

Introduction

“Well, your highness, I’m afraid I come bearing grave news. No- No, please, sit down. Let me explain.

The first thing I noticed was that a star had gone out. Now, this does happen, no need for alarm, it’s just quite rare to actually notice it in one’s lifetime. Stars live for billions of years, you know- Yes, yes. Sorry. I’ll get back on topic.

Anyways, the missing star was one in Io’s Crown, one of the lesser ones near the third prong. So, I went to update the charts of the constellation. When I opened the drawer, I was surprised to see that there were many revisions to this one constellation, done by my predecessors. I did tell you how long stars live, so to have so many in the same area go out in the span of less than a century is unheard of.

So, I took it upon myself to map out the missing stars and, ah, the pattern- the pattern seems to be forming a line, your highness. I’m afraid we are in the path of this... great extinguishing.

N-no your majesty, I admire your drive, but I’m afraid we can’t start planning for such a distant date. You see, it takes even light itself a vast amount of time to travel from distant stars to here. Those suns that we only just saw vanish were likely quenched tens of thousands, maybe even

millions of years ago, and many more have been snuffed since. So, taking the distance between the missing stars and the time between them going dark, I- I made some calculations. Please sit down, your highness.

Whatever it is, it's already almost here."

- Argosta Denelleri, Seventh Royal Astronomer of the Empire of Terretu

The universe grows. As time marches on, new life is born, stars flare into brilliant light and the furthestmost boundaries of existence push outwards at an ever-increasing rate. Whatever great, unmatched force first exploded everything into existence is still pouring energy into reality, inflating the universe like a great balloon. While there are great benefits to this, such as countless new worlds being spawned on the fringes of the cosmos for inhabitation and exploration, there is a downside as well. As all space expands at a faster and faster rate, some genius astronomers and physicists have drawn an unsettling conclusion. In trillions of years the gravity and atomic bonds that hold matter together will be outpaced by the spatial expansion, stranding even the tiniest molecules an impossible distance away from each other and dooming the universe to a cold, lonely death. However, whatever divine creative force that was responsible for the moment of universal conception also provided a solution, to restart the

cosmic cycle and prevent the lonely eternity. The universe grows, like a field of wheat. And so it shall be harvested like one too.

We have spoken of the beast-machine's Why. Now, let us discuss the What. Towering over houses and dwarfing men as if they were but blades of grass, the colossus stands nearly a hundred feet tall, and just as wide. Its vast pentagonal body is supported by five legs with broad hoof-like feet, the entire thing coated in an organic hull of blood-red iron. Atop its back are huge grinding cogs and an immense blazing heart-like growth, with exposed ventricles billowing out smoke like the chimneys of some nightmarish furnace. Each of its five yellow eyes, one on each side and all of them large enough to swim in, have dozens of fractured pitch-black irises that roam and shift independently of each other. And as for the thing's mouth, "mouth" is far too gentle a word. Grinding wheels of teeth that spin in both directions at once, hooked chains and tongues with grasping spurs, and vats of boiling slaver to break down anything that enters that terrible threshold. Colossal mounted spools of living barbed wire hang out from the underside to surround the mouth, and each great mechanical shoulder is adorned with edifices of bone. There is no difference between muscle and metal, flexing and groaning with the strain of their own strength. The

Harvester is a factory of death that walks on legs, and its form makes no attempt to disguise or glorify this.

The living machine sent to eat the universe is a near-unmatched threat, rivaled only by other avatars of destruction. It boasts a huge array of devastating abilities, built to dismantle worlds as efficiently as possible. It cares not for efforts to resist it, as its ascendant mind exists on a scale too large for even the greatest mortal wills to register. Throngs of people filled with valor, emotion and soul are indistinguishable from the dirt they walk on. That being said, the Harvester does have responses to those animate chunks of matter that might seek to flee. Razor-sharp filaments that launch from their spools to seek out even the tiniest movements, and adjustable pistoning limbs for launching itself in pursuit. Of course, the vast majority of the universe is inert, so most of the destroyer's arsenal is more suited to such things. Its very gaze compresses matter into infinitesimally small chunks, in order to store it within its inescapable belly. It bites into planets, coring away huge chunks of them with its drilling, blazing teeth. Barrages of annihilating bullets to break down bonds between molecules, to swallow the world more easily. And of course, to resist the dangers of existence such as the heat of stars or tremendous impacts its body hardens in response to physical trauma, bringing damage down to a manageable rate.

