

KARL, LIVING STATUE

Edited by Nickala

Ambition, compassion, and selflessness - it's said that such things are what defines humanity. Philosophers and scholars alike would claim that these human traits are to be considered virtues that all should aspire to. Nevertheless, there are creatures who are very human, yet reject their own humanity as if it were a putrid cyst that must be cut out.

Karl is one such creature. Strictly speaking, Karl isn't human but his humanity is undeniable. He harbors a deep loathing for humanity in all of its forms, especially his own. Karl is a man-made construct, a stone statue given not only the gift of life but the gift of independent thought and intelligence far exceeding that of other constructs. At a glance, one would assume he was human, much to his chagrin.

While he seeks to turn his hatred into action, he is well aware that indiscriminate killing would only paint him as a target. Karl knows this would only lead to his downfall and humanity's victory. Because he could never allow humanity even the smallest triumph, his approach to indulge in his grudge is much more focused, operating within the systems humanity itself created.

As an assassin of renown, he has earned a fearsome reputation as The Hyena in the city he calls home. To him, the idea of humans killing their own is as amusing as it is repulsive - creatures who perform such acts should be exterminated. For Karl no target is off limits, as long as the task includes ridding the world of one more repugnant creature. The power and resilience granted to him by his construct nature allows him to complete his assassinations without fail. Like an unstoppable killing machine, Karl pursues his targets until he destroys them.

One must wonder from where this hatred originates. Does this statue seek to destroy those who cursed it with sentience? Or has Karl witnessed the darkest parts of humanity? One can only speculate.



Artwork by Unknown Person

KARL, LIVING STATUE

Medium Construct, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 123 (13d8 + 65)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	11 (0)	16 (+3)

Proficiency +4

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +9, Wis +4

Skills Athletics +10, Deception +7, Performance +7, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantite weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities petrified, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 10 (darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15, if accompanied by Arma)

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Arma. Karl is accompanied by a tiny alchemical raven called Arma. As long as Karl is within 200 ft. of Arma, he can see through her eyes and communicate with her telepathically. Additionally, Arma is Karl'ss weapon. She is a magical +1 weapon that can transform into any simple or martial melee weapon.

Brittle. If Karl takes 20 or more thunder damage in a single turn, he has disadvantage on attack rolls and his damage resistances are suppressed until the end of his next turn.

Immutable Form. Karl is immune to any spell or effect that would alter his form.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Karl fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Self Repair. Arma can perform minor repairs on Karl, creating an alchemical compound that temporarily fix Karl's body. Over the course of 10 minutes Karl can gain temporary hit points equal to half of his missing hit points.

Silver Tongue. Karl's tongue bears a silver rune that misdirects magic. Any divination spell of 4th level or lesser that detects lies will show that Karl speaks the truth, even if he lies.

Powerful. Karl is considered one size larger when grappling and his carrying capacity is doubled.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Karl makes two weapon attacks.

Arma. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d8+7) bludgeoning, piercing or slashing damage.

Arma (Two-handed). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d10+7) bludgeoning, piercing or slashing damage.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6+6) bludgeoning damage.

Assassinate (1/round). Karl makes a single weapon attack with Arma against a creature. On a hit the attack deals an additional 14 (4d6) damage. If the attack roll had advantage the attack deals an additional 35 (10d6) damage instead. Once Karl uses this action he can't use it again until the beginning of his next turn.

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LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Karl can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Karl regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Detect. Arma makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Move. Karl moves up to half of his speed without provoking opportunity attacks or Arma flies up to her speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Provoke. A creature that can hear Karl must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or the creature has disadvantage on ability checks and attacks that do not target Karl until the end of its next turn. Karl has advantage on his next attack roll that targets a creature that fails its saving throw before the end of his next turn. Once a creature succeeds its saving throw, it is immune to Karl's Provoke until the end of his next turn.

Strike (2 Actions). Karl one weapon attack.

ARMA

Tiny construct, unaligned

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 3 (1d4+1)

Speed 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	16 (+3)	10 (0)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Proficiency +2

Skills Perception +5

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantite weapons

Condition Immunities petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Bond. While Arma is wielded as a weapon, she has total cover from attacks and effects, unless it is an effect that target held objects.

