

Ravenous

Introduction

The periton worm is a distant and distorted relative of the common tape worm. It thrives in filthy conditions, and is spread by contaminated food and water. A single periton worm can produce thousands of eggs in its lifetime, and these eggs can lie dormant for centuries before they take root in the guts of hapless victims. Beyond the bellies of their hosts, these disgusting parasites are helpless and die in short order when exposed to the open air.

Like a tape worm, the periton worm takes root in its host's intestines. Unlike a tapeworm, a periton can grow to an extraordinary size, eventually replacing a portion of the host's intestines with its own writhing, tube-like body. In effect, the periton worm becomes a living intestine, completely digesting nutrients that pass through it. Anyone who becomes host to a periton worm is dubbed one of the "ravenous," and for good reason.

So hungry are the hosts of periton worms that they will literally eat anything in an attempt to stave off their terrible appetites. The endless hunger drives the ravenous to cannibalism, especially when other forms of food are scarce or nonexistent. Locales that teem with the victims of periton worms are often stripped completely of all edible and near-edible items. In villages where the parasites are common, the ravenous fight amongst themselves, often to a gruesome conclusion.

Appearance Changes

Ravenous creatures quickly lose weight, no matter how much food they eat. They are sallow-skinned and gaunt, and their bellies are marked by a distinctive distension indicative of an adult periton worm.

Creating a Ravenous

"Ravenous" is an acquired template that can be added to any Small or Medium animal, humanoid, or monstrous humanoid (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

A ravenous uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature's type and size remain unchanged.

Speed: Same as the base creature.

Attack: A ravenous creature gains a bite attack.

Damage: The bite attack gained by a ravenous creature inflicts 1d4 damage if the base creature is Small and 1d6 damage if the base creature is Medium. The base creature's Strength bonus, if any, applies to this damage.

Special Attacks: A ravenous retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains the one described below.

Ferocious Bite (Ex): A ravenous creature that succeeds with a bite attack may attempt to initiate a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If the grapple succeeds, the ravenous may attempt to feed upon its enemy, making additional bite attacks. These bite attacks do not suffer the usual -4 penalty applied to attacks made while grappling.

Special Qualities: A ravenous retains all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains those described below.

Devour Anything (Ex): A ravenous can eat, and gain sustenance from, nearly any organic material. Wood and leather are just as appetizing to a ravenous as old bones or an animal's internal organs.

Insatiable Hunger (Ex): A ravenous must eat up to three times the normal amount of food per day in order to avoid penalties due to hunger. Starvation begins to affect a ravenous after a single day without food, instead of after 3 days. The base DC for the Constitution check a ravenous creature makes to stave off the effects of starvation is increased to 15. In addition, the amount of nonlethal damage suffered by a starving ravenous creature is increased to 1d8 per day. See the rules on starvation and thirst in Chapter 8 of the *DMG* for details.

Poison Resistance (Ex): A ravenous gains a +8 racial bonus to Fortitude saves made to resist the effects of ingested poisons.

Abilities: Modify the base creature as follows: +2 Con, -2 Wis.

Skills: A ravenous creature gains a +2 racial bonus on Survival checks.

Environment: Temperate plains and forests.

Organization: Solitary.

Challenge Rating: +0.

Advancement: By character class.

Level Adjustment: +0.

Ravenous Characters

Like other victims of parasitical infestation, the ravenous come from all walks of life. Many are poor peasants, though the worms have been known to find their way into large cities amid imported foodstuffs and exotic spices. Adventurers and explorers, as well as anyone else that might find themselves in the uglier parts of the world, are always at risk of infection by periton worms.

Sample Ravenous

The following example uses a 5th-level kobold adept as the base creature.

Even though the aged kobold before you is obviously starving, he seems less interested in eating the food that you offer him and more interested in biting the hand that offers it.

C'marel: Male kobold Adp5; CR 4; Small humanoid (kobold); HD 4d6; hp 14; Init +2; Spd 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 14 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +1 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +2; Grp -5; Atk +0 melee (1d4-3, bite); Full Atk: +0 melee (1d4-3, bite); SA Ferocious bite, spells; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., devour anything, insatiable hunger, light sensitivity, poison resistance, summon familiar; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 4, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Craft (trapmaking) +4, Concentration +8, Heal +12, Hide +6, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Profession (miner) +4, Search +4, Spellcraft +10, Survival +8 (+10 following tracks), Use Magic Device +1 (+3 scrolls); Self-Sufficient, Spell Penetration.

Typical Spells Prepared: (3/3/2; base save DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*create water*, *purify food and drink*, *touch of fatigue*; 1st—*burning hands*, *cause fear*, *cure light wounds*; 2nd—*invisibility*, *web*.

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