It may quickly patch itself up with umbilical appendages that weld flesh back together, or enter an inert state where it uses the vast wealth of material it has eaten to rebuild itself from any injury.

Once its material surroundings are sufficiently pulverized, the Harvester sets about eliminating the more abstract concepts of existence. Thoughts, magic, energy, time and space themselves are not exempt from the Harvester's all-encompassing task of annihilation. The method it uses to do so also serves to accelerate its travels, making itself larger and larger relative to the world as it shaves the universe away. A ring of bone-spires rises from the beast-machine's back, tracing a large seam of the world with crackling energy. Then, an implosion of unmatched potency occurs as it opens its mouth to the widest degree. Space collapses, and the universe shrinks as distance itself is erased alongside any fragments of existence unlucky enough to find themselves within the area. While travelling between distant stars, the Harvester maintains a version of this gruesome ability to shorten the distance as it travels, bringing itself to speeds impossible by any mortal laws of science.

Over billions of years the thing carries out its grim work, millenia passing in the blink of one of its eyes. The Harvester is patient. Sometimes, it may fall into the gravity well of a sun, or find itself bound by the strongest

magic the dimensions can muster. The Harvester is patient. Millions of years spent lying in wait will not shake its resolve, looking for the slightest falter in its prison as the suns themselves fade and even the most ancient magic degrades over time. Whether it eats a world now or aeons in the future matters not. The Harvester is patient. It will work its way through the realm, and once an entire plane has been reduced to the last speck and even the empty space left behind has been swallowed up, the great celestial mechanism in its brain-core shifts. And then it is on to the next world. And the next after that. And after trillions and trillions of years, when not even nothingness exists outside its belly, the loyal machine shall return to its master and spit out the seed of creation so that the universe may be grown once more. So it goes.

How and When to use it

Telegraph its attacks. Got it? Good! Now, also make sure to *TELEGRAPH ITS ATTACKS*. The Harvester doesn't have a traditional multiattack, instead having almost all of its attacks being some form of AoE. So, to make up for it and ensure that it stays at the proper level of damage-dealing, pretty much every attack is incredibly punishing. Some of them just deal incredible amounts of damage, like BORE, while others have

nasty effects for dealing further damage and locking targets down, like PLUCK or CONDENSE. RAZE, being the de facto final smash here, forces you to telegraph its attacks with the round-long windup and clearly outlined hit zone. SUNDER and TRAMPLE are the attacks that you probably don't need to warn about several turns in advance, but that's because they are relatively simple and don't deal stupid amounts of damage, or in TRAMPLE's case are almost constantly being used. Telegraphing attacks can be simple as describing the Harvester's behavior before it launches them, which the attached prose document can help with. This not only makes the fight a bit more fair, it also ramps the tension up by making every attack seem far more imposing and monumental. Our little gamer rodent brains have learned that the bigger the windup, the scarier the attack. To make the attacks even scarier, definitely make sure to describe the effects they have on the surroundings.

Speaking of effects on the surroundings, the main horror of the Harvester is one of scale. The thing is just *too big*. The most important part of cosmic horror isn't tentacles and psychic attacks and insanity, it's making the characters feel utterly powerless and insignificant. That's another reason that the Harvester uses almost exclusively AoE attacks: the party, as mighty as they are, are still beneath its notice. It rarely ever targets them

