CORRUPTED ROC

As terrifyingly enormous a normal roc may be, one can rest assured that it is at least an animal. Its motivations are fueled by hunger and protection. However something in the Mirrored Steppes has changed these creatures. Their predator-minds have been fractured and torn and they chaotically thrash about the wilderness, ruthlessly attacking anything they see. The source of their insanity is an indescribable corruption that wisps around them like thick charcoal smoke, pouring from their beaks and eyes—twisting up and down their talons. They are reckless, aggressive, destructive, and relentless. They don't hunt to eat, they hunt to kill.

Tactics

The roc has seen the caravan's camp from hundreds of feet up. It swoops down to attack without warning or provocation. It is attracted to firelight and will target those around torches and campfires first. It will be indiscriminate about who it attacks and will likely take out many of those in the caravan first, but if someone starts attacking, it will shift its focus entirely to them.

While the roc has more than half its hit points, it engages in hit-and-run tactics. From 60 ft. up, the roc dives down at a group of creatures. It attacks and attempts to grapple up to two creatures with its beak and talons, then flying upward the remainder of its move speed (60 ft.), dropping grappled foes at the apex (dealing 21 (6d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall).

Once the roc is sorely wounded (less than half hit points), its tactics change. At this point, the roc lands next to whichever creature it wants to focus its ire on—often the one that has proven to be the strongest. It will make both attacks against that target, grappling up to twice to ensure the creature is stuck. On its next turn, the roc takes the Dash action to move up to 240 ft. high and drop the creature – causing 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall. The roc focuses its attention on a single creature in this fashion until slain. The roc will not relent and must be completely killed.

Scaling Tactics – Easier: The roc spends more time grounded, and does not use the "Dash 240 ft. high, then drop" tactic. Start the roc on the ground, attacking foes with talons and bite. As it becomes wounded, throw in the occasional "grab, fly, drop" tactics, using the roc's great speed to disperse the party.

Scaling Tactics - Harder: For a significantly more challenging fight that will likely prove lethal, have the roc pick up a single foe and fly off a great distance – say a half-mile. It then bites, tears, and drops its prey until slaying it, returning to repeat the process with the rest of the party one at a time.

The Corruption (Disease)

Locals in the Mirrored Steppes use the phrase "the corruption" to describe a highly infectious magical disease that affects many humanoids and beasts in the region. The disease is airborne, but cannot survive outside a host for long. As such, it passes easily from creatures to other creatures within close proximity.

Many believe that the Corruption is from an ancient curse that was put on the land and that the arrival of so many adventurers and treasure-hunters has resurrected the curse.

Creatures contracting the disease manifest symptoms at the end of their next long rest. Symptoms include engorgement of the afflicted creature's veins as they fill with thick semi-coagulated blood that darkens to a deep red or black, and a darkening of the eyes. Late stages of the disease include inky mist "leaking" from the victim's orifices.

The affected creature does not recover spent Hit Dice when taking a long rest, gains vulnerability to necrotic damage, and gains an aura of disease within 10 feet. At the start of each of the infected creature's turns, living creatures within the aura that are not infected with the disease suffer 9 (2d8) necrotic damage and must attempt a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, or contract the disease. If a creature's saving throw is successful, it cannot contract the disease for the next 24 hours, but still suffers damage from the aura as usual.

While infected, at the end of each long rest, the creature must attempt a new saving throw against this disease. A successful saving throw reduces the aura's radius by 5 ft.; a failure increases it by 5 feet. If the aura's radius decreases to 0, the creature is cured of the disease. If the aura's radius increases to 20 ft., the creature stops making saving throws against the disease at the end of each long rest and can no longer be cured of the disease without magical aid, requiring first a *remove curse* and then a *lesser restoration* or similar cast within the same hour.

Corrupted Roc:
Gargantuan monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 248 (16d20 + 80)
Speed 20 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +9, Wis +4, Cha +3
Skills Perception +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages –
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Traits

Keen Sight. The roc has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Corrupted. At the start of each of the roc's turns, each creature within 20 ft. of it takes 9 (2d8) necrotic damage and must attempt a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or contract The Corruption. If a creature's saving throw is successful, it cannot contract the disease for the next 24 hours, but still takes the necrotic damage.

Actions

Multiattack. The roc makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 27 (4d8 + 9) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 17). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and takes 18 (4d8) piercing damage at the end of the target's turn for every round the target is grappled, and the roc can't use its beak on another target.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit 23 (4d6 + 9) slashing damage plus 5 (1d6 + 2) poison damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 19). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the roc can't use its talons on another target.