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[Another Ed Greenwood critter from the first “Creature Catalogue” feature. Ed Greenwood wrote a lot of monsters in the 1e era, and I kind of get why relatively few of them went onto be D&D staples (the exception is the dark naga, incidentally). Most of them are terrible glass cannons, with powerful abilities but very low Hit Dice. Like the cantobele here, which in 1e has 8 attacks a round but 2-4 HD! So it’s either going to annihilate an entire low level party, or be taken out in a round by a high level one. My version brings the HD up to match the damage output, and ends up being a pretty robust foe. There is a 2e version, in the Monstrous Compendium Forgotten Realms Appendix. It has the same balance problem but, unusually, says that the male bears the young. That inspired the marsupial/seahorse reproductive system mentioned in my flavor text.]

Cantobele

CR 10 NE Magical Beast

This creature is slung low to the ground, with six muscular legs ending in clawed paws. Its tail is broad and ends in a brush. Its head is like that of a hyena, except that it has two tusk-like fangs in its upper jaw, and a coarse mane of hair runs along its crown and neck.

Cantobelers are so named for their chiming, sing-song voices. They are excellent vocal mimics, using a combination of mind-reading, mimicry and magical charm to lure creatures to their deaths. The claws on all six of their legs are small but deadly sharp, and they pounce on befuddled prey and tear them to pieces. Any survivors are knocked prone and killed while on the ground. Cantobelers are comfortable moving in three dimensions, and often attack from higher ground such as up trees or cliffs.

Cantobelers are most comfortable in snowy forests such as the taiga. They are impervious to the cold, and can call down magical clouds of hail to obscure vision and dissuade pursuers if they are outmatched. Most cantobelers are solitary, but they do come together to mate. The mated couple will associate until the birth of the (usually single) young, which is reared by the male in a pouch somewhat like that of a kangaroo. Male cantobelers can lactate, and feed their young on milk and blood until the infant is strong enough for solid food.

With their hyena like aspect and magical luring voices, cantobelers are believed to be kin to leucrottas. The two species rarely if ever interact in the wild, but when they do, the stronger cantobelers tend to kill and eat the leucrottas. Unlike leucrottas, cantobelers have little patience for long-term manipulations and do not seek to rule tribes of humanoids.

Cantobele CR 10

XP 9,600

NE Large magical beast

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +17, snow sight

Aura detect thoughts (60 ft., Will DC 19)

Defense

AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +9 natural)

hp 136 (13d10+75)

Fort +13, **Ref** +12, **Will** +9

Immune cold

Offense

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee bite +16 (1d8+4), 4 claws +16 (1d4+4), tail slap +14 (1d6+2 plus trip)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks detect thoughts (DC 19), lure, pounce, rake (2 claws +16, 1d4+4)

Spell-like Abilities CL 13th, concentration +16

Constant—*tongues*

3/day—empowered *ice storm*, *misdirection* (DC 15)

Statistics

Str 18, **Dex** 19, **Con** 20, **Int** 13, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +19 (+21 trip); **CMD** 33 (43 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Expertise, Empower SLA (*ice storm*), Improved Trip, Iron Will, Multiattack, Nimble Moves, Skill Focus (Bluff)

Skills Bluff +20, Climb +30, Perception +17, Stealth +14; **Racial Modifiers** +16 Climb

Languages Common, Infernal, *tongues*

SQ expert climber, sound mimicry (bells, voices)

Ecology

Environment cold and temperate forests

Organization solitary or pair

Treasure standard

Special Abilities

Aura of Detect Thoughts (Su) A cantobele can read the minds of all creatures within 60 feet, as per a *detect thoughts* spell, if the creature fails a DC 19 Will save.

Expert Climber (Ex) A cantobele can scale sheer surfaces and ceilings as if under a *spider climb* effect. It gains a +16 racial bonus to Climb checks, instead of the +8 usually afforded by a Climb speed.

Lure (Su) At any point that a cantobele's targets are unaware of it (for example, if the cantobele is hiding or concealed in darkness), the cantobele can call out to the targets, who must be in line of sight and within 60 feet. When the cantobele calls out, the targets must make a DC 16 Will save or fall under the effects of a *suggestion* to approach the sound of the cantobele's voice. This effect functions identically to a *mass suggestion* spell with a caster level equal to the cantobele's Hit Dice. A creature that saves cannot be affected again by the same cantobele's lure for 24 hours. The lure is a language-dependent effect, and if the cantobele uses the victim's name during the lure, the victim takes a –4 penalty on its saving throw. This is a sonic mind-affecting charm effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Rake (Ex) A cantobele may use its rake attack against prone enemies in an adjacent square, in addition to when charging or grappling.

Snow Sight (Ex) A cantobele's vision is not obscured by mundane or magical snow, fog or other weather.