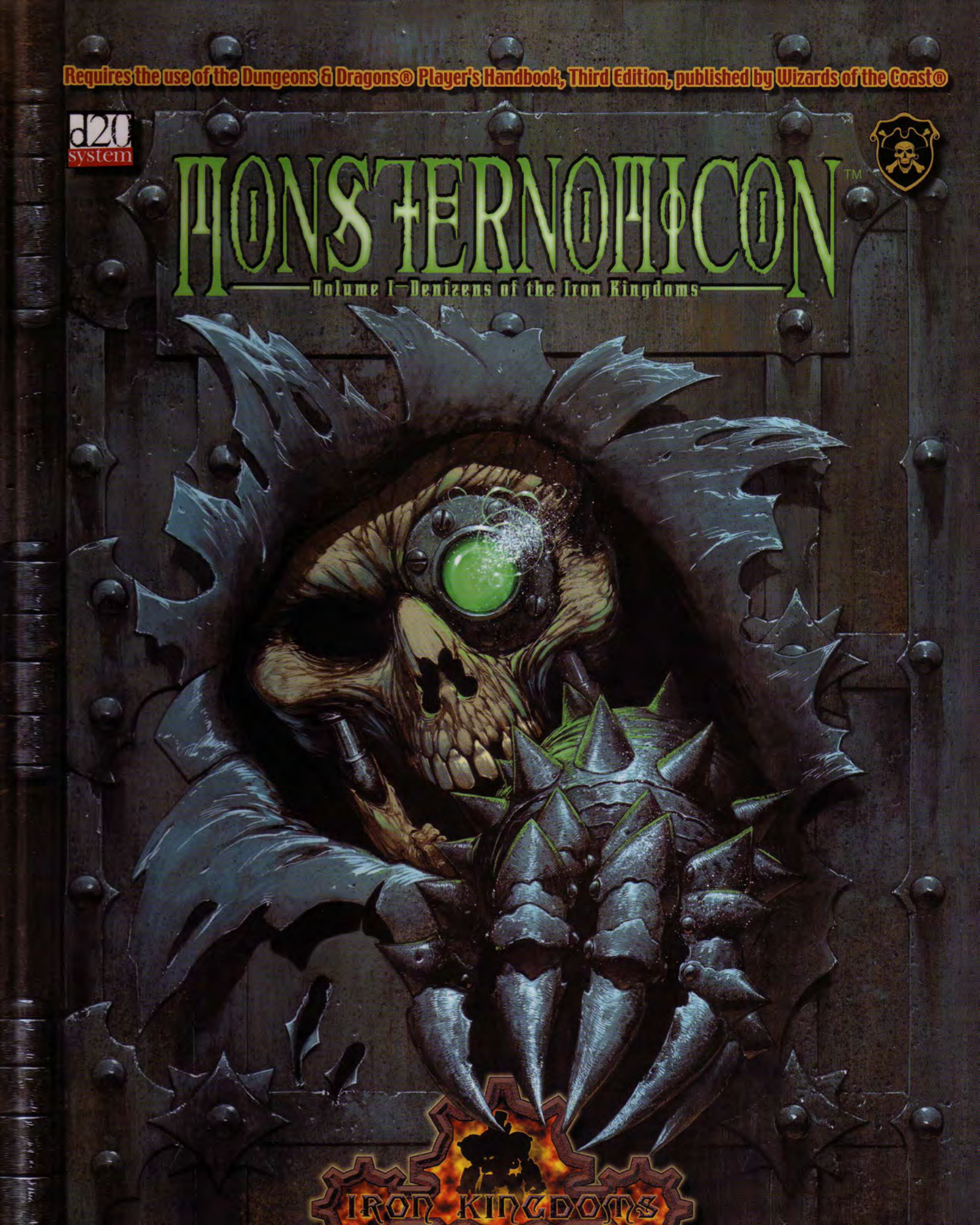
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d20 system

MONSTERNOMICON™

Volume I—Denizens of the Iron Kingdoms



IRON KINGDOMS





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MONSTERNOMICON

Volume I—Denizens of the Iron Kingdoms

TM

A D20 System Sourcebook of Monstrous Proportion

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Contents trademark & copyright © 2002 Privateer Press LLC. All rights reserved. This is a work of fiction, and any resemblance to actual persons living or dead is purely coincidental, though we have almost indisputable proof that gremlins are responsible for the lateness of this publication. Wait until they find all the crap I hid in this book, though! That'll serve Staroscik right for abandoning this project on me! I'm an artist, not an editor, you bastard! Oh yeah, and the secret monster of the day is: Gotax. mw



Table of Contents

It has been twenty-two years at this writing since I came across a tattered manual on some University back shelf entitled the 'Tome of Beasts', penned by some nigh-forgotten author known simply as Holden. I was young and filled with dreams of adventure and immortality in those days. I'm rather embarrassed to admit I nicked that musty old chapbook under my arm and promptly lifted it from the University's possession (it is still in my collection today), and after devouring every tasty bit of it, embarked on my first monster hunt. In your hands you hold the gatherum of my great many notes and experiences collected over the past two decades. Herein you will find detailed observations and recollections of creatures both breathtaking and nightmarish. I have strove to be as accurate as possible in my descriptions and my research, but cannot guarantee the accuracy of each and every iota of this tome. Still, I hope you will find this Monsternomicon as valuable and as essential as I have found Holden's aged but indispensible 'Tome of Beasts.'

~Professor Viktor Pendrake, Royal Cygnaran University, 604 A.R.

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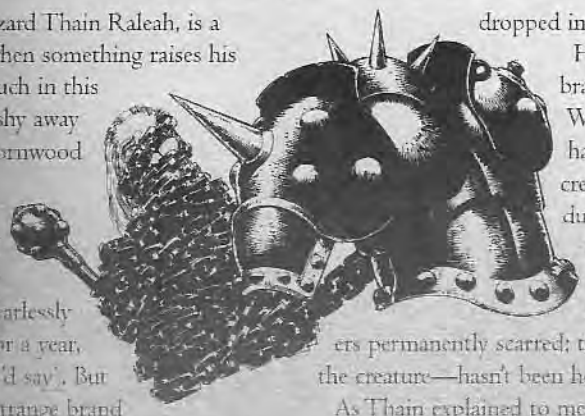
Animatons



Animaton: Gear Wyrm	
Large Construct	
Hit Dice:	*4d10 (22 hp)*
Initiative:	*+4 (+4 Dex)*
Speed:	*20 ft.*
AC:	*21 (+4 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)*
Attacks:	*Bite +8 melee*
Damage:	*Bite 1d8+7*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Energy discharge 1d4-1, greater dispelling, trample 1d8+7*
Special Qualities:	*Absolute magic resistance, construct, hardness 10, null field 40 ft. radius, spell consumption*
Saves:	*Fort +1, Ref +5, Will -4*
Abilities:	*Str 20, Dex 18, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*4*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*1–3 HD (Medium-size); 5–10 HD (Large); 11–20 HD (Huge)*

Animaton: Rip Cutter	
Medium-size Construct	
Hit Dice:	*6d10 (33 hp)*
Initiative:	*+7 (+7 Dex)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*22 (+7 Dex, +5 natural)*
Attacks:	*2 chains +11 melee*
Damage:	*Chain 2d6+7*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Chains, constrict, greater dispelling, improved grab*
Special Qualities:	*Absolute magic resistance, construct, hardness 15, null field 60 ft. radius, spell consumption*
Saves:	*Fort +2, Ref +9, Will -3*
Abilities:	*Str 20, Dex 24, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*7*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*7–10 HD (Medium-size); 11–15 HD (Large)*

My good friend, the wizard Thain Raleah, is a fearsome opponent when something raises his ire, and there's not much in this world that he would shy away from. I once watched him slay a Thornwood mauler without casting a single spell, and he even defaced a temple of Cyriss, rousing an entire band of angry priests, just so he could study some petty artifact. The man even fearlessly sought out the dreaded Deadjack for a year, but to no avail (and lucky for him, I'd say). But when I went to him inquiring of a strange brand of constructs called animatons, his face went pale and his tone dropped immediately.



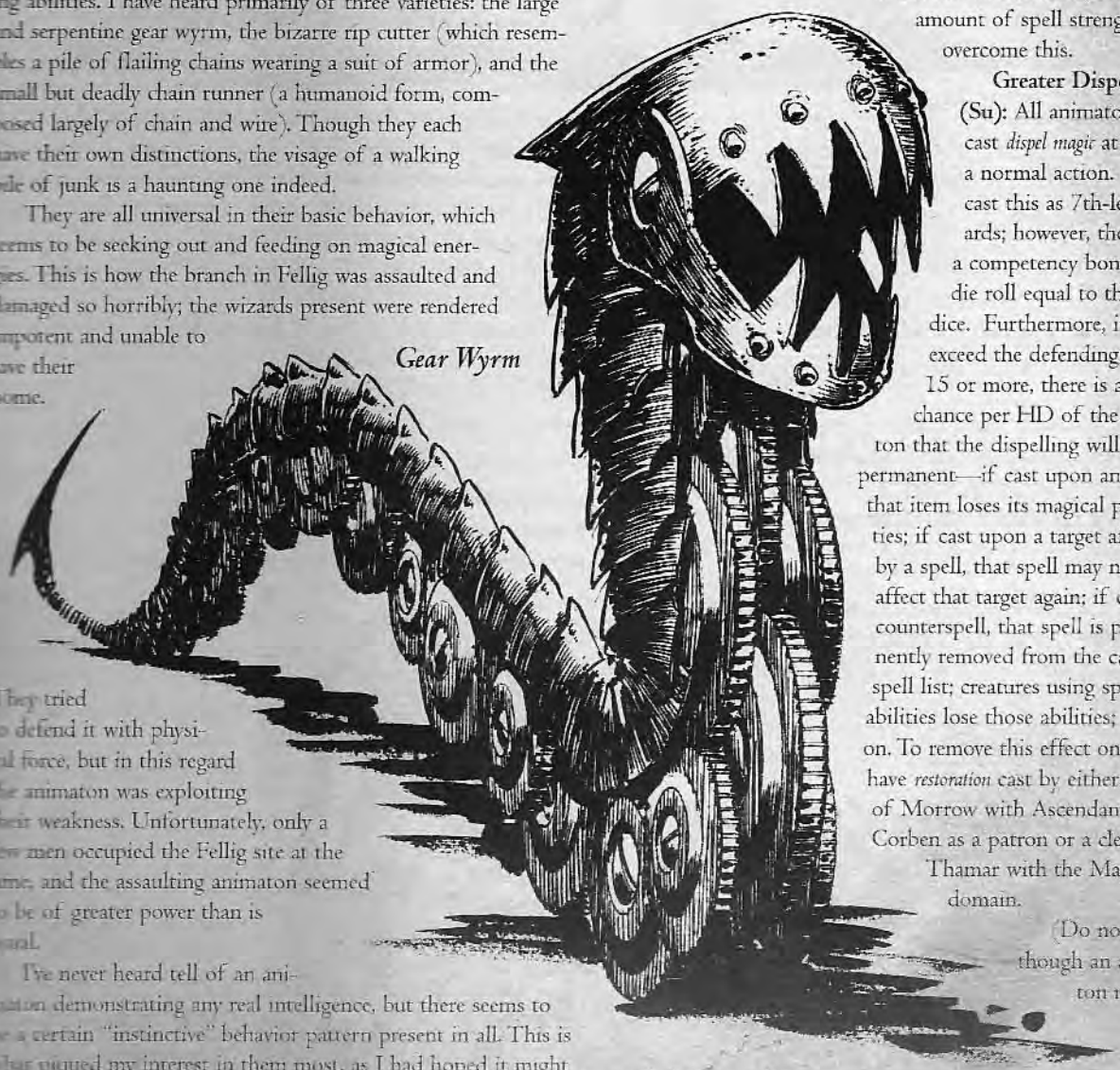
He told me the tale of a small branch of the Fraternal Order of Wizardry located in Fellig. They had been assaulted by one of these creatures after a brother was conducting unsanctioned experiments in a nearby scrap yard. Two of the five resident wizards were lost to the creature and two others permanently scarred; the survivor—he responsible for the creature—hasn't been heard from since.

As Thain explained to me, they are not living creatures, nor creations of any intelligent being. They are strange constructs

born of latent magical energy and are the ultimate bane of all who tamper with magic or wield enchanted devices. Under certain circumstances—which aren't entirely understood—magical residue can animate pieces of worked metal, usually in the form of debris, into certain recurring forms. Fields of energy that completely suppress magic surround these animatons, and they have even further abilities that can cause permanent loss of magical enchantment.

Though I've heard tell of others, there are several more common recurring forms of animaton, each with slightly varying abilities. I have heard primarily of three varieties: the large and serpentine gear wyrm, the bizarre rip cutter (which resembles a pile of flailing chains wearing a suit of armor), and the small but deadly chain runner (a humanoid form, composed largely of chain and wire). Though they each have their own distinctions, the visage of a walking pile of junk is a haunting one indeed.

They are all universal in their basic behavior, which seems to be seeking out and feeding on magical energies. This is how the branch in Fellig was assaulted and damaged so horribly; the wizards present were rendered impotent and unable to save their home.



Gear Wyrm

They tried to defend it with physical force, but in this regard the animaton was exploiting their weakness. Unfortunately, only a few men occupied the Fellig site at the time, and the assaulting animaton seemed to be of greater power than is usual.

I've never heard tell of an animaton demonstrating any real intelligence, but there seems to be a certain "instinctive" behavior pattern present in all. This is what piqued my interest in them most, as I had hoped it might shed light on my theories on instinctive behavior in living creatures. However, study has been slow. These constructs are exceedingly rare, usually only occurring in places where great magical energies have been wrought. I have encountered a few among the junk-strewn battlefields along the Llael-Khador border, as well as in a few scattered ruins, but in all cases my companions and I had to put the terrors down before they ran amuck.

Combat

The following abilities are common to all animatons.

Absolute Magic Resistance (Su): All spells cast upon or which would otherwise directly affect an animaton have no effect on it whatsoever, and no amount of spell strength may overcome this.

Greater Dispelling (Su): All animatons may cast *dispel magic* at will, as a normal action. They cast this as 7th-level wizards; however, they receive a competency bonus to the die roll equal to their hit dice. Furthermore, if they exceed the defending DC by 15 or more, there is a 1% chance per HD of the animaton that the dispelling will become permanent—if cast upon an item, that item loses its magical properties; if cast upon a target affected by a spell, that spell may never affect that target again; if cast as a counterspell, that spell is permanently removed from the caster's spell list; creatures using spell-like abilities lose those abilities; and so on. To remove this effect one must have *restoration* cast by either a cleric of Morrow with Ascendant Corben as a patron or a cleric of Thamar with the Magic domain.

(Do note that, though an animaton may recognize a spell, magic item, or other enchantment, it does not comprehend what is going on. It uses this ability out of instinct and reflex—so it won't target specific items, etc. intentionally.

Null Field (Su): All animatons are surrounded by field that nullifies all magic within a radius of 10 feet per HD (double

Animaton: Chain Runner	
Small Construct	
Hit Dice:	*10d10 (55 hp)*
Initiative:	*+5 (+5 Dex)*
Speed:	*40 ft.*
AC:	*23 (+1 size, +7 Dex, +5 natural)*
Attacks:	*2 slams +13 melee*
Damage:	*Slam 1d4+7*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Superior dispelling*
Special Qualities:	*Absolute magic resistance, construct, hardness 20, null field 200 ft. radius, spell consumption, spell turning*
Saves:	*Fort +3, Ref +8, Will -2*
Abilities:	*Str 21, Dex 21, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*10*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*11–13 HD (Small); 14–18 HD (Medium-size)*

that in the case of the chain runner). It functions identically to an *antimagic field* spell, with the exception that it does not suppress any of the animaton's own abilities.

Spell Consumption (Su): Any time an animaton successfully dispels any magic effect, either by *dispel magic* or by its null field, it gains 1 hp per effective spell level per item or target affected. This includes suppressing spell effects and magic items, and multiple items being suppressed or dispelled simultaneously are cumulative (so a party of adventurers brimming with magical items that walks into, or out of and back into, its null field is likely to heal it completely). Do note that animatons are not smart enough to heal themselves intentionally this way.

Gear Wyrm

Gear wyrms are the most base of all animatons and seem to possess the least amount of instinct. Generally, they slither and roll about looking for nourishment and attacking anything that comes near it. They use their dispel abilities less often and frequently employ physical attacks.

Energy Discharge (Su): Whenever a gear wyrm is struck by a physical blow, the magical energies it has consumed burst forth slightly, in the form of crackling blue lightning that affects all in its threatened area for 1d4-1 damage. All creatures, except that which made the affecting attack, may make a Reflex save (DC 10) for half damage. Creatures immune to lightning are not immune to this effect (it's not true lightning), though spell resistance functions equivalent to hardness (of equal numerical value) against it.

Trample (Ex): A gear wyrm may roll over and effectively trample any Small size or smaller opponents for 1d8+7 bonus points of damage. Victims who don't make an attack of opportunity may make a Reflex save (DC 16) for half damage.

Rip Cutter

Rip cutters use a combination of physical and dispelling attacks. They display a surprising amount of instinct when it comes to wielding the many chains that hang from their bodies.



Chains (Ex): The rip cutter wields its chains as if it had the Weapon Finesse feat, and it may perform all of the special moves normally allowed with such a weapon, except that it may never drop them.

Constrict (Ex): With a successful grapple check, a rip cutter deals 1d4+5 damage to any grappled opponent of Medium-size or smaller.

Improved Grab (Ex): For this to take effect, the rip cutter must score a suc-



cessful attack with one of its chains. It may then attempt to constrict the victim.

