

## Of Gods, Men, & Monsters: Darkness Rising Preview

**Of Gods, Men, & Monsters** is a series of PDF sourcebooks devoted to the background of roleplaying. While there is more than enough information within each issue to fuel an entire campaign, they have been written to enhance any gaming situation new deities, domains, spells, races, monsters, equipment, and rules sets.

**Darkness Rising**, the first in the series, focuses on the dark and dank depths of the world of nightmares and horror. This volume contains 15 brand new monsters, four prestige classes, 10 new feats, 10 dark gods, 9 new domains, 48 new spells, and numerous dark plots and forbidden places your characters can spend from hours to days exploring.

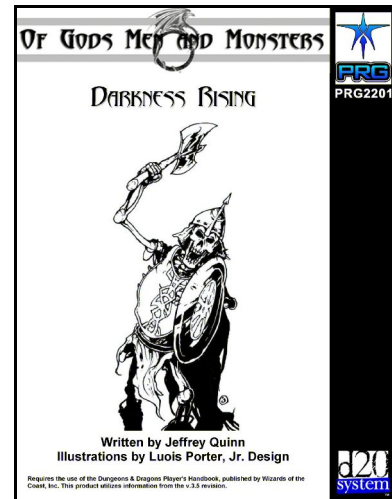
As a sample look at some of the vile creatures you can encounter within this PDF sourcebook, we have included the vile steel clawed imp as a sneak peak.

Other d20 publishers, and fans looking for as many short cuts while designing their adventures, will be happy to discover that all Open Gaming Content is easily located within our publications. We have even included a full d20 v.3.5 stat block for all of our creatures so that you can easily cut and paste them into your own documents!

Available only at RPGNow for only \$5.00 US!

Written by three time Ennie nominated writer Jeffrey Quinn and with artwork from **Fantasy Image Portfolio 1.1, 1.2, and 1.4** by Louis Porter, Jr. Design.

Coming December 2003!



### Steel Claw Imp

**Small Outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful)**

**Hit Die:** 5d8+5 (28 hp)

**Initiative:** +5

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**Armor Class:** 21 (+1 size, +5 Dex, +5 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 16

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +3/+1

**Attack:** Gore +5 melee (1d8+3); or 2 claws +8 melee (1d6+2/19-20); or flame tail strike +5 melee (2d6 fire damage)

**Full Attack:** Gore +5 melee (1d8+3); or 2 claws +8 melee (1d6+2/19-20); or flame tail strike +5 melee (2d6 fire damage)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Spell-like abilities

**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 5/good or silver, darkvision 60 ft., regeneration 2, immunity to poison, resistance to fire 5

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +5

**Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 21, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12

**Skills:** Bluff +11, Hide +13, Listen +9, Move Silently +13, Search +10, Spot +9, Survival +9

**Feats:** Dodge, Weapon Finesse (claw)

**Environment:** A lawful-evil aligned plane

**Organization:** Solitary or unit (2-6)

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always lawful evil

**Advancement:** 6-8 HD (Medium)

**Level Adjustment:** +4

*The bowels of Hell are known to spawn hideous creatures of terrible power, but these small devils appear to only be*

*an uncommon footnote in their arsenal. That is, until these beasts reach the battlefield, where they rend and tear with a speed and ferocity that is surely able to make the most devout man's blood run cold.*

*~Marcus Rein, Holy Knight of the Dawn*

The steel claw imp is born from an unholy blood ritual involving an imp and a chain devil (called a kyton). They normally appear as a small humanoid with wicked claws and horns made of naturally occurring infernal steel. Their thick hides are hairless and are a deep red to reddish-black color. Their long tails end in a continuously burning black flame that sheds no light, the same flame that can be witnessed in their cruel black eyes just before they strike the final blow against an opponent.

Steel clawimps can be found in the employ of powerful devil spellcasters, usually kyton sorcerers or wizards. However, a few mortals have been lucky enough to strike a bargain with one to serve as a familiar (see **Steel Claw Imps as Familiars** below). But, these mortals were eventually consumed by the steel claw imp's thirst for blood and flesh.

As with all devils, steel clawimps can speak Infernal, Celestial, and Draconic.

### Combat

The steel claw imp fights with its metallic claws in combat, relishing the feel of rending flesh under those wicked talons. Because of their claws' design and properties, the steel claw imp's claws have a higher critical threat range.

If they discover that the claws are ineffective against a foe, the steel clawimps will either attempt to gore their opponent with their metallic horns, or strike at them with their lightning fast tails. These tails deal 2d6 points of fire damage on a successful hit.

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A steel claw imp's natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as evil-aligned and lawful-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Steel claw imps also share many of the same traits as their lesser imp cousins and their infernal heritage, as well as the following special qualities.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will—*detect good*, *detect magic*, *invisibility* (self only); 1/day—*haste*. Caster level 8th.

Once per week a steel claw imp can use *commune* to ask six questions. Otherwise, this ability works as the spell (caster level 12th).

**Regeneration (Ex):** Steel claw imps take normal damage from silvered weapons, good-aligned weapons, and spells or effects with the good descriptor. A steel claw imp that loses a piece of its body regrows it in 2d6x10 minutes. Holding the severed member against the stump enables it to reattach instantly.

### Steel Claw Imps as Familiars

Only either the most powerful or the most insane mortal would attempt to bind a steel claw imp to his service, but it has happened in the past. If the character attempting to acquire a steel claw imp familiar does not meet the following requirements, the creature will immediately attempt to kill him.

**Requirements:** Improved Familiar feat, ability to acquire a new familiar, lawful evil alignment, arcane spell caster of at least 12th level, and a sacrifice of a 24,000 gp metal magic weapon.

### Open Game Content

The following is designated as Open Gaming Content.

**Steel claw imp:** CR 4; Small outsider (Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful); HD 5d8+5; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 16; Base Atk./Grapple +3/+1; Atk +5 melee (1d8+3/x2, gore), or +8 melee (1d6+2/19-20, 2 claws), or +5 melee (2d6 fire damage, flame tail strike); Full Atk +5 melee (1d8+3/x2, gore), or +8 melee (1d6+2/19-20, 2 claws), or +5 melee (2d6 fire damage, flame tail strike); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities; SQ Damage reduction 5/good or silver, darkvision 60 ft., regeneration 2, immunity to poison, resistance to fire 5; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +5.

Str 14, Dex 21, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +13, Listen +9, Move Silently +13, Search +10, Spot +9, Survival +9; Dodge, Weapon Finesse (claw).

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will—*detect good*, *detect magic*, *invisibility* (self only); 1/day—*haste*. Caster level 8th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Once per week a steel claw imp can use *commune* to ask six questions. Otherwise, this ability works as the spell (caster level 12th).

**Regeneration (Ex):** Steel claw imps take normal damage from silvered weapons, good-aligned weapons, and spells or effects with the good descriptor. A steel claw imp that loses a piece of its body regrows it in 2d6x10 minutes. Holding the severed member against the stump enables it to reattach instantly.

