

# BOOK OF BEASTS

## UNDERDARK VAULT

**Introduction:** This edition of the *Book of Beasts* centers on a number of creatures that come from the Underdark or could easily be encountered there. Each of these monsters was chosen because they can easily be dropped into adventures in the Underdark, be used as interesting one-off encounters, or employed by NPCs (or other monsters) as guardians. They should be particularly useful to DMs running *Out of the Abyss*. The monsters included here include: Cave Fisher (CR 1), Choker (CR 1/2), Destrachan (CR 6), Iron Cobra (CR 4), Iron Defender (CR 2), Kruthik Young (CR 1/4), Kruthik Adult (CR 1), Kruthik Hive Lord (CR 2), and the Skeletal Tomb Guardian (CR 8).

*A collection of creatures from the Underdark to challenge  
heroes of any level.*

BY JON LEITHEUSSER



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# UNDERDARK DANGERS

Having explored the Underdark for years, encountering drow elves, conversing with deep gnomes, and escaping the attentions of mind flayers, I know better than most that the threats facing travelers in the Underdark are more common and more dangerous than anyone—including myself—would like to admit.

—Dorin Lightfeather, journal entry

## Cave Fisher

Strange, insect-like subterranean creatures, cave fishers hunt by ambushing their prey from above. They prefer to hide out on rocky ledges and outcroppings, waiting in secret for prey to pass below them. When a lone, weak, or injured creature passes, the cave fisher projects a sticky filament to catch the victim. Once it tags a creature, the cave fisher quickly pulls it closer, taking the fight out of it by firing chitinous spikes at it or snapping at it with pincers.

Cave fishers are odd-looking creatures, like some kind of six-foot-long insect or crab, with thick, protective plates covering its body, multiple legs, a couple of

large and dangerous pincers, bulbous eyes, and a long proboscis from which it looses its sticky filament.

**Unknowning Guards.** Some dwellers of the Underdark have figured out how to attract lone or paired cave fishers into areas they'd like protected. Once the cave fisher is in place, it's easy enough for those who know about them to bypass them by throwing out meat. Then walk by unmolested as the cave fisher is eating.

### Cave Fisher

Medium monstrosity, neutral

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 38 (7d8 + 7)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +5

**Senses** darkvision 90 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Ambusher.** The cave fisher has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised.

**Rock Camouflage.** The cave fisher has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in rocky terrain.

**Sniper.** When the cave fisher is hidden from a creature and misses it with its spike launcher or filament grab attacks, making the attack doesn't reveal the cave fisher's position.

**Spider Climb.** The cave fisher can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The cave fisher makes one attack with its filament grab, uses reel, and makes one attack with its spike launcher or pincer.

**Filament Grab.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. Hit: The target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained and has disadvantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws, and the cave fisher can't use its filament grab on another target.

**Pincer.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

**Reel.** The cave fisher pulls a Large or smaller creature grappled by its filament grab up to 15 feet straight toward it.

**Spike Launcher.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60, one target. Hit: 8 (2d4 + 3) piercing damage.



# Choker

Chokers are small, cruel, and hate-filled monsters created long ago in the laboratory of some mad wizard or otherworldly being. They live underground or in heavily-shadowed areas that allow them to easily conceal themselves—both to keep them safe from predators and so they can attack from surprise. They are most often found in caves, tunnels, or the Underdark, but they've learned to live in large cities, specifically in sewers, crawl spaces, or other nooks and crannies they can squeeze into. Constantly on the lookout for food, chokers are nasty, evil creatures who prefer to work together to take down larger creatures before consuming them.

Chokers have long, boneless arms and legs, more like tentacles than anything else, and walk with a strange, long, loping gait. While no taller than halflings, they look nothing like that race otherwise, instead they are gray-skinned creatures with oversized hands lined with sharp spines, a hairless head with no

nose, dark pits for eyes, jagged teeth, and stunted feet with only a few long-nailed toes.

**Nighttime Stalkers.** During the daylight hours, chokers prefer to hide away, emerging from hiding only at night to hunt and inflict pain on others. Their preferred method of attack for a choker is to strike from surprise and wrap its pliable arms around its target's neck, then slowly choke the victim to death. If attacking with others of its kind, one choker strangles the target while the others slash at it with their spiny tentacle-like arms.

**Bauble Fascination.** While not very bright, chokers are intelligent enough to understand that some things are valuable or important. Sometimes, this leads them to fixate on stealing a certain item from a person, like a brooch or shiny dagger, while other times a choker might become desirous of a fancy hat or cloak. As such, it's entirely possible to find chokers bedecked in odd bits or clothing or secreting away odds and ends of uncertain value.

