of study necessary to train arcane spellcasters when their spells have no effect on the enemy.

RELIGION

The inability of the gods to observe the Contaminated directly damaged the political and social power of religion in post-Intruder Abaddon. The failure of healing magic to stop the spread of the Shaper Plague shattered faiths and led to a backlash of anger.

In the Purified Lands, the sanctuaries do not build churches or temples. Those structures from before the plague are now more commonly used as hospitals and quarantine centers.

The exceptions are the clergy and buildings of gods of Fire and Law, who find themselves allies of the Purifiers whether they like it or not.

The clergy of gods of Knowledge are welcome in academic sanctuaries, like the College of Purity. Though they cannot observe and report on the Contaminated directly, they lend their knowledge to the study of the plague as best they can.

Many clerics, seeking to regain the honor and prestige of their faith, volunteer to go into the Tainted Lands as scouts and to support adventurers there. Settlements in the Tainted Lands generally welcome clerics, as many mundane injuries and illnesses now threaten lives. Clerics provide structure, healing, information, and inspiration to those in the Tainted Lands.

DISEASES & FEATS

SHAPER VIRUS

The Shaper Virus transmits via contact between Infected or Contaminated creatures.

When a living creature comes into physical contact with an Infected or Contaminated creature, it must succeed at a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or become infected. Symptoms manifest 2d4 hours after infection. Infected creatures become

feverish and weak. Their muscles contract and contort, as if trying to force the victim into a new shape. Hard plates may form on skin, horns or spurs may sprout from the body, and patches of skin may turn green or black. The infected loses 2 points from their Constitution score and 2 points from their Intelligence score.

At the end of each long rest, an infected creature can make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. If a creature fails this save, it loses another 2 points from both its Constitution and Intelligence ability scores. If a victim's Constitution reaches zero, they die. If a victim's Intelligence reaches zero first, they cease taking ability damage and become one of the Contaminated (and an NPC under the GM's control). Thereafter, the newly contaminated creature recovers Constitution and Intelligence at the rate of 2 points each following a long rest.

On a successful save, the Shaper Virus becomes dormant within the victim. The victim recovers Constitution damage at the rate of 2 points after each long rest and is eligible to take Infected feats. Taking any of those feats, however, starts the virus cycle again. The character taking the feat begins suffering the effects of the virus in 2d4 hours and must make the saving throws again with the penalty imposed by the new feat (see Infected Feats, below).

Unfortunately, the Shaper Virus is immune to most curatives, including magical ones such as *lesser restoration* or the paladin's lay on hands class feature. Only *wish* or similarly powerful magic can cure the virus. Any creature cured of the virus cannot take additional Infected feats, but they retain any feats they have already taken.

PLAYER CHARACTERS & THE SHAPER VIRUS

A player character can be Infected and take Infected feats. However, once a player character loses his (or her) fight against the Shaper Virus, that character becomes an NPC controlled by the GM.

INFECTED FEATS

As you gain Infected feats, you accumulate disadvantages as described below.

- Each Infected feat imposes a cumulative –2 penalty on future saving throws against the Shaper Virus.
- Each Infected feat reduces both your Charisma and Intelligence ability scores by 2. This reduction is permanent.
- Each Infected feat grants a cumulative +3 bonus on Constitution saving throws against severe weather, including against exhaustion caused by high altitude.
- Each time you take an Infected feat, you trigger a relapse of the Shaper Virus.
- If you possess three or more Infected feats you are contagious. You infect other living creatures with the Shaper Virus on contact.

INFECTED FEATS

ACID BARRIER

The infection seething within you causes you to sweat an acidic slime that protects you in melee.

Prerequisite: Intruder's Blessing or Supernal Protection feat

A creature that hits you with a melee weapon attack must make a Dexterity saving throw (DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier) or take 2d4 acid damage, or half damage with a successful save.

ACID GUSH

The Shaper Virus provides you with additional glands in your throat and a special bladder in your torso, allowing you to spit acid with great force.

