Penanggalan

By light of day, penanggalans are virtuous maidens whose clever charm is exceeded only by their incomparable beauty. But upon the witching hour, their maidenly heads tear free from their shoulders to hunt the dark for the sweet blood of innocents. Dripping entrails drag beneath the fanged flying heads, pulsing, writhing, and reaching of their own volition.

She might be a common nursemaid or a lady of the royal court. Either way, the maiden’s gentle smile, blushing cheeks, lustrous hair, and voluptuous figure allow her to infiltrate society. By night, she reveals her true form as the monstrous head of the penanggalan hunts, streaming its entrails behind.

Cursed by Dark Magic: According to legend, the first penanggalan was a young baroness of Harkenwold, plain of face and scant of suitors. But what she lacked in beauty she made up for in wit, and the maiden discovered arcane texts of Bael Turath in the vaults of her father’s estate. She invoked the rituals therein and conjured a devil, which promised her matchless beauty and eternal life if only she would serve it forever.

The devil’s bargain was not so glorious as it had appeared, for such was the maiden’s beauty that armies clashed for her hand, and her father was forced to lock her away in a tower to protect her. Alone in her wretched beauty, the maiden begged the gods to forgive her vain folly, and she swore to do penance before them.

But the devil had other plans. It whispered the secret of the maiden’s unlikely beauty into the ear of the high priest, and before she could do her penance, the maiden was seized from her tower and hanged as a devil worshiper.

The maiden’s body dangled from the gallows until midnight, at which time it slid to the ground, leaving her head behind in the noose, gory intestines dangling beneath. Then the maiden opened her eyes and saw what her vanity had created.

Each penanggalan’s origin involves a female who bargains with devils for immortal beauty and tries to

Penanggalan Level 10 Elite Lurker
Medium natural humanoid, undead (shapechanger) XP 1,000
HP 162; Bloodied 81
AC 24, Fortitude 19, Reflex 22, Will 23
Speed 6, fly 8 (hover) only in head form
Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1

Standard Actions (Maiden Form)
① Dagger (weapon) ♦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 2d4 + 4 damage.
② Soothing Voice (charm) ♦ Encounter
Attack: Close burst 1 (creatures in the burst); +13 vs. Will
Hit: The target is slowed (save ends).
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is unconscious instead of slowed (save ends).
③ Horrific Transformation (fear, psychic) ♦ Encounter
Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +13 vs. Will
Hit: 4d6 + 6 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn.
Effect: The penanggalan changes from maiden form to head form. While the creature is in head form, its headless body is considered a corpse. Unless the body is utterly destroyed, the creature can take a standard action to return to maiden form, but only if it is in the same square as at least one part of the body.

Standard Actions (Head Form)
① Bite (poison) ♦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).
② Grasping Entrails (disease, necrotic, poison) ♦ Recharge 4:6:6:1
Attack: Melee 2 (one or two creatures); +13 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d12 + 8 necrotic and poison damage, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 22). Until the grab ends, the target grants combat advantage. At the end of the encounter, the target makes a saving throw. On a failure, the target contracts blistering corruption (stage 1).
③ Malleable Form ♦ At-Will
Effect: The penanggalan is phasing until the end of its next turn and shifts up to its speed. If it starts its next turn hidden from all enemies, grasping entrails recharges, and on that turn it can use that power and bite with a single standard action.

Skills Bluff +17, Diplomacy +17, Religion +15, Stealth +16
Str 17 (+8) Dex 22 (+11) Wis 16 (+8)
Con 15 (+7) Int 20 (+10) Cha 24 (+12)
Alignment evil Languages Common
Equipment dagger
revenge, but perishes before she can complete her penance. The penanggalan thirsts for the purity that once ran in its veins. Rare penanggalans continue to attempt penance, but none can purge the unholy thirst that arrives at the midnight hour.

**Beautiful Infiltrators:** Penanggalans live to feed and spend a portion of each day hunting for potential victims. They typically prey on young innocents that won’t be missed, such as youths from poor urban areas or isolated villages.

Penanggalans rarely stay in one place for long. During the daytime, they monitor the aftermath of their nocturnal kills to gauge when it is time to move on to new hunting grounds. They often work as midwives or nursemaids, taking care to note expecting mothers and young children beyond their employers’ walls.

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**Penanggalan Head Swarm**
Medium natural humanoid (swarm, undead) XP 350

**Penanggalan Bodiless Head**
Small natural humanoid (undead) XP 400

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**Malleable Rush**

**Triggered Actions**

**Form (disease, poison)**

**Trigger:** The penanggalan dies.

**Attack (No Action):** Close burst 1 (creatures in the burst); +12 vs. Reflex

**Hit:** 2d8 + 3 poison damage, and the penanggalan can slide the target 1 square.

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**Blistering Corruption**

**Level 10 Disease**

**Sore, blisters, and boils**

**Effect:** The penanggalan is phasing until the end of its next turn and shifts up to its speed.

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**Penanggalan Head Swarm**

**Level 8 Soldier**

**Standard Actions**

**Swarm of Entrails (poison) **

**At-Will**

**Attack:** Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +13 vs. AC

**Hit:** 1d8 + 5 poison damage, plus 1d8 poison damage if the target is slowed. The swarm can slide the target 1 square to a square adjacent to it.

**Effect:** The penanggalan is phasing until the end of its next turn.

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**Penanggalan Bodiless Head**

**Level 9 Skirmisher**

**Standard Actions**

**Bite**

**At-Will**

**Attack:** Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC

**Hit:** 3d8 + 4 damage. If the target is granting combat advantage to the penanggalan, the target is slowed (save ends).

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**Flailing Entrails (poison) **

**At-Will**

**Attack:** Melee 2 (one or two creatures); +12 vs. Reflex

**Hit:** 2d8 + 3 poison damage, and the penanggalan can slide the target 1 square.

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It hunts these victims first, all the while playing the caring maid to its employer, whose household it saves until last before moving on.

In maiden form, a penanggalan tempts and teases suitors, modestly guarding her chastity until she is alone with the suitor at night. When her amorous victim is most vulnerable, the penanggalan’s head separates from her body’s shoulders, and the monster strikes.

Some penanggalans serve intelligent evil creatures as seductresses and spies.

**Horrifying Monstrosities:** Unless her maiden’s body has been destroyed (causing the creature to become a bodiless head permanently), a penanggalan’s monstrous form does not manifest by light of day. But at midnight, when her teeth lengthen into fangs and her head tears itself free from her body, the penanggalan hunts. Her bloated entrails serve as motile appendages, and a putrid ichor spews from the intestinal orifices, causing every living thing they touch to fester with boils and sores.

As aptly as it infiltrates society by day, the loathsome penanggalan penetrates physical structures by night, dragging its malleable, reeking bulk through small holes, shutters, shafts, chimneys, and floorboards toward the scent of blood. It especially seeks out those of pure heart, entangling them with its intestines while it drinks their blood. If it cannot locate its preferred quarry, the penanggalan preys on the weakest victim it can find.

A penanggalan can maintain its humanoid state without feeding for three days before it goes mad from hunger and devours the first victim it finds.