Chain Runner

Although they are simple-looking constructs, chain runners demonstrate a surprising instinctual cunning. They rely almost entirely on their dispelling abilities, seeking out and attempting to permanently debilitate spell-wielding beings. They tend to avoid physical combat.

Spell Turning (Su): Any spell cast upon a chain walker from outside of its null field is instantly reflected upon the caster once it reaches the null field (it bounces off of it, so to speak).

Superior Dispelling (Su): Chain runners dispel magic even more effectively than other animatons. They need only exceed a target DC by 10 to threaten with permanent dispelling. Furthermore, the odds of permanent dispelling occurring jump to 2% per HD.

Treasure

Parts taken from a destroyed animaton may be used as a material component in a *dispel magic* spell, granting the caster a +5 enhancement bonus to the dispel check (parts are used up in the casting). These parts may also be used as components of magical items that have (only) dispelling or antimagic effects. Items made of these parts cost half the XP to create. Animaton pieces are also prized by scholars and wizards who wish to study them. Raw pieces may sell for anywhere from 100 to 5000 gp, depending on size and condition, though wizards seeking parts for magical items might pay far more.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: It is known that there is a rare type of construct that can arise without a builder's hand, though only of formerly crafted metal parts.

UNCOMMON: Animatons are animated and powered by latent magical energy. They possess the unique ability to suppress magical energies.

RARE: They lack intelligence, but possess a haunting amount of instinctual "programming," which can make them deadly opponents, especially to those who employ magic. However, those who do not possess any form of enchantment or enchanted item are ignored by an animaton unless they provoke it.

OBSCURE: There are rumors that a particularly clever underground band of elves have been performing experiments to bring an animaton into being. Thus far they have been unsuccessful, but they theorize that if they can replicate the conditions of their genesis, they can unleash one of their own.

Hooks

An estranged wizard out of Five Fingers has decided he wishes to perform some experiments upon an animaton. He is currently searching for someone to help him capture one, although doing so might prove a nigh impossible task because of their peculiar resistances. Rumor has it that this is the brother behind the Fellig fiasco, and he is looking to redeem himself.

"This walking pile of junk ain't nothin'. My enchanted Bow of the Great Avenger has never let me down. My bow has never. . . . Gahhhh!" — *Alfonse Ehrlick, Cygnaran bowman, now short one magical bow*

Argus



Medium-size Magical Beast	
Hit Dice:	*3d10+3 (20 hp)*
Initiative:	*+2 (+2 Dex)*
Speed:	*40 ft.*
AC:	*14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)*
Attacks:	*2 bites +5 melee*
Damage:	*Bite 1d6+2*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Doppler bark, grappling bite*
Special Qualities:	*Scent*
Saves:	*Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1*
Abilities:	*Str 14, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 10*
Skills:	*Hide +5, Listen +6, Spot +5, Swim +5*
Feats:	*Alertness*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land*
Organization:	*Solitary, brace (2), or pack (5–10)*
Challenge Rating:	*3*
Alignment:	*Usually neutral*
Advancement:	*4–6 HD (Medium-size); 7–9 HD (Large)*

During a trip in the northern lands of Khador a number of years back I was called upon by an old friend to help the Khadoran Free Soldiers League dispatch a slaving ring run by black ogrun. It wasn't the type of thing I usually get into, but I owed this friend a couple of debts, so I joined in. The slavers had raided many villages, and the cruelty of the ogrun masters had ruined many lives. All told I helped rescue a hundred souls from their iron mines. Gemenus, an argus pup, was a gift from the soldiers league for helping them.

I'd never raised nor trained such a feral animal, but I'd convinced myself that I could do it (despite the warnings of the soldiers who gave it to me). Raising that damn dog became one of the hardest things I ever did, but it was also one of the most rewarding. Gemenus was a magnificent per— strong, fearless, and as stubborn as a dracodile is deadly. He passed away only but two summers ago, and I still sorely miss his company on my travels.



The most notable thing about an argus is that it has two heads, which enables it to do several things at once. So it can track and guard at the same time, eat and sleep at the same time, or even rip your sofa to pieces while doing the same to your entomology textbooks! Both of its heads have distinct personalities, and it is perhaps the only creature I have ever met that is good at keeping its own company. They have short thick fur, usually colored a dark brown to a glossy black.

The argus dogs were first found as marauding packs in Khador. It wasn't long before specimens made their way into keeps and noble houses to act as guard beasts, and the argus is now even the official symbol of the Khadoran Free Soldiers League. The elite trackers and rangers of the league are often trained to handle these dogs. These hardened men have wept openly at the loss of their canine charges, so valued are the dogs among them.

The argus is a dangerous animal when found in the wild.

They are incredibly intelligent, and groups of them are deadly. The packs can communicate with a series of yips and yowls and employ all of the breed's distinct abilities to bring down prey. Wild argus hunt in pairs or packs and have a very strict hierarchy. A pack will often stalk their prey for days before moving in for the kill.



Combat

An argus is typically used as a tracking dog or traveling companion. It is usually commanded to bark and then attack those who assault its handler. An argus on the attack stuns its prey with its bark and then takes the prey to the ground with its grappling bite.

Doppler Bark (Su): The doppler bark is a fear-based cone attack that paralyzes its prey. The cone extends 25 feet from the argus. Anyone caught in the cone must make a Will save (DC 12) or be paralyzed in confusion for 1d3 rounds. It may do this once per day.

Grappling Bite (Ex): If an argus manages to successfully attack with both bites, it begins to tear apart its prey with its jaws. Treat this as an improved grab. It may use this against creatures Large or smaller. However since both jaws are used in doing this, it gains no attacks and may only grapple while it uses this ability.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: The argus is a two-headed dog that is sometimes used as a tracker and war hound.

UNCOMMON: The bark of the argus can addle your mind, rendering you paralyzed for a few moments—plenty enough time for it to pounce you and tear you apart.

RARE: If you see one of these dogs in Khador, don't kill it. There's a good price for pups and full-grown beasts.

OBSCURE: The argus breed was created by an Orgoth mage named Chergaze. He aided the Orgoth army in breeding their beasts of war. It is said that he had a fortress deep in the woods of Khador where he created all manner of magical hybrids.

Treasure

In most places the argus itself is treasure enough. A pregnant argus bitch can fetch as much as 1000 gp. Pups are worth around 250 gp apiece. In Khador the military values these dogs immensely. There is a standing bounty on bringing in live argus (100 gp), and bringing in wild ones will fetch you double or triple depending on their size. Injured specimens will be healed by beast-tenders; the cost of healing is usually deducted from the bounty.

The argus is considered a beast for purposes of the Handle Animal skill.

Hooks

A merchant has come to town selling argus dogs to the noble houses of the area. These are specially trained to respond to the merchant and his rogue friends. The rogues are using the dogs to disable the guards and families so they are easier to rob. However, a former Khador free leaguer has become aware of the plans of the merchant. He has recruited the party to help him stop the thieves.

Assassin Fly

Fine Vermin	
Hit Dice:	*1/4 1d8+1 (2 hp)*
Initiative:	*+2 (+2 Dex)*
Speed:	*5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)*
AC:	*22 (+2 Dex, +8 size, +2 natural)*
Attacks:	*Sting +10 melee*
Damage:	*Poison/implant*
Face/Reach:	*½ ft. by ½ ft./0 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Poison/implant*
Special Qualities:	*Vermin, assassin fly weaknesses*
Saves:	*Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0*
Abilities:	*Str 1, Dex 15, Con 12, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2*
Skills:	*Hide +18, Listen, +4, Spot +4*
Feats:	*Ability Focus (poison/implant), Weapon Finesse (sting)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any desert*
Organization:	*Solitary, pair, or nest (11–20)*
Challenge Rating:	*2*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	—

I first came across this specimen upon my maiden voyage into the fringes of the Bloodstone Marches. While traveling through the canyons, my group came across an unconscious sand beast. The creature's lungs labored in the scorching air. I asked my trusted guide Quimut what could have felled the creature. He replied with a single word, "khal-paut."

This cryptic answer left me wondering what he meant, but I did not have to wonder for long before we heard one of our traveling companions cry out. It was Michael Chanwiller, a gaunt but determined student of mine. Curious to a fault he had approached the fallen sand beast before being told to and by doing so had lost his life.

We advanced towards Micheal's body waiting for the assassin fly's strike; it came out of the shadows with frightening speed. I had barely moved my sword, when with a flicker of his war-fan Quimut struck the insect down just inches from my neck. We cremated Michael's corpse to keep the larvae inside him from hatching and returned to Carya with his ashes.

Assassin flies have a crimson carapace and fine black wings that blend into the rocky terrain of the Bloodstone Marches. They also have a wicked stinger used to both implant and poison their victims. The male's poison is a mixture of potent blood and nerve toxins, meant to prepare the body to host the female's eggs.

Combat

Assassin flies hide within the crevices of canyon walls or rocky outcroppings and wait for unwary creatures to come within range. The males attack anything within an 80-foot radius of the nest, while the females only venture out of their nests in order to implant eggs.

Poison (Ex): The male assassin fly's sting injects poison into the victim's body, forcing them to make a Fortitude save (DC 13); initial damage 3d4



temporary Constitution, secondary damage 3d4 temporary Intelligence.

Implant (Ex): A female assassin fly that hits with a sting attack injects eggs into the opponent's body. The affected creature must succeed at Fortitude save (DC 13) to avoid implantation. Often the female assassin fly uses this ability on unconscious, helpless, or dead creatures (which get no saving throw); this attack injects 1d10+8 eggs and leaves an inflamed crimson ring around the area where the eggs have been injected. A *remove disease* spell rids the victim of the eggs, as does a successful Heal check (DC 20). If the check fails, the healer can try again, but each attempt causes 1d4 points of damage to the patient. The eggs hatch after a day, at which time the victim falls increasingly ill (-1 permanent damage to all ability scores for every 8 hours the infestation continues). Drinking a draught made from blood polyp leaves kills off the larvae within the body ninety percent of the time, but also forces the victim to make a Fortitude save (DC 13) or suffer 1d4+1 points of initial and secondary temporary Constitution damage. The eggs take 1d4+3 days to reach maturity, at which time they emerge from the creature and start to hunt.

Assassin Fly Weaknesses: After an hour in a humid environment, the assassin fly's speed slows to 20 ft., and their maneuverability drops to average. If an assassin fly's wings actually get wet, then it loses the ability to fly. Incense made from blood polyp root also repels assassin flies with its acrid smell.



Treasure

The assassin fly's poison is highly prized on the Iron Kingdoms black markets. Each dose of poison is worth 750 gp. Assassin fly eggs are also poisonous if ingested and force the consumer to make a Fortitude save (DC 11) or suffer 2d4+1 temporary Constitution initial damage and 2d4+1 temporary Intelligence secondary damage for each egg ingested. Assassin fly eggs sell for about 180 gp.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: None.

UNCOMMON: Assassin flies only fertilize one clutch of eggs at a time and protect the body of those who have been implanted with eggs until the larvae emerge from the victim's corpse.

RARE: Assassin flies have delicate wings that react poorly in humid conditions and can be rendered entirely useless if wet. Incense made of blood polyp root repels assassin flies.

OBSCURE: Ingesting a draught made from blood polyp leaves (only found in the Bloodstone Marches) has a 90% chance of killing off assassin fly larvae.

Hooks

An assassin known only as Khal-paut (named after his modus operandi) uses assassin flies and their poison to send his victims to early graves. He leaves a dead assassin fly upon his victims as a calling card. The PCs are approached by the local lawmen (or some criminal element) who will pay them handsomely to locate and capture the assassin.

"When I die, I hope it is at the stinger of a khal-paut. The irony of it will make oblivion that much more bearable." — Khal-paut, assassin

Quimat tells me that keeping a wet cloth on one's neck may help keep assassin flies at bay when travelling in the Bloodstone Marches. He also carries dried blood polyp leaves with him at all times... just in case.

VP

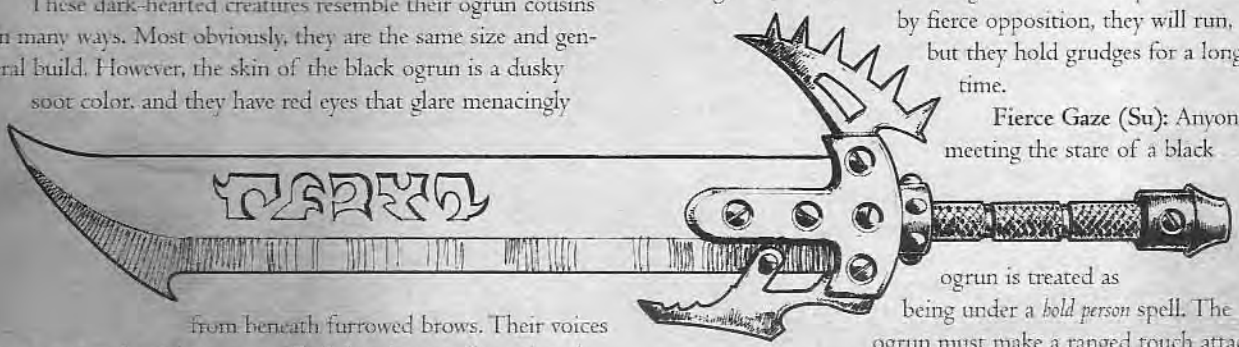
Black Ogrun



Large Giant	
Hit Dice:	*5d8+15 (36 hp)*
Initiative:	*+1 (+1 Dex)*
Speed:	*20 ft.*
AC:	*16 (+1 Dex, +5 chainmail)*
Attacks:	*By weapon +7 melee*
Damage:	*Longsword 1d8+5; or greataxe 1d12+5*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Fierce gaze*
Special Qualities:	*Blood-forged steel*
Saves:	*Fort +7 Ref +2, Will +1*
Abilities:	*Str 20, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8*
Skills:	*Craft (weaponsmith) +9, Spot + 3, Search +3, Intimidate +6*
Feats:	*Power Attack, Skill Focus: Craft (weaponsmith)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land and underground*
Organization:	*Smithy (1), forge (2–4), foundry (5–10)*
Challenge Rating:	*5*
Alignment:	*Usually neutral evil*
Advancement:	*6–15 HD (Large)*

Cruelty. If one word sums up the black ogrun, it's cruelty. Although these creatures are master smiths, they are also slavers, cold-hearted monsters that enslave whoever they can use and slay those they cannot. I myself spent two months in the dark heart of a black ogrun mine, courtesy of traitors that sold me out for some of their famous steel. I managed to pay my supposed comrades back months later, but I will never forget the hell I went through at the hands of the black ogrun.

These dark-hearted creatures resemble their ogrun cousins in many ways. Most obviously, they are the same size and general build. However, the skin of the black ogrun is a dusky soot color, and they have red eyes that glare menacingly from beneath furrowed brows. Their voices are coarse and quick to anger. Their hands are calloused, and corded muscles show the strength gained from years of forgework. Worst of all, a black ogrun's stare can stop a man in his tracks, so beware their gaze.



It's well known that black ogrun produce weapons and steel of incredible quality. Even though they use slaves and evil practices such as torture, people still trade with them for the beautiful weapons they create. What isn't widely known is that the blades are tempered and forged with blood and dark magic. Dispose of any weapons you may find in their lairs—the steel is cursed, I'm sure of it.

Combat

Black ogrun charge into combat bearing weapons of black steel, usually longswords or greataxes. Their angry gaze can make a grown man freeze in terror. They use this to their advantage and cut down the strongest foes first. If pressed back by fierce opposition, they will run, but they hold grudges for a long time.

Fierce Gaze (Su): Anyone meeting the stare of a black ogrun is treated as being under a *hold person* spell. The ogrun must make a ranged touch attack at +1 to lock its gaze with its opponent. The gaze can initially be broken with a successful Will save (DC 12). This avoids the effects of the gaze altogether. A held victim remains trapped until the black ogrun looks away or the gaze is otherwise broken.

Blood-forged Steel (Su): Any weapon wielded by a black ogrun has a 10% chance of being cursed, forged with secret rituals and the blood of tortured slaves. Weapons that are

blood-forged are treated as masterwork quality, as are all black ogrun weapons. The weapons infect anyone who wields them with blood steel madness (see below). Black ogrun are immune to this effect.

Blood Steel Madness
Infection: Contact
DC: 20
Incubation: 1d4 days
Damage: Once the wielder of a blood-forged weapon is angered or irritated they must make a Will save (DC 20). If they fail, they burst into a rage of hatred and bloodlust. They will attack anyone within sight, friend or foe. Treat this as a barbarian's rage that lasts 2d4+4 combat rounds.

The only way to exit the rage is to let it run its course. Once the rage is over, the infected passes out and awakens 1d4 hours later; there is a 50% chance they will have no memory of the rage. The disease can only be cured through magical means or by destroying the weapon that caused it. Simply removing the weapon from the wielder's possession will not cure the madness.



Treasure

Black ogrun always produce masterwork weaponry. When selling weapons they always make at least one blood-forged weapon available—usually the finest looking one. They typically have standard treasure, but all rolled weapons will be of masterwork quality.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Black ogrun are vile distant cousins of the regular ogrun found in Rhul, Cryx, and other kingdoms..

UNCOMMON: Although the black ogrun are brutal slavers, they produce weapons of incredible quality. Weapons produced by black ogrun smiths are valued throughout the Iron Kingdoms.

RARE: The stare of a black ogrun can fix even the bravest of men in place. Never meet their gaze!

OBSCURE: The finest weaponry of the black ogrun forges is cursed. Normally disciplined warriors with these weapons have been known to go mad, killing everyone in their path. There are rumors of berserkers bearing these weapons in Khador and northern parts of Cygnar.