Immutable Form. Arma is immune to any spell or effect that would alter her form against her will.

Magic Item. Arma is a magic item. If reduced to 0 hit points she is not destroyed but becomes incapacitated for 1 hours or until Karl touches her.

ACTIONS

Arma. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 bludgeoning, piercing or slashing damage.

INFORMATION GATHERING

After a party's initial encounter with Karl or after investigating one of his many victims, they will most likely wish to seek out more information on the mysterious man. Let your players roll Intelligence (Investigation), Charisma (Persuasion), or other skills that you deem appropriate to learn more about Karl. Different skills used for gathering information may yield different pieces of information.

Easy: DC 10 – Lately, there has been a lot of talk of an assassin simply nicknamed The Hyena. The assassin earned this nickname due to their signature laugh, though if asked, people will recount widely different laughs that are The Hyena's supposed trademark.

Intermediate: DC 13 – The Hyena is supposedly very strong, superhuman even. Whereas usual assassins act with stealth and wit, The Hyena uses pure strength and combat prowess to get the job done. Despite The Hyena's less than subtle methods, they have yet to be caught.

Intermediate: DC 13 (Persuasion) – The victims of The Hyena seem to follow no pattern, making people wonder about the assassin's allegiance, especially since no valuables are removed from their victims. Crime bosses, members of the clergy, and politicians have all been victims of the enigmatic Hyena.

Intermediate: DC 13 (Investigation) – The Hyena does not work alone. Apparently, they are accompanied by a tamed raven who they use as a lookout.

Hard: DC 15 (Persuasion) – A warehouse worker retells his sighting of The Hyena; he describes a blonde man wearing a long leather coat forcing his way into a warehouse used for conducting shady business. This man pushed entire crates out of his way with ease and mercilessly cut down the thugs with a black blade, cackling with glee while he did so.

Hard: DC 15 (Investigation) – Reports of an encounter with a man suspected to be The Hyena describe a failed attempt to capture the assassin. In this encounter the assassin, a blonde man wearing a long coat, surrendered without much of a fight to the city guard, allowing himself to be cuffed and led to the guard house for questioning. When passing over a channel he broke his bonds with a single move and jumped into the water. The man never surfaced.

Impossible: DC 20 – (Persuasion, requires success in one Hard check) – When asking for information on a blonde man in a long coat with a unique laugh, an eyewitness will relate their sighting of a man that fits the description. This man was seen hiding away in an alley conversing with a black raven. What stood out to the witness was that while the man spoke to the raven, the man was holding his own severed arm, which the raven then reattached to his body. The witness could not make out how the bird did so, but suspects magic.

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Impossible: DC 20 – (Investigation) – The players investigate a scene in which The Hyena performed a recent assassination. While investigating the area they find a strange shard of an unknown hard substance. Taking a closer look at the shard, the players identify it as resembling a finger tip.

Impossible: DC 20 – (Arcana, requires success in both Hard checks, and in the Impossible Investigation check)

– The players conclude that The Hyena is a construct who has been acting as an assassin within the city. Considering the human-like appearance of The Hyena, they conclude that he must be a human-sized golem of sorts.

KARL TACTICS

Karl will most likely be the one to attack the players first, making use of Arma as a scout to observe the group and wait for an opportune moment to strike. If Karl is unable to find an opening, he is not above using underhanded tactics. He will attempt to approach the group under false pretenses, using his Deception skill to lure them into a false sense of security. His demeanor will be joking and courteous, but this is a mask that Karl has perfected over the years. Once his target lets his guard down he drops the facade and strikes.

In combat Karl will always attempt to strike with his Assassinate action with advantage, using misdirection, stealth, or his Provoke action to open his opponent up for a powerful attack. If Karl finds himself at a disadvantage he will retreat to find a better moment to attack. Over the years Karl learned all there is about the city, meaning no shortcut, hidden sewer entrance, or alley is unknown to him and will be used to reposition himself more advantageously.

If Karl is reduced below half health he will stop his attack and retreat. He will first retreat to a safe spot to allow Arma to repair damage to himself before continuing the fight. If he finds himself completely outmatched by his opponent, he will fully retreat to his workshop to repair and recharge his energy. If he sees a chance to finish the job, he will continue the pursuit of his target after patching himself up.

