ARCANA OF THE ANCIENTS

CREATURES AND CYPHERS
BY MONTE COOK AND BRUCE R. CORDELL

5e
COMPATIBLE

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BLOOD BARM

Its long neck craning this way and that, the four-footed blood barm doesn't have an easily distinguishable head or eyes. Instead, a barm has a large opening at the end of its neck that is covered with a clear membrane similar to an eyelid. The creature's body, somewhat turkey-shaped, is covered with myriad vesicles rather than feathers, ranging in color from dark green to grey to crimson. These bubbles are filled with liquid and hard seeds. Some seeds have "sprouted," and these sacs swell with tiny unborn barms. When the young are close to hatching, the sacs can grow half as large as the barm itself.

Defensive Flocking. Blood barms often move about in flocks of two to four. They are not aggressive unless their young are threatened. However, if a flock of barms and their young are located in or near a site the PCs need to access, they might attack.

BLOOD BARM
Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 37 (6d6 + 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	13 (+2)	7 (−2)	12 (+1)	8 (−1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
**Languages** —
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the blood barm can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature it hits with an attack if that creature is within 5 feet of another blood barm that isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Spew Explosive Blood Bubble. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 15/30 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or a seed from one of the blood bubbles is implanted in a target's skin for 1 minute, during which time the target suffers 1 point of damage per round. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Blood Sac Birth (Recharge 6). Barms can break their own body sacs by pressing them against a PC or an object. The larger sacs burst first due to their extended size, and any young barms (1-4) within are born. Treat each youngling as a tiny blood barm with 31 hit points that lack this ability.
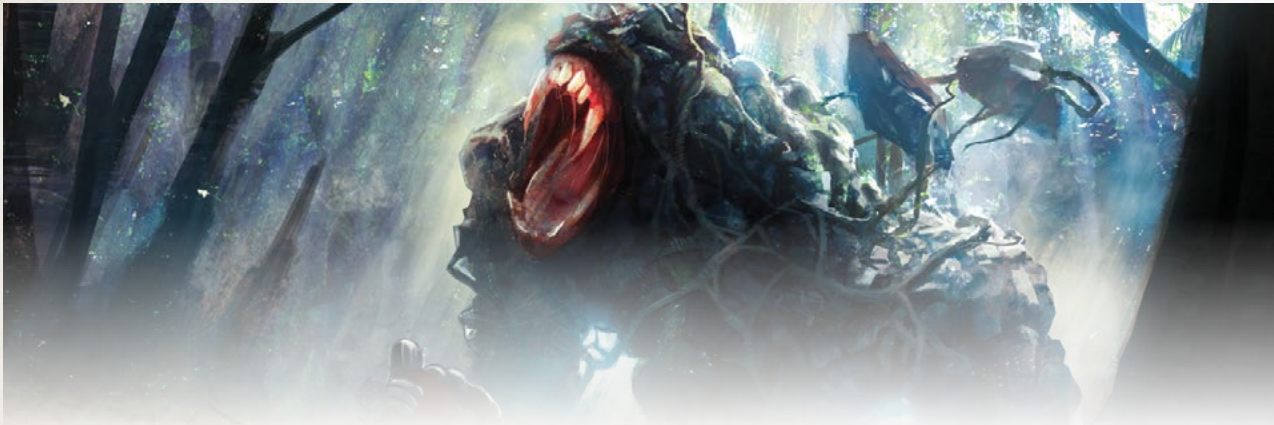
CALLERAIL

A callerail is a creature of fused organic and inorganic substances. Flesh mingles with wood, steel, and stone, as the callerail possesses the ability to absorb inorganic matter and add the material to its body. The creature is a lumbering giant—15 feet (5 m) tall—that walks using its forelimbs as well as its shorter rear legs. Its body is a conglomeration of materials.

A callerail's organic portions remain cohesive so that its circulatory system reaches all areas of its body. It still requires food—in fact, it requires even more food than an ordinary creature of its size.

Unreasoning Monstrosity. Reasoning with a hungry callerail is impossible, and they're always hungry. However, a smart character can fool them by setting a trap, creating a diversion, or using a similar type of tactic. They are not particularly bright and act on animal instinct in most situations.

Focused on Dominance. Callerails move into an area and threaten the entire region. Two callerails in the same locale pose a danger to every living thing. The monsters fight to the death, each attempting to absorb the inorganic portions of the other and destroying everything that gets in their way. Afterward, the victor reproduces asexually.

CALLERAIL
Huge monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 180 (19d12 + 57)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +9, Wis +7, Cha +9
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft.,
     passive Perception 12
Languages —
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Absorbing Form. A creature that touches the callerail takes 4 (1d8) acid damage, as matter is transferred from the object to the callerail; the callerail regains 4 (1d8) hit points.