specifically with an attack, which reads as it barely registering their presence. So, as weird as this may sound, don't focus attacks on the party, or rather don't describe the Harvester as doing so. What you should describe, however, is the thing going to town on the surrounding area. The Harvester is here to eat the world, and its attacks *actually do that*. The battlefield becomes more and more perilous as vast chasms, craters and fields of rubble are created. PLUCK actively just deletes any NPCs weak enough to not matter in a harrowing display as they are dragged screaming into the air, which is also one of the Harvester's multiple ways of resisting the power of the action economy. So, don't just have the party encounter the Harvester in a big simple field. Give it something to destroy! Give it buildings to dwarf in comparison, give it terrified crowds to decimate! Pull out the biggest map you got, not just because you'll need it to fit the damn thing. Speaking of big maps, feel free to treat the Harvester itself as part of the terrain. It's certainly big enough, after all. Most of the threat is for things below it, which is why it might be fun to have players fighting atop its back. SUNDER and REPOSITION can be used if they're starting to get cheesy with it, and if you're feeling particularly vindictive then combo REPOSITION and BORE to quickly dump players down and then slam the Harvester's

entire 80-kiloton ass down on them. However, that would be a very mean thing to do.

One of the more unique abilities the Harvester has (at least, as far as I could find) is its damage cap per round. This one ability serves multiple purposes. First, it really helps resist the almighty power of the action economy. It doesn't matter if a large warband of high-level adventurers with a gaggle of various pets and minions come after it, they still won't be able to chip it down any faster. Granted, the damage cap is still pretty high, so players should still be able to feel like they're making progress and having an effect on it. The multiple body parts help with this, as they make sure there's still a way for them to observe their progress as they take out eyes and legs. One flaw in the 5e system itself is that it very much becomes a damage-focused action rush, which in my opinion wastes a lot of the creativity that the medium is built around. So, if only a limited amount of damage can do anything, then the players are forced to go after other goals as well. Everyone gets to explore other roles and strategies, such as trying to slow it down or heal or minimize collateral damage. Reward this creativity! The fight will without fail take a long time, as is prone to happening with high-CR monsters, so this is an important way to avoid tedium, alongside taking breaks and such. Describe the relieved flow of

evacuees as party members help get them out of harm's way, or how it stumbles into a pitfall trap they set up. Players may avoid these kinds of things normally due to perceiving them as a waste of a turn, so the Harvester makes it so that that's no longer an issue. They'll also absolutely get time to try out all their ideas, as the damage cap also means that a fight against the Harvester will last longer. Combined with MAINTAIN, at max damage-dealing from the party the fight should still last a minimum of five rounds, which is a lot longer than most single-enemy fights in my experience. Again, make sure to take breaks and pull out new abilities to avoid tedium! This also gives you plenty of time to show off all the Harvester's attacks, and therefore allow the party to get used to them and start recognizing the telegraphed signs, which is super gratifying. That's also why it's instakill-proof, in order to make the party face it like the overwhelming power it is as opposed to an anticlimactic ending that makes all but one player sit around feeling cheated out of a chance to be cool. However, in the interest of fairness there's still a chance for spell slots and the like to be recovered and the Harvester does suffer some ill effects, so that nobody gets blocked from ever doing anything cool by an ability they didn't expect to exist.

Finally, there comes the daunting task of actually defeating the Harvester, and what comes after. It's a pretty brutal fight so casualties amongst the party are a likely risk, alongside all the untold property damage and NPC deaths the Harvester is prone to causing. It'll be an exhausting, grueling, desperate ordeal for the characters, so definitely give them a moment to appreciate their victory, despite the heavy cost. Let them shed their tears, bemoan their losses, and let loose their victory cries. Then describe the sudden, jolting thrum of the fallen behemoth's innermost mechanisms awakening as it begins to slowly start repairing itself. Before fighting the Harvester for the first time, the party may have asked themselves "What is it capable of" or "How bad could it be"? Well, now they know it can be, in fact, quite bad. Instead of letting the fear of the unknown that cosmic horror is famed for fade away, it is instead replaced by a different unknown: *What will it cost us this time? Will it ever end? Is there anything we can even do?* That kind of hopelessness is what this style of horror is all about. Of course, it would be cruel to give the party no options whatsoever. And they have a minimum of five days before it wakes up again, more if they set things up to keep damaging it and setback its repairs. They can get people out, prepare as much as they can, and most

importantly they can think and learn. They can't ever really kill it, but what they can do is access its core.

