Cruel and brutish, oni haunt the night. Their great strength and innate magic have made them into legends and folktales even though they remain very real threats.

Oni are monsters in the truest sense of the word—cruel, heartless, irredeemably evil, inhuman. They see all creatures as tools, valuables, or food. They think of themselves as lords, and everyone else as lowly subjects that exist only to fulfill their whims. They aren’t content to rule in name only. They need to conquer the mind and spirit, to torment the peaceful and corrupt the good. Being evil isn’t just an oni’s nature, but also its entertainment.

An oni would never show respect to any but another oni, yet its own pride is easily wounded. At the slightest affront, it concocts a scheme to wreak vengeance and humiliation on the impertinent offender. The oni begins subtly, slowly unraveling the target’s life until the offender is utterly ruined, even losing loved ones or body parts. Furious oni have destroyed entire communities, and superstitious folk sometimes call monsoons, plagues, or earthquakes “the oni’s revenge.”

Enslavers of the Innocent: Those who deal in slaves, no matter how evil they might be, usually follow some ethical code. They might take only prisoners of war, or accept tribute instead of enslaving an entire people. Not so with oni. As long as a creature has a soul that can be crushed, it makes a good slave. Breaking the spirit of a slave is like a game to them, and an oni might keep a ruined, unpredictable creature as a trophy long after the end of its usefulness. An innocent child is a far greater prize than a stout worker. Oni don’t keep a very close watch over their slaves, though, so escapes are frequent. Those who do get away are still plagued by nightmares the rest of their lives, and the oni might well take revenge on them for the insult of escaping.

Spoken of in Tales and Seen in Dreams: Parents tell their children nursery rhymes that warn the oni will eat them or enslave them. Such tales have a ring of truth, even if the storyteller scoffs at the idea. As a result, children sometimes mistake other dangers for oni, from physical phenomena to mundane creatures. Are they mistakes, though, or oni cleverly covering their tracks? Many a small child has cried “oni” one too many times, then disappeared the first time the call went unheeded.

Oni legends alone inspire sleepless nights filled with imagined monsters lurking in every shadow. Here, too, the truth mirrors the tale. Oni use magic to send frightening messages and images through dreams, terrorizing their targets with recurrent nightmares before capturing them. Each oni has a signature theme, usually a vision of its own...
“Lock the door, little one—
But the oni has a key;
Blow the candles out—
But the oni still can see;
So just keep kind and honest
As your heart will let you be;
When the oni comes to eat you
Your flesh won’t taste as sweet.”

grinning face with a special flourish: blood dripping from its mouth, spiders crawling from its eyes, or skin peeling back to reveal the dead face of a loved one.

**Masters of Illusion and Infiltration:** Oni derive perverse pleasure from outsmarting others, especially their sworn enemies. They infiltrate cities in the guise of prophets, advisors, or wandering heroes, then bring the inhabitants to ruin. Oni mages, with their superior talent for disguise, might pose as different people to give contradictory orders and spread chaos. If doing so embarrasses their enemies, the oni enjoy it even more.

The innate magic of oni gives them great power, varying by the kind of oni and the training it pursues. All oni have prowess with illusions, though; deception is in their nature, and they can appear to be smaller humanoids of some kind. An oni lets its true self be seen only when it’s going in for the kill or trying to drive someone insane, or is so confident that it expects no danger in revealing itself.

Each oni maintains a stronghold (unless it’s still young and on the warpath). This domain is a cross between an ostentatious palace and a hidden lair. An oni loves luxury and comfort, and its den must be able to accommodate guests, if only to provide an audience for its gloating. Only a few basic physical defenses protect such strongholds. The creatures prefer illusory pathways and cleverly constructed entrances to avoid discovery. Trusting one’s eyes isn’t safe around an oni’s home base.

**Wealth Is Status:** Oni compete among themselves for the most riches, measuring both actual treasure and the slaves they’ve taken. The interior of an oni’s stronghold isn’t just some bare dungeon: It’s spacious even for a creature of the master’s size, and meticulously laid out. Only the most skilled, famous, and attractive slaves serve there, and the oni treats them like any other piece of fine furniture. The stronghold is ornately furnished, decorated with tapestries and statues, and contains at least one trophy room. Rare artifacts and people of renown make the best prizes, and an oni might dedicate a hidden room in its stronghold to holding such possessions.

Most oni collect fine art, and their favorite subject is their own kind. They proudly display any sculpture, print, or painting of an oni. The most valuable pieces aren’t necessarily the best executed: A terrified child’s scrawl or a carving hacked out by someone driven mad by nightmares is more beautiful to oni than any gilded statue.

Each oni uses only the finest materials for its clothing and weaponry (though style and choice are more a matter of practicality than elegance). When it faces a foe it can’t easily defeat, it enters into negotiation wearing its richest garb in hopes of either impressing the other party into a concession or provoking it into an attack that the oni then defends against and uses to weaken the opposition.
### Oni Night Haunter
Level 8 Elite Controller
Large natural humanoid  
XP 700

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<td>Saving Throws</td>
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### Skills
- Bluff +13
- Insight +12
- Stealth +12
- Thievery +12

### Abilities
- **Skills**: Bluff +13, Insight +10, Stealth +12, Thievery +12
- **Alignment**: Evil
- **Equipment**: Morningstar

### Traits
- **Deceptive Veil** (illusion) + At-Will
- **Devour Soul** (healing, psychic) + At-Will
- **Hypnotic Breath** (charm) + Recharge when first bloodied
- **Gaseous Form** (polymorph) + Encounter
- **Double Attack** + At-Will
- **Freezing Blast** (cold) + Recharge when first bloodied
- **Lightning Storm** (lightning) + Recharge
- **Invisibility** (illusion) + At-Will

### Actions
- **Morningstar** (weapon) + At-Will
- **Greatsword** (weapon) + At-Will
- **Greatsword** (weapon) + Recharge when first bloodied
- **Deceptive Veil** (illusion) + At-Will
- **Deceptive Veil** (illusion) + Recharge

### Innate
- **Regeneration**
- **Gaseous Form** (polymorph) + Encounter

### Equipment
- Morningstar
- Chainmail, greatsword

### Language
- Common, Giant

### Updating the Oni

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### Oni Mage
Level 10 Elite Lurker
Large natural humanoid  
XP 1,000

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<td>Saving Throws</td>
<td>+2, Action Points 1</td>
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### Skills
- Arcana +14, Bluff +15, Insight +12

### Abilities
- **Arcana** +14
- **Bluff** +15
- **Insight** +12

### Traits
- **Greatsword** (weapon) + At-Will
- **Deceptive Veil** (illusion) + At-Will

### Innate
- **Regeneration**

### Equipment
- Chainmail, greatsword

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### About the Author
Logan Bonner's credits include *The Slaying Stone™* and *Monster Vault™*. He lives in the Seattle area and works as a freelance game designer, writer, and editor. You can follow him on Twitter, where he's @loganbonner.

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