## Choker

*Small monstrosity, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 18 (4d6 + 4)

**Speed** 25 ft., climb 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)

**Skills** Stealth +5

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Undercommon

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Chameleon Hide.** The choker has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide.

**Quickness.** The choker can take the Disengage, Hide, or Move action as a bonus actions on each of its turns.

## Actions

**Multiattack.** The choker makes two tentacle attacks.

**Strangle.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and a Medium or smaller target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and takes 5 (2d4) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of its turns, and the choker can't strangle or use a tentacle attack against another target.

**Tentacle.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.



# Destrachan

Weird, alien creatures that lack eyes and instead use their other senses and sonar to perceive their surroundings. However, the strangest thing about these creatures is their ability to produce powerful blasts of sound at frequencies it modulates to cause harm and knock creatures off their feet.

The destrachan's mastery over sound also allows it to mimic noises, voices, and any other sound it hears. Paired with the destrachan's innate intelligence, it can easily trick the unwary into dropping their guard while it moves into position to attack from surprise.

The destrachan is a large, dinosaur-like creature that stands on two legs, has two slightly shorter front arms that end in long claws, a thick tail, and a neck topped by an eyeless head with a muzzle-like mouth filled with sharp teeth. Its coloring is usually dark, with hints of red, gold, and orange.

**Terrifying Hunters.** The destrachan is a cunning hunter, able to trick wanderers in the Underdark into dead ends by calling for help or making noises fortune seekers might find interesting. Then, when its prey is in position, the destrachan reveals itself and unleashes terrible blasts of sound. If its prey fights back, the destrachan uses its Bellowing Blast to knock them down and gain some distance.



## Destrachan

*Large aberration, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 114 (12d10 + 48)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	21 (+5)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

**Skills** Stealth +8

**Damage Resistances** thunder

**Condition Immunities** blinded

**Senses** blindsight 90 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Undercommon

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Mimicry.** The destrachan can mimic any sounds it has heard, including voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check.

**Keen Hearing.** The destrachan has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

## Actions

**Multiattack.** The destrachan makes two claw attacks.

**Claw. Melee Weapon Attack:** +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (2d10 + 5) slashing damage.

**Sound Pulse.** The destrachan targets one creature it can detect with its blindsight within 50 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 38 (11d6) thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Bellowing Blast (Recharge 4-6).** The destrachan generates a loud burst of sound. Each creature 15 feet of it must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) thunder damage and is knocked prone on a failed save, or half as much damage and isn't knocked prone on a successful one.

# Iron Guardians

A category of constructs created to protect people, places, or things, iron guardians can be created in a number of different forms.

**Commanded to Stand Guard.** When they're created, they can be commanded to guard over something or someone, or more often, are bound to an amulet that allows its owner to control it. The amulet's are often hidden away, but can be passed from one owner to another freely or by force.

**Constructs.** As constructs, iron guardians don't need air, food, drink, or sleep.

## IRON COBRA

An iron cobra is a dangerous guardian. It often appears to be a large, metal statue positioned in the area or near the item it was created to protect. When it decides intruders pose a threat, it animates and attacks. Its bite delivers a dangerous poison and once its poison has taken hold, it uses its *Poison the Mind* action to incapacitate a victim before moving on to the next.

An iron cobra appears to be a large cobra (or other snake) made of interlocking plates of metal. When animated, its eyes glow.

## Iron Cobra

Medium construct, neutral

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 85 (10d8 + 40)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)	5 (-3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, poisoned, prone

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the iron cobra remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an inanimate statue.

**Guardian.** The iron cobra is magically controlled by an amulet. The possessor of the amulet can command the iron cobra to protect an 30 foot by 30 foot area, an object, or a person.

**Pursue.** The iron cobra can move without provoking opportunity attacks if it is in the area it has been commanded to protect or within 15 feet of the person or object it has been commanded to protect.

## Actions

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage and 10 (3d6) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution save or become poisoned for 1 minute.

**Poison the Mind (Recharge 4-6).** The iron cobra targets one creature it can within 50 feet of it that it has poisoned. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be stunned for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the iron cobra's *Poison the Mind* for the next 24 hours.



## IRON DEFENDER

An iron defender is usually tasked with defending a person, but can be used to guard objects and locations. The iron defender has been designed to defend its charge from attacks, but also to draw the ire of attackers so they concentrate on the iron defender, allowing its ward to escape.

The iron defender is built to look like a large dog, cat, or other animal, usually adorned with spikes, sharp claws, and vice-like jaws.

### Iron Defender

*Medium construct, neutral*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 45 (7d8 + 14)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	5 (-3)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the iron defender remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an inanimate statue.

**Guardian.** The iron defender is magically controlled by an amulet. The possessor of the amulet can command the iron defender to protect an area 30 feet by 30 feet, an object, or a person.