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

Monstrosity's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the callerail's darkvision.

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

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The callerail makes three attacks: one with its bite, and two with bludgeoning limbs to make slam attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) acid damage. In addition, the callerail regains 10 (3d6) hit points.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d4 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) acid damage. In addition, the callerail regains 10 (3d6) hit points.

Object Absorption (Recharge 5-6). The callerail sets itself to receive a foe's attack, and the attack automatically hits. The attacking foe must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or their weapon is absorbed into the callerail. Whether the saving throw is successful (and the weapon is retained) or not, the attack fails to inflict damage on the callerail. If a nonmagical weapon is absorbed, the callerail regains 10 (3d6) hit points, and the weapon is destroyed. If a magical weapon is absorbed, it becomes part of the callerail; to retrieve it, the callerail must be destroyed.

The callerail could choose to regain hit points simply by absorbing portions of what's around it, and absorb a 5-foot-cube of nonmagical wood, stone, or metal (or helpless flesh, whether alive or dead). When it does, it regains 10 (3d6) hit points.

DISASSEMBLER

A disassembler is a strange-looking artificial creature of glass and steel with six spindly metallic arms arranged around its circular midsection. Its upper half is all glaring green lights and mechanical protrusions, some of which might be sensory mechanisms. Its lower half is a broad engine that allows it to hover 3 feet (1 m) off the ground. If it landed, the disassembler would be about 8 feet (2.5 m) tall.

Mad Wanderers. Disassemblers are artificially intelligent automatons that seem to have gone mad at some point. Now they act erratically—sometimes attacking creatures, sometimes ignoring them, sometimes destroying what they come across, sometimes wandering aimlessly.

A conversation with a disassembler is possible. They understand speech and, after listening to a language for a time, can often speak it in a very basic way. But the creature is just as likely to attack without provocation, perhaps in the middle of a conversation. Still, a well-spoken, intelligent, and quick-witted character might be able to figure out what a disassembler wants (at the moment) and convince it not to attack or perhaps to do something to aid them.

Potential Predators of the Living. The construct's disassembling tools cannot affect organic matter, but this limitation might have been programmed into it—perhaps as a safety mechanism—rather than the limitation being a true inability. A disassembler with this prohibition removed would be a true terror.

DISASSEMBLER
Large construct, neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 104 (11d10 + 44)
Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages understands the languages after hearing them for a time
Challenges 5 (1,800 XP)

Inorganic Destruction. The dissembler sometimes turns artificial objects and portions of structures it can see within 5 feet (1.5 m) of it into liquid and gas (destroying them). If the object isn't being worn or carried, the touch destroys a 1-foot (.3 m) cube of it. If the object is being worn or carried by a creature, the creature is subject to one or more Disassembly Claws; on a hit, instead of dealing damage, the object is affected as follows.

If the object touched is unliving armor or a shield being worn or carried, it takes a permanent and cumulative –1 penalty to the AC it offers (magical armor and shields shed this penalty within a day, unless destroyed). Armor reduced to an AC of 10 or a shield that drops to a +0 bonus is destroyed. If the object touched is a held nonliving weapon, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative –1 penalty to damage rolls (magical armor and shields shed this penalty within a day, unless destroyed). If its penalty drops to –5, the weapon is destroyed.

ACTIONS
Multiattack. The disassembler makes three attacks with its disassembly claws. If a target is wearing nonmagical nonliving armor or wielding a nonmagical nonliving weapon (such as armor and weapons made of iron), it makes one, two, or three attacks that affect targets as described in the Inorganic Destruction trait.

Disassembly Claws. *Melee Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 21 (5d6 + 4) piercing damage if attacking a creature composed of inorganic or nonliving matter (such as most constructs and undead).

RAVAGE BEAR

A ravage bear is a hideous mammalian predator that hunts entirely by sense of smell. It is blind and nearly deaf, but it still tracks and senses prey easily. It is very protective of its young, and when hungry for fresh meat, it is extremely dangerous. Otherwise, it gives most creatures a wide berth.

Bane of Forest and Mountains. Ravage bears dwell alone or in pairs (usually with a few cubs) in wooded, rocky, or mountainous areas, typically in cold or temperate climes.

RAVAGE BEAR
Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 50 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3
Immunities illusions
Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Olfaction. The ravage bear can't use its blindsight for one round if confused by a sufficiently intense odor.

Wounded Fury. While it has 10 hit points or fewer, the ravage bear has advantage on attack rolls. In addition, it deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage to any target it hits with a melee attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ravage bear makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the ravage bear can claw only the grappled creature and has advantage on attack rolls to do so.

