

# Writing Samples - Alex Muller-Nicholson

## [Lore Item Descriptions: Bestiary Entries](#)

Five journal entries for an in-game bestiary in the style of The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt.

## [Cinematic Script: Rumble](#)

A three-page scene between two characters in a post-apocalyptic survival action RPG. Juniper and Christos deal with a hostile presence aside from the one hanging between them.

## [Event Chain: Bizarre Stars](#)

A short event chain in the style of Stellaris. The event chain provides the player with a couple of choices that affect its outcome in one way or another.

## Bestiary Entries - Lore Item Descriptions - max 500 words

| Monster Name     | Bestiary Entry  | Word Count |
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| <p>Shrabacci</p> | <p><i>I told you before, no normal lass has teeth like that! - Bree of Blandare</i></p> <p>Beauty is said to be in the eye of the beholder, but if that beholder has hold of your eye, it's harder to appreciate their charms. A Shrabacci is an unusual monster, as it could be present in any room one finds themselves in. Driven by twisted impulses, it conceals its true identity with exceptional skill, enticing its victims willingly into its embrace. Shrabacci are known only to be stunningly beautiful in whatever form they present themselves as. As such, all fortunate enough to be blessed with irresistible good looks and grace should be treated with extreme caution, for one can never truly know if a Shrabacci lurks within the flesh of a being so desirous.</p> <p>These deceitful beauties take additional pleasure in hiding in plain view; celebrated and adored by those who live beside them. Shrabacci are patient monsters, delaying the gratification of their murderous appetites until they've seduced their victims sufficiently. Perhaps its meal tastes sweeter when it voluntarily comes along, begging and pleading to spend a night with their heart's one desire.</p> <p>Only one man is known to have been fortunate enough to survive an encounter with a Shrabacci, albeit through serendipitous intervention rather than skill on his part. Brogan of Blandare, a miner, recounted a night of absolute terror to his older sister after escaping the savage jaws of what he thought was his sweetheart Paulina. Celebrated for her beauty, Brogan had considered himself the luckiest of all Blandare's menfolk when Paulina invited him to visit her chambers after nightfall. It was only upon relieving himself of his breeches that Paulina's form melted like wax, revealing the foul maw of the Shrabacci within. As it lunged for his quivering flesh, it pierced its clawed foot on the mining pick Brogan had hastily discarded as he'd disrobed. A momentary howl of pain from the monster gave the lad a chance to escape, so he fled home, bare arse to the moonlight and screaming in horror.</p> <p>The next morning, there was no trace of Paulina. Her cottage was abandoned, and the only evidence to support Brogan's panicked claims were black bloodstains on the floor where the mining pick still lay, alongside Brogan's undergarments. From that fateful encounter, it can be assumed that Shrabacci are highly averse to the touch of silver, for Brogan the Lucky Bastard, as he is now known, was carrying his specialist silver pick that night. He'd been mining for gemstones that afternoon, hoping to impress his paramour with a diamond.</p> | <p>430</p> |
| <p>Viustails</p> | <p><i>Viustails...horrible bastards. Once upon a time, a scorpion shagged a seagull and the rest is history. At least that's what Pa told me about them, anyway. -</i></p>  | <p>280</p> |