Prerequisite: Intruder's Blessing or Supernal Protection feat

You can breathe acid in a 30 ft. line as a ranged weapon attack. If your attack succeeds, you deal 2d6 acid damage. In addition, the target takes 1d4 points acid damage at the end of their turn each round, with a successful Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier) ending the effect. You may use this attack a number of times equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum 1). This ability recharges following a long rest.

EXTRINSIC MIND

Changes caused by the Shaper Virus turn your eyes a solid color. Your hair becomes thin and brittle, and your ears become little more than rudimentary nubs.

Prerequisite: Intruder's Gift feat

You gain magic resistance, granting you advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Note: When you choose this feat, decide whether your eyes become all white, all black, or all the color your eyes were before taking this feat.

EXUDE ACID

The infection boiling within you can now secrete acid through your skin during combat.

Prerequisite: Intruder's Blessing or Supernal Protection feat

Your unarmed melee attacks do 2d6 acid damage. In addition, the target takes 1d4 points acid damage at the end of their turn each round, with a successful Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier) ending the effect.

INTRUDER'S BLESSING

Partial conversion to being one of the Contaminated grants you increased strength and health at the cost of your hair.

Prerequisite: Shaper Scarring feat

Increase your Strength or your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.



You have advantage on both Strength and Constitution ability checks.

INTRUDER'S GIFT

The Shaper Virus leaves its alien imprint on you, creating a rift between you and other life on Abaddon.

Prerequisite: Must have previously recovered from the Shaper Virus infection.

You gain proficiency with both Strength and Constitution saving throws.

Special: You now carry the Shaper Virus. Every time you hit a living creature with your unarmed melee attack, there is a 10% chance you infect the target with the virus. In addition, your mere touch has a 1% chance per minute of contact of infecting another creature you are touching. As a precaution, you may want to sleep in your clothes and invest in some gloves...

SHAPER SCARRING

Changes caused by the Shaper Virus are permanently visible, manifesting as patches of hard, green and black tissue.

Prerequisite: Intruder's Gift feat

While you aren't wearing armor, you can calculate your AC as 15 + your Dexterity modifier. You can use a shield and still gain this benefit.

SUPERNAL PROTECTION

The gulf between this reality and you widens, increasing your resistance to magic at the cost of your hair.

Prerequisite: Extrinsic Mind feat

You become immune to all spells from one school of your choice, except for spells that affect objects (e.g., *disintegrate*).

Special: This feat can be taken multiple times, each time for a different school.

CITIES

THE PURIFIED LANDS CITADEL OF SMOKE

The Citadel of Smoke represents an average Sanctuary settlement. It is a walled large town. The Citadel functions as a war college in the Purified Lands. Here, soldiers and generals study how to defend the Purified Lands from the onslaught of the Contaminated.

The Guard patrols outside the walls, while the Purifiers patrol inside. The two share the duty of guarding the city gates.

The Citadel is constantly on the watch for attacks by contaminated monsters and for outbreaks of the Shaper Virus.

The people live in constant fear, believing that rigid obedience to the Purity Protocols is the only thing protecting them from the plague. They view strangers with suspicion, but once they accept someone the community is warm and supportive.

CITADEL OF SMOKE

LN Large Town

Qualities Academic, Insular, Strategic Location

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government Overlord

Population 3,300 (2,000 humans, 700 halflings, 350 elves, 200 dwarves, 50 other)

NOTABLE NPCs

- Noble Defender Helena Bright (LN female human aristocrat 4/inquisitor 3)
- Guard Commander Urgic Ravensmasher (LE male orc fighter 11)
- Purifier General Encinal Heath (LN male elf bard 10)

THE COLLEGE OF PURITY

The College of Purity represents an academic institution, turned into a Sanctuary in the face of the plague.

The College focuses on studying the Contaminated and the Infected, trying to find a way to defeat the virus itself.

Although the College of Purity is as insular as any Sanctuary, it is actually quite tolerant of newcomers. The Purifiers do not enjoy the authority here that they do elsewhere, which some say may lead to the College's eventual downfall.