**Pursue.** The iron defender can move without provoking opportunity attacks if it is in the area it has been commanded to protect or within 15 feet of the person or object it has been commanded to protect.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The iron defender makes two claw attacks and a bite attack.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

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



# Kruthik

## Kruthik Young

*Small monstrosity, neutral*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 13 (3d6 + 3)

**Speed** 40 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 30 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** –

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Spiky Aura.** At the start of each of the kruthik young's turns, each creature within 5 feet of it takes 1 piercing damage.

**Spider Climb.** The kruthik young can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

### Actions

**Claw. Melee Weapon Attack:** +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

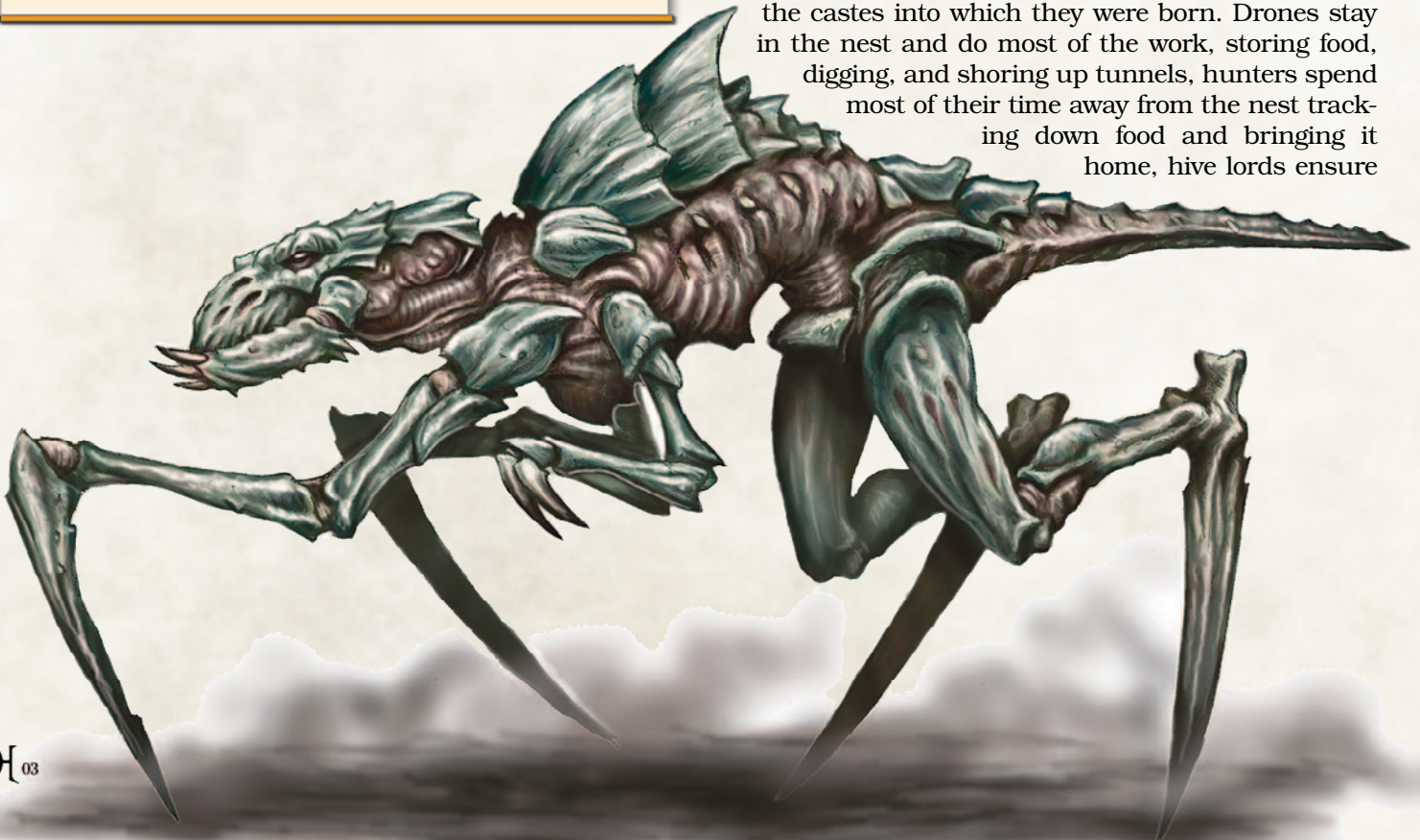
Kruthik are creatures of the Underdark. They move through the tunnels and passageway of the Underdark on spike-like limbs that allow them to climb on nearly any surface and dig through walls to find new areas in which to hunt. They excavate large, interconnected tunnels to create hives in which they raise their young—then they set about stripping the surrounding region of life, hunting and killing to feed their growth.

