



THE **ACERBAK**

Acid spitting, underground dwellers that want nothing more than to turn your party into food.

ACERBAK

The depths of dwarven mines in Bharzul are never to be considered fully safe. Though advancements in technologies have been swift, creative, and useful in mitigating many of the dangers of the deep delvings they pursue, the underground holds many surprises for those that would venture into them for too long.

One such surprise started with the dwarves finding carved out tunnels in solid rock. Now, creatures that can carve through rock are not unheard of. There are many worm species that are known of, that can chew their way through given enough time. What was concerning is that the walls of these tunnels were pocked with small holes and the rock face had taken on a glasslike shine as if something had polished it. At the time, there were talks of it possibly being something that used extreme heat to bore its way through, but no evidence could be found of the kind of expansion one would expect in the rock surface when great heat was applied.

It wasn't until an exploratory mining party went missing that a more thorough investigation was launched into these odd tunnels. Eventually the mining party was found, flesh burned away from their bones leaving little behind but skeletons and half melted armor with a similar pocked appearance to the stonework they had previously seen in the tunnels. As the expedition pushed deeper, they came across

odd environs deep underground. A tangle structure of interweaving tunnels that lead to a central hub where dozens of eggs lay in acrid smelling sulfuric pits.

The awe of discovery lasted only a moment before they were beset by fast moving lizard like creatures with bulbous acidic glands protruding from their necks. They fought and fled, few making it back to report on their findings. Over the years, more has been understood about these creatures dubbed "Acerbaks". Their nests are fiercely guarded by their colonies. It's known that they often hunt in small packs preferring to take a numbers advantage over being individualistic. It's also known that their societies are matriarchal clusters similar to honey bees, though a queen has never been seen by someone that lived to tell about it.

When a cluster is found, they are often marked in documentation and the entry tunnel is closed. Due to their rapid rate of multiplication, clearing a cluster is a difficult task unless one is able to kill their queen and destroy their nesting grounds. Adventurers who would take up such a task are hard enough to come by and their return is never guaranteed.

Matriarchal Clusters. Acerbaks operate similar to honey bees in that most of the colony is centered around protecting and maintenance of their queen and nesting grounds. They naturally build around sulfuric hot pools found deep underground as they maintain the proper heat and acidity needed to nurture the eggs of their young. Clusters can vary

ACERBAK

CREATURE 4

N MEDIUM **ANIMAL**

Perception +14; darkvision

Skills Acrobatics +12, Stealth +15

Str +3, **Dex** +5, **Con** +5, **Int** -5, **Wis** +2, **Cha** -4

AC 20; **Fort** +14, **Ref** +15, **Will** +8

HP 62; **Immunities** acid

Speed 25 feet, burrow 25 feet, climb 25 feet

Melee ♦ bite +14 (acid, agile), **Damage** 1d6+5 piercing plus 1d4+2 acid

Melee ♦ claw +12 (agile), **Damage** 2d8+5 slashing

Melee ♦ tail whip +12 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 2d6+5 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ acid spit +12 (acid, range 30 feet), **Damage** 2d8+5 acid

Acidic Belch ♦♦ (acid); **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** The acerbak belches forth a cloud of stinging acid in a 15 foot emanation that persists for 1 minute. Any creature other than the acerbak within the area takes 5d6 acid damage and is blinded. If a creature ends their turn within the cloud, metal items that they are wearing or carrying take 1d6 damage, ignoring its hardness.

Acid Spew ♦♦ (acid); **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** The acerbak spews forth acid in a 30 foot cone dealing 5d6 acid damage and 1d6 persistent acid damage (DC 21 basic Reflex save).

Rock Tunneler An acerbak can burrow through solid stone at a Speed of 15 feet. It can leave a tunnel if it desires, and it usually does.

Tail Sweep ♦♦ The acerbak sweeps its tail as it spins in a rapid circle. Non-flying creatures within 10 feet of the acerbak must succeed on a DC 18 Reflex save or be knocked prone and take 3d6 bludgeoning damage.

in size from smaller ones being in the dozens to larger clusters being in the hundreds. The queens themselves are often kept deep within the clusters near to the nesting grounds and are fiercely guarded by the colony.

Pack Hunters. Acerbaks often form small hunting groups that they remain with for the entirety of their lives. These bands of 3-5 work together to set up ambushes and attack from multiple angles to confuse and disorient their foes, sometimes even burrowing up from below their prey in order to catch them unaware. It's rare to find a lone Acerbak unless it has been separated from its pack. Lone Acerbak's are often the most hostile as they consider themselves to be vulnerable without their pack.

Tunnelers. These beasts carve labyrinthian tunnels with their acidic spit to confuse and disorient any predators that may try to encroach on their nests. It's not unusual for Acerbak nests to stretch out for a mile or more around their nesting grounds.

TACTICS

Acerbaks are pack based hunters and they work together to draw in their prey, disorientate them, and attack from multiple angles all at once. They will often send one ahead as bait to get enemies to chase them before ambushing from several angles including from below.

- While they have several melee attacks, each of them is unique with their bite dealing acid, claw being slightly higher in damage, and their tail adding reach. Use them accordingly.
- Their bite, claw, and tail whip are agile attacks so make sure to apply their MAP properly.
- They have a ranged option with their acid spit. Use this to hit and run when they get low on health.
- Acidic Belch is nasty. The item damage can build up quite quickly. Make sure to let the players know this is happening.
- Tail sweep can be a good set up for an Acid Spew from another Acerbak close by. Knocking creatures prone will cause them to have a much harder time with their reflex saves.
- Consider setting up impromptu pit traps by having Acerbaks dig tunnels below but leaving just a bit of the land above.

SUGGESTED PAIRINGS

Acerbaks are pack hunters and should be treated as such. Keep them paired with other Acerbaks or put a scared one alone as an introduction.

- Large worm species treat the Acerbak as prey. Consider weaving in some of these creatures if you're looking to bring in some large worm enemy like a Purple Worm.
- Bulettes prowl a lot of the same areas as Acerbaks meaning that it wouldn't be uncommon to find several Acerbaks fighting a Bulette. This could be a great set up for a three way encounter.



ACERBAK'S BITE

ITEM 5

ACID	EVOCATION	INVESTED	MAGICAL
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Price 150 gp

Usage worn on 1 hand; **Bulk** L

This *+1 striking spiked gauntlet* features two protruding spikes made from a special alloy that is resistant to the Acerbak's acidic saliva along with a magically sustained acid gland pulled directly from one of the beasts. Fearsome tunneling animals, the Acerbak are known for their powerful acid that cuts through stone and metal alike. Many unsuspecting miners have met a sudden and brutally painful demise when ambushed by these crafty hunters. The few that have managed to slip away often bear the scars of their encounter for the rest of their life.

When you hit with an attack using this weapon, you can choose whether it deals acid damage or the usual piercing damage.

Activate ♦ interact; **Frequency** twice per day; **Effect** You squeeze the acid gland on the weapon coating the blades of this gauntlet with it. For the next minute, successful strikes made with this weapon deal an additional 1d4 acid damage, on a critical hit, the target's armor (if any) takes 1d6 acid damage (before applying Hardness); if the target has a shield raised, the shield takes this damage instead.

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