The Harvester's core is a different kind of problem than the rest of it. While the full being represents an immediate, life-or-death challenge, the core is a moral challenge. If they manage to enter the broken body of the Harvester and refer to their own arcane knowledge, they may be able to control the mechanism that guides it through existence towards its next target. And there they have a choice. Do they leave it here, ready to rampage once more in the still-fresh wounds of the world with many of its obstacles already removed? Or do they send it to another realm far away, saving their world in exchange for dooming another? The party knows what it's like to suffer the initial incomprehensible assault of the Harvester for the first time, so it's a fate they might be reluctant to bestow upon others. Hell, if you need a reason for the Harvester to show up, it could be because some other dimension was desperate enough to send it away, and the party's plane just drew the short straw. Neither option is entirely just, so it's ultimately up to the party whether they want to try and contain it in their world or pass the burden off. There are any number of ways they could set up a trap for the Harvester, such as throwing it into the sun or having one selfless hero remain inside it to guide it into the farthest, emptiest recesses

of space for the rest of their life. But all of those require time to set up, time that may result in more carnage. And ultimately, no solution is permanent. The Harvester is patient, and inevitable. No grand cosmic victory can be drawn from its clutches, but perhaps a small, fleeting mortal victory can. A peace that will end, a triumph that changes nothing, lasting only for a paltry amount of time compared to the billions of years that pass in the blink of an eye for the monster. But maybe, for the weary heroes and a world that yet surges with life, that's enough.

Harvester

Gargantuan Aberration, True Neutral

CR: 30

AC: 22 (Iron Hull)

650/650 HP

Prof. Bonus: +9

Speed: 30 ft (See TRAMPLE)

Languages: Celestial, does not heed communications of other beings

STR: 30(+10) DEX: 7(-2) CON: 30(+10) INT: 22(+6) WIS: 15(+2)

CHA: 15(+2)

Saving Throws: CON +19, WIS +11, STR +19

Skills: Perception +11

Senses: Darkvision 200 ft, Truesight 300 ft, Perception 19

Damage Resistances: Fire, Acid, Poison, Psychic

Damage Immunities: Bludgeoning/piercing/slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't Adamantine

Condition Immunities: Prone, Charmed, Frightened, Poisoned, Exhaustion

UNFATHOMABLE: The Harvester's hitbox is divided into the main body and five legs spaced roughly evenly around it. Each leg occupies a 20x20 ft cylinder reaching up to the main body. The main body occupies a cylindrical area 90 ft across, extending upwards 50 ft. The bottom of the main body is treated as 80 ft above ground level, unless it has been lowered by an effect or damage to the legs.

The Harvester's legs each have their own health pool of 100 HP, acting separately from the monster's total HP. If a leg falls to 0 HP, the main body takes 90 damage and the leg becomes incapacitated and cannot be

used until it is healed or otherwise restored. If two adjacent legs are incapacitated, the main body falls.

Each of the Harvester's five eyes also have 40 HP, counted separately from the total HP, and cannot be used when at 0 HP. When an eye is destroyed, the main body takes 40 damage. If all eyes are destroyed, the Harvester is Blinded until repaired.

UNBREAKABLE: The Harvester and all its parts cannot take more than a total of 160 damage from all sources in one round. Any damage taken beyond this amount is ignored. Damage to the main body taken when a leg, repair appendage or eye is destroyed can exceed the maximum. If the Harvester is Incapacitated and its damage cap is reached, damage will not be ignored until the end of the current turn.

The Harvester is immune to falling damage, and whenever it would normally take falling damage all other creatures on the ground within a 100 ft radius must pass a DC 17 DEX save or be knocked prone. Anything caught underneath the falling body must pass a DC 17 DEX save or take 60 bludgeoning damage, taking half as much on a successful save.

The Harvester's HP cannot drop below 0. If the Harvester is reduced to 0 HP, it does not die. Instead, it falls unconscious and begins to regenerate HP at a rate of 5 per hour (or 120 per day). Upon reaching 600 HP, the Harvester is no longer unconscious and may act normally.