THE COLLEGE OF PURITY

LN Small Town

Qualities Academic, Insular

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government Council

Population 1,950 (750 humans, 250 elves, 200 dwarves, 100 gnomes, 525 other)

NOTABLE NPCs

- High Councilor Alden Strengate (LG male human paladin 13)
- Pious Scholar Ilyin Cursewood (LN female elf cleric 10)
- Esteemed Master Lumrolor Cooper (NG male gnome bard 8)
- Scholar Emeritus Emrael of the Last Tower (N female elf wizard 7)
- Warmaster Davor Bonecrack (NE male orc fighter 7)

THE TAINTED LANDS

AGRESTON

Agreston is an average community of those living with the Shaper Virus, those who could not accept the rigid discipline

of a Sanctuary settlement, and those who volunteered to scout the Contaminated Lands on behalf of the sanctuaries.

The inhabitants live in a community abandoned by people who fled to the sanctuaries. The community size is based on the number of inhabitants. Before the plague, Agreston was a small town. Now, there are more buildings than there are people to live in them.

Agreston is an open, bustling community that lives with the danger of attack every day. Uncontaminated newcomers are welcome, and those struggling to understand their newly Infected condition find sympathy here. These people will even trade with the fully Contaminated, as long as the Contaminated behave themselves.

AGRESTON

CN Village

Qualities Notorious, Rumormongering Citizens

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government Council

Population 200 (75 human, 30 dwarf, 20 orc, 15 gnome, 60 other)

NOTABLE NPCs

- The Visionary Aidan Skyforged (NG male elf fighter 4/ranger 4)
- The Prosperous Fearghus Goldenbeard (LN male dwarf)
- The Enforcer Tomek Foecutter (N male orc barbarian 4/fighter 4)

OCCLUDED SANATORIUM

The Occluded Sanatorium was a monastery. When the plague struck, it found itself in the path of the withdrawal from the Shaper Virus. Rather than retreat, the abbot asked for volunteers to stay behind to treat the ill and injured and to give those infected with the virus some comfort in what could be their final hours.

Now, monks from the Sanatorium venture into the Tainted Lands, looking for those who need help. When they can, they aid settlements or escort the ill or injured back to the Sanatorium.

OCCLUDED SANATORIUM

LG Hamlet

Qualities Pious, Superstitious

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government Autocracy

Population 55 (25 human, 20 dwarf, 10 other; all Infected)

NOTABLE NPCs

- Abbot Darvan Tay (LN male Infected human monk 8)
- Brother Bulwark (LN female Infected orc fighter 3/monk 3)
- Brother Quartermaster (LG male Infected dwarf monk 3)
- Brother Purity (LN female Infected human monk 6)

RAZOR'S REFUGE

Razor's Refuge is a place where anyone with the strength and the will can carve out a place in society. A rough-and-tumble place, the Refuge grew in the ruins of a large town evacuated during the withdrawal from the plague. A gang of bandits moved in and set themselves up as the bosses of the place. They loot empty dwellings, raid other settlements, and generally enjoy what little time they have left before the contamination spreads and consumes them. They are structured like a large family, with a so-called Father or Mother running the gang, Elder siblings acting as lieutenants, and other siblings as the foot soldiers.

RAZOR'S REFUGE

NE Village

Qualities Notorious, Rumormongering Citizens

DEMOGRAPHICS

Government Overlord

Population 175 (90 humans, 30 orcs, 15 halflings, 40 other)

NOTABLE NPCs

- Mother Izora Silverrazor (NE female human barbarian 4/fighter 3)
- Elder Brother Tsadok Toecutter (CE male orc barbarian 5)
- Sister Morstra Stickyfingers (LE female dwarf rogue 5)

THE CONTAMINATED LANDS

RESOURCE CENTER ALPHA SEVEN

This settlement is a center for Contaminated activities. Everyone within it is either contaminated or a prisoner waiting for the Shaper Virus to overwhelm them.

Day and night, Contaminated servitors bring prisoners and required materials to the resource center. Finding it is as easy as following Contaminated creatures burdened with their harvests.

