

“Kaban was there one moment and gone the next. He’d been jabbering on about seeing numenera, yeah? Cyphers, he said, all laid out neat and proper. When I turned ’round, there weren’t no cyphers, nor Kaban neither. We thought he nicked them and run off. But Kaban came back. Parts of him, anyhow, dropping out of the sky like soft red hail, all bitten, chewed, and with the insides showing.”

~Tati Coulter, explorer

*Beware, beware the
Nowhere Man/
for snatch and grab is his
pretty plan/
Quick, tell a riddle and
stump him true!/
Elsewise he’ll steal away
with you.
~nursery rhyme
of the trawl*

A trawl exists partially out of phase, but when it’s hungry, it rests one welcoming hand in reality, cupping something tantalizing, such as a book, a compass, or a numenera device in its invisible palm, apparently free for the taking. But the item is bait for a trap, and the victim who falls for it is snatched out of phase, where she must face a hungry trawl by herself.

A grim nursery rhyme describes how thieving children must pacify the “Nowhere Man” or be eaten. The rhyme may actually be about trawls. According to the rhyme, those who pacify a trawl with a clever riddle not only avoid becoming dinner but also get a treat from the Nowhere Man’s bag of gifts.

Motive: Hungers for flesh

Environment: Almost anywhere in the Steadfast and the Beyond

Health: 12

Damage Inflicted: 4 points

Armor: 2

Movement: Short

Modifications: Speed defense as level 3 due to size

Combat: If a character grabs for an item that’s bait held by a trawl, he must succeed on a Speed defense roll modified one step to his detriment due to surprise. On a failed roll, the victim is pulled out of phase and disappears from the perceptions of his companions (if any).

From the victim’s point of view, the environment goes grey and dim, hazy at the edges. But more important, he sees the hungry trawl that’s got him by the wrist.

The trawl attempts to retain its grip and attacks with its bite. While a victim remains in the trawl’s grip, its bite ignores Armor. A victim can free himself from the grip with a successful Might defense roll. If he kills the trawl or moves away from it a distance equal to or greater than long range, he returns to reality. If the victim moved a significant distance while out of phase, he risks fusing with whatever solid objects exist back in reality.

Under normal circumstances, a trawl can’t be seen or affected by normal phase creatures and effects.

Interaction: Trawls can communicate, but they usually do so only to intimidate prey that has been pulled out of phase. Sometimes a trawl spares a victim that delights it with a joke or riddle, but such mercy is rare.

Use: Few things are more surprising to player characters than a trawl-napping.

Loot: A trawl baits its trap with various needful and interesting things. A defeated trawl has several oddities (such as a book, a compass, a glowing decoration, and so on), 3d6 shins, 1d6 cyphers, and usually at least one artifact in its bag of bait.



GM Intrusion: *When the PC is snatched from reality and rendered out of phase, a portion of his belongings and equipment stays real, which means that he is without some of his normal weapons, cyphers, and so on while fighting for his life.*