Part insect, part reptile, and part fiend, kruthik are unnatural beasts. They have chitinous shells bristling with small barbs and longer spikes. They move around on four legs that end in spikes that create distinctive patterns in the ground. Their heads are vaguely skull-like with red eyes and powerful mandibles.

**Pack Hunters.** Kruthik adults play the most important role in the hive, that of hunters. During their expeditions, the kruthik hunt in packs, crowding their prey, throwing their barbed bodies into opponents and striking with their spiked limbs.

**Hive Defenders.** Kruthik work together to defend their homes, with adult kruthik acting as the main combatants backed up by young kruthik if needed. If a threat is particularly dangerous, the largest kruthik, known as a hive lord enters the fray, concentrating on foes the smaller kruthik have already injured.

**Organized by Caste.** Kruthik organize themselves by the castes into which they were born. Drones stay in the nest and do most of the work, storing food, digging, and shoring up tunnels, hunters spend most of their time away from the nest tracking down food and bringing it home, hive lords ensure



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there are enough young being born and command the other kruthik using clicks, hisses, and scent. There are rarely more than one hive lord in a nest, because once a hive lord is old enough, it leaves with a portion of its old nest's members to create a new hive.

**Dark Origins.** Created uncounted centuries ago by tiefling mages by corrupting unknown reptilian creatures with fiendish blood, kruthik were designed to act as living weapons, digging passageways into stronghold while also undermining their walls. Since they were first loosed, kruthik have spread uncontrollably.

## KRUTHIK YOUNG

A kruthik young is a small, dog-sized creature. While not as powerful as a kruthik adult, it is still dangerous and its spike-covered shell is just as dangerous.

## KRUTHIK ADULT

A kruthik adult stands about five feet long and has a barrel-like build. The mature kruthik make up the bulk of the hive and handle building the next, breeding, and hunting. The kruthik adult prefers to fire a volley of poisoned spikes to weaken enemies before moving into close combat.

### Kruthik Adult

*Medium monstrosity, neutral*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 32 (5d8 + 10)

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 15 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

**Senses** darkvision 90 ft., tremorsense 50 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** –

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Spiky Aura.** At the start of each of the kruthik adult's turns, each creature within 5 feet of it takes 1 piercing damage.

**Spider Climb.** The kruthik adult can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The kruthik adult makes two attacks: two claw attacks or two toxic spike attacks.

**Claw. Melee Weapon Attack:** +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

**Toxic Spike. Ranged Weapon Attack:** +2 to hit, range 30/60, one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the end of the kruthik adult's next turn.

## KRUTHIK HIVE LORD

A kruthik hive lord is the largest and most powerful member of a hive. Each hive lord is about the size of a horse and covered in lance-like spikes. It can fire a blast of acid to soften up opponents and does so even if it means hitting members of its own hive. It is a vicious fighter and targets injured foes before anyone else.

### Kruthik Hive Lord

*Large monstrosity, neutral*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 68 (8d10 + 24)

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 15 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 50 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** –

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Blood Frenzy.** The kruthik hive lord has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

**Spider Climb.** The kruthik hive lord can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Spiky Aura.** At the start of each of the kruthik hive lord's turns, each creature within 5 feet of it takes 2 piercing damage.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The kruthik hive lord makes two claw attacks.

**Acid Blast.** The kruthik hive lord expels acid in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 13 (3d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Claw. Melee Weapon Attack:** +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.





# Skeletal Tomb Guardian

Like other skeletons, the skeletal tomb guardian is an undead creature created by necromancy. Unlike most other skeletons, the tomb guardian is built from multiple skeletons, giving it four arms and making it the perfect warrior and guardian.

A skeletal tomb guardian is made from a human-sized skeleton. It's bones are stripped of flesh, but it might be

adorned with the remnants of clothing or jewelry. It has four, fully-functional arms, each of which holds a scimitar or similar weapon. Its hollow-eyed skull is the last thing many of its opponents ever see.

**Fast and Deadly.** In combat the skeletal tomb guardian wields four scimitars and is capable of holding its own against multiple opponents, striking out at them with lightning-fast blows even when apparently full engaged with another combatant.

## Skeletal Tomb Guardian

*Medium undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 105 (14d8 + 42)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)

**Damage Vulnerabilities** bludgeoning

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Damage Resistances** necrotic

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, poisoned

**Skills** Perception +5

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** understands the languages it new in life but can't speak

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Reactive.** The skeletal tomb guardian can take one reaction on every turn in combat.

## Actions

**Multiattack.** The skeletal tomb guardian makes four attacks with its scimitars.

**Scimitar.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