Hooks

• A connection has been drawn between a human arms dealer and a number of bloody attacks—evidence shows his blades were used in the crimes, and the deranged assailants confirm such when they are caught. As it happens, the man is dealing blood forged weapons… but they are *not* of black ogrun make. Who is the smith and how did they learn the black ogruns' secrets? Where is he getting his blood from? Is there a black ogrun conspiracy afoot, and what is its ultimate goal?

• A more reputable merchant in another city has accidentally allowed some captured blood forged weapons out of his shop. He needs to recruit some can-do types to track down the weapons and retrieve them covertly, so as to preserve his reputation… and one of the blades is known to belong to the town's mayor.

Their blades are cursed... but the workmanship is indeed remarkable.

Boatman



Medium-size Monstrous Humanoid (Aquatic)	
Hit Dice:	*10d8+20 (65 hp)*
Initiative:	*+1 (+1 Dex)*
Speed:	*30 ft., swim 30 ft.*
AC:	*14 (+1 Dex, +3 natural)*
Attacks:	*Rake +15 melee*
Damage:	*Rake 1d6+5 and ability score loss*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Ability score loss*
Special Qualities:	*Boat of shades, create spawn, spell-like abilities, boatman weaknesses*
Saves:	*Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +4*
Abilities:	*Str 21, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 10*
Skills:	*Appraise +9, Bluff +10, Hide +9, Listen +12, Spot +12*
Feats:	*Ability Focus (ability score loss), Alertness, Blind-Fight, Expertise*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any aquatic and marsh*
Organization:	*Solitary (plus 2–8 progeny)*
Challenge Rating:	*7*
Alignment:	*Always lawful evil*
Advancement:	*8–10 HD (Medium-size)*

Wherever there is water to be found you have the chance of crossing paths with an urshan, or in layman's terms a "boatman." Born from the pairing of a man and a sea witch (at least according to rumors), these creatures prowl lakes and marsh alike (Fenn Marsh being a notable example) offering to ferry men to the other side.

Boatmen normally appear elderly and almost always reveal themselves when you need a ferry most. Though they have been known to take up residence in well-traveled areas hiding themselves amongst legitimate ferrymen, they usually seek out solitary lives in the Iron Kingdoms' more remote regions.

The very touch of a boatman can kill a man, and it is said that those slain by its touch rise from the dead. These progeny appear as bloated and corrupted corpses and are mainly used as a distraction. They lie beneath the water's surface waiting for their master to call them forth, at which time they attack and try to drag those within their master's boat to a watery death.

My first (and only) ferry ride with a boatman came during a visit to my residence in Corvis. It



was evening, and I was seeking a ferry back to my home in southern Corvis (I had just finished a wonderful conversation and dinner with the good Father Pandor Dumas upon church history and was too pleasantly full to consider the long walk home). When I arrived at the piers an old ferryman was just pulling into dock. I hailed him, and he waved me aboard with a most welcoming grin.

"Where to, gov-'na?" said the ferryman with a creaking voice and appraising look.

After giving him directions to the pier nearest my home, we made great time across the Black River. It was a most peaceful moonlit evening, and I soon found myself settled in and quite drowsy. A fog rolled in.

Through my half-hazed musings I unexpectedly felt something quite queer crawling up the backs of my legs. My years of experience proceeded to pull me out of slumber and into the present predicament that I was in. The old man bent over from his position on the stern and told me in a most haunting voice that we were taking on water and if I wanted to make it to the closest dock that I should start bailing. As I pitched the water over the sides I saw something move beneath. I paused.

There just below the surface drifted a drowned man, his flesh pale and bloated and his eyes murky. In ghastly silence, he raised himself up the lip of the boat. I ducked back into the sinking ship and came face to face with no elderly ferryman, but the twisted form of a boatman. His breath was salty and brought tears to my eyes. He reached out.

Remembering my boatman folklore (gained by the campfire of good old Draven Corenghast, a junker I knew in my youth), I said, "I have a bargain for you."

"A bargain is it then?" replied the boatman, his fingers just a breath away from my lips. The water stopped rising. The hands that had been reaching for me retreated back into the waters. "What bauble will you give me for safe passage? Think quickly, for a moment is all you have."

My first few guesses were met with grotesque grins, "It seems my family will grow by one tonight."

Not being the slight bit interested in joining his "family," I put fourth my final guess and hit upon his fancy (a pair of fine leather boots from Khador, a recent gift from a dear friend). After the exchange, he agreed to return me to my residence. Needless to say I bought a new pair of boots, and though I still travel by ferry (after all Corvis is my place of residence) I do so only with those whom I know and trust.

Perhaps the best advice I can give you when dealing with a boatman is to bargain with him. He has a weakness for deal-making and it might just save your life. Then again if you can't figure out what he wants, you better take your chance with the progeny and jump ship.



Combat

The boatman depends upon his expertise and withering touch to keep himself alive long enough for his boat to sink. Boatmen frequently call forth fog to obscure the vision of their company and use it to their advantage in attack. Once the boat has sunk they join their progeny in the waters and attack their opponents relentlessly.

Ability Score Loss (Su): A successful rake attack forces the victim to make a Fortitude save (DC 17) or suffer 1d4+1 points of temporary Constitution damage.

Create Progeny (Su): If a boatman's slam attack drains a humanoid or monstrous humanoid of their Constitution (brought to 0 or less), then the victim rises as a progeny within 1d4 days. A boatman may create and control a number of progeny equal to his Charisma score. The newly raised progeny is under the command of the boatman that created it and remains enslaved until its master dies or dismisses it, at which time it perishes in a pool of murky water. See below for more on progeny.

Boat of Shades (Su): Once a day, a boatman may call forth a quasi-real boat. This boat functions as a normal boat does and is under the complete control of the boatman. The boatman may spend a free action to weaken the boat, at which time it springs a leak and begins sinking. This process takes 2d4 rounds, but may be halted at any time. The boat of shades lasts for up to eight hours, until it is dismissed, or until the boatman is killed.

Spell-like Abilities: At will—*change self, detect thoughts*; 3/day—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, fog cloud*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 6th-level sorcerer (save DC 10 + spell level).

Boatman

Boatman's Bargain: Boatmen have a weakness for making deals. If asked to bargain, haggle, or any other such activity the boatman suspends all hostilities (even the sinking of the boat) until a deal is made or a minute has passed. A boatman is bound by the deal for one day; afterwards he is free to act as he pleases. When a boatman first picks up a traveler he chooses a single valuable item that he will haggle for (this should be something that can be seen by the boatman and may be of either sentimental or monetary value) and will settle for nothing less.

Progeny Template

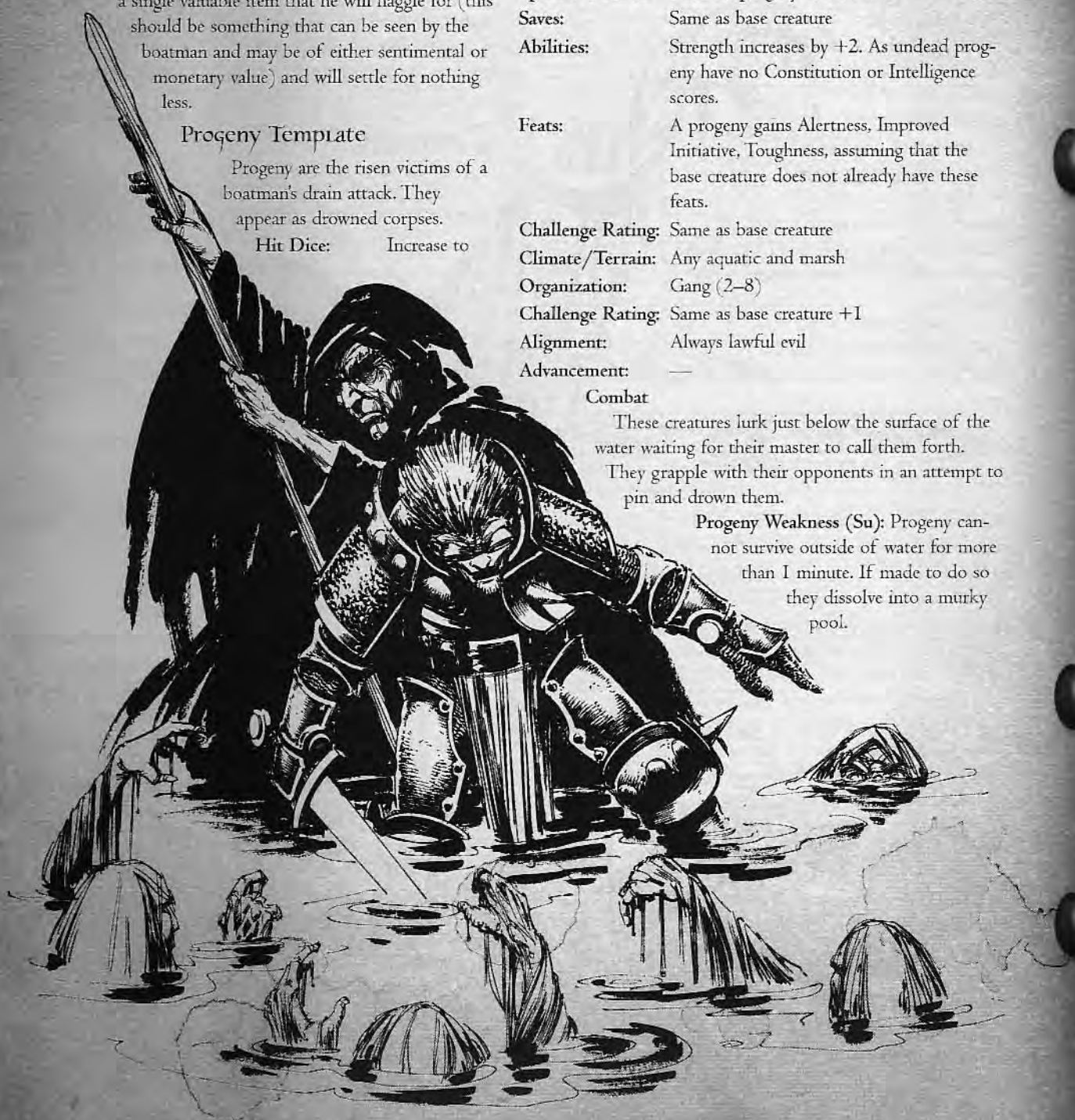
Progeny are the risen victims of a boatman's drain attack. They appear as drowned corpses.

Hit Dice:	Increase to d12.
Speed:	Same as base creature plus swim 30 ft.
AC:	Natural armor improves by +2.
Attacks:	A progeny gains a rake attack.
Damage:	Rake 1d6
Special Qualities:	Undead, progeny weakness
Saves:	Same as base creature
Abilities:	Strength increases by +2. As undead progeny have no Constitution or Intelligence scores.
Feats:	A progeny gains Alertness, Improved Initiative, Toughness, assuming that the base creature does not already have these feats.
Challenge Rating:	Same as base creature
Climate/Terrain:	Any aquatic and marsh
Organization:	Gang (2–8)
Challenge Rating:	Same as base creature +1
Alignment:	Always lawful evil
Advancement:	—

Combat

These creatures lurk just below the surface of the water waiting for their master to call them forth. They grapple with their opponents in an attempt to pin and drown them.

Progeny Weakness (Su): Progeny cannot survive outside of water for more than 1 minute. If made to do so they dissolve into a murky pool.



Treasure

Boatmen keep well-hidden (and often aquatic) lairs that might contain any manner of treasure gained from past victims.

Divining coin: A boatman can create a *divining coin* once per day. This coin grants its possessor the ability to cast a single *divination* spell as a 7th-level cleric. The coin is good for only a single use and rusts away afterward. Boatmen usually carry 0–2 (1d3-1) coins and use them to locate their victims. *Divining coins* sell for about 400 gp each on the open market.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Evil spirits haunt the waterways, offering rides to the unwary. Beware unfamiliar ferrymen!

UNCOMMON: Boatmen are accompanied by undead minions—those who they have drowned. Some boatmen are even so bold as to haunt the waterways of cities.

RARE: A boatman's progeny will be destroyed if it is dragged from the water. If a boatman takes a shine to one's possessions, he may accept a bargain—the item for one's life.

OBSCURE: Boatmen can blend into rural societies, posing as reclusive river-folk. They may inhabit distant homes or even open shops, all for the purpose of locating new victims and new items to acquire.

Hooks

• The PCs are approached by a well-to-do merchant (or other personage) who has lost a family heirloom to a boatman. The PCs may be hired to simply reacquire the heirloom or to hunt the boatman down.

• Through their adventuring, the PCs have acquired an unusual item and are now being followed by a boatman who wants to possess it. The entity has even set up a small shop in the local area. People have started disappearing and the local authorities may hire the PCs to find out what is causing the disappearances.



Progeny	
Medium-size Undead	
Hit Dice:	*1d12 (6 hp)*
Initiative:	*+4 (+4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*30 ft., swim 30 ft.*
AC:	*12 (+2 natural)*
Attacks:	*Rake +1 melee*
Damage:	*Rake 1d6+1*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Qualities:	*Undead, progeny weakness*
Saves:	*Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0*
Abilities:	*Str 12, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 10*
Feats:	*Alertness, Improved Initiative, Toughness*

This samploe uses a 1st-level human commoner as the base creature.



The canals of Eoris have seen more than one boatman, but lately I have heard of one prowling the waterways of Ceryl as well. Perhaps there is something about the arcane industries there that attracts them—something to investigate.

—VP

Bog Trog



Medium-sized Humanoid (Aquatic)	
Hit Dice:	*2d8 (9 hp)*
Initiative:	*+6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*30 ft., swim 50 ft.*
AC:	*19 (+2 Dex, +5 natural, +2 piecemeal armor)*
Attacks:	*2 claws +3 melee, bite +1 melee; or by weapon +3 melee or +4 ranged*
Damage:	*Claw 1d4+1, bite 1d4; or battleaxe 1d8+1; or shortspear 1d8+1*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Qualities:	*Camouflage, low-light vision, scent*
Saves:	*Fort +0, Ref +5, Will -1*
Abilities:	*Str 12, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 10*
Skills:	*Hide +5*, Move Silently +5, Spot +3*
Feats:	*Improved Initiative, Multiattack*
Climate/Terrain:	*Warm or temperate marsh*
Organization:	*Pack (2–5), pod (5–20), band (20–40), tribe (50–100)*
Challenge Rating:	*1*
Alignment:	*Usually neutral evil*
Advancement:	*By character class*

I think I am one of the few travelers of the Iron Kingdoms who has ventured a peaceful encounter with the dangerous swamp-dwellers known as bog trogs. Of course, we don't often hear about the violent encounters had with such creatures, because few who encounter them live to tell of it—so I'd have to consider myself doubly lucky.

My guide was a tradesman who made part of his business peddling camouflaged gear made by bog trog craftsmen (while there, I picked up a bog trog parka, which was right on par with the swamp gobber ponchos I've seen elsewhere). I wasn't permitted into the heart of the village proper, but I learned much on my visit. Bog trogs are masters of camouflage, possessing both a physical capacity for altering their skin pigment to match their environment, though in a different physiological fashion, I believe, than a swamp gobber, and an innate talent for camouflaging gear and just about anything else. For this reason, one who encounters bog trogs doesn't usually know any are nearby until he is directly among them... and they start closing in.



Bog trogs are vicious and intolerant creatures, though not as bloodthirsty as some others out there, such as the horrid dregg. They are isolationistic and very territorial. I understand that those in the Fenn Marsh near the Mirewater River and Fennmar Lake area have a bitter lengthy blood-feud with nearby gatormen, who can be just as stubborn and bloodthirsty when it suits them. The gatormen might have overtaken them long ago if it weren't for the sheer numbers and tenacity of the bog trogs; I must admit that I was staggered by the concentrated volume of the bog trog population in such a small area. Bog trogs are also known to have similar conflicts in that region (and in others) with swamp gobbers, who consider them dire enemies (and the two being so similar in some ways, I don't blame them).

Though humanoid, bog trogs are very reptilian, even fish-like, in appearance, with skin that is a dank green and brown in its natural state. Their culture is advanced enough to have mastered tool use and adopted a basic infrastructure, though they are still primitive compared to humans or even the nearby gatormen, the swamp gobbers being much more advanced than both.

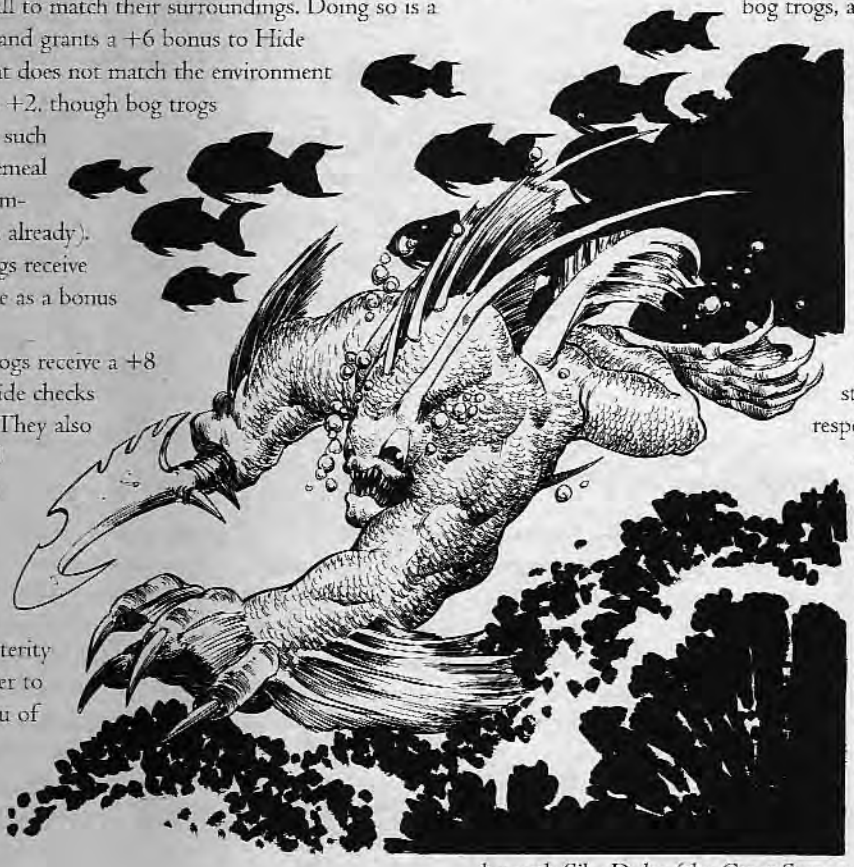
Combat

Bog trogs are able and surprisingly clever combatants. They always attack in numbers and make heavy use of stealth and surprise. Once engaged they are unrelenting and merciless.