Within the settlement, Harvester Alpha Seven Prime organizes incoming goods and sees to their reduction to component parts—including even magic items of any sort. Assembler Alpha Seven Prime leads an army of servitors in using those components to build the alien structures and devices that serve the Contaminated. Vector Alpha Seven Prime is in charge of the prisoners and infecting them.

For the non-Contaminated, Resource Center Alpha Seven is Hell on Abaddon. The colors and shapes of the structures bear no resemblance to anything seen in this world before. The constant exposure to the Shaper Virus makes succumbing to its horrors inevitable. The silently coordinated activities of the Contaminated are unnerving. Their ability to draw nourishment from any organic substance is terrifying. Only the very toughest and very boldest have survived seeing the inside of a resource center like this one.

RESOURCE CENTER ALPHA SEVEN

CE Small City

Qualities Insular, Racially Intolerant, Strategic Location, Superstitious

Demographics

Government Autocracy

Population 7,500 (2,500 Contaminated humans, 1750 Contaminated elves, 850 Contaminated dwarves, 700 Contaminated halflings, 1,700 Contaminated others)

Notable NPCs

- Overseer Alpha Seven Prime (CE male Contaminated human fighter 12)
- Harvester Alpha Seven Prime (CN female Contaminated dwarf fighter 8)
- Assembler Alpha Seven Prime (NE female Contaminated dwarf fighter 7)
- Vector Alpha Seven Prime (CE male Contaminated orc barbarian 9)

ORGANIZATIONS

MONSTERS

A creature overcome by the Shaper Virus becomes a Contaminated creature. When this occurs, use the following template to modify the original creature.

The Shaper Virus alters the body of its host at the most fundamental level, transforming the creature into a suitable servitor for those who sent the Intruder. A Contaminated creature has bizarre shapes, with limbs shifted from the placements typical of the base creature. Some have horns, bony plates, or ridges on their heads, torsos, or limbs. They are hairless and have skin colored toward festering greens, black, and virulent purples. Many contaminated creatures have transparent or translucent bubble-like body parts.

The Contaminated creature has a Challenge Rating of 2 higher than the base creature. In addition, the creature becomes an aberration. Since a Contaminated creature is no longer part of Abaddon's reality—although it continues to have a physical presence—its alignment shifts to unaligned.

In addition, the following changes apply to the base creature:

- **Armor Class.** A contaminated creature gains an Armor Class no lower than 14 plus its proficiency bonus due to natural armor.
- **Movement.** The contaminated loses any mode of movement based on spells or magical or supernatural abilities. If this change leaves the creature without a mode of movement, it gains a ground speed of 10 feet.
- **Magic Resistance.** A contaminated creature has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

- **Resistances.** A contaminated creature gains resistance to acid damage.
- **Immunities.** A contaminated creature gains immunity to psychic damage.
- **Special Attacks.** A contaminated creature loses access to any spells they once possessed, and they lose any magical or supernatural abilities. They instead gain the following special attacks:

- **Acid Touch.** The creature's unarmed melee weapon attacks, in addition to the normal damage they cause, inflict 3 (1d6) acid damage. The target also suffers 2 (1d4) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. The creature can make a Constitution saving throw (DC = 8 + the creature's proficiency bonus + its Constitution modifier) at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect with a success.
- **Acid Breath.** The contaminated creature can breathe acid in a 30 ft. line as a ranged weapon attack, dealing 7 (2d6) acid damage on a hit. In addition, the target suffers 2 (1d4) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. The creature can make a Constitution saving throw (DC = 8 + the creature's proficiency bonus + its Constitution modifier) at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect with a success. The contaminated creature may use this attack a number of times equal to its Constitution modifier (minimum 1). This ability recharges after a long rest.
- **Shaper Virus.** Melee attacks of contaminated creatures infect their targets with the Shaper Virus.

