HOUND OF ILL OMEN

When fog rolls across the Gray Downs during the dead of night, the hounds of ill omen emerge from the mists, ghostly apparitions howling their song of doom.

Once the loyal companions of the hill clans, who now rest beneath the barrows of the Gray Downs, the hounds of ill omen howl to awaken and avenge their long-dead masters.

**Ghosts of Long Ago**: The Gray Downs were once inhabited by indigenous hill clan people reputed far and wide for their fierce hunting hounds. But when the empire of Nerath began to bloom, greedy generals sought to expand the empire into the Nentir Vale and across the hill clans’ territory. The clans resisted. Hopelessly outnumbered, they stood with their faith—across the hill clans’ territory. The clans resisted.

Hopelessly outnumbered, they stood with their faithful hounds against the mighty armies of Nerath, even as the Tigerclaw barbarians (page 100) and other native tribes abandoned the vale and retreated far into the northern wilderness. Although the hill clans fought bravely, they were annihilated in a final desperate battle upon the downs.

Long after the battle, the hounds of the hill clans prowled the battlefields, howling over the corpses of their masters and refusing to leave their sides. The Nerathians built a great barrow in honor of the warriors that fought and died—and after the last of their bodies was interred, the hounds vanished.

But on dark nights when the fog rises, it is said that the hounds can still be seen coursing across the downs, their ghostly forms pining for their lost masters. The common folk call them the “hounds of ill omen,” because calamity and misfortune follow in the wake of their fearsome howls.

**Harbingers of Death**: As legend would have it, on nights when the skull-white moon hangs low and the downs are silent as a corpse’s dream, the ghost hounds

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**Bregga, Hound of Ill Omen**

Large shadow beast (undead) XP 1,000

- HP 212; Bloodied 106
- AC 24, Fortitude 19, Reflex 20, Will 18
- Speed 8; phasing
- Immune disease, poison
- Languages —

**Traits**

- Ill Omen + Aura 2
  - Any enemy that spends a healing surge while in the aura is slowed until the end of its next turn.

- Insubstantial
  - The hound takes half damage from any damage source, except those that deal force damage or radiant damage. In addition, if the hound takes radiant damage, it loses the insubstantial trait until the end of its next turn.

**Standard Actions**

- **Clamping Bite** + At-Will
  - Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
  - Hit: 3d8 + 5 damage, and Bregga can shift up to half her speed, targeting the target with the bite. The target remains adjacent to Bregga during this movement.

- **Drag and Snap** + At-Will
  - Effect: Bregga uses clamping bite and then bite against the same target.

**Triggered Actions**

- **Howl of the Pack** (fear, thunder) + At-Will
  - Trigger: An enemy within 3 squares of the hound and marked by it willingly moves away from it.
  - Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Close blast 3 (triggering enemy in the blast); +10 vs. Fortitude
  - Hit: 2d10 + 4 thunder damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn.

**Move Actions**

- **Ghostly Travel** (illusion) + Recharge when first bloodied
  - Effect: Bregga becomes invisible and moves up to her speed. She remains invisible until the end of her turn.

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**Hound of Ill Omen**

Medium shadow beast (undead) XP 300

- HP 80; Bloodied 40
- AC 23, Fortitude 19, Reflex 20, Will 18
- Speed 8; phasing
- Immune disease, poison

**Traits**

- Ill Omen + Aura 2
  - Any enemy that spends a healing surge while in the aura is slowed until the end of its next turn.

- Insubstantial
  - The hound takes half damage from any damage source, except those that deal force damage or radiant damage. In addition, if the hound takes radiant damage, it loses the insubstantial trait until the end of its next turn.

**Standard Actions**

- **Bite** + At-Will
  - Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
  - Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage.
  - Effect: The target is marked until the end of the hound’s next turn.

- **Howl of Doom** (psychic, thunder) + Encounter
  - Attack: Close blast 5 (enemies in the blast); +10 vs. Will
  - Hit: 2d10 + 11 thunder damage, and the target is cursed. Until the target is no longer cursed, it takes 3 psychic damage whenever it misses every target with an attack power. At the end of each of the target’s extended rests, it makes a DC 16 Religion check to try to end the curse.
  - First Failed Check: The psychic damage increases to 6.
  - Second Failed Check: The psychic damage increases to 9.
  - Third Failed Check: The target dies.
  - Miss: Half damage.

**Triggered Actions**

- **Howl of the Pack** (fear, thunder) + At-Will
  - Trigger: An enemy within 3 squares of the hound and marked by it willingly moves away from it.
  - Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Close blast 3 (triggering enemy in the blast); +10 vs. Fortitude
  - Hit: 2d10 + 4 thunder damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn.
come forth to hunt mortals. Who sends the hounds and for what purpose, none can tell; when a hound tracks its quarry down, it emits a baleful cry before vanishing into the fog. For the one the hound calls, its hours are numbered.

Those the hound has called observe nothing unusual at first. But soon enough, ill luck nips close at the afflicted one’s heels, and as calamity follows calamity, it soon becomes apparent that a curse is at work. Dangers accidents and near fatal encounters plague the hound’s quarry until the panicking mortal flees, rabbitlike, to any haven that might stave off its impending demise. It is said those who seek solace by petitioning the mercy of the gods, or of the great she-hound Bregga, have sometimes survived a hound’s dire calling. For most, however, death comes inevitably. And then, the hound’s ghostly jaws drag the mortal’s spirit to the channel halls beneath the cold earth of the barrow, where the dead remnants of the hill clans feast upon the bright essence of its life.

Servants of the Shades: Sometimes a single howl sounds over the downs, louder and longer than any other. This is the cry of the alpha female, Bregga, calling the pack to her so the hounds can rouse the shades of their masters slumbering within the barrows. It’s said that Bregga was the first hound, having lived on the downs since before the hill clans arrived. According to some legends, she sees the true nature of mortal hearts and sends her hounds to punish the unjust—in retribution for the sins of Nerath, perhaps—but no one knows for certain.

When Bregga’s hounds sound their lonely howls for the hill clans, the spectral apparitions of their dead masters—cold and black as the grave—rise again from their barrows. Their hateful presence chills the blood of living mortals. With their hounds restored to their sides, the hill clan apparitions ride again to war, eternally seeking vengeance against foes and empires long since crumbled into dust.

**Hill Clan Apparition**
*Medium shadow humanoid (undead)  XP 88*

**Hit Points:** 1
A missed attack never damages a minion.

**Initiative:** +11

**AC:** 24,
Fortitude 20, Reflex 21, Will 18

**Reflex:** 21,
Perception +4

**Speed:** 6, fly 6 (hover)

**Darkvision**

**Immune:** disease, poison;
Resist 10 necrotic

**Traits:**

**Chill of the Grave**
Any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to the apparition is slowed until the start of its next turn.

**Standard Actions**

*Shadow Blade*  At-Will

**Attack:** Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC

**Hit:** 6 damage.

*Call of the Dead* (psychic)  At-Will

**Attack:** Ranged 5 (one creature); +11 vs. Will

**Hit:** 6 psychic damage, and the apparition pulls the target up to 4 squares.