Camouflage (Ex): *Bog trogs can change the pigmentation of their skin at will to match their surroundings. Doing so is a full-round action and grants a +6 bonus to Hide checks. Armor that does not match the environment cuts this bonus to +2, though bog trogs almost never wear such armor (what piecemeal they do wear is camouflaged to match already).

Feats: Bog trogs receive Improved Initiative as a bonus feat.

Skills: *Bog trogs receive a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks when submerged. They also receive a +4 racial bonus to all Craft checks when it comes to camouflaging anything; additionally, they may use their Dexterity bonus as a modifier to the skill roll in lieu of their Intelligence bonus due to their innate knack for it.



Treasure

Bog trogs, though notoriously vicious and difficult to deal with, are well respected for their acumen when it comes to camouflaging. Bog trog parkas, though hard to find, grant a +4 circumstance bonus to Hide checks when worn in an appropriate environment; they can be worn over armor, but impose an additional -1 armor check penalty. Such parkas tend to sell for 50 to 200 gp, depending on availability. If one has the connections, they might even be able to hire bog trog craftsmen out for custom camouflaging assignments (such as, say, camouflaging a bunker). Items concealed as such typically add +5 or more to the Spot DC. Payment for such chores varies widely and typically involves some sort of bartering or favors.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Invisible creatures stalk the waters and trails of deep swamps, capturing any who venture too far and leaving no survivors.

UNCOMMON: These creatures are strange humanoids called bog trogs, and they can change their skin to blend in with their surroundings.

RARE: Bog trogs are most active during the morning and evening hours, and they are far more loath to pursue trespassers during the peak hours of day. If they are encountered, an overt display of raw strength will win the respect of a bog trog party, and if played up correctly could lead to a peaceful parley.

OBSCURE: Bog trog legends speak of a truly mammoth bog trog lizard beast called Ashiga. He was defeated centuries ago by the giant Ulmer (who himself disappeared centuries ago) and buried himself deep, deep beneath Sike Dulra (the Great Swamp of bog trog legend) where he sleeps even today. Rumor has it that the bog trogs have never ceased their search for Ashiga, who they dearly hope to awaken.

Hooks

A woodsman originally out of Point Bourne has gone missing in the Greater Cygnaran area, and it is suspected that a tribe of ravenous bog trogs has captured him. The man's family is paying a healthy ransom to anyone who can return him, alive or dead (preferably alive). The truth of the matter is that the man has gone off his rocker, believing himself to be a fictitious lizard god risen from Urnaen (related to Ashiga perhaps?). What's more is that the tribe of bog trogs believe him and have adopted him as their living deity. Needless to say, they won't be too willing to part with him (nor he to come along).

Bridge Troll

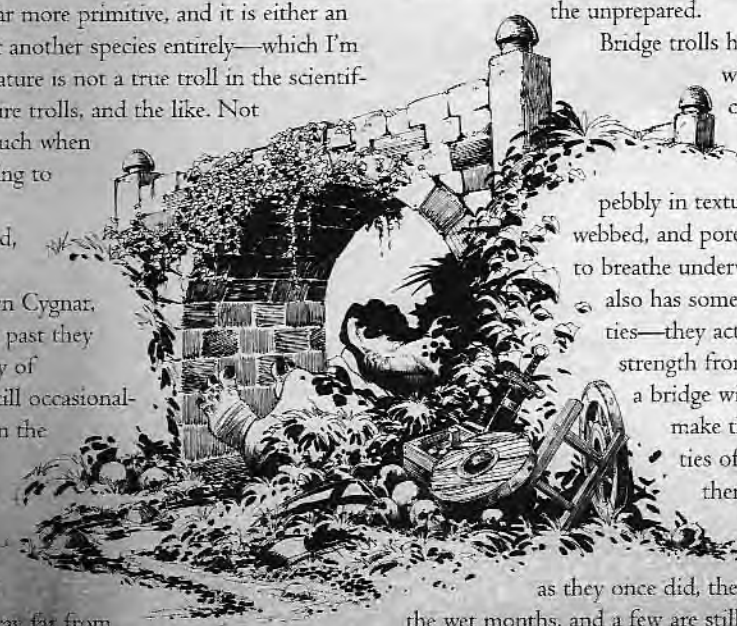


Large Giant (Aquatic)	
Hit Dice:	6d8+18 (45 hp)
Initiative:	+0
Speed:	40 ft., swim 20 ft.
AC:	14 (-1 size, +5 natural)
Attacks:	Bite +8 melee, 2 claws +6 melee
Damage:	Bite 1d8+5, claws 1d6+2
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Gnashing bite
Special Qualities:	Amphibious, bridge-tapping, darkvision 60 ft., regeneration 5, scent
Saves:	Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +2
Abilities:	Str 20, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 4, Wis 10, Cha 6
Skills:	Hide +5*, Intimidate +8*
Feats:	Multiattack, Power Attack
Climate/Terrain:	Temperate urban and rural aquatic
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	6
Alignment:	Usually neutral evil
Advancement:	7—12 HD (Large); 13—18 HD (Huge)

As a man of science I truly enjoy debunking rumors, and just recently my studies have killed the persistent rumor that bridge trolls are related to the other members of the troll family. True, a bridge troll resembles a troll, and the anatomical properties are similar. However the creature is far more primitive, and it is either an amphibious throwback or another species entirely—which I'm not yet sure. But, this creature is not a true troll in the scientific sense, as are trollkin, dire trolls, and the like. Not that taxonomy matters much when one is leaping at you, trying to bite your head off!

Bridge trolls are stupid, savage creatures that are most common in northern Cygnar, Llael, and Rhul. In times past they positively infested the city of Merywyn, and they are still occasionally found there and even in the urban waterways of Corvis. Some of the vile amphibious menaces have been sighted as far south as the outskirts of Caspia, but they never stray far from the Black River, wherever they range. If they have any kind of spawning ground, it has yet to be found.

The beasts are always found in or near urban environments, where they take up residence under bridges and piers, waiting for unsuspecting prey to walk by. Luckily, the creatures are as dim as they are strong. The behavior of a bridge troll is very predictable—if the beast is hungry it bounds upwards to attack when good-smelling prey walks overhead. This makes them manageable for organized parties, but they are deadly to the unprepared.



Bridge trolls have distensible jaws, filled with rows of sharp teeth that can snap forward to make a deadly biting attack. The skin is gray and pebbly in texture. Its claws and feet are webbed, and pores in the rough skin allow it to breathe underwater, like a frog. Their hide also has some interesting mimetic qualities—they actually have the ability to draw strength from stone or wood. By tapping a bridge with their knuckles, they can make their skin take on the properties of the structure, hardening them against physical blows.

While bridge trolls no longer plague Merywyn as they once did, they can still be a danger during the wet months, and a few are still slain every spring when the waters of Llael rise. Even today that kingdom has a standing bounty of 100 crowns on their grotesque heads—but I assure you, there are much easier ways to earn your keep!

Combat

Bridge trolls can eat fish and offal, but when one gets the taste for land-meat it begins to prey exclusively on people and domestic animals. The beasts tend to attack lone travelers or small groups of people, but older specimens may have learned to avoid the smells of burning pitch and blasting powder that accompany armed parties. They prefer to attack by surprise, leaping from a submerged hiding spot if possible.



Amphibious (Ex): Bridge trolls can breathe equally well in water or air.

Bridge-tapping (Su): Once per day a bridge troll can tap stone or wood to gain the protective properties of the material. If a bridge troll taps wood, it gains the effects of a *barkskin* spell as if cast by a 7th-level druid. If a bridge troll taps stone, it imbues the creature with damage reduction 10/+5, and absorbs 20 total points of damage before the benefit fades. Bridge trolls cannot mimic wood and stone at the same time. Note that when this occurs the bridge troll's skin tone changes according to the material mimicked, though not enough to grant any true camouflage.

Gnashing Bite (Ex): A bridge troll can make a great bite attack that distends its jaws further to take a larger bite out of its prey, doing +8 additional points of damage if the attack is successful. It may do this freely as a full-round action.

Regeneration (Ex): Acid and fire inflict normal damage to bridge trolls.

Skills: *Bridge trolls use their Strength score to determine their Intimidate skill modifier. They also receive a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks when submerged.

Legends and Lore

COMMON: The vile bridge trolls lurk under bridges in wet areas. They'll snatch you up right quick if you aren't careful!

UNCOMMON: Watch out for the creatures' snapping bite. They can open their mouths wider than a dwarven shield and bite your arm right off.

RARE: The creatures make a distinct tapping noise before they attack, as they somehow absorb the toughness of nearby wood or stone.

OBSCURE: Under the peaks of southern Rhul, there is a massive mother bridge troll. She dwells in an underground lake fed by the Black River. The bloated troll spawns a few more of these foul creatures each year.

Treasure

The intact hide of a bridge troll is usually far more valuable than anything that might be dredged up from the beast's often-watery lair. A properly skilled craftsman can craft the hide into a jacket or cloak that wears like simple clothing but is quite resistant to attack.

The jacket or cloak provides damage reduction 4/+1. It takes a good portion of intact bridge troll hide, the Craft Magic Arms and Armor feat, Craft (leatherworking), 50 XP, and 200 gp to prepare. This clothing is bulky and cannot be worn over armor. A bridge troll garment bestows no special value to armor class. Spell-casters value these highly and most will gladly pay up to 4000 gp for one.

Hooks

A local bridge has been the site of some bloody mishaps due to a bridge troll that has taken to attacking the mules and packhorses of passing caravans. In the latest attack it even killed and ate a caravan guard. The elder of the local village is afraid that the beast will soon come looking for food in the village itself, and wants to recruit the PCs to hunt down and slay the despicable beast.

Burrow-Mawg

Tiny Beast	
Hit Dice:	*1d10+2 (7 hp)*
Initiative:	*+4 (+4 Dex)*
Speed:	*30 ft., burrow 10 ft.*
AC:	*16 (+2 size, +4 Dex)*
Attacks:	*Bite +6 melee, 2 claws +1 melee*
Damage:	*Bite 1d6-1, claw 1d4-1*
Face/Reach:	*2 ½ ft. by 2 ½ ft./0 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Rage*
Special Qualities:	*Scent*
Saves:	*Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +1*
Abilities:	*Str 8, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 6*
Skills:	*Listen +9*, Spot +9**
Feats:	*Weapon Finesse (bite), Weapon Finesse (claw)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Temperate forest, hill, plains, and underground*
Organization:	*Pack (10–20) or mob (20–40)*
Challenge Rating:	*1*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*2–3 HD (Tiny)*

Burrow-mawgs are despicable little creatures with a severe hankering for flesh. Some people call them land piranhas, for they swarm and consume meat just like those ravenous fish. I have personally witnessed them strip a fair-sized ox of its meat in the span of a few breaths, and I shudder whenever I think of what these beasts can do to a man. There are stories of these creatures catching travelers at night, leaving nothing but tattered cloth and bones as the unfortunate person's sole remains come first light.

In appearance, these fiends resemble a blend between a badger and a large bat. They are covered in a layer of dark red-brown fur with four long, black claws at the end of each powerful limb. The claws are easily as long as a man's finger, and are meant for two purposes: burrowing through earth and rending through flesh. They have two large blood-red eyes that enable extraordinary night vision, mucous-dripping upturned snouts that hone in on living flesh from half a league away, and pointed, bat-like ears that detect slight noises across great distances. Their most frightening feature by far, however, is their strong, prodigious maws filled with dozens of sharp, serrated fangs—perhaps this is the source of the name "mawg;" I'm not sure. These curved teeth are perfectly suited to sawing through not just meat but also cartilage and bone. It is said that one mawg can grind through a grown man's forearm in less than two seconds.



Hints of burrow-mawgs in the vicinity are in the wildness of their movements and their scenting habits. When on the hunt, these boisterous monsters chitter and sniffle, and, once the prey is scented, they squeal at full volume while skittering toward their target. They rely almost solely on their remarkable sense of smell and hearing whenever abroad during the daylight hours, for these creatures are nearly blind except at night, during which a mawg's vision is significantly acute. In fact, these beasties nearly always surface at night, preferring to hide away in their burrows and sleep during daylight. One way to keep these creatures at bay is with light, but if they have not eaten in some time, light or no, the creatures will eventually overcome their misgivings in order to sate their ravenous appetite. Some use this voracious appetite against them, for they will fearlessly venture into danger for food. In fact, it is surmised that during times of scarcity they tend to eat one another. So this, coupled with the fact that burrow-mawgs will leap into a flame pit to chase after meat, is most likely what keeps the population of these horrid beasts under some measure of control.



Combat

Burrow-mawgs attack immediately at the first scent of food if it appears that they have sufficient numbers to bring down their prey.

Rage (Ex): As soon as a burrow-mawg pack smells prey, it flies into a berserk rage. Individual mawgs gain +4 Str, +4 Con, and –2 AC. If half of the pack is killed during combat, then each creature may make a Will save (DC 15) to end its rage and flee. Any creature that remains enraged fights until either it or its opponents are dead.

Light Blindness (Ex): Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as sunlight or a *light* spell) blinds burrow-mawgs for 1 round. They also suffer a –1 circumstance penalty to all attack rolls, saves, and skill checks while operating in bright light.

Skills: *Burrow-mawgs receive a +4 racial bonus to Spot and Listen checks. The Spot bonus only applies under low-light or darker conditions.

Treasure

Occasionally items of value such as gems, coins, and other small objects can be found in burrow-mawg dens or anywhere else the creatures pass waste. The adrenal gland, located at the base of its brain, is teeming with the hormone that gives the beast its exceptional physicality. Eating the adrenal gland of a burrow-mawg raises the Str and Con of the consumer by +2 for 4d8 rounds.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: None.

UNCOMMON: Burrow-mawgs cannot tolerate direct light. They are rarely seen during the day, and they hibernate in the deepest parts of their den during the summer months.

RARE: Eating the burrow-mawg adrenal gland boosts the consumer's physical prowess. This attribute-enhancing organ, however, is rather addictive.

OBSCURE: The creatures communicate through minute clicking sounds located in their chittering, although their "language" is seemingly not very complex.

Hooks

Burrow-mawg adrenal glands have become the drug *du jour* among the local nobility. The glands are valued amongst the nobility not for the benefits one gains in combat after consuming them, but for the high that comes with the increased physical attributes. Suffice to say, these nobles are paying handsomely for fresh burrow-mawg carcasses.

"Those nasty little mawglings have a hunger so terrible there be two flaws I know of that'll help you outmaneuver 'em. One is, they smell blood, they go mad; they'll even eat each other. Two, once they get a taste, they lose all sense of everything else; they'll leap over a cliff or even straight into a draconile's maw to chase after meat they've tasted." – Bors "Longwalker" Durant, Cygnaran scout

Buzzard Beetle

Tiny Vermin	
Hit Dice:	*1d8-1 (3 hp)*
Initiative:	*+2 (+2 Dex)*
Speed:	*10 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)*
AC:	*16 (+2 size, +2 Dex, +2 natural)*
Attacks:	*Bite +0 melee*
Damage:	*Bite 1d4-2*
Face/Reach:	*2 ½ ft. by 2 ½ ft./0 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Attach, soften flesh, flesh burrow*
Special Qualities:	*Vermin, immunities*
Saves:	*Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0*
Abilities:	*Str 6, Dex 15, Con 9, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 10*
Skills:	*Climb +10, Hide +14, Spot +3*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any*
Organization:	*Swarm (5–9), large swarm (10–20)*
Challenge Rating:	*2*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*2 HD (Tiny); 3 HD (Small)*

Scavengers are part of the natural world, but some are more vicious than others. Your average vulture or jackal will flee the sight of a man. But some carrion eaters are not so easily frightened.

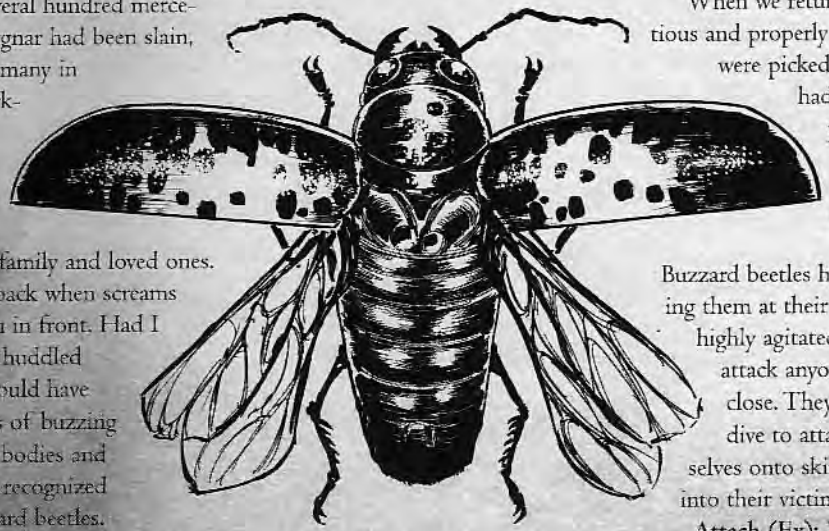
One time I agreed to help in the gruesome task of searching the site of a recent battle near Fellig for the body of the son of a friend of mine. In one of those typically hushed up border skirmishes, several hundred mercenaries working for Cygnar had been slain, along with at least as many in another company working for Khador. A group of us had traveled to the site of carnage to recover what we could for family and loved ones.