Special Qualities. Contaminated creatures lose any access to spells as well as any other magical and supernatural abilities. They instead gain the following:

- **Acid Armor.** Any creature that hits the contaminated with a melee weapon attack suffers 4 (2d4) acid damage. A successful Dexterity saving throw (DC = 8 + the creature's proficiency bonus + its Constitution modifier) negates this damage.
- **Darkvision.** A contaminated creature has darkvision with a range of 120 feet.
- **Hive Mind.** Contaminated creatures are all part of a hive mind. So long as a contaminated creature has at least 1 hit point per Hit Die, it retains its Intelligence score. If its hit points fall below that threshold, it becomes mindless. As a mindless creature, it becomes immune to being charmed or frightened. Being part of the hive mind, what one contaminated creature knows, they all know.
- **Telepathy.** Contaminated creatures can communicate telepathically with other contaminated creatures. They can communicate at a distance of up to 100 feet, plus 10 feet per

point of Intelligence. When a higher Intelligence creature communicates with a lower Intelligence creature, the higher Intelligence creature can send information or instructions even if the lower Intelligence creature cannot respond over the same distance.

The Contaminated are living creatures that require food. They can, however, survive on any organic material, even the flesh and bones of corporeal undead. They do not need to cook food, and the food does not need to be fresh. Contaminated creatures of all sorts can crush bones in their teeth, pulverize bark, or chew grass into digestible mush.

Contaminated creatures never have more than standard treasure for the base creature. Any treasure they carry is bound for a resource center and is not their personal possession. Any gear used by a contaminated creature is temporarily assigned to that creature for a particular mission or activity.

CONTAMINATED VS. UNDEAD

The viral invader from the gulfs behind the stars acts as if corporeal undead are a nuisance at worst and raw material at best. Whether intelligent or mindless, the undead hold no interest for the Contaminated.

Incorporeal creatures, whether living or dead, seem beyond the understanding of the Contaminated. They ignore incorporeal creatures.

SAMPLE CONTAMINATED CREATURES

CONTAMINATED BARGHEST

Large aberration (fiend), unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 90 (12d10 + 24)

Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	15 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Intimidation +4, Perception +5, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances Cold, Fire, Lightning; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

Damage Immunities Acid, Poison, Psychic

Condition Immunities Poisoned

Senses Blindsight 60 ft., Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 15

Languages Abyssal, Common, Goblin, Infernal, Telepathy at a range of 230 feet with other contaminated creatures

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Acid Armor. A creature that hits the contaminated barghest with a melee attack takes 4 (2d4) acid damage. A successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw negates this damage.

Hive Mind. Contaminated creatures are all part of a hive mind. So long as a contaminated creature has at least 1 hit point per Hit Die, it retains its Intelligence score. If its hit points fall below that threshold, it becomes mindless. As a mindless creature, it becomes immune to being charmed or frightened. Being part of the hive mind, what one contaminated creature knows, they all know.

Keen Smell. The contaminated barghest has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Magic Resistance. A contaminated barghest has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) acid damage. The target also takes 4 (1d8) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. The target can make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the effect. In addition, the target creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or contract the Shaper Virus.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 83 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) acid damage. The target also takes 4 (1d8) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. The target can make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the effect. In addition, the target creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or contract the Shaper Virus.

Acid Breath. The contaminated barghest can breathe acid in a 30 ft. line as a ranged weapon attack, dealing 7 (2d6) acid damage on a hit. In addition, the target suffers 2 (1d4) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. The creature can make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect with a success. The contaminated barghest may use this attack two times per day, recharging it following a long rest.

CONTAMINATED BANDIT CAPTAIN

Large aberration (beast), unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws STR +4, DEX +5, WIS +2

Skills Athletics +4, Deception +4

Damage Resistances Acid

Damage Immunities Psychic

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages Any two languages, Telepathy at a range of 240 feet with other contaminated creatures

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Acid Armor. A creature that hits the bandit captain with a melee attack takes 4 (2d4) acid damage. A successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw negates this damage.

Hive Mind. Contaminated creatures are all part of a hive mind. So long as a contaminated creature has at least 1 hit point per Hit Die, it retains its Intelligence score. If its hit points fall below that threshold, it becomes mindless. As a mindless creature, it becomes immune to being charmed or frightened. Being part of the hive mind, what one contaminated creature knows, they all know.