While the Harvester is Unconscious, creatures may make a DC 14 Investigation check and then a DC 20 Arcana check to access the Harvester's brain-core and force it to move to another location or plane of existence of their choosing upon waking up. These checks can be made once per day each. If the Investigation check is succeeded once, it is no longer necessary and creatures may proceed directly to the Arcana check.

UNDENIABLE: The Harvester is immune to any effects that would instantly kill it or otherwise remove it from existence(e.g. Vorpal Sword, Power Word Kill). This includes the effects of the Wish spell or other wish-granting items, although it can still be affected by the results of a wish(e.g. using another spell with a wish, or wishing for a giant boulder to fall on top of it). Instead of being killed or removed, the Harvester loses all remaining Legendary actions for the round and has its damage cap reset. These effects also trigger whenever the Wish spell is used on it.

While conscious, the Harvester is immune to any effects other than its own that would send it to a different plane of existence or otherwise transport it more than 10 miles away. While conscious, any effects that alter the Harvester's form last for a maximum of 1 round, or 10 minutes outside of combat.

A spellcaster that has a spell negated by any of these effects may make a DC 18 save of their spellcasting ability to regain the wasted spell slot. For other expendable abilities that would be negated, the character may make a DC 18 check of the most relevant ability score.

Actions:

TRAMPLE: After the Harvester's main body moves, all legs are moved to a new space within 30 ft of the main body.

All creatures that would be within the legs' new spaces must pass a DC 18 DEX save in order to spend their movement and exit the space before the foot comes down. Upon failing the save, creatures take 3D8+20 bludgeoning damage and are Prone and Restrained under the foot until it moves. Creatures may make a DC 20 Athletics check to move out from

underneath the foot and escape the restraint as an action on their turn. They do not roll with disadvantage on this check.

This ability deals double damage to objects and structures. Huge or larger creatures take halved damage from this ability and have advantage on the DEX save.

PLUCK: The Harvester selects a 100 ft cube placed level with the ground, centered at any point horizontally within 70 ft of the Harvester's main body. Upon activating this ability, up to 50 creatures within the area with 40 or less maximum HP are immediately killed by way of a wire impaling them and dragging them into the mouth. If this portion of the ability activates, all other creatures witnessing the event must pass a WIS save with a DC equal to half the number of creatures killed or 15, whichever is higher. On failing the save, they become Frightened until the end of their next turn.

For all other creatures, a Melee Weapon Attack is made. +15 to hit, single target. 3D6+10 piercing damage, on hit target becomes grappled and is pulled 25 ft up into the air. At the start of a grappled creature's turn, it may make a DC 18 STR save to escape the grapple. Otherwise, it is pulled another 25 ft towards the mouth. The Harvester may use a Legendary action to pull all grappled creatures another 10 feet in.

If a creature is pulled 80 ft upwards into the Harvester's mouth, it is no longer pulled higher and instead takes 2D8+10 slashing damage and 4D8 fire damage at the start of each of its turns until it escapes the grapple.

BORE: The Harvester's main body drops downwards until it hits the ground. Before it drops, all creatures beneath the main body may use their reaction to move out from underneath the body by spending movement or otherwise transporting themselves. Everything remaining underneath takes 40 bludgeoning damage, 3D10+10 slashing damage and 60 force damage.

Creatures and objects buried more than 20 ft below the surface of the area only take the force damage. All creatures on the ground in a 100 ft radius must pass a DC 20 DEX save or be knocked prone.

After damage is dealt, the area underneath the main body becomes a bottomless chasm occupying a cylinder with a width of 60 ft.

This ability deals double damage to objects and structures. This ability cannot be used more than once per round.

CONDENSE: The Harvester selects a number of points within 200ft of it equal to the number of intact eyes that it can see from. A sphere 25 ft across centered on each point forms, and all loose material and terrain within the sphere is destroyed and compressed into a ball half an inch across.

The first time any creature enters the sphere, it must pass a DC 20 CON save or take 3D10 force damage and be pulled 10 ft closer to the center. In addition, at the start of their turn every creature within the sphere takes 1D10 force damage and must make a DC 18 CON save or be pulled another 10 ft closer to the center, even up through the air. Creatures within the sphere have their movement speed halved.