I was toward the back when screams erupted from the men in front. Had I seen the black shapes huddled among the bodies I could have warned them. Dozens of buzzing forms leapt from the bodies and flew upon the men. I recognized them at once as buzzard beetles.

About the size of a large rat, these bugs are exceptionally dangerous in groups. They have tough black exoskeletons which turn blades quite easily, and only a blunt mace or hammer seems effective against them. Unlike some scavengers, they are just as happy to eat live flesh as dead.

While the men panicked and swatted ineffectually, the beetles landed upon them and began to burrow into their flesh, softening their skin with an excretion from their mandibles. Several died in the space of minutes before we were able to fall back and get under cover. I had never seen so many beetles in one place before, and we were not properly equipped to deal with them. They must have gathered from miles around, drawn by the stench of so much death.

When we returned the next day, cautious and properly armed, all the bones were picked clean as if the battle had happened a hundred years ago.



Combat

Buzzard beetles hide amid corpses, eating them at their leisure. They become highly agitated if disturbed and will attack anyone who ventures too close. They fly quite well and will dive to attack, then latch themselves onto skin and begin to burrow into their victim until slain.

Attach (Ex): When a beetle makes a successful bite attack it attaches itself to its victim and will begin to soften flesh where it has landed. Any successful attack on the beetle will knock it loose, unless it has begun to burrow. Those wearing metal armor covering the majority of their skin (such as full plate mail) are immune to this.



Soften Flesh (Ex): Once the beetles attach, they emit a fluid that causes flesh to break down and turn to liquid, which the beetles drink for sustenance. With corpses this is a slow process, but when agitated and attacking, it is greatly accelerated. If the victim fails a Fortitude save (DC 10) they take 1d3 acid damage. This save must be repeated each round the beetle is attached, although it will temporarily exhaust its fluid supply after 4 rounds.

Flesh Burrow (Ex): The round following success with soften flesh, the beetle will burrow into the body, continuing to melt tissues with its acidic secretions. Once this has begun, the beetle cannot be knocked off unless it is killed, and any attacks on the beetle cause half as much damage to the person to whom they are attached. The beetle can be pried loose by succeeding an opposed Strength check; the buzzard beetle has an effective Strength of 18 for this ability. This requires a standard action and causes 1d2 damage to the victim if successful.

Immunities (Ex): Buzzard beetles only take half damage from piercing or slashing weapons.

Treasure

On rare occasions (10% chance), a buzzard beetle can be slain without destroying the internal organs that produce its unique secretions. These glands can be sold to an alchemist for up to 200 gp, and are useful in a number of organic mixtures.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Buzzard beetles are a variety of scavenger that attack the living as eagerly as the dead.

UNCOMMON: Blunt weapons have the most impact against the buzzard beetle's tough carapace.

RARE: Attacking beetles will latch onto a person and then burrow into them. However, they loathe the smell of oil. Those who rub some lantern oil onto exposed skin will be less likely to be attacked.

OBSCURE: Alchemists will pay handsomely for intact bodies of buzzard beetles, as there is a mixture derived from their excretions that can ward off petrifaction and paralysis effects.

Hooks

After a merchant wagon is attacked by some bandits, the PCs are sent to recover the bodies, which they find strangely picked clean. When checking closer they disturb a swarm of hiding buzzard beetles.

"Hey, I think I see some jewelry on that rotten skeleton... Aaaahh!"

— An unlucky rogue learning a hard lesson

Cask Imp

Tiny Fey (Grymkin)	
Hit Dice:	*2d6+4 (11 hp)*
Initiative:	*+3 (+3 Dex)*
Speed:	*20 ft., swim 15 ft.*
AC:	*16 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural)*
Attacks:	*Bite +3 melee, 2 claws +2 melee*
Damage:	*Bite 1d2, claw 1d2*
Face/Reach:	*2 ½ ft. by 2 ½ ft./0 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Inebriating burp*
Special Qualities:	*Drunken domination, intoxicated empathy, shape-change*
Saves:	*Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3*
Abilities:	*Str 10, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12*
Skills:	*Climb +5, Escape Artist +10, Hide +16, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Open Locks +8, Swim +13, Tumble +8*
Feats:	*Dodge, Mobility*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any locale near kegs of ale*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*2*
Alignment:	*Usually chaotic neutral*
Advancement:	*3–4 HD (Tiny); 5–6 HD (Small)*

One evening I was enjoying ale at the Falling Star with my friend Mitchel Filkins of the watch. He was several flagons ahead, but I was surprised when he lurched to his feet and began singing at the top of his lungs, eyes straining from their sockets. He then made the mistake of manhandling one of the tavern girls. Soon he was unconscious on the ground with an ugly knot on his head thanks to Dando, the bullish bartender.

My hunch that something was amiss was confirmed when another man began similar antics. With the cooperation of the proprietor, I investigated the grounds.

In the storage area I noted a cork popped loose from a nearby cask, yet there were only a few drops of wine spilled on the floor. Looking closer, I saw a fat little toe poking out where the cork had been. The bouncer and I gave the cask a good shake and heard something thumping around inside! There was a shriek and a loud stream of curses.

Clawing out of the cask, ruining it in the process, the little creature bit the bouncer's arm before scrambling away. As I gave chase it belched a cloud of vapors that made me giddy. When I managed to catch up, it had already found the room's drain, jumped into the grate, and was sucked down like so much ale!

Cask imps, as I have learned, entertain themselves from the shelter of their casks by spying on the emotions of people drinking nearby and controlling their actions. They usually just choose to embarrass their chosen victim, but some are malicious and compel more dangerous actions. This becomes more likely as the grymkin nears the bottom of the barrel and gets grumpy. These imps only need alcohol for sustenance and can go through five gallons of wine or ale a night. This can incur a considerable loss for the tavern owner if not discovered quickly.



Combat

Cask imps have sharp teeth and claws, and are prone to rages if removed from the casks where they enjoy pickling themselves in prodigious amounts of alcohol. They prefer to flee if discovered and use their inebriating burp and shape-change abilities to get away.

Inebriating Burp (Su): Once per day, the cask imp can belch forth a cloud of magically charged gas. Those within a



10-foot radius must succeed a Will save (DC 13) or be overcome by laughter, falling to the ground and unable to perform any actions for 1d3 rounds.

Intoxicated Empathy (Sp): If happily immersed in alcohol, a cask imp can sense anyone who is drinking within a 100-foot radius at will and pick up surface thoughts (similar to *detect thoughts*).

Drunken Domination (Sp): This power requires 5 minutes of uninterrupted effort, but allows the goblin to take control of anyone within 100 feet who has been drinking at least three stiff drinks within the last hour and fails a Will save (DC 16). This power is similar to *dominate*, allowing a bonus for actions against the person's nature. However, there is a cumulative -1 penalty for each drink past three drinks consumed. Another 5 minutes of uninterrupted effort are required to switch targets.

Shape-change (Su): Twice per day the cask imp can turn its body into liquid, usually used to enter a cask of alcohol. Turning into a liquid requires a move-equivalent action, and they can be harmed in this form. They can return to their normal shape at will.

Treasure

Cask imps sometimes steal and stash fine bottles of wine, brandy, and other liquors. These stashes are difficult to find unless the grymkin is followed or captured and forced to bargain for its freedom. Their taste in alcohol is impeccable, and they will always steal the most expensive bottles available.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Cask imps are alcoholic supernatural creatures that break into taverns for beer and wine.

UNCOMMON: These things are actually grymkin, a nasty form of fey. As their name suggests, they live inside casks of alcohol.

RARE: Cask imps can control the minds of drunken people near them and can turn into liquid to help them escape.

OBSCURE: They keep secret stashes of valuables and can be forced to give these up if caught. Some cask imps can turn water into fine brandy if chained with silver and immersed.

Hooks

- The best way to spring cask imps on a party is while they are celebrating in a local tavern. This works best if one PC is recruited to participate as the dominated drunk.
- Several particularly malicious cask imps inhabit a Corvis tavern, which has since earned a bad reputation. The PCs are hired by the nervous proprietor to find out what is behind this before the city council shuts him down.

Cephalyx

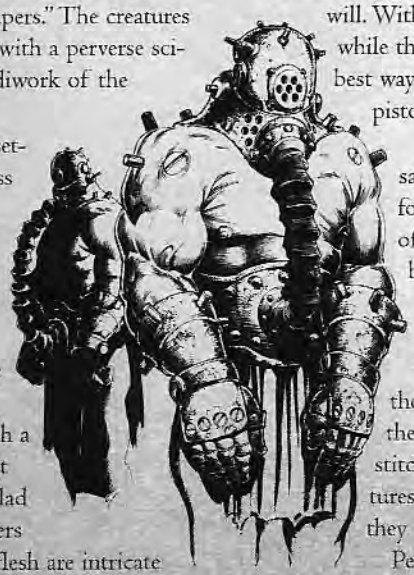


Medium-size Monstrous Humanoid	
Hit Dice:	*4d8 (18 hp)*
Initiative:	*+1 (+1 Dex)*
Speed:	*30 ft., fly 10 ft. (average)*
AC:	*14 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather)*
Attacks:	*4 prosthetic weapons +7 melee*
Damage:	*Prosthetic blade 1d4*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Cephalomek*
Special Qualities:	*Darkvision 60 ft., telepathy, chirurgery, command drudge*
Saves:	*Fort +1, Ref +7, Will +8*
Abilities:	*Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 16*
Skills:	*Craft (augmentation) +7, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +7, Innuendo +5, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Listen +6, Search +7, Sense Motive +5, Healing +6, Spot +3*
Feats:	*Exotic Weapon Proficiency (prosthetic weaponry), Iron Will, Multidexterity, Multiweapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse (prosthetic weaponry)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Temperate underground*
Organization:	*Clave (1–4, plus 1–8 drudges), Convene (5–12, plus 9–20 drudges), Collective (12–26, plus 20–40 drudges)*
Challenge Rating:	*6*
Alignment:	*Usually lawful evil*
Advancement:	*5–8 HD (Medium-size); 9–12 HD (Large)*

The wizard Crimnebule put it best when he referred to the cephalyx as "the mind-rapers." The creatures enslave and twist their captives with a perverse science. Sadly I have seen the handiwork of the cephalyx all too closely.

Crimnebule and I discovered a cephalyx settlement while touring the caverns of the Glass Peaks in Rhul. I don't wish to recount the matters that led to our encounter with these godless monsters—however I will tell you that my party spent every rifle round, pistol shot, and spell at our disposal to escape. I am not ashamed to say that we fled from the cephalyx with all speed.

These subterranean overlords stride with a calm purpose and can also fly at will (albeit not very swiftly). Cephalyx are uniformly clad in a padded black leather garment that covers them from chin to toe. Imbedded in their flesh are intricate mechanical arms that extend over the shoulders in a spider-like manner. Each limb ends in some sort of cutting tool.



The mind-rapers can sense your thoughts and twist your will. With a thought they can hold you in place, while their drudge servitors overpower you. The best way to parley with these abominations is with a pistol.

Cephalyx drudges are held in check with savage modifications and make fearful reinforcements to their master's will. A "helmet" of brass and crystal seems to be surgically bolted over the head of the slave. The implants seem to grant the drudges with increased strength and perception.

I witnessed a myriad of augmentations on these unfortunates as we fought our way past them. Each was crudely fastened in place with stitches, rivets, and even screws. The poor creatures were so twisted that I could not truly say if they were human or something else.

Perhaps there is some ancient book that alludes to the goals of the cephalyx, but whatever motivates them is certainly beyond my own speculation.

Combat

Any encounter with the cephalyx is likely to turn into a brutal melee. While drudges engage opponents in physical combat, the cephalyx use their formidable mental abilities.

Cephalomek (Sp): At will—*daze, detect thoughts, mage hand, mage armor*; 2/day—*hold person, suggestion*. These are as the spells cast by a 6th-level wizard (Save DC 13 + spell level).

Telepathy (Su): Cephalyx can telepathically communicate with any creature within 200 feet that has a language.

Command Drudge (Su): Cephalyx orders to a drudge are more compelling than a *dominate person* spell. A drudge will follow cephalyx telepathic commands as closely as possible, no matter how suicidal.

Chirurgery (Su): The modifications made to a drudge grant them increased strength, new weaponry, and enhanced senses. The grafts and implants also include a cephalyx "helmet." The helmet usurps the drudge's will and places them under the total command of its masters. The following template can be applied to any humanoid of Medium-size or smaller.

Cephalyx Drudge

Special Qualities: A drudge retains the hit points and level of its former self. However it loses access to any feats, class abilities, spells, or spell-like abilities that it may have had prior to being enslaved. Racial abilities are not affected.

Hit Dice:	Increases by one die type to a maximum of 1d10.
Speed:	30 ft.
AC:	+4 to natural armor class
Special Attacks:	There is a 10% chance that a slave will have a mechanical limb similar to those grafted to a cephalyx. If so, this grants the slave an extra blade attack (+2 melee) that does 1d4 points of damage.
Special Abilities:	Darkvision 60 ft.
Attack:	Prosthetic blade +2 melee
Damage:	1d8 + Str bonus
Saves:	Same as base creature
Abilities:	Str +2, Dex +0, Con +2, Int -4, Wis -4, Cha -8
Skills:	+4 to Listen, Search, and Spot checks
Feats:	Endurance, Toughness (x2)

If a player character is implanted with a helmet, the full effects of the command drudge power will not take until a week has passed. During this time treat the character as if under the effects of a dominate person spell cast by a 7th-level wizard. Removing the helmet does 1d12 points of damage, and 1d4 points of Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma are lost (for each a Fortitude save of DC 20 negates).

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Cephalyx are creatures that dwell in deep caverns and underground realms.

UNCOMMON: The cephalyx employ mental abilities that can cripple or bend one's will.

RARE: Cephalyx have absolute command over their slaves. If they catch you, you will join their number.

OBSCURE: The acolytes of Cyriss have a standing enmity with the cephalyx. How this began, and what the enmity is about is a mystery.

Treasure

The vaults of the cephalyx are full of treasures seized from the unfortunates they have taken into bondage. Treat these ill-gotten gains as standard treasure.

Hooks

Cephalyx have begun using a sinkhole to gain access to the surface world, raiding villages for slave stock. A survivor of a raid has recounted the tale and has begged the players to help him rescue his family.

Crypt Spiper



Medium-size Vermin	
Hit Dice:	*2d8+2 (11 hp)*
Initiative:	*+3 (+3 Dex)*
Speed:	*40 ft., climb 20 ft.*
AC:	*14 (+3 Dex, +1 natural)*
Attacks:	*Bite +4 melee*
Damage:	*1d8+2*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Acid*
Special Qualities:	*Vermin*
Saves:	*Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0*
Abilities:	*Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 3*
Skills:	*Climb +12*, Hide +9*, Jump +7, Move Silently +4*, Spot +7**
Climate/Terrain:	*Temperate and warm underground*
Organization:	*Colony (2–5) or swarm (6–11)*
Challenge Rating:	*3*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*3–5 HD (Medium-size); 5–7 HD (Large)*



These large arachnids are more a nuisance than anything, as they feed not on the living, but rather on the dead. Imagine, one spends months and months poring over ancient tomes in search of the resting place of Warlord Kyarna of Orgoth, only to finally get there and find the tomb violated by blasted spiders! They're everywhere! They've sucked dry the bones of every visible corpse and filled every chamber with thick webs. One can't venture a step without disturbing a colony of their young or slipping in a pile of their effluvial droppings!

When feasting on these carcasses, they first crack open the bones of the fallen with their large oversized mandibles, then secrete a very powerful digestive acid, which they use to dissolve the marrow found within. They then suck up the dissolved marrow and move on to another bone. In this manner, they can quickly destroy any archeological find. I have found instances in which starving crypt spiders have actually eaten ancient bones that lack the marrow they prefer.

Luckily, the spiders only attack the living in self-defense and are therefore little threat to the common man. Adventurers such as myself, however, are another matter. The crypt spiders do not take kindly to any who disturb their homes or feeding grounds. They will not hesitate to band together to take on a foe that poses a threat to their colony. Although they continue to spin webs, which may hearken back to their earlier evolutionary days as hunters, they do not use them for hunting purposes. The webs merely seem to provide a shelter for the spiders and their young.

Crypt spiders are about as long as a man is tall and stand at about half of that, but I've witnessed them squeezing through openings about half that size in search of prey. In appearance, they are possessed of nearly translucent skin that allows one to see the pulsating organs beneath, and their enormous pair of oversized mandibles used for cracking open bones extends outward from the head.

Combat

Crypt spiders usually avoid combat, though they will attack if they feel threatened (unfortunately for adventurers and delving scholars, this includes disturbing their "food"). If pressed, they will release their acid spray.

Acid Spray (Ex): Once per day, a crypt spider can evacuate its acid bladder in a jet from its mouth. This attack does 2d10 points of damage to one target in a 5-foot radius directly in front of the spider. A successful Reflex save (DC 18) halves the damage. They only do this if cornered or sorely pressed.