Magic Resistance. A contaminated bandit captain has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiaction. The contaminated captain makes three melee attacks: two with its scimitar and one with its dagger, or two with its acid touch and one with its dagger. Or the captain makes two ranged attacks with its daggers.

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

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Acid Touch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) acid damage. The target also suffers 2 (1d4) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. The target can make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect with a success. In addition, the target creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or contract the Shaper Virus.

Acid Breath. The contaminated bandit captain can breathe acid in a 30 ft. line as a ranged weapon attack, dealing 7 (2d6) acid damage on a hit. In addition, the target suffers 2 (1d4) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. The creature can make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect with a success. The contaminated captain may use this attack two times per day, recharging it following a long rest.

REACTIONS

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

TACTICS

Contaminated human bandits typically attack in ambush, breathing acid and then rushing in to use their acid punches. Generally speaking, they act as scouts for more powerful Contaminated or attack to get a specific object. For that reason, contaminated human bandits will often leave survivors behind, making off with whatever they wanted.

Gear longbow with 20 arrows, scimitar, dagger, contaminated warhorse

CONTAMINATED WARHORSE

Large aberration (beast), unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)



Hit Points 19 (3d10 + 3)

Speed 60 ft.

STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA
18 (+4) 12 (+1) 13 (+1) 2 (-4) 12 (+1) 7 (-2)

Damage Resistances Acid

Damage Immunities Psychic

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 11

Languages Telepathy at a range of 120 feet with other contaminated creatures

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Acid Armor. A creature that hits the dragon with a melee attack takes 4 (2d4) acid damage. A successful DC 11 Dexterity saving throw negates this damage.

Hive Mind. Contaminated creatures are all part of a hive mind. So long as a contaminated creature has at least 1 hit point per Hit Die, it retains its Intelligence score. If its hit points fall below that threshold, it becomes mindless. As a mindless creature, it becomes immune to being charmed or frightened. Being part of the hive mind, what one contaminated creature knows, they all know.

Magic Resistance. A contaminated dragon has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Trampling Charge. If the contaminated warhorse moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a hooves attack 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 contaminated warhorse can make another attack with its hooves against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) acid damage. The target also suffers 2 (1d4) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. The creature can make a Constitution saving throw (DC 11) at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect with a success. In addition, the target creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or contract the Shaper Virus.

Acid Breath. The contaminated warhorse can breathe acid in a 30 ft. line as a ranged weapon attack, dealing 7 (2d6) acid damage on a hit. In addition, the target suffers 2 (1d4) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. The creature can make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect with a success. The contaminated warhorse may use this attack once per day, recharging it following a long rest.

CONTAMINATED YOUNG RED DRAGON

Large aberration (dragon), unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 178 (17d10 + 85)

Speed 40 ft. climb 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA
23 (+6) 10 (0) 21 (+5) 14 (+2) 11 (+0) 19 (+4)

Saving Throws DEX +4, CON +9, WIS +4, CHA +8

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +4

Damage Resistances Acid

Damage Immunities Fire, Psychic

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Draconic, telepathy at a range of 240 feet with other contaminated creatures

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Acid Armor. A creature that hits the contaminated dragon with a melee attack takes 4 (2d4) acid damage. A successful DC 17 Dexterity saving throw negates this damage.

Hive Mind. Contaminated creatures are all part of a hive mind. So long as a contaminated creature has at least 1 hit point per Hit Die, it retains its Intelligence score. If its hit points fall below that threshold, it becomes mindless. As a mindless creature, it becomes immune to being charmed or frightened. Being part of the hive mind, what one contaminated creature knows, they all know.

Magic Resistance. A contaminated dragon has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The contaminated dragon makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) acid damage. The target also suffers 2 (1d4) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. The creature can make a Constitution saving throw (DC 17) at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect with a success. Finally, the target creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or contract the Shaper Virus.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) acid damage. The target also suffers 2 (1d4) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. The creature can make a Constitution saving throw (DC 17) at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect with a success. In addition, the target creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or contract the Shaper Virus.

