

Xaver

by Ed Greenwood (from the "Creature Catalog", Dragon Magazine #94)

FREQUENCY: Very rare

NO. APPEARING: 1-4

ARMOR CLASS: 2

MOVE: 9"

HIT DICE: 2+4

% IN LAIR: See below

TREASURE TYPE: See below

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 slash

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-5

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Metal corrosion

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Immune to metals, poisons, heat, and electricity

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 45%

INTELLIGENCE: Average to high

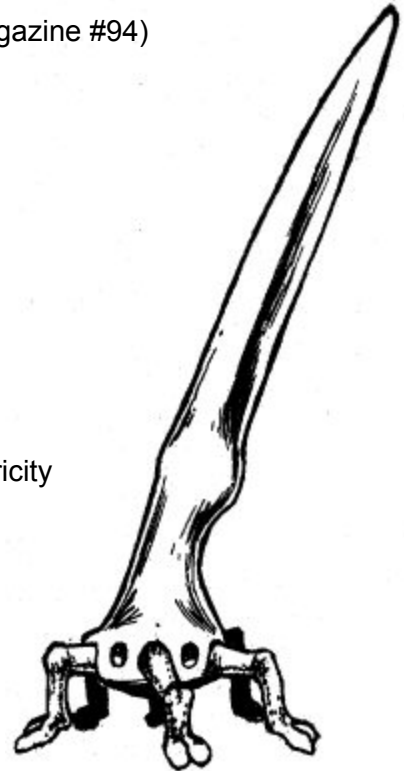
ALIGNMENT: Neutral

SIZE: S to M (3' to 6' tall)

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

Attack/Defense Modes: Nil

LEVEL/X.P. VALUE: IV/175+3/hp



Xavers are curious creatures of unknown origin and thankful rarity which, like rust monsters, have a diet consisting entirely of ferrous metals and alloys (such as iron, steel, and mithril or adamantite alloys). Unlike rust monsters, xavers are intelligent and will not be "bought off" with a meal of a few spikes or nails when they see an easily won suit of armor or much weaponry.

Xavers normally inhabit rocky lairs, but are sometimes found in treasure hoards in which they have concealed themselves. (Such hoards will have no ferrous materials in them, of course.) There is a 1% chance that any hoard initially determined to contain magical ferrous armor, shields, or weapons will also contain one or more xavers; then eliminate the metallic items from the hoard.

Xavers have silvery, smooth metallic bodies, and are flat and tapered with a bulbous base at one end. They resemble short swords or long swords. The ring of the base of a xaver is studded with six green, hard, faceted eyes that resemble gems. An 8-inch-long leg is set between each eye. A xaver lies motionless at the approach of creatures and radiates no body heat (thus being invisible to infravision) or sound. Instead of breathing, it absorbs solar heat and needed gases through the long "blade" of its body. It has no senses of hearing or smell, but has 9" infravision as well as normal vision.

Metal of any sort will pass harmlessly through a xaver's body as if the latter did not exist, and metallic weapons used against the xaver will do no damage. Weapons of wood, stone, and other materials do normal damage. Heat and electrical attacks do no damage, but the xaver will conduct these through its body and pass the damage on to anyone in contact with it. A xaver suffers +1 hp per HD of damage from all cold attacks. Poison has no effect upon them.

Any ferrous metal that contacts a xaver will crack and fall into shards within 1 segment. The xaver will have caused the metal to corrode (though the corrosion does not resemble rust) and will then attempt to eat the metallic shards for nourishment. As a xaver eats metal it grows slightly; several suits of armor or about ten weapons might make one grow 1" or so.

Though xavers cannot control their corrosive powers, they can choose not to touch metallic items in order to lure victims wearing lots of armor to come closer to them. Non-ferrous metals will not be corroded and destroyed, though they can be consumed for nourishment if necessary.

Xavers scuttle about on their legs, retracting them with blinding speed if they see danger approaching. They can cut victims with the razor-sharp edges of their "blades" like wielded swords, doing 2-5 hp damage. Usually they swing their bodies in wild, circular slashes as they go into their "battle dancing." Xavers do not rust or corrode, and rust monsters cannot harm or eat them.

A xaver about to give birth goes on an eating spree, building its body size to the maximum in order to provide sufficient nourishment for its offspring. Young are born live and singly, and have full powers at birth; young have 1+2 HD and are about 3 long, growing rapidly if the food supply allows.