Skills: *Crypt spiders receive a +4 racial bonus to Hide and Spot checks. They also receive a +8 competence bonus to Climb and Move Silently checks when using their webs.

Legends & Lore

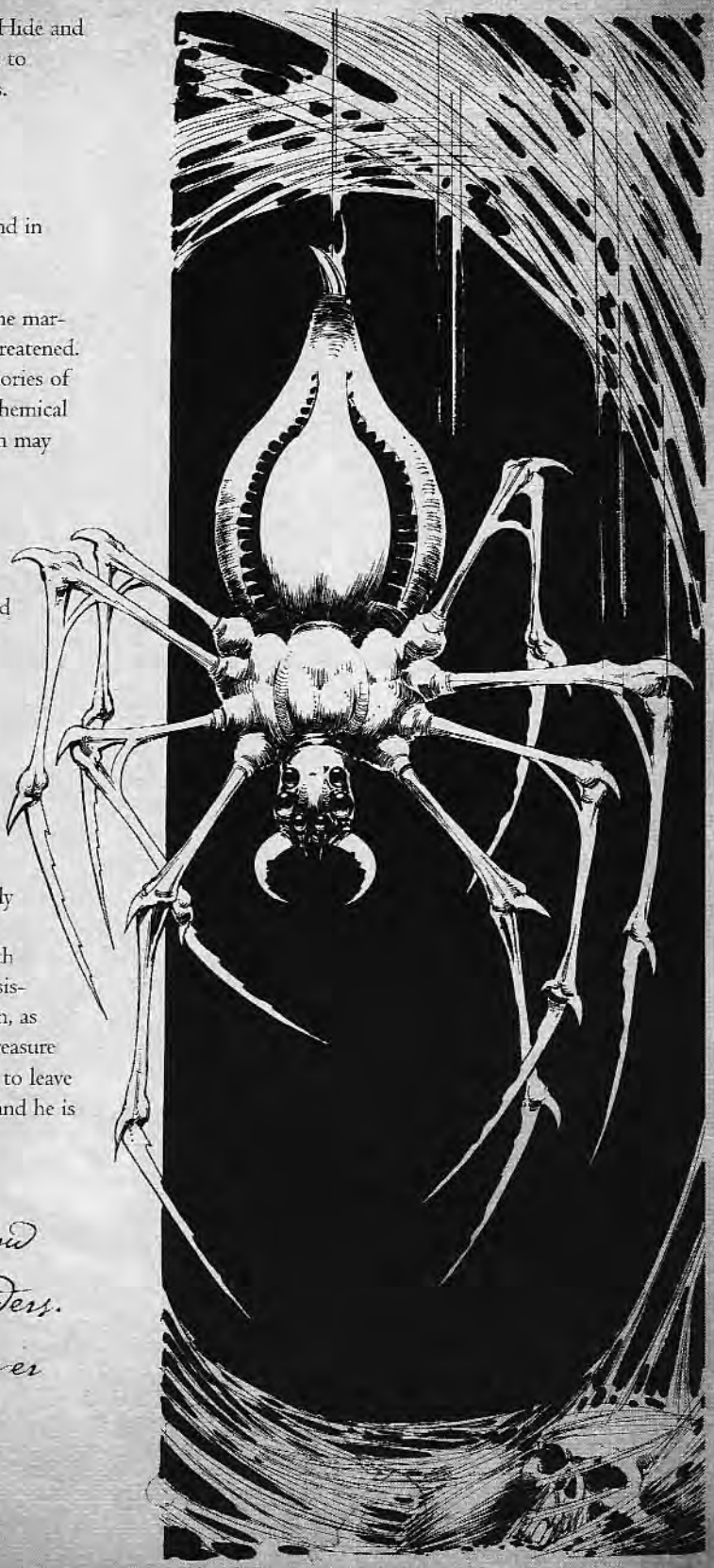
COMMON: Crypt spiders feast upon the corpses found in tombs.
UNCOMMON: Crypt spiders devour bone marrow.
RARE: Crypt spiders use a powerful acid to digest bone marrow, and they can spray this acid at aggressors when threatened.
OBSCURE: Some say that crypt spiders gain the memories of those they have eaten. Ancient texts allude to a rare alchemical formula that calls for the brain of a crypt spider, which may allow the imbiber to inherit those memories.

Treasure

The crypt spider's full acid bladder can be harvested and sold to the right buyer for 20 gp. The problem in collecting these, however, is that the spiders tend to evacuate their acid bladders as a last-ditch defense.

Hooks

Professor Pendrake himself approaches the PCs with a proposition. He recently unearthed a major discovery outside the city in which the PCs are currently located. He has located the tomb of a legendary local hero. The trouble is that the entire tomb is infested with crypt spiders, more than the good professor and his assistants can handle. Time is of the essence on this mission, as there are many other parties interested in finding the treasure supposedly located in the tomb. It perturbed Pendrake to leave the site under the watchful eye of his assistant Lynus, and he is now eager to return to the ruin.



I honestly didn't know Lynus was scared of spiders. I don't think he'll ever forgive me.

VP

Deathjack



Large Construct	
Hit Dice:	*20d10 (110 hp)*
Initiative:	*-1 (-2 size, +1 Dex)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*27 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +18 natural)*
Attacks:	*2 slams +25 melee*
Damage:	*Slam 2d10+10*
Face/Reach:	*10 ft. by 10 ft./15 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Necrovent, improved grab, swallow whole, smite good, skulls of hate, soul furnace, spawn undead*
Special Qualities:	*Construct, cold and fire resistance 20, damage reduction 10/blessed, SR 25*
Saves:	*Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +6*
Abilities:	*Str 30, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any remote locale*
Organization:	*Unique*
Challenge Rating:	*15*
Alignment:	*Chaotic evil*
Advancement:	*21–40 HD (Huge); 41–60 HD (Colossal)*

Of all the mercenaries I've worked alongside in my travels, the Ironhands are certainly some of the most interesting. They're specially trained mercenaries working for the Steam & Iron Workers Union, who typically perform tasks like tracking down rogue steamjacks and handlers, though sometimes they do more interesting things, like battling junker bands. These people are the toughest mercenaries the Union has to offer, accomplished warriors and mages that have seen more than a fair share of mayhem. They are paid well for what they do, and they are very good at it.

Like a lot of guilds and fellowships, the Ironhands have built a mythology for themselves, something most groups do to explain away things that have happened to their people in the past. When a team of Ironhands fails to return from a dangerous mission, it's said that the Deathjack was waiting for them.

Veteran teamsters and Ironhands from the Union can describe the Deathjack to you in detail. I've listened to a few of such tales. Many told me about close calls with the creature, and some even claimed to have vanquished it, only for it to appear once more in a remote location.



Fifteen feet of kettle-black greasy iron and a gut full of soul-burning mechanika, the Deathjack supposedly resembles a steamjack made from the nightmares of a madman. Its head is a horned helm with glowing eyes that sits between massive pneumatic shoulders. A hybrid of machine and vile necromantic energy, its design must be awesome to behold.

From what I can tell the thing doesn't need coal to burn—it needs souls. Stories mention it sapping the life out of men and leaving mere husks behind. Using some sort of necromantic furnace it draws the life force out of those it can stuff into its iron belly. This vicious boiler hisses and crackles and the furnace vents give off a dark greasy ash as it burns its victims.

It has been seen as close to Corvis as the Widower's Wood, and as far away as the mountains of Khador. Mention of it has been recorded in tales that go back as far as two hundred years. I've even heard mention of a tome that may reveal the nature of its function. An ancient book called the *Librum Mekanecrus* has been rumored to hold this secret. This dusty manual supposedly details a melding of



mechanika with ancient Orgoth rites. The damnable tome could be a key to unlocking the mysteries of the Deathjack.

Construction

Creating a Deathjack is possible. The creator needs to use the procedures outlined in the *Librum Mekanecrus*. Learning these procedures costs 1,500 XP. To begin crafting a Deathjack the creator must meet all of the requirements for crafting a golem as defined in the MM, as well as following the procedures in the tome, which include many despicable acts, including human sacrifice.

Combat

The Deathjack is typically encountered on the outskirts of civilized lands, raiding small communities, and sometimes even armed caravans or patrols to fuel itself. It shows no mercy, slaying anything it sees. It is not without guile, however. It can and will retreat from fights it cannot win. It will often use its necrovent to throw up a screen of charnel ash to cover its escape.

The Deathjack cannot weather the wrath of the blessed and righteous. A properly armed warrior with blessed or holy weapons can easily penetrate the Deathjack's armor. It will attack those that bear such weapons with all of its attention.

Deathjack

Necrovent (Su): A black greasy necrotic ash leaks out of the Deathjack's smoke vents and engine seams. Twice per day this soot can be vented out to form a 30-foot radius cloud around the construct. This cloud remains stationary for 2d4 rounds.

Any living thing within the ash cloud must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) each round. Creatures of 3 HD or less take 1d10 points of damage with a successful save, while those that fail die immediately. Creatures with more than 3 HD that fail their saving throw take 1d10 points of damage as the ash blackens and eats their flesh. A successful save results in half damage.

The ash cloud is heavy and thick, and attempts to disperse it with magical winds are half as effective. Visibility in the ash cloud is 50%, and the ash cloud should be treated as partial cover.

Improved Grab (Ex): The Deathjack will often grab opponents in combat. Once it has a firm enough grip, they get tossed into its furnace through a black iron hatch.

Swallow Whole (Ex): See swallow whole, MM . Once the Deathjack has its quarry in its grasp, they are tossed into its furnace. Inside the furnace individuals will take 4d6 points of fire damage per round. In addition the ingested must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) each round in the belly of the beast, or lose one level. It is possible to force a way out through the Deathjack's furnace hatch with a Strength check (DC 25). Attacks made from the inside of its belly are affected by its damage reduction.

Smite Good (Su): The Deathjack's fiendish nature allows it to assault the forces of good with great power. Once per day the Deathjack can add 20 points of damage to a single melee slam attack versus a good creature.

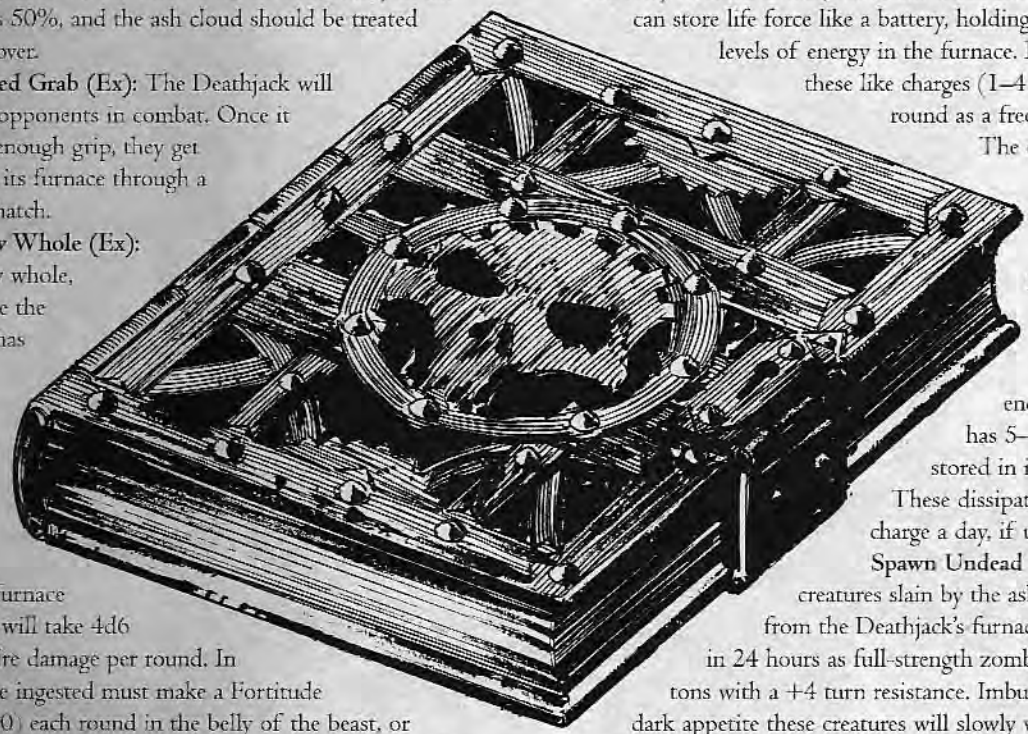
Skulls of Hate (Su): Mounted on each shoulder of the Deathjack is a skull-shaped lantern. The lanterns act not only as spell focuses for the construct, but also provide 360-degree vision, making it impossible to surprise the construct.

The *skulls of hate* can cast spells from the Death or Destruction clerical list as a 17th-level cleric (including the number of spells available). They must make a Concentration check at +10 if they are struck while casting.

These grim lanterns also empower the jack with the granted abilities of the Death and Destruction domains: *death touch*, and *smite* as a 17th-level cleric. If not casting spells the *skulls of hate* make a soft chanting noise, and the flames inside of them glow a hellish red.

Soul Furnace (Su): The soul furnace metabolizes life-force. This horrid engine can hold one living creature of Medium-size, or two creatures of Small size. Although the Deathjack's infernal engine can keep it going without souls, life energy can repair damage done to the construct.

For every level the Deathjack drains it can heal 1d10 hp. It can store life force like a battery, holding up to 20 levels of energy in the furnace. It can expend these like charges (1–4 charges a round as a free action). The energy heals the construct 1d10 hp per charge spent. Usually when encountered it has 5–10 charges stored in its fiery gut. These dissipate slowly, at a charge a day, if unused.



Spawn Undead (Su): Any creatures slain by the ash vented from the Deathjack's furnace rise again in 24 hours as full-strength zombies or skeletons with a +4 turn resistance. Imbued with a dark appetite these creatures will slowly wander to areas of civilization to feed off of the living. Washing a corpse in holy water or casting *bless* on the corpse will prevent it from rising up, as long as the blessing takes place within the first 12 hours after death.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: The Deathjack is an horridly evil device that kills indiscriminately. It saps the life of the living to power its furnaces.

UNCOMMON: Its engines can vent a caustic life-draining ash that can kill a normal man in an instant. This ash has necro-

mantic properties that cause the dead to rise as hungry shambling beasts. Washing the ash from a corpse with holy water will prevent it from rising. Those corpses that do rise up are difficult to rebuke or turn.

RARE: Fear the chanting of the skulls mounted on the Deathjack's shoulders. The skull-shaped lamps burn with the damned souls absorbed in the belly of this beast. Each skull channels spells of death and destruction. Dangerous in their own right, they may make powerful talismans if removed from the Deathjack's still frame.

OBSCURE: Destroying the Deathjack permanently may be difficult. More than a few tales speak of its destruction, but it arises to plague the world in one form or another. The skull lamps seem to be a key element of its construction and may hold the secret to its permanent demise.

Treasure

If the Deathjack is defeated, the *skulls of hate* can be taken as magic items. The skulls are worth 30,000 gp apiece. The wielder of a single lit skull once per day can use the domain granted ability from the Death or Destruction list (depending on the skull held) as if they were a 12th-level cleric. Every time a skull is used it shifts a character's alignment one step closer to chaotic evil; a Will save (DC 20) negates. The DM may choose the path taken, but it usually is the quickest route.

Once a shift to chaotic evil is complete, the affected is compelled as if by a *geas* spell (cast at 17th-level) to seek out a steamjack and attach both of the skulls to the frame of the jack. Once this is done, the skulls will flare to life and cause the steamjack to transform into the Deathjack within 10 rounds. At this point the Deathjack will destroy the *geased* character and consume their soul. It will then make its way towards more souls for consumption.

The skulls themselves are impermeable to harm and cannot be destroyed by any regular means.

Hooks

The Deathjack has been rumored to be approaching a small village or town. The characters are asked to help evacuate the village and outlying areas before the creature devastates the populace with its wrath. Ornery old folk that "won't leave where they grew up for some durn contraption," opportunistic nobles looking for a cause, and even thieves wanting to plunder coffers may be obstacles the characters face as they attempt to get innocents away from the area before the Deathjack arrives.

Deathjack Sightings

Ceryl — 599. Merchant caravan attacked. 20 dead, 1 survivor.

Wyrmwall Mountains — 601. Mining town devastated. 41 dead, 12 missing.

Fharin (10 mi. south) — 601. Trollkin kith massacred. 10 dead, 1 missing.

Fort Falk — 602. Assault on main gates of city. 33 dead, 40 injured, 8 missing.

Highgate (20 mi. east) — 589. Mountain pass waystation destroyed.

Unknown casualties; 20 estimated.

High Gulch (15 mi. NE of Caspia) — 592. Gobber caravan massacred. 12 dead.

Kidlan (20 mi. E of Berck) — 595. Ironhand crew ambushed. 24 dead, 2 survivors.

Midfast — 599. Neighboring troll population wiped out. Unknown casualties; at least 50 estimated.

Imer — 598. 6 confirmed sightings. 0 confirmed dead, 12 missing.

Khardov — 592. Reported capture. Believed to be falsified; no physical evidence.

Fellig — 596. The Brickfield Massacre. 102 dead, 32 injured, 16 missing.

Irysk — 597. Multiple sightings. Unconfirmed.

Cygnaran-Khadoran border (NW of Corvis) — 601. The Red Fist mercenaries wiped out. 42 dead, 1 survivor.