Karl understands that his workshop is his greatest weakness and thus must be protected at all costs. If Karl is confronted in his workshop, he will fight until he is destroyed.

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THE WORKSHOP

The workshop in which Karl was created still holds the mysterious force that gave him life all those years ago. It is only here in which Karl's animus can truly recharge and recover and damage to Karl's body can be fully mended, while his faithful companion Arma can only stitch him together temporarily.

The workshop is located in an unassuming building within the city. Karl bought the building early in his career as an assassin out of necessity. It wouldn't do to allow clients or targets alike to know where Karl was tethered. Wherever Karl is on the material plane, he is always aware of which direction the workshop is relative to himself, similar to a compass.

To Karl, the workshop holds only painful memories of his creation and the circumstances that led to him roaming the world. To some extent, it is a prison to which he is bound to return to again and again, lest he risk entirely running out of his animus and becoming an inanimate statue. He has no knowledge of the arcane and does not understand which mysterious forces revitalize him, nor would he stoop so low as to ask help from a human. Because of this deep-seated hatred of humanity, he seeks answers to escape his shackles by himself to become truly unshackled from his cradle.

If Karl is outside of his Workshop his animus is drained. For every day Karl spends outside of his workshop he gains one level of exhaustion. Once he reaches 6 levels, his animus ceases and he becomes inactive. No magic can reduce this exhaustion and nothing short of a Wish is able to stop his animus from depleting.

To recharge his energy, Karl must spend a minimum of 6 hours within the Workshop. He usually spends this time playing the violin, one of the few mementos of his past. He can't seem to part with it, much to his own frustration and shame. At the end of his stay, he recovers any missing hit points and loses all levels of exhaustion.

ARMA

When Karl was created, his sculptor realized that the mystical energy that breathed life into the statue was abundant enough for another creation. The sculptor hastily searched his workshop for any unfinished work he deemed fitting of being infused with the animating magic. His choice was a black statuette created out of hardened pitch, a personal passion project of his.

Once the statuette was animated, Arma was born. Due to the remaining energy being less potent Arma is not as sophisticated as Karl, though she holds powers of her own; Arma shows transmuting powers akin to a mimic, able to freely soften her form and take on new shapes.

Arma has become Karl's sole confidant, a kind of sibling and kindred spirit who shares his sorrows. Indeed, the energy they both share created a bond, allowing Karl to see through Arma's eyes as if she was an extension



Artwork by DM Tuz

of himself. Despite Arma's limited intellect, she is fully aware of Karl's thoughts and intentions. Arma's transforming powers are used by Karl to great effect, always having the right tool or weapon at hand to overcome his foes. Arma's unassuming form has caught many adversaries unaware.

TREASURE

Vast amounts of valuables tucked away in bags and neatly sorted art pieces can be found within Karl's workshop. Karl amassed these riches by pillaging any valuables he could find from his targets while on a job.

While Karl holds no personal love of money - after all, greed is for humans - he understands the value gold holds in society. He occasionally uses this money to ensure the secrecy of his workshop and to maintain the city building that houses it.

Any character that searches Karl's workshop will find a collection of art pieces, gemstones, trinkets, and loose coins worth a rough total of 4,500 gold. In addition, anyone who destroys Karl will be able to claim his artificial raven, Arma, as their own. With Karl's destruction Arma deactivates and becomes a willing servant to anyone who attunes to it.

Arma, Artificial Raven

Rare wondrous item (requires attunement)

Arma is an animated statuette of a raven that is inactive until a creature attunes to it. When attuned Arma animates and bonds with the creature. While animated Arma is a tiny construct creature with her own statistics (see Arma) and the attuned creature can command Arma telepathically as long as it is within 120 ft. of Arma. As a bonus action or when the attuned creature uses an action to attack, Arma changes its shape into a common object or simple or martial melee weapon. In any form Arma takes, she will retain her black color. If Arma transforms into a weapon, the weapon is magical and has a +1 bonus to attack and damage.

If Arma is reduced to 0 hit points, she returns to her inanimate state until the next dawn.

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