Until the end of the Harvester's next turn, it may use a Legendary Action to increase the width of each sphere by 10 ft. At the end of the Harvester's next turn the spheres fade, leaving behind round craters. If this ability is used two rounds in a row, instead of creating new spheres the old spheres may instead be maintained.

This ability deals double damage to objects and structures. This ability cannot be used more than once per round.

MAINTAIN: (2/Day) An appendage emerges from atop the Harvester's back. The appendage is a large construct, and has 50 HP counted

separately from the total HP. DEX saves made by the appendage have +5 instead of -2. The appendage is connected to the main body by an umbilical cord. Any damage done to the umbilical cord is dealt to the appendage.

If the appendage is not reduced to 0 HP before the start of the Harvester's next turn, it may then select one of the following effects to trigger before retracting back into the main body:

- Up to two of the Harvester's eyes are restored back to full HP.
- One of the Harvester's legs is restored back to full HP.
- The Harvester heals back 80 HP to the main body without restoring any destroyed legs or eyes.

If the appendage is destroyed before the start of the Harvester's next turn, the amount of healing done is halved and the Harvester takes 5D10 damage.

RAZE: (1/Day) The Harvester highlights a cross-shaped horizontal area centered on itself, with each arm being 60 ft wide and 300 ft long. When used outside of direct combat, this area may be increased until each arm is 5 miles long and 1 mile across. It then begins charging the ability.

During the charging period, it cannot move or take other actions, including Legendary Actions.

At the start of its next turn, the Harvester erases the space within the cross. This includes all other structures, terrain, creatures, distances and demiplanes located within the area reaching up to the edge of the atmosphere and down to the core of the planet/plane. Areas of the Ethereal or Astral planes that overlap with the current plane are also affected. Everything in the cross (except the Harvester and any creatures directly on top of it) is first annihilated in a flash of energy before the space itself is

collapsed, leaving no trace behind and pulling the seams of the world closed around the missing chunk. Terrain around the edges of the cross is pulled inwards to fill the gap. The overall size of the planet/plane this ability is used on is reduced by an appropriate amount.

Any creatures visually observing the launch of this ability must pass a DC 20 CON save or become Blinded until they receive magical healing. All creatures that can hear within 10 miles of the Harvester must pass a DC 22 CON save or take 10D6 thunder damage and be knocked prone, taking half as much damage on a successful save.

After using this ability, the Harvester undergoes an imperceptibly small increase in size.

Legendary Actions: (3/Round)

SUNDER: Ranged weapon attack, +15 to hit, 300 ft, single target. 2D10 bludgeoning damage and 5D6 necrotic damage, on hit target must pass a DC 18 CON save or have all of their speeds reduced by 15 ft and their AC reduced by 1 until they receive healing.

CONDENSE (Expand spheres)

PLUCK (Reel in targets)

MAINTAIN (2 Actions)

REPOSITION: This ability cannot be used two rounds in a row. This ability may be used using a reaction. After using this ability, the Harvester cannot move until the end of its next turn.

Upon activating this ability, draw a line anywhere alongside the Harvester that intersects with at least one leg and does not intersect with the main body. The Harvester's position is flipped over this line, including

the main body and all other legs. Creatures on the Harvester's back are dislodged.

Before the flip is completed, all creatures that would be under the legs' new positions are targeted for TRAMPLE by the incoming legs.

Thanks to HairBearHero, Evelyn, Lucky38, Bimgus, CountBongo, Bravest Bats, TigerT20, Rcgyl, Sir Kill-A-Lot, Dioiioib and my irl homies

Inspired by War of The Worlds, Chrono Trigger, the artwork of Zdzislaw Bekasinski, the works of H.P. Lovecraft, Amnesia: A Machine For Pigs, Hellstar Remina, DUSK, and that one Kurzgesagt video

Prose Document:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jgvM5hBIWMIIIGFVuxjhdTHNPcOROqZZ6reFSWLnTgu0/edit?usp=sharing>