Is there a pattern? VP

Disembodied



Medium-size Undead (Incorporeal)	
Hit Dice:	6d12 (39 hp)
Initiative:	+5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed:	30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect)
AC:	13 (+1 Dex, +2 deflection)
Attacks:	Incorporeal touch +4 melee; or 2 claws +4 melee
Damage:	Energy drain; or claw 1d8 against ethereal targets
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Energy drain, spell-like abilities
Special Qualities:	Undead, darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal, damage reduction 10/+1, +4 turn resistance, rejuvenation
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +8
Abilities:	Str —, Dex 13, Con —, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 15
Skills:	Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (Arcana) +7, Listen +9, Sense Motive +12, Spot +9
Feats:	Alertness, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative
Climate/Terrain:	Any land
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	7
Alignment:	Always lawful evil
Advancement:	7–12 HD (Medium-size)

The disembodied are to be both feared and pitied. They are the shades of priests who lived their lives with the outward appearance of goodness and light. Naturally, were it truly so, they would not suffer the fate of the disembodied, for such priests committed unspeakable acts unbeknownst to their flocks and were never discovered, never punished… but nothing can be concealed from the gods.



Some tainted priests with a strong enough life force, knowing that their spirits would face eternal torment for their crimes, resist crossing over and remain tied to their corporeal form to escape retribution. The disembodied develop a terrible hatred for the living, and to sustain their power they will attempt to consume the life force of any intelligent creature that ventures too close.

Fortunately, these horrid spectres cannot move more than about 100 feet from their corpse. If they do so, they are destroyed and forced to face their fate. Removing the corpse, usually interred in a crypt, will only cause the spirit to follow. To truly defeat these foul defilers, the corpse must be burned, immersed in acid or holy water, or otherwise utterly destroyed.

That is never an easy task. Mother Caspis Crispus, the legendary abbess of Felig, penned the definitive tome *On Restoring the Blackened Heart* three centuries past. The great ghoul hunter warns that the disembodied are possessed of "great despoiled magicks," remnants of the powers they held in life. They are vulnerable to holy water (though only if applied to the corpse) and will resist all but the most powerful of magical spells. I have been told that fire and acid will also send them to their eternal rest, though I have never observed such methods in practice.

The disembodied will also retain the objects they possessed in life, Mother Crispus tells us, hoarding arms, armor, and other relics in the tomb. If that is inspiration for some to seek out the places where these things pass their uneasy rest, be warned: they are deadly evil.

Combat

The disembodied can do no physical damage at all against the living. They instead attempt to drain the life-force of the living with an incorporeal attack. Ethereal attacks against the disembodied function as normal attacks and vice versa.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a disembodied's claw attack suffer one negative level. Each time a negative level is bestowed, the disembodied's hit points return to full if it has been damaged. The Fortitude save to remove a negative level is at DC 15.

Spell-like Abilities: 3/day—*animate dead, cause fear, darkness, death knell, protection from good*; 1/day—*slay living*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 10th-level cleric (save DC 12 + spell level).

Rejuvenation (Su): A disembodied cannot be permanently killed unless its physical body is found and destroyed. If its incorporeal form is defeated, it will return to the location of its corpse at full strength within 2d12 hours.

Turn Resistance (Ex): Disembodied have +4 turn resistance. If it is successfully turned, the disembodied returns to its body for 30 minutes before it can move again.

Treasure

The coffin of a disembodied has a 30% chance of containing 1d4 minor magical items usable by the cleric class. In addition, there is a 50% chance of magic armor and a 30% chance of a weapon suitable to the cleric class being in the burial vessel.



Legends & Lore

COMMON: The disembodied are the ghosts of priests gone bad.

UNCOMMON: Destroying the corpse of a disembodied with fire, holy water, or acid will kill the spirit.

RARE: The mere touch of these vile creatures can kill.

OBSCURE: Unless its physical corpse is burned or doused with acid or holy water, a disembodied will return to haunt the area where it is buried.

Hooks

Communities who discover their local crypt inhabited by one of the disembodied often find themselves in a bind. They're angry to discover such a fiend had ministered their local church unbeknownst to them. They are usually incapable of dealing with the deadly spirit in their midst and also embarrassed that such a thing could have happened under their noses. Hiring a party of adventurers to quietly clean out the crypt is likely to be their first choice.

Dolomite



Huge Aberration (Earth)	
Hit Dice:	*12d8+108 (162 hp)*
Initiative:	*-1 (-1 Dex)*
Speed:	*20 ft.*
AC:	*29 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +22 natural)*
Attacks:	*2 slams +17 melee*
Damage:	*Slam 2d6+10*
Face/Reach:	*10 ft. by 10 ft./15 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Improved grab, constrict, rend*
Special Qualities:	*Darkvision 60 ft., damage reduction 25/+1, music sensitivity*
Saves:	*Fort +15, Ref +3, Will +8*
Abilities:	*Str 30, Dex 9, Con 28, Int 3, Wis 6, Cha 10*
Skills:	*Listen +2, Search +6, Spot +6*
Feats:	*Great Fortitude, Iron Will*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any plains, hills, and mountains*
Organization:	*Solitary or rutting group (5–10)*
Challenge Rating:	*9*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*13–24 HD (Huge); 25–36 HD (Gargantuan)*

I must confess that I find the dolomite, or slag hound as it is known in Rhul, to be a truly fascinating creature. These huge, jagged jumbles of rock and dirt are usually mistaken for a pile of rubble, though in reality they are slow moving, dim-witted creatures found in uninhabited rocky plains and low mountain foothills.

The migration of the dolomite during its mating season once per decade is a wonder to behold (if you happen to have quite a bit of leisure time). Shambling bipedal hulks, they shuffle across the plains in slow intricate dances. Lowing softly and swinging their massive eyeless heads from side to side, the dolomites dance for a year until each has paired off with a mate.

Usually they are mostly harmless—and brainless, to boot. They eat dirt for the most part, tearing up great clods of earth and stuffing them into their gigantic maws.

Unfortunately, these massive and virtually indestructible monsters have also developed an insatiable hunger for magically imbued metal of all kinds. I have seen the armor of stalwart mercenaries torn to shreds by these giants—sometimes with the mercenaries still inside! They will stop at nothing to possess—and eat—an enchanted wand, sword, or pair of bracers.

Once it has devoured all it can find, the dolomite will move on, usually ignoring all else.

They will defend themselves if attacked, but will not pursue a retreating foe. I have never seen a dolomite fall in combat, nor, oddly, have I seen the corpse of one. They leave no spoor, so what becomes of the metals they consume I cannot tell.

They do have one curious weakness—music, which will cause the dolomite to stand as if entranced. Stranger still, they seem to have a taste for good music. They will not usually respond to my bawdy tavern songs (admittedly, I sing like a crow).

They did respond favorably to the harping of Wythsten Farill, the famed performer from Five Fingers who accompanied me once on safari to chronicle my adventures. I will never forget the sight of poor Master Farill singing frantically across the steppes with several rut-crazy dolomites in tow. Oh, we told the vain young thespian all he had to do was stop singing. Eventually.

Combat

Dolomites attack only if provoked or if they are near metallic magical items.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this the dolomite must hit with a successful slam attack. It can then attempt to constrict or rend.

Constrict (Ex): A dolomite inflicts 2d12 points of damage with a successful grapple check against Large or smaller creatures.

Rend (Ex): A dolomite can tear a Medium-sized or smaller creature from limb to limb after a successful grab. It automatically inflicts 2d6+10 points of damage per round until the creature is dead. It will only do this to obtain enchanted armor or other items on the creature's person.

Music Sensitivity (Ex): Music sung or played on an instrument will cause the dolomite to stand as if entranced. A successful performance roll (DC 15) will cause the creature to attempt to stay within 50 feet of the music's source until it stops. Poorly performed music (unsuccessful skill check) does not affect the dolomite, though a truly botched performance may enrage the creature at the DM's option.

Treasure

A dolomite's gizzard may contain magic items it has consumed, though some will eventually (after 100 years) be destroyed by the creature's glacially slow digestion. There's a 50% chance of 1–2 random items.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: The dolomite lives exclusively in rocky areas.

UNCOMMON: Dolomite gizzards sometimes contain magic items made of metal.

RARE: They like music, and a well-played song can stop a magic-hunting dolomite in its tracks.

OBSCURE: The dolomites were called "the hounds of Menoth" in ancient times, and records of their existence predate the Orgoth invasion. It is written that they were created by Menoth to remind men that magic is a curse as often as a blessing. Dolomites will not attempt to consume a magic item enchanted by the Church of Menoth.

Hooks

The dolomite's insatiable hunger for magic drives it to consume dozens of items during its 2,000-year lifetime. Some are family heirlooms: a count wants the family's fabled mace (lost by his foolish son) returned from the gut of one that lives in the not-too-distant foothills and will pay well for its return. Some are artifacts: a dolomite on the border with the Protectorate of Menoth is reputed to have eaten the powerful *Mail of Carunder (+3 chain mail of etherealness)*; unfortunately, the creatures are revered in the Protectorate and it is forbidden to harm them.

Dracodile



Huge Magical Beast (Aquatic)	
Hit Dice:	*11d10+50 (115 hp)*
Initiative:	*+1 (Dex)*
Speed:	*20 ft., swim 30 ft.*
AC:	*17 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural)*
Attacks:	*Bite +17 melee; or tail slap +17 melee*
Damage:	*Bite 4d6+12; or tail slap 2d6+12*
Face/Reach:	*10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Breath weapon, improved grab*
Saves:	*Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +3*
Abilities:	*Str 26, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 10*
Skills:	*Hide +0*, Listen +5, Spot +5, Swim +16*
Climate/Terrain:	*Warm and temperate marsh*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*9*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*12–20 HD (Huge); 21–30 HD (Gargantuan)*

Dracodiles, often called dragodiles in the lands of Khador, are usually the top predators in whatever swamp, marsh, or bog they prowl. They are particularly vicious killers that are ever hungry and fearless. They are not wholly predictable, however, and they are ambush predators that can be submerged several feet away without their prey having the slightest inkling that they are ever so close to a sudden, violent death. Of course, if you're this close, it's usually too late.



Dracodiles are surprisingly protective of their young. If you should spy any rather small dracodiles, nests, or eggs, I suggest you put forth your best effort to be somewhere else, and quick. Their nests are large areas—usually 40 feet in diameter—that have been cleared of most debris and are dominated centrally by a large mound of mud and various detritus, wherein the female dracodile lays her eggs. If she feels that her eggs are in danger, she will not leave the nest site, often without eating for several days. Regardless of any immediate threats, she'll never be more than a stone's throw away from the nest and will be similarly close to her young once they are hatched.

I should take a moment here to address the "legend," as Lynus calls it, which is circulating about my encounter with a dracodile and my subsequent "riding" of the beast. I must tell you, it was nothing of the sort, and I wouldn't dare "play" with one of these most vicious of creatures. Lynus and I were traveling through Widower's Wood towards a popular breeding ground of the Tyner's toad (named for the explorer that discovered and then was later killed by the extremely poisonous amphibian) when we were suddenly attacked by an exceptionally large dracodile. On one hand, we were fortunate that the thing lunged at our pack-mule, Daisy, instead of us, astride our horses. On the other, my lucky bow and journals (which were fortunately sealed in a water-tight satchel) were lashed to Daisy's side, and bugger me if I lose two of my most prized possessions to an oversized wall lizard! Prudence be damned, I leapt into the water after the beast, a dagger firmly clenched in my teeth. I suppose I was riding the dracodile at one point, but that was just a matter of circumstance. It was the easiest way

to reach the thing's eyes with my blade! To the detriment of my scholarly sensibilities I must admit it was terribly fun, though I still roll my eyes at Lynus's calling it a legend, despite how true some of the circumstances may have been.

Combat

A dracodile will usually hide partially submerged while waiting for its prey to come within striking range and then burst out of the water, jaws agape. It will reserve its breath weapon for larger or more dangerous prey (such as fully armored and armed adventurers!).

Breath Weapon (Su): Up to four times a day, a dracodile can breathe forth a noxious cloud of swamp gas and a minute amount of its own digestive acids. It takes the form of a cone 50 feet long, doing 3d6 points of damage and causing confusion, per the spell. A successful Reflex save (DC 20) results in half damage and the target is not confused.

Improved Grab (Ex): If a dracodile hits a Large size or smaller creature with a bite attack, it can attempt to grab the creature and drag it into deeper waters to drown. The dracodile automatically deals bite damage each round it maintains a hold on its prey, and victims held underwater may be subject to drowning.

Skills: *The dracodile receives a +10 racial bonus to Hide checks when submerged.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Dracodiles are monstrous reptiles that lair in swamps and marshes.

UNCOMMON: Female dracodiles are extremely protective of their eggs and young and will go to any length to kill those that threaten them.

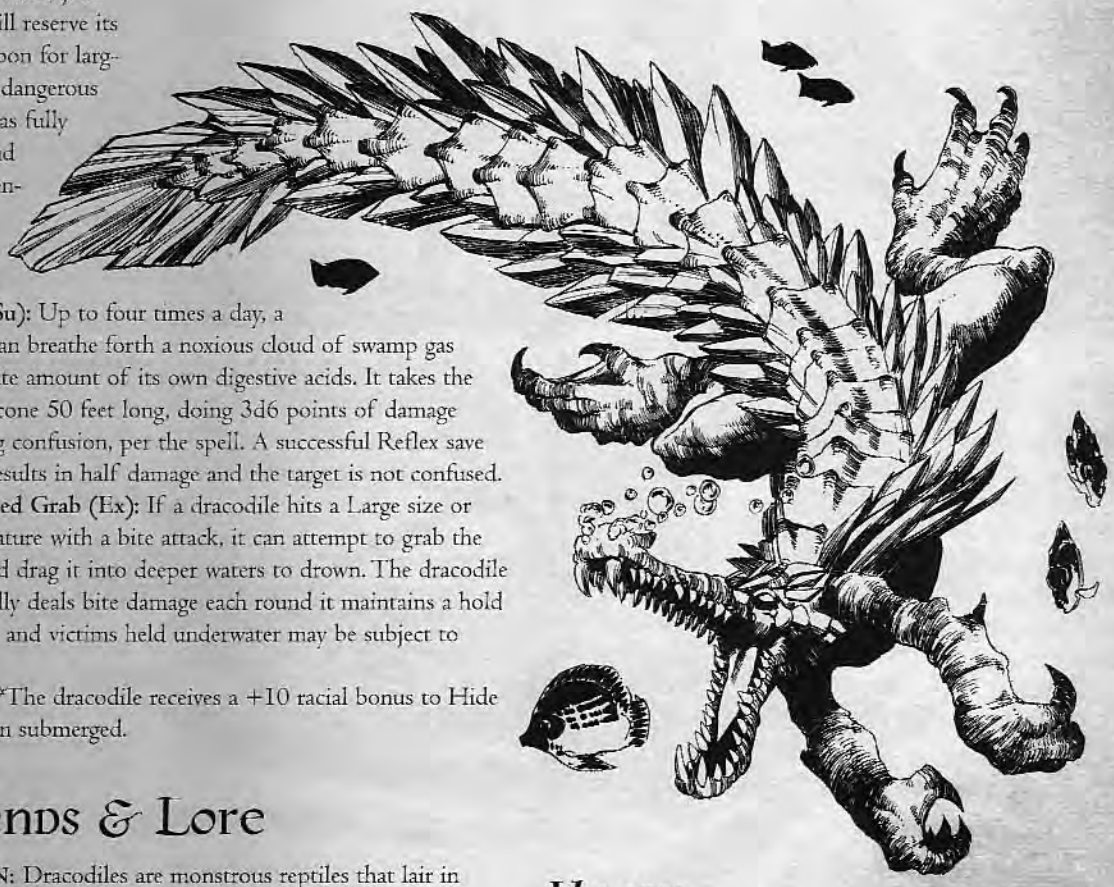
RARE: Dracodiles are able to inhale and store swamp gas. They release the concentrated gas in a noxious breath attack.

OBSCURE: Dracodiles are unusually attracted to the racket created by engines. If you stop your steamboat for any length of time out in the swamps, make sure that you don't let the engine run idle: turn it off.

Treasure

Female dracodiles often bring their prey back to their nest, so their young can eat in relative safety. Here can be found the remains of many adventurers, swampies, and other interlopers. Numerous man-made items are sure to abound in these dangerous nest sites.

Dracodile hides can be made into masterwork hide armor.



Hooks

Merchants or armorers may hire the PCs to hunt dracodiles for their hide. This is obviously no easy task, so their employers will undoubtedly pay handsomely for the return of a few quality dracodile hides and if they acquit themselves well, may employ the PCs in future endeavors. As Professor Pendrake can attest, tall tales travel fast, and dracodile slayers can quickly gain a name for themselves as big game hunters in the Iron Kingdoms.

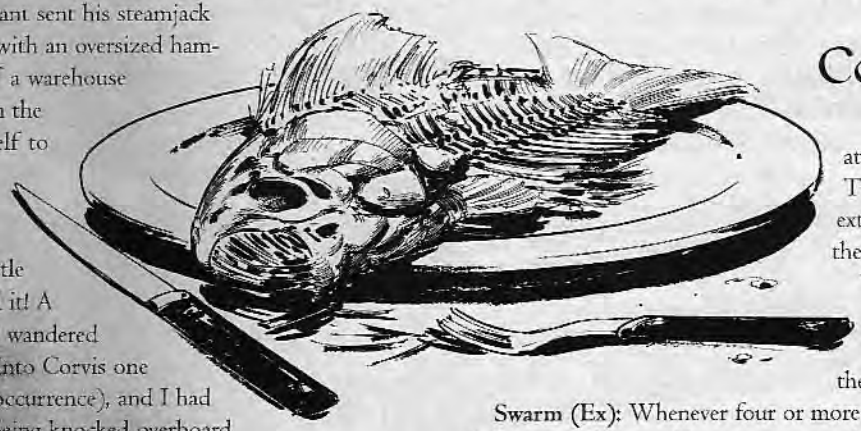
Dragon Fish

Tiny Animal	
Hit Dice:	*1d8+1 (5 hp)*
Initiative:	*+1 (+1 Dex)*
Speed:	*Swim 30 ft.*
AC:	*19 (+2 size, +4 Dex, +3 natural)*
Attacks:	*Bite +6 melee*
Damage:	*Bite 1d4*
Face/Reach:	*2 ½ ft. by 2 ½ ft./0 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Frenzy, swarm*
Special Qualities:	*Keen scent*
Saves:	*Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +0*
Abilities:	*Str 6, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 2*
Skills:	*Hide +6*, Listen +9, Spot +9*
Feats:	*Weapon Finesse (bite)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any aquatic*
Organization:	*School (2–12) or pack (13–36)*
Challenge Rating:	*1*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*2–3 HD (Tiny); 4–5 HD (Small)*

There's rarely a single time I can recall almost losing a body part to a beast in all my adventures. No, it wasn't when I pinned a gorax into submission with a cowherd's cudgel, nor was it when a crazed Ordic merchant sent his steamjack pounding after me with an oversized hammer, destroying half a warehouse and an entire pier in the process (sinking itself to the bottom of the channel as well).