CYPHERS

Cyphers can be considered as a category of magic item, similar in some ways to armor, potions, rings, and so on. A cypher is a leftover device of vanished civilizations so advanced that even their cast-off technology provides amazing effects. The use a PC finds for the cypher is probably not the use originally intended.

Cyphers are consumable items. Using a cypher usually requires an action, but could take longer, as specified in its description. Once used, a cypher takes effect immediately, leaving behind a defunct device with no further obvious function.

If too many cyphers are carried by the same PC—usually more than three—a strange and dangerous resonance begins to build between the devices and the PC's mind and body. Most don't wait to find out what happens if that resonance is allowed to build, because it's always bad. At minimum, the cyphers that exceed this limit are destroyed. More serious consequences involve permanent reduction in the PCs' physical stats when all their cyphers melt together into a burning slag heap, a horrendous war machine of the prior worlds being called to the location, or the character being sucked through a brief, tiny singularity and destroyed beyond recovery.

BANISHING NODULE

Cypher, uncommon

This crystal nodule must be affixed to a melee weapon to function; applying the nodule takes an action. The affected weapon then gains the following additional ability for one day. Each time the nodule-bearing weapon strikes a solid creature or object, it generates a burst of energy that teleports the creature or object struck 10 feet in a random direction (not up or down). The teleported creature has disadvantage on all actions, as well as on saving throws, on its next turn.

DETONATION, FLESH-ROTTING

Cypher, uncommon

This fist-sized device bearing dimly winking lights can be thrown up to 60 feet away. When it reaches the end of its trajectory, the device detonates with a low roar into an explosion of cell-disrupting purple-black energy. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a Dexterity saving throw (save DC 15). A target takes 8d6 necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The necrotic influence spreads around corners. It kills plants and other natural growth in the area.

DETONATION, GRAVITY

Cypher, uncommon
This fist-sized device bearing dimly winking lights can be thrown up to 60 feet away. When it reaches the end of its trajectory, the device detonates with a low roar into an explosion of inverted gravity. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a Dexterity saving throw (save DC 15) as they're smashed flat to the ground. A target takes 8d6 bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The inverted gravity spreads around corners. All creatures in the area, whether they succeed on their saving throw or not, are crushed to the ground for one round and cannot take physical actions.

TIME DILATION NODULE

Cypher, uncommon
This crystal nodule must be affixed to armor to function; applying the nodule takes an action. The affected armor then gains the following additional ability for one day. The wearer of the armor moves in seemingly random, rapid jumps, a few inches to one side or the other, when attacked. (From the wearer's perspective, they're just moving normally.) All attacks made on the wearer during this period gain disadvantage.

AMBER CASEMENT

Wondrous Item, rare
This object is composed of a series of short, rounded tubes and hoses that's about 1 foot long. When activated as an action, it solidifies the air in a 10-foot (3 m) cube of space, the center of which must be within 60 feet of the device. The air is turned into an amberlike substance, and each creature in that area must make a Dexterity saving throw (DC 20) or be trapped in the amber. Trapped creatures can make one DC 30 Strength (Athletics) check. On a success, the creature breaks free and destroys the solidified amber around it and any other creatures also trapped. Otherwise, those trapped in it will likely suffocate or starve.

Each time the device is used, roll a d6. On a roll of 1–4, the device is depleted and no longer functions.

BRAIN BUD

Wondrous Item, rare
This organic pod, almost like a small hemispherical bit of fruit, must be affixed to a living creature in order to function; applying the bud takes an action. Once applied, it permanently grafts to the host, taking on the hue and texture of the host's flesh. Thereafter, once per day the affected creature can gain advantage on a skill use modified by Intelligence (such as History, Investigation, and so on).

ARCANA OF THE ANCIENTS

In the misty recesses of time, before the kingdoms and lands you know existed—before the elder elves, the dwarven ancestral lords, and even the dragons—civilizations undreamt rose and fell. And with their passing, they left behind remnants of the powers they wielded. They built citadels of metal, glass, and light—now hidden away in the deepest recesses of the world—and crafted wonders and harnessed energies we can only guess at. These places, objects, and even creatures all can be called Arcana of the Ancients.

Arcana of the Ancients is a sourcebook for 5th edition players and GMs to bring the wonders of mysterious technology and weird science-fantasy elements to their traditional fantasy campaigns. Designed by Monte Cook, Bruce R. Cordell, and Sean K. Reynolds, all of whom have years of professional design experience working on the world's most popular roleplaying game, this gorgeously illustrated hardcover sourcebook gives you everything you need to add a whole new element to your 5E game.

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