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|                  | <p><i>Harthkar Brannach, Trapper</i></p> <p>Viustails can very easily be mistaken for the common Forktail, or to the lesser-trained eye, a Wyvern. This rare and deadly creature can be identified by the scorpion-like stinger it wields at the end of its tail, which may go unnoticed at first glance due to the beast's avian visage. Unlikely as it sounds, one might be forgiven for assuming that at some point along the evolutionary chain, seagulls and scorpions were perhaps more than friendly acquaintances. The only other explanation for the Viustail's existence is that of a Mage's spell gone awry, but alas, it matters not to the beast's unlucky victim.</p> <p>These winged miscreants use their hooked stingers to inject their prey with a paralysing poison, before ripping the immobile casualty's head clean asunder using its powerful birdlike beak. Smaller than your average flying devil, a Viustail uses its superior vision to identify its targets from the skies, before diving from above, barb first. Thankfully, the cocky caw of the Viustail is audible just long enough to be considered a warning bell, for those trained to recognise it.</p> <p>To counter the effects of the poison, one should hastily imbibe a draught of Golden Oriole, and make every effort to avoid its aerial attacks. Should it be brought to the ground long enough for blows to be struck, a crossbow or long-handled weapon is advisable, particularly if coated with Draconid Oil. Make no mistake; avoidance is certainly the best strategy for all but the most seasoned of monster hunters.</p> |            |
| <p>Kraglulds</p> | <p><i>The Kraglulds ugliness hides its true threat; vicious ferocity and revolting dietary mechanisms. - Cynthia Hass, Oxenfurt Scholar.</i></p> <p>Kraglulds roam the marshes of Velen, although sightings of these foul beasts have been noted as far afield as Skellige. Troll-like in appearance, a Kragluld may fool an unsuspecting victim into thinking it shares the same primitive cognitive skills as its rock troll brethren. Not so. Kraglulds are cunning and cruel, with an insatiable bloodlust that will get the better of all but the most capable of stray wanderers.</p> <p>They use their powerful fists to pulverise their prey, mulching bone and sinew into a pulpy soup that proves easier to consume and digest. For all their savagery and fighting prowess, the Kraglulds must prepare all of their meals in this way, as they are entirely devoid of teeth. If an adventurer should happen to be near a marshland and come within earshot of an unnaturally loud slurping, they should turn back and retreat at speed. If not, they may find themselves gurgling their last breath whilst deep in the blood-soaked gullet of a Kragluld.</p> <p>One preventative measure that may injure an attacking Kragluld and provide an opportunity to flee is to coat one's weapon in a thick layer of Ogroid Oil. Failing that, carrying multiple sprigs of lavender upon one's person may also keep</p>   | <p>277</p> |

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|                   | <p>these foul beasts from consuming one's flesh. It is thought that a Kragluld is repulsed by the scent of this flower, but only when presented in overwhelmingly large quantities. This is a secret that all seasoned adventurers should come to know; the preferred scent of elderly ladies is also, in fact, a fairly powerful monster repellent.</p>  |            |
| <p>Bilgekin</p>   | <p><i>I thought it was nowt but a bloated corpse, but when I poked it, the bloody thing near bit me hand off! - Lurgen of Novigrad, dockworker</i></p> <p>The loathsome Bilgekin inhabit the fetid sewers beneath Novigrad and Oxenfurt, although anecdotes place them in such surface-level spots as bogs, swamps and abandoned battlefields. Indeed, it makes sense that their insatiable lust for filth and squalor would spread beyond the excrement-lined pipeworks of our great cities.</p> <p>Whilst they prefer to feed on remains, detritus and human waste, Bilgekin will feast on anything and everything they can. Omnivorous to a terrifying degree, they devour like pigs until they become so engorged they must lie down to aid the digestive process. It is in this state of festering rest that the Bilgekin is at its most dangerous. It excretes the foul contents of its stomach as it lays prone, marinating happily in its own poisons whilst emitting a gas so toxic it causes an almost instantaneous collapse of a bystander's nervous system.</p> <p>Bilgekin are generally not as aggressive as say, Rotfiends or Alghouls, but they do not appreciate being distracted in their ceaseless cycle of feeding and release. Should one mistake a prone Bilgekin for a mere cadaver, it will use its considerable jowls to snap at its disruptor. That's if it hasn't already begun to relieve itself of the putrid spoils in its belly, of course.</p> | <p>232</p> |
| <p>Phastornis</p> | <p><i>Ensure you never go to bed with an argument unresolved. Stay up all night and fight if you have to, but never go to sleep on a cross word, lest your beloved shall meet a Phastornis. - Amaryllis, serving wench at the Passiflora</i></p> <p>Old wives' tales are rarely taken seriously, although only a fool wouldn't stop to consider their true merits. After all, old wives only become old wives through a long life of marital trials, tribulations and lessons. The oldest of old wives' tales is then passed down through the eras, for the idiocy of youth to chalk up to superstition and nonsense. Occasionally, someone will stop to ponder the merits of an old wives' tale, which is just as well, for common sense and a touch of belief could one day save your life.</p> <p>Such is the case of the dreaded Phastornis, a haunted and malign spectre that generations of old wives have warned others against. The Phastornis seeks out quarrelsome partnerships, lingering in the shades of darkness and savouring each hateful insult thrown. It thrives on discontent and frustration, drawn in particular to angry exchanges between romantic pairings, as it hunts without cease for new lovers of its own to join it in undeath. As the old wives' ever</p>  | <p>386</p> |