Acid Breath. The contaminated dragon can breathe acid in a 30 ft. line as a ranged weapon attack, dealing 7 (2d6) acid damage on a hit. In addition, the target suffers 2 (1d4) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. The creature can make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect with a success. The contaminated dragon may use this attack five times per day, recharging it following a long rest.

Fire Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales fire in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 56 (16d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

NEW MONSTERS

HARVESTER OOZE

Medium aberration (ooze), unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 30 (4d8 + 12)

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (0)	17 (+3)	1 (-5)	8 (-1)	2 (-4)

Skills Stealth +2

Damage Resistances Acid

Damage Immunities Poison, Psychic

Condition Immunities Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned, Prone

Senses Blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), Passive Perception 9

Languages A harvest ooze has no language but can understand the telepathic communications of the Contaminated, to a range of 110 feet.

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Acid Armor. A creature that hits the ooze with a melee attack takes 4 (1d8) acid damage. A successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw negates this damage.

Amorphous. The ooze can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

False Appearance. While the ooze remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a pool of glittering black crystals.

Hive Mind. Contaminated creatures are all part of a hive mind. So long as a contaminated creature has at least 1 hit point per Hit Die, it retains its Intelligence score. If its hit points fall below that threshold, it becomes mindless. As a mindless creature, it becomes immune to being charmed or frightened. Being part of the hive mind, what one contaminated creature knows, they all know.

Magic Resistance. The ooze has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) acid damage. The target also takes 4 (1d8) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. The target can make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the effect. In addition, the target creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or contract the Shaper Virus.

TACTICS

Despite their mindless nature, a harvester ooze can be controlled and directed by a contaminated creature's telepathy. When undirected, a harvester ooze will dissolve the nearest living things into their basic chemicals.

INTRUDER'S GET

Huge aberration, unaligned

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 168 (16d12 + 64)

Speed 20 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	4 (-3)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)

Saving Throws CON +9, WIS +7

Skills Athletics +10, Stealth +2

Damage Resistances Acid, Poison, Psychic

Damage Immunities Bludgeoning from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities Charmed, Frightened, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 90 ft., Passive Perception 17

Languages An intruder's get has no language but can understand the telepathic communications of the Contaminated, to a range of 140 feet.

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Acid Armor. A creature that hits the intruder's get with a melee attack takes 4 (1d8) acid damage. A successful DC 17 Dexterity saving throw negates this damage.

Death Burst. When an intruder's Get reaches zero hit points, its skin abruptly bursts, showering everything with acid in a 30-foot radius. A creature in this area of effect must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much with a successful save.

Hive Mind. Contaminated creatures are all part of a hive mind. So long as a contaminated creature has at least 1 hit point per Hit Die, it retains its Intelligence score. If its hit points fall below that threshold, it becomes mindless. As a mindless creature, it becomes immune to being charmed or frightened. Being part of the hive mind, what one contaminated creature knows, they all know.

Magic Resistance. The intruder's get has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The intruder's makes two attacks with its pseudopods.

Acid Spittle. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (7d6) acid damage. The target also takes 4 (1d8) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. The target can make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the effect.

Engulf. The intruder's get engulfs a Medium or smaller creature grappled by it. The engulfed creature takes 16 (2d8 + 7) acid damage, is blinded, restrained, and it must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or become paralyzed. As long as a creature remains engulfed, it must make a new Constitution saving throw at the beginning of each of its turns or be paralyzed. If the intruder's get moves, the engulfed target moves with it. The Intruder's get can have only one creature engulfed at a time.

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) acid damage. The target also takes 4 (1d8) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. The target can make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the effect. In addition, the target creature must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or contract the Shaper Virus.

TACTICS

An intruder's get goes where more intelligent Contaminated command it to go. It crushes everything in its path, leaving the remains for smaller Contaminated to harvest. It attempts to engulf anything that attacks it, saving its acid spittle for targets it cannot reach.