No, it was one of those viscious little dragon fish that did it! A school of them had wandered up the Black River into Corvis one afternoon (a freak occurrence), and I had the misfortune of being knocked overboard off a ferry. I can swim fine, but when I felt the school swarm about me I knew I was in trouble. The little bastards ate one of my finest tunics right off my back, and they sent a load of my personables to the bottom of the river. But it was when I was pulled back aboard and found my finger hanging, cocked to the side, that I got really angry. Luckily, I had just made acquaintances with the good Father Dumas at the time, and he saw to it that one of his talented assistants fixed me back up right away. When I'm out on the river though, and the current's just right, I sometimes get a twitch in my finger, reminding me of the frustrating incident.

Most, however, are not as lucky as I was. Dragon fish are truly wicked little creatures with extremely sharp teeth and an endless appetite. Their real danger is when a school of them swarms and begins to frenzy. I can't say I've ever seen anything come out of those churning waters alive.



Combat

Dragon fish always attack in numbers. Their teeth are extremely sharp and their appetite endless. They will swarm any submerged prey, and once blood is drawn they will frenzy.

Swarm (Ex): Whenever four or more dragon fish attack a single target, they constitute a swarm and gain certain advantages. They no longer make individual attacks, and instead one attack roll is made for the entire swarm. This attack roll gains +2 to attack and damage for every four fish in the swarm. Furthermore, targets are now engulfed by the swarm and are considered flat-footed when determining AC. At the DM's option some attacks may affect an entire swarm, although this usually affects a swarmed target too.

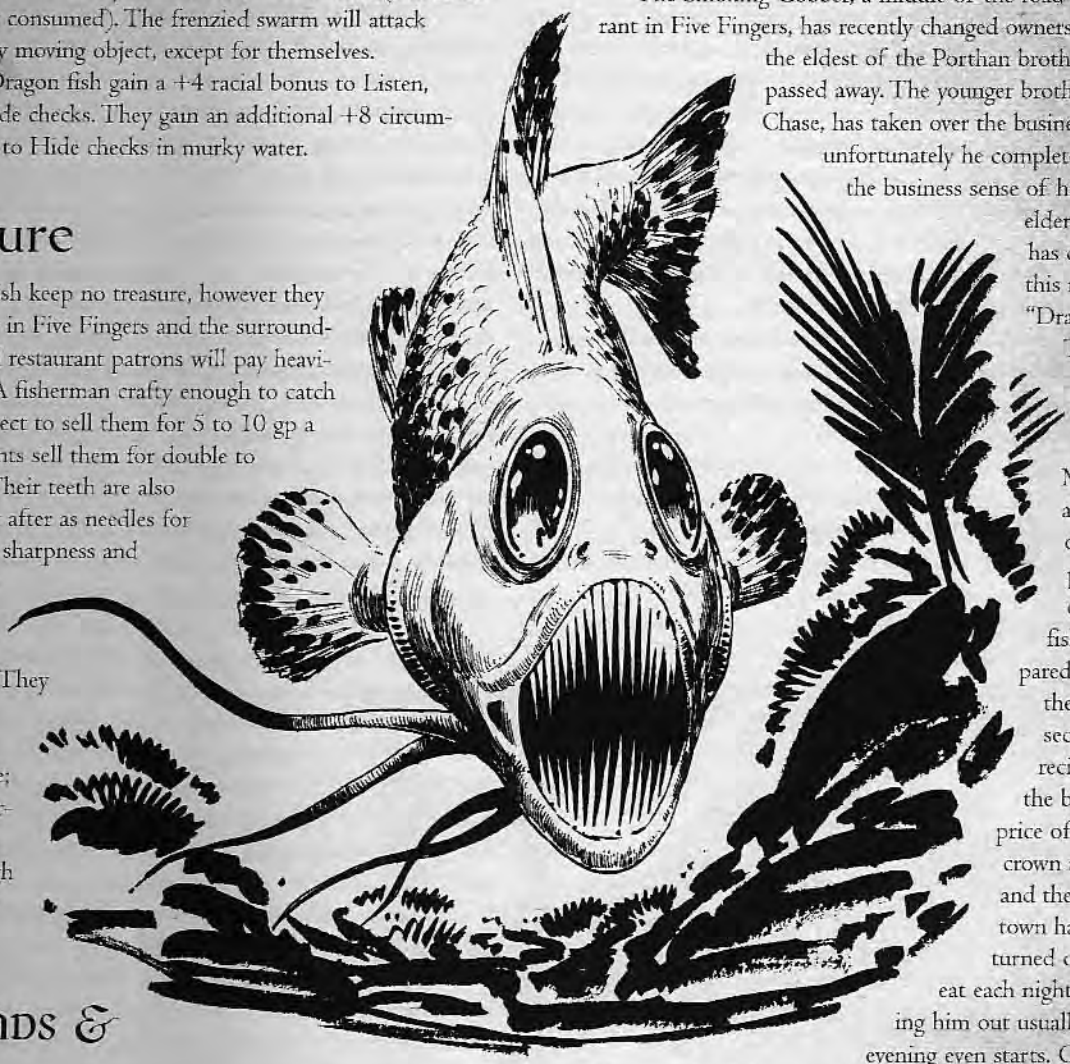
Frenzy (Ex): If the target is a creature that sheds blood, then there is a cumulative 5% chance per point of damage done that the swarm will frenzy. A frenzied swarm is able to make two attacks per round, instead of one, at no penalty.

Each fish in the frenzy, however, suffers -3 to its AC. The frenzy may not be ended willingly, and it continues until all creatures that enter the frenzy's threatened area are dead (and usually completely consumed). The frenzied swarm will attack absolutely any moving object, except for themselves.

Skills*: Dragon fish gain a +4 racial bonus to Listen, Spot, and Hide checks. They gain an additional +8 circumstance bonus to Hide checks in murky water.

Treasure

Dragon fish keep no treasure, however they are a delicacy in Five Fingers and the surrounding areas, and restaurant patrons will pay heavily for them. A fisherman crafty enough to catch some can expect to sell them for 5 to 10 gp a fish (restaurants sell them for double to triple that). Their teeth are also highly sought after as needles for their extreme sharpness and unique flexibility (handy in some crafts). They typically sell for as much as 1 gp apiece; there are several dozen in a mouth, though many will be damaged.



Legends & Lore

COMMON: Dragon fish are deadly aquatic predators that are typically found in fresh waters.

UNCOMMON: Despite their small size, their bite is deadly, and when a school of them frenzies, the circumstances are grave.

RARE: Dragon fish only frenzy when there's blood in the water, although once they do frenzy they will attack and eat just about anything.

OBSCURE: Orilite powder, a rather common mineral used in mortar, burns the eyes of the dragon fish, and if poured into the water will scare them off instantly.

Hooks

The Smoking Gobber, a middle of the road restaurant in Five Fingers, has recently changed ownership as the eldest of the Porthan brothers passed away. The younger brother, Chase, has taken over the business, but unfortunately he completely lacks the business sense of his late elders. He has declared this month "Dragon's Tooth Month" and is offering plates of dragon fish (prepared with the house's secret recipe) at the bargain price of a crown a plate, and the entire town has turned out to eat each night, cleaning him out usually before evening even starts. Chase is desperate for fisherman with the guff and skill to catch him a mother lode of dragon fish, and he will pay quite handsomely for it (wasting his inheritance in the process).

Population is on the rise in the south the warm summers perhaps?

-VP

Dragons



Of the extraordinary fauna all through this tome, there is one entity of the kingdoms that I would be remiss not to add. Moreover, it merits an entry akin to its magnitude. This is a creature—if I dare call it such—that dwarfs all other things of the world short of the gods themselves, a creature so deadly and unspeakable that the very mention of such draws out awe in men, elves, and dwarves alike. It is the dragon. Fortunately they are few in number and appear to dislike proximity to civilization.

Elven works of art illustrate the dragon, ancient dwarven codexes make mention of it, and men whisper fearfully of the beasts and their ilk. In my possession is a rare volume of *The Wyrmsaga Cycle*. A passage reads:

"...And I, weeping at the sight of the land laid waste,
Witnessed the Black Wyrm fell then 'pon us,
Bore up two score and eight,
And all went screaming into the maw.
Swords and spears were nothing to it,
And their skins were boiled from the bone.
The great Blight-Bringer, the terrible Father of Dragons,
Toruk of the Black Scale had been beckoned,
Defending his Mountain on the Isle..."
–Book I, The Wyrmsaga Cycle

More than mere legend and far from just "wyrms," some dragons have been regarded by men of ages past as gods. Indeed, their power is such that entire civilizations have been destroyed, others enslaved—or *blighted*—by the will and actions of such beings. Today, dragon-worship is limited to the island kingdom of Cryx, for in that dark corner of the realm the dark dragon Toruk reigns supreme. Without a doubt, he is both powerful and ancient, and he relishes the homage paid unto him. A church exists in his name on the isle, and the dragon grants power to his priests just the same as Morrow gifts his own devoted clergy. His following hails him as the Father of All Dragons and the oldest of gods; they say all lesser dragons are his spawn, and I once read a grisly flesh-bound tome delineating a peculiar lineage that suggests these dark tales may hold some truth.

If I recall correctly, it is believed that thousands and thousands of years ago, Toruk decided to create servants worthy of him—men and elves were unworthy, despicable creatures—so he brought forth from his own blood the very first dragon brood. These he made in his image and nurtured them, but once they had grown, their hunger was too great and they sought to be free of Toruk's dominion. The dragons rebelled and there was a great struggle. In his rage and indignation, Toruk destroyed all but a handful of his progeny, but these few escaped into the world and went into hiding for millennia. Toruk searched the realm but they were hidden deep within the earth, so eventually the Father of Dragons engaged in other matters and seemed to forget his disloyal brood. Over several thousands years, the young dragons grew powerful, until finally their hunger forced them to slink up from their earthen lairs and establish their own territories. Eventually, they attacked one another, for the dragons knew that in consuming their brethren, they would grow in power (a point of interest I will touch further upon in a while). But in this new havoc, Toruk easily found his offspring and once more fell upon them with a vengeance. It took an alliance of all the children to drive away the father, and so the progeny made a pact that if Lord Toruk were ever among them again, they would drop their quarrels and join against him who had made them. And it is said this alliance of dragons exists to this very day.

Some delvers I have met over the years allege their paths have crossed with dragons, but most of these claims I eventually uncover as misleading. In fact, I have never encountered one up close and personal, nor do I wish to, though I have seen them from afar and witnessed the effects of their presence firsthand. It was the very dragon mentioned above, Toruk the Mighty Lord of Dragons—or at least I believed it so—who was suddenly winging through the clouds above while my party and I hid among the rocks and brambles of the Cryxian badlands. Having heard his terrible roar echoing throughout the vale, chilling my blood and touching my soul in ways no other beast or monster ever has, I can now tell the difference between those who have seen an actual dragon and those who have encountered one of the many creatures of the realm often confused for one. Dracodiles or the various breeds of drake or tatzylwurm, or even the fear-inducing dune prowlers of the Bloodstone Marches, they have all been mistaken for dragons one time or another, but I can tell you they most assuredly are not.

The Wyrmsaga Cycle was penned shortly after the Orgoth landed on our shores. It was in those days while the coastlands endured invasion that Toruk chose to assault western Cygnar, a people already beset and weakened. Where the ancient dragon laired before this, only he could say, but I suspect he came from the east, from beyond the dreaded Stormlands. His motives for founding Cryx and ruling as a god-king are similarly obscure, but it is clear he has a rapacious desire for conquest and enslavement. For over a thousand years the western mainland has lived with the dragon's covetous eye upon them,

yet the dragon's patience outlasts the lives of men. He appears to only grow stronger with each century, twisting the islands into a nightmare by his very presence.

Indeed, my visit to Cryx revealed a warped and barren scene. This was Toruk's territory, and nature had given way, as if made ill by the influence of the Father of Dragons. In many places the soil was black as burnt cinders, rivers were cold and dark, tree trunks coiled like petrified serpents, and brambles choked everything within their thorny clutches. Even where the squalid inhabitants managed to erect a farmstead, the crops were withered and unpleasant to behold, corn of strange colors and bloated kernels, wheat colored purple like a bruise. Even the wildlife is twisted and sickly, and the closer we traversed to the dragon's obsidian fortress on the black mountain, the worse everything became. It is said the smugglers of Blackwater pay well for food from the mainland. Now I can see why.

But the blight is not always easily detected. In fact, most of the inhabitants of its dark cities pass for normal, at least in the physical sense. Still, the blight seems to have seeped into their minds, for these denizens of these cities are often twisted and cruel and prone to malice, and they all—each and every one—speak as terrified yet awestruck fanatics in reverence of their deity and master, the black-scaled Lord Toruk.

Aside from the blighted and even beyond that twisted island and its corrupted populace, other terrible creatures, tainted as it were by the influence of the dragon, roam Immoren. It is rumored that minions are created from the dragon's very blood; in fact, and these "dragonspawn" follow the bidding of their master without question. Indeed, records of a dragon's territory encroaching upon the borders of Cygnar tell of sightings of draconic servitors. The militia of the west is known for employing bands of spawn-hunters, and these specialists venture into the dragonblight, attacking and exterminating the spawn and the blighted. The muddled journal of such a spawn-hunter, one Baingrave Bowmantle—an obviously semi-literate and blustery bravo—tells of not one dragon but two in the far-flung north roughly two centuries past. As best I can translate, these dragons clashed in a territorial dispute in the mountains that are now both Khador and Rhul and the skirmishes of the beasts and their spawn laid waste to many civilized areas over the years. Bowmantle repeatedly boasts about his influence and good fortune during this time, yet the journal ends rather abruptly for whatever reason, leaving me to ponder why the dragons ceased their recurring battles and withdrew to their individual lairs.

The dwarves of Rhul call the dragon of their region Scylfangen (known as Scaefang to others), a black-scaled monster that has, fortunately, not been seen or heard from in well over a century. The people of Khador have legends of the "female" dragon Halfaug; to be exact, I should say this is a likely misnomer, as dragons are sexless and spawn asexually—a topic broached later in this passage. The winter elves called the Nyss refer to the same beast as Glyssingfor; whatever her name, she is recorded as a massive silvery terror that eventually turned her attentions upon the inhabitants of those frozen mountains. Blood was shed by the winter elves in the thousands, and entire tribes were lost to the dragon's ferociousness and guile. It was not until a great coalition of men and Nyss—the first and only of its sort—campaigned into Halfaug's lair, that she was sent fleeing northward into the icy floes of the Windless Waste. To this day, that mirror-scaled terror has not been seen, but lately there have been whispers of a dark and winged shape looming over those hoary peaks north of the towering timbreland called the Scarfells. Many fear the worst: that either Halfaug has returned to claim the north, or that Scaefang, Lord of the Black, has emerged from some deep, dark lair. Either would be



Lord Toruk

grave news indeed.

As stated above, I have witnessed the effects of dragonblight, and I have felt the icy grip of a supernatural fear emanated by these great beasts. I have never witnessed the effects of their breath, but have read about immense gouts of flame and roiling clouds of burning fog belched from a massive, toothy maw; flame and fog that has melted flesh and sinew, seared arms and armor, even devastated fleets of wide-beamed Orgoth galleons. One passage from Book II of *The Wyrmsaga Cycle* reads: "...And the vast, magnificent beast smote the Cerylian fleet with buffets of his sandbar wings and therewith unleashed burning oil from his terrible snout that burned the very rocks of the great coast for seven nights and seven days."



The above passage in particular brings to mind a beast called Blighterghast, a dragon of ancient pedigree roaming the Wyrmwall Mountains of Cygnar. Miners from Orvin claim to have seen this beast. They suspect it lairs in the twisted peaks north of Highgate, an area infested with boggers, trollkin, and drakes, and avoided by all who claim to know these mountains. I would have dismissed the rumors as drake sightings, but for evidence of these blighted beasts brought back by rangers on patrol from Highgate and countless reports of a bright-colored fog rolling down the mountains that burns like fire. Firsthand, have I viewed evidence of beasts slain by the rangers, and firsthand have I seen the ghastly burn marks on the flesh of woodsmen and the gruesome, cooked corpses of two wayward huntsmen. The surviving woodsmen's skin was blistered, their eyes burned shut, and they retched horribly. I consulted with the camp chirurgeon who told me they were suffering from internal and external bleeding and that the mucous membrane of their bronchials was utterly destroyed. This was extremely painful for them to endure, and the ailing men had to be strapped to their beds. It took them four weeks to die. The chirurgeon told me: "I wish those fools in the militia who talk about going on with this expedition whatever it costs could see the men suffering from this baffling poison. Great mustard-colored blisters, blind eyes, all sticky and stