BYATIS, THE SERPENT-BEARDED

Great Old One of forgetfulness, forged prisons, and toads; chaotic evil

Primary Source Ramsey Campbell, "The Room in the Castle"

Favored Weapon dagger

Symbol tentacles coiling around a fanged mouth filled with darkness

Temple caverns, secret basements, ruined castles

Worshipers amphibious creatures, mad spellcasters

Servitors monstrous amphibians and reptiles

Byatis the Serpent-Bearded is an imprisoned Great Old One. Wherever it is called, it typically appears in an underground cavern or the lower levels of a built-up structure. It is huge, weighing many tons. It is scaled and reptilian, with an array of mouthed tentacles which it extends from its prison to feed. At first glance, its near immobility may make it seem less dangerous than other Great Old Ones, but this impression would be a mistake.

Byatis gradually grows spiritually and physically by consuming creatures. As Byatis festers in its lair, its environs become a gate to other realms, one that expands in size and scope to let more and more baleful influences seep into the world. Natural laws start to alter. Given enough time, the gates open wide, and the Outer Gods and their minions pour through unchallenged. This horrendous fate can be averted by periodic attacks on Byatis, interrupting and reverting this spiritual growth. It can also be slowed or stopped by sacrificing victims to Byatis, which prompts it to focus on the victims rather than expanding the gates.

GOD OF FORGETFULNESS

Unfortunately, keeping one's distance from Byatis is not always an option. It has the ability, over an extended area, to erase knowledge of its existence from the minds of mortal beings. It takes time for this amnesia to take effect, but one result is that the inhabitants nearest to Byatis often are the least aware of its presence and cannot guide outsiders to its lair. Any propitiatory or worshipping cult must come from further away, and then leave before they forget about Byatis.

It can also use its mental influence to draw people unknowingly into its terrible presence, that it might feed upon them.

BYATIS IN COMBAT

Byatis attacks with several snout-like proboscises, each of which ends in a toothed mouth which can attach to and suck out the life from victims. They can also clamp down and simply chomp, which does more immediate damage but does not drain the victim's strength. Byatis also has a multiplicity of lesser tentacles ranging from flail-like whips to constricting boas, all useful in battering the unfortunate forms of its foes. It has thick scales for armor, almost impenetrable by most means, and it has access to countless magical abilities.

What You See

This one-eyed horror possesses a single, long, flexible proboscis that ends in a fanged, leech-like mouth. Clawed limbs stud its serpentine length at asymmetric intervals, each ending in a grasping talon.

BYATIS

Elder influence, stage 1

Area 300-ft.-radius circle

Unnamable Doom DC 18

Nucleus proxy (avatar of Byatis)

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Shackled Proxy. Byatis's influence is centered on the avatar of Byatis (page 180). Its avatar is restrained and can only act to bite or to cast the following spells: *dream*, *suggestion*, or *wish*. It can take no other actions and can't be moved or free itself except by escalating its influence.

EFFECTS

Quicken Influence. Other Mythos influences that overlap with Byatis's influence escalate faster than normal. If the influence has a time-related component to its escalation, that time period is halved. If the influence's escalation is based on reaching a numerical milestone, progress it makes toward that milestone is doubled.

ESCALATION

After 90 days during which Byatis's influence remains at stage 1 without being reduced to 0 hit points or being appeased by sacrifice, its influence escalates to stage 2. Days during which Byatis is reduced to 0 hit points or appeased do not count, and at the end of a day during which Byatis is reduced to 0 hit points or appeased, increase the number of days remaining until it escalates by 1d4.

DEFEAT

At influence stage 1, Byatis's influence can be defeated in one of the following ways.

Combat. If Byatis's avatar starts its turn at 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate, the influence ends. If it is reduced to 0 hit points but survives, the influence's escalation is delayed.

Sacrifice. If a creature with Intelligence 3 or higher is sacrificed to appease Byatis in the area, the influence's escalation is delayed (see above).

BYATIS

Elder influence, stage 2

Area 1-mi.-radius circle

Unnamable Doom DC 19

Nucleus proxy (avatar of Byatis)

Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

Restrained Proxy. Byatis's influence is centered on the avatar of Byatis (page 180). Its avatar is restrained and it can't be moved or free itself except by escalating its influence.

EFFECTS

Amnesia (DC 19). Whenever a creature first enters the area of influence since its last long rest or finishes a long rest there, it must succeed on a DC 19 Intelligence saving throw or lose all knowledge of Byatis, its influence, and associated lore (although it can be relearned normally). Memory lost in this way can be recovered by means of a *greater restoration* spell cast on the creature.

Quicken Influence. Other influences that overlap with Byatis's influence quicken. If the influence has a time-related component to its escalation, the time period is halved. If the influence's escalation is based on reaching a numerical milestone, progress it makes toward that milestone is doubled.

Lure (1/Day, DC 19). One creature of Byatis's choice (generally the most dangerous) that is under Byatis's *Amnesia* effect must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or become magically charmed. While it is charmed, the creature is incapacitated and moves to Byatis's avatar with only dim awareness of its surroundings, seeking the most direct route that would not damage it. The creature doesn't avoid opportunity attacks. Once it is within 15 feet of the avatar, it waits patiently and refuses to leave for 8 hours or until it is removed from the influence. It doesn't notice if it is harmed. 1d8 hours after the target arrives, the avatar begins attacking it. These attacks do not violate the lure effect and the creature remains charmed.

ESCALATION

When Byatis has killed 20 creatures charmed by its Lure, its influence escalates to stage 3. When Byatis is reduced to 0 hit points and regenerates, the number of creatures it must kill to escalate its influence increases by 1 unless it already increased since the last dawn.

DEFEAT

At influence stage 2, Byatis's influence can be defeated in one of the following ways.

Combat. If Byatis's avatar starts its turn at 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate, the influence ends. If it is reduced to 0 hit points but survives, it requires additional sacrifices to escalate (see above).

Sacrifice. If a creature with Intelligence 3 or higher is sacrificed to appease Byatis within the area of its influence, it can't use its Lure effect on the next day. At the next dawn, if there have been more days with these sacrifices than not since Byatis's influence reached stage 2, it deescalates to stage 1.

BYATIS

Elder influence, stage 3

Area 10-mi.-radius circle

Unnamable Doom DC 20

Nucleus proxy (avatar of Byatis)

Challenge 21 (33,000 XP)

Freed Proxy. Byatis's influence is centered on the avatar of Byatis (page 180). It can move normally but can't teleport beyond the area of its influence.

EFFECTS

Amnesia (DC 20). Whenever a creature first enters the area of influence since its last long rest or finishes a long rest there, it must succeed on a DC 20 Intelligence saving throw or lose all knowledge of Byatis, its influence, and associated lore (although it can be relearned normally). Memory lost in this way can be recovered by means of a *greater restoration* spell cast on the creature.

Intensify Influence. Whenever a creature in the area makes saving throws against a spell or effect created by an Elder Influence or an influence's proxy (including this influence), that creature rolls a d4 and subtracts the result from the saving throw.

Quicken Influence. Other Mythos influences that overlap with Byatis's influence escalate faster than normal. If the influence has a time-related component to its escalation, that time period is halved. If the influence's escalation is based on reaching a numerical milestone, progress it makes toward that milestone is doubled.

Lure (1/Day, DC 20). One creature of Byatis's choice (generally the most dangerous) that is under Byatis's *Amnesia* effect must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or become magically charmed. While it is charmed, the creature is incapacitated and moves to Byatis's avatar with only dim awareness of its surroundings, seeking the most direct route that would not damage it. The creature doesn't avoid opportunity attacks. Once it is within 15 feet of the avatar, it waits patiently and refuses to leave for 8 hours or until it is removed from the influence. It doesn't notice if it is harmed. 1d8 hours after the target arrives, the avatar begins attacking it. These attacks do not violate the lure effect and the creature remains charmed.

DEFEAT

At influence stage 3, Byatis's influence ends only when Byatis's avatar starts its turn at 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

AVATAR OF BYATIS

Huge aberration (proxy), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 225 (18d12 + 108)

Speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	22 (+6)	23 (+6)	21 (+5)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Con +12, Wis +12, Cha +11

Skills Arcana +11, Perception +12, Religion +11, Yog-So-thothery +12

Damage Resistances fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified

Senses blindsight 60 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 22

Languages Aklo, Common, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 20 (25,000 XP)

Influence. The avatar emanates Byatis's influence and gains the benefits of all the influence's traits and effects.

Innate Spellcasting. The avatar's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *dispel magic* (5th-level version), *dream, fly* (doesn't require concentration), *modify memory, resilient sphere*

3/day each: *forcecage, suggestion* (can target creatures through *dream*)

1/day each: *feeblemind, imprisonment, symbol, wish* (self only, replicate spells only)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the avatar fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Regeneration. The avatar regains 20 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point. If it takes cold damage, this feature doesn't function at the start of its next turn. The avatar dies only if it starts its turn at 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The avatar makes three attacks: one each with its bite, claw, and tentacles.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +13 to hit, reach 15 ft. or special, one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d8 + 7) piercing damage plus 11 (2d10) necrotic damage. This attack can reach anywhere within the influence by passing through an interdimensional portal that Byatis creates just for this purpose and which vanishes as soon as the attack is completed. It can only use this portal to hit a creature charmed by its Lure or that has damaged or affected the avatar previously. The portal can't be used to attack a target in the area of a *forbiddance* spell or other area warded against planar travel. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled on a hit (escape DC 17) and its hit point maximum is reduced by the amount of piercing damage it takes. Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained and the avatar can't bite another target.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d6 + 7) slashing damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled on a hit (escape DC 17). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained and the avatar can't claw another target.

Tentacles. Melee Weapon Attack: +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (4d4 + 7) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it is grappled on a hit (escape DC 17). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained and the avatar can't use its tentacles to attack another target.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

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

Bite (Costs 2 Actions). The avatar makes a bite attack.

Cast a Spell (Costs 3 Actions). The avatar casts a spell that it can use at least three times per day, expending a usage of the spell as normal.

Tentacles. The avatar attacks with its tentacles.