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|  | <p>warned, if couples should go to sleep with their disagreement unsettled, a Phastornis will emerge from the walls to drag out the soul of the partner it finds most impressive in argument. For the one who awakes the next morning, nothing but the desiccated corpse of their former loved one will remain beside them, along with the echoes of the harsh words spoken the night before.</p> <p>To avoid the grasp of a Phastornis, be certain to take great care of the emotional current running through any romantic entanglements. For an extra layer of protection, smearing lashings of Specter Oil around window and door frames may keep the wretched husk at bay. Silver, too, is known to be quite despised by ghosts, wraiths and spectres of most varieties. This is especially pertinent if one's partner is prone to theatrics, aggression or simply seems to enjoy the thrills of furious disagreement. In such cases, it may be wise to seek new companionship rather than continuing to roll the dice and catch the unwanted attention of a Phastornis.</p> |  |
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## RUMBLE

INT. ABANDONED OFFICE - NIGHT

The remnants of an office. JUNIPER (24, athletic, lively, confident) and CHRISTOS (22, scrawny, uptight, nervous) navigate upturned desks, rubble and destroyed decor. Sparks flicker from broken ceiling lights, punctuating the darkness. JUNIPER stomps through a litter of BROKEN GLASS beside an empty window frame.

CHRISTOS

(sharply)

It's like you want them to hear us!

Juniper resumes crunching through the glass, tiptoeing exaggeratedly. Christos rolls his eyes and turns on his TORCH. Juniper ransacks the drawers of a nearby desk. She finds what seems to be a crudely drawn map.

JUNIPER

Looks like someone else had the same idea.

CHRISTOS

(dismissive)

Great. Good for them.

Juniper scoffs. It's awkward. A quiet rumble reverberates below them.

Christos finds one of the office's exit doors and tries the handle. It's locked.

He tries it again, attempting to force the door. He's too puny to make that happen.

CHRISTOS

Come on! Please! Just...open!

JUNIPER

Bruv, you need to chill out.

CHRISTOS

Chill out? Are you for real?

JUNIPER

Yeah. You're over there trying to guilt trip a door, and I've found us a map. Know why?

CHRISTOS  
(under his breath)  
...because you're a smart-arse?

Juniper stuffs the map into her pocket. Another rumble.

JUNIPER  
Because I'm not losing the plot, that's why. You know--

A sudden, much louder RUMBLE interrupts them. Christos drops his torch and freezes.

The rumble intensifies and the ground trembles. Christos eyeballs Juniper, who scans the room. Nothing. A moment passes that feels eternal.

CHRISTOS  
Is it gone?

Juniper fires him an incredulous glare. He should've stayed quiet.

ROARS pierce the air and an invisible assailant lunges at Juniper. She fights back as Christos screams and begins hurling chunks of rubble. One gashes Juniper's leg. She flails, landing awkwardly in a puddle of slimy liquid on the ground.

JUNIPER  
(furious)  
Get to the other door!

Christos runs. He trips over a smashed chair, sliding through the same ooze as he stumbles to the other doorway. Breathless, he mashes the locked door, slamming himself against the light switch in panic.

SPARKS fly. Time slows. Energy flows steadily through the slime coating Christos' arm. It paths through the ooze, across the floor to Juniper, still fighting in slow motion against the invisible attacker. She's illuminated by the electrical glow for a moment, before time resumes as normal.

CHRISTOS  
(despairing)

It's shut! I can't...

He howls in frustration. A surge of white-hot energy pulsates from Christos' fingertips. The door BLASTS from its hinges.

Beat.

Christos lifts his hands, his veins glowing white under his skin. He's pulled from his trance by Juniper's voice. The glow fades.

JUNIPER

Christos! Did you see that? It's dead!  
I... I killed it.  
With my hands! Well, with whatever came  
out of them - hey, you alright?

She stares at the empty door frame, then the scorch marks and bloody remnants on the ground. There's no identifying the monster, but its demise was messy.

CHRISTOS

How the- what the hell? It's like my  
arms are on fire!

JUNIPER

Yeah, mine too. Man, who cares? I just  
took one of those things out! This  
changes everything!

CHRISTOS

It changes nothing, Juniper. We can't  
draw attention to ourselves.

JUNIPER

Oh really? Remind me, who was it that  
couldn't keep his big mouth shut during  
the rumble?

Christos bristles and returns to collect his dropped torch.

JUNIPER

(mimicking Christos)  
"It's like you want them to hear us!"

CHRISTOS

Shut up! If you hadn't been tap dancing  
through that glass--



JUNIPER

(mimicking Christos)

"Chill out? Are you for real?"

She laughs. Christos strides back towards her, torch in hand. He raises it in a momentary flash of anger. The atmosphere sours. A tense silence. He lowers the torch, clicking it on.

CHRISTOS

Yeah, Juniper. I'm for real. I'm really telling you to take something seriously, for once in your life. Think you can do that?

He brushes past Juniper and heads through the open doorway. Sparks crackle from her fingertips as she sullenly watches his back. She smirks before following him into the dark.

## Event Chain: Bizarre Stars

The discovery of an unmapped star system poses opportunities for exploration. However, pioneering isn't without risk. Character counts are denoted at the end of the main event text.

### Event One: Uncharted Constellation (Anomaly.5200)

**Art:** An eye-catching stellar backdrop, depicting a pattern of luminous stars with greenish hues against nebulous clouds and small, glinting shards of asteroid.

An unexpected astronomical anomaly interrupts the (science ship name)'s voyage to (star system name). Science Officer (name) remarks that a previously unmapped constellation has been identified by the ship's scanner and recommends that it should be surveyed immediately. The discovery of a new star system is fascinating, especially as to the naked eye, the orbs of this unknown constellation appear to radiate a shimmering green hue whilst shifting around and vibrating. (472)

**Prompt:** Fascinating.

### Event Two: Vessel Remnants (Anomaly.5201)

**Art:** A closeup of the shattered remains of a spacecraft, littered around a greenish field of dark, deep space. Beams of starlight slice through its wreckage.

On closer inspection, these new and strangely luminous shifting fragments of plasma appear to have been investigated by another vessel. A large debris field is all that remains of it, and the pulsating ripples of the stars' unusual vibrations have so far obstructed the (science ship name)'s scanners from identifying the vessel's origin. (339)

**Prompt:** We must identify those lost to the dangers of space. (Choice 1)

**Prompt:** Unfortunate. We should scavenge the remains. (Choice 2)

### Event Three: Light Fantastic (Anomaly.5202)

Trigger conditions: (if the player selects choice 1)

Art: View of the greenish constellation from inside a spacecraft's viewport/window, as if an onlooker inside the ship, staring out at its hypnotic weirdness.

Despite their natural inclination towards cosmic exploration, something about this new constellation sends the (science ship name)'s crew into a heightened state of anxiety. Science Officer (name) reports that the beauty of these shimmering celestial bodies invokes involuntary paralysis in any that gaze directly upon their light. With three of the research team and one navigator currently incapacitated, Science Officer (name) recommends a careful retreat while the option remains to do so. (493)

**Prompt:** Understood. Better safe than sorry.

### Event Four: Loud Noises (Anomaly.5203)

Trigger conditions: (if the player selects choice 2)

Art: Closeup of the spacecraft's scanner, showing a spiking audio frequency and a cracked screen. Green-tinted hues.

(Science ship name) is hardy and resourceful, yet its foray further into the debris field results in increasingly unstable readings from its audio frequency scanners. As the remnants of the obliterated vessel come closer into view, a hideously high-pitched squealing sound blares through the comms system of (science ship name). A warning? No adjustment to the sensors can mitigate the deafening wail, which coupled with the sickly lime-tinged hue of the nearby new stars, is enough to make any crew member initiate the ship's self-destruct protocols. (551)

**Prompt:** Abort scavenging.

### Event Five: Refuge In Darkness (Anomaly.5204)

Trigger conditions: (plays after completion of choice 1 or choice 2)

Art: A calmer image of the spacecraft returning to its voyage against a generic background of dark blue/black space, with normally-lit stars.

The unfamiliar constellation remains a mystery, for now. Far better to retreat into the shadows of deep space than to succumb to the same fate as the destroyed vessel. The crew of the (science ship name) speculate that their close encounter with the strange shifting stars warrants further research, albeit with a fortified spacecraft equipped with enhanced speed, shield and evasion

components. Those affected by the disturbing physiological and auditory effects of this stellar experience are recuperating under medical observation until (science ship name)'s scheduled arrival on (star system/destination planet name). (622)

**Prompt:** A close encounter.