

BLOOD BEAST

FORGOTTEN LORE ABOUT
A GRUESOME MYTH



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by Denis Faupel



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BLOOD BEAST

This slender beast of vaguely humanoid form has two abnormally long arms and spider like fingers on each hand. Its face has no visible eyes but is dominated by a big bulky thing supposed to be a nose.

5th level wrecker [ABERRATION]

Initiative +8

Vulnerability: fire

Many fingered claws +10 vs AC (2 attacks)

– 10 damage

Both attacks hit one target: The blood beast can make a *bite* attack as a free action.

Bite +10 vs AC – 8 damage

Natural 1-5: The blood beast bites in the target's weapon and takes 10 damage.

Natural 14+: The target is stuck (save ends, the blood beast making another *bite* attack also ends the condition). Track the natural roll. For each failed save the target makes against the stuck condition, the blood beast heals damage equal to this roll.

[Special trigger] Blood strike +10 vs. AC (one staggered enemy) – 25 damage

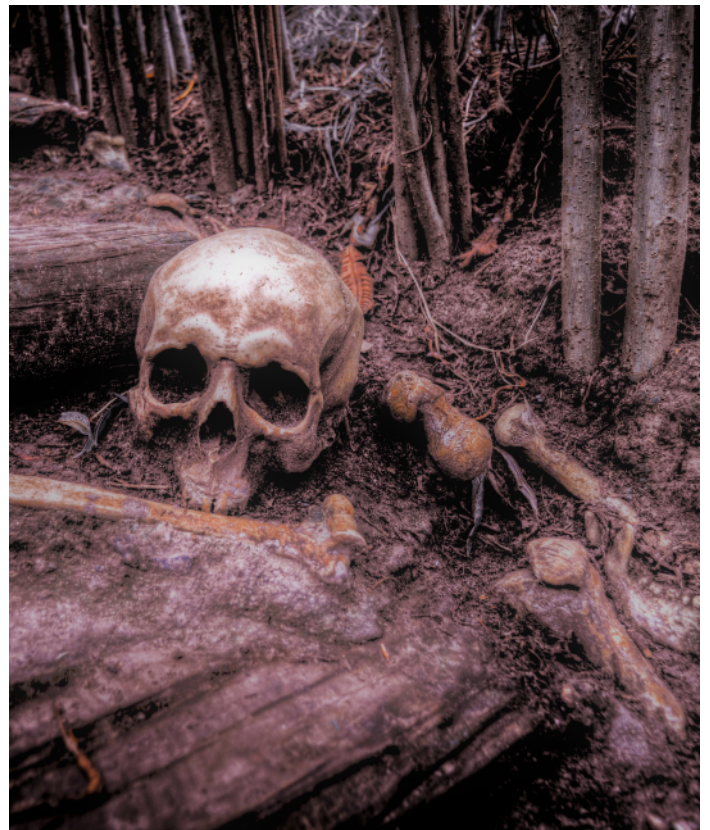
Miss: 10 damage.

Limited use: As soon as a nearby enemy becomes staggered, the blood beast's next action *must* be this attack against it. The blood beast moves, if necessary, and doesn't bother with disengage checks.

Blood frenzy: When the blood beast scores a critical hit, it adds the escalation die to its attacks until the end of its next turn or until it takes a critical hit itself.

Nastier Special

Hard to kill: Ignore every enemy's damage die with a roll lower than the escalation die (except fire damage).



UNNATURAL ABOMINATIONS

Blood beasts are no species, they are embodiments of death and devastation. That's not only what keeps them alive, it's what creates them. The appearance of a blood beast may be the outcome of a vicious ritual but it may also be an unlucky accident. When cruelty and bloodlust pile up, the fabric of the real world may be weakened. At that point a blood beast is born. Not many have witnessed such a birth and survived, so we have no reliable information but the sages tend to have only two possible explanations of the phenomenon.

First, the fabric of reality is damaged, because the bloodshed and morbidity is just too much for the sane world and a tear opens where a blood beast emerges from an unknown eternal plane of unimaginable horror. The beast appears in humanoid form because that's what we expect of it. It mocks us, manifesting as the picture of our deepest fears.

Second, the birth is initiated by the powerful concentration of blood and suffering, which summons dark spirits from wherever they might have lurked until then. In this case, the body of the beast doesn't come from another world but forms from the remains of those

AC 20

PD 18

MD 14

HP 75

victims whose terrible agony allured it in the first place. Thus, any blood beast is different. Although the shape tends to be very similar with slender limbs, hands with long finger-shaped claws and of course a distinctive nose.

BLOOD SPIRITS

A minor phenomenon often witnessed when a blood beast roams or is about to be born are the so-called blood spirits. They're hardly visible shades of ferruginous mist, lying thick above the fresh corpses and preying on the living minds. They seem to consume weirdness and fear, so the more you succumb to chaos and madness around you, the more they're likely to attack you.

BLOOD SPIRIT

3rd level spoiler [SPIRIT]

Initiative: +8

Vulnerability: holy

Vision of gore +8 vs. MD – 8 psychic damage

Natural 16+: The target is hampered (save ends)

Natural 18+: The blood spirit makes a *possess mind* attack against the same target as a free action.

C: Possess mind +8 vs. MD (one nearby hampered enemy) – 5 ongoing psychic damage

Natural even hit: As long as the target takes the ongoing psychic damage, it must roll a save at the start of its turn. Failure means, the target makes a basic attack against itself.

Flight: The blood spirit hovers like mist.

Unstable form: The blood spirit is hard to recognize. It's just there or not. Thus, it doesn't make opportunity attacks and enemies don't have to disengage from it either. In the worst case, however, it just sticks with them.

BUILDING BATTLES

The blood beast is a solitary monster, because blood beasts fight each other fiercely. That's because of the fact that no other being provides more powerful blood than a blood beast - and feeding of blood and grow more powerful is the whole purpose of those creatures.

Nonetheless, blood beasts are often not alone. They're no natural creatures, so in most cases there are folks around who are either victims or initiators of the catastrophe that the appearance of one of those beasts is.

Blood beasts are mostly uncontrollable, but there are certain rituals who can accomplish the task. Among many tribes of orcs, the secret knowledge is kept by the tribe's shamans and witchers. And certainly, humans are not above trying to evoke such a beast to send it on a killing spree. Often, those evokers are the first victims of the beast. But the monster also has proven to have a fine sense of loyalty, sparing the most fanatical cultists and feed on other victims first. The more you embrace madness and death, the more likely it is, the beast will kill you not outright. If you are beyond sanity and think it would be the greatest honor to feed the beast with your own flesh and blood, well, than it's almost sure it will let you wait quite a time. You might prove yourself useful until then.

BLOOD BEASTS AND THE ICONS

The Magician certainly has some experience with the beasts, trying some of the rituals for research purposes. The experiment has proven too dangerous to pursue but there are notes about them somewhere in the libraries for sure.

The Bone Lord considers the blood beasts as his abassadors. They're beasts of the threshold between life and death, their only purpose to keep the door wide open for the living - one direction only. The blood spirits are among the favorite undead of the Bone Lord.

The Temple Queen has no second thoughts about the blood beasts: they're messengers

AC 20

PD 18 HP 44

MD 12

of the antagonist, hostile creatures deserving to be fought wherever they appear. There's no talk to be talked with the beasts, so the troops of the Temple Queen normally try to intervene as soon as possible, crushing Blood Cults all around the land where they can find them.

The Archfiend tried to use the blood beasts for her purpose but ended up believing they're of no real help for her cause.

The Black Knight is said to have some very effective methods to keep the blood beasts and spirits at bay. Sounds reasonable, because when his business is done, blood usually amasses.

The Chieftain believes the blood beasts are holy creatures of the wild gods of the mountain tribes and the blood spirits are ghosts of the ancestors rewarding warriors for glorious gory deeds on the battlefield.

The Mountain King believes almost the same as the Chieftain, that's why the blood beasts are among his most hated foes.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Battlefield Madness—Between the once peaceful mountain villages of the northern realms, civilization now lies besieged by the wild hordes of the mountain tribes (orcs, beastmen or simply barbarians, whatever fits your campaign). The battle lasts for weeks now and the corpses abound. The more unstable of the present people soon sense that something is about to happen. Blood spirits pop up here and there, as the body collectors tell, but nobody buys it until a blood beast rises from the pile of bodies yet to be burned.

The Blood of Nobles—Tulsa Nakssius serves as the mentor and consultant of Verbek Khatonn, the ruler of the city, for decades. The thin and weakly Tulsa had tried various times to seize power since then. He failed, but managed the secret to be kept. Now, he has one last desperate plan: a blood beast. He bought the ritual scroll from a local gang of former mercenaries and studied it almost every night.

The PCs on the other hand gather clues about a mysterious Blood Cult, seeking out

their temple under a local warehouse eventually. They find the cultists murdered by the mercenaries but may have to fight various survivors and probably some blood spirits.

Information in the temple leads to the mercenary gang, where more information points on to the palace of the ruler. Will the PCs arrive soon enough to avert the disaster?

The Effaced Orc Tribe—While roaming the wilderness beyond civilization the PCs come upon several abandoned orc camps obviously left in a hurry. Searching the area finally leads to a camp where serious bloodshed has taken place. It seems like a large and cruel ritual has gone terribly wrong. Blood spirits are floating around the corpses and the only living being in the camp is the old orc shaman who is, no doubt, completely insane and attacks on sight. While the PCs find out what happened they are about to witness the birth of a blood beast.

The Ritual—The Temple of X'thuarak lies just outside the city where the mountains meet the woods. The blood of heroes is strong and if sacrificed, one might grow a powerful blood beast with it.

That's what Zehurak, the exiled priest, is about to do. The PCs are certainly worth a sacrifice so he lures them to the temple with a plan: a broken artifact which certain city sages know as very powerful. The sages (not knowing of the trap) identify the runes and writings on the pieces as those of old Luumar, a long forgotten sorcerer bloodline. Clues lead to the temple eventually, where the PCs walk into a trapped room and are attacked by numerous cultists. After a few rounds of fighting, just when the PCs might wonder, why there is no real threat but men who willfully fall into their blades, Zehurak appears on a balcony with his clergy and starts the ritual. If he can't be killed fast, a blood beast will surely be born among those blood red and fresh corpses and it will feed upon the flesh of heroes and grow even more powerful soon...

BLOOD CULT DEVOTEE

3rd level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +5

Jagged knife + 8 vs. AC – 5 damage

Natural 18+: 2 ongoing damage.

Sacrificial death: A blood cult devotee can choose to kill itself for the higher cause, normally to create or feed a blood beast. The blood cult devotee dies immediately and the blood beast gains 1d12 temporary hit points.

Mass suicide: If all the remaining blood cult devotees commit mass suicide all at once on their turn, the blood beast heals 1d10 hit points per cultist and it uses the escalation die until the end of its next turn.

AC 19
PD 18 HP 10
MD 10

Mook: Kill one blood cult devotee for every 10 damage you deal to the mob.

Devotees of the Blood Cult may be of various kinds, so consider this an example. Just reskin the stat blocks you need and add the *Sacrificial death* and *Mass suicide* abilities. Mooks seem to be most appropriate and a die around their hit point value (to determine the temporary hit points or the hit points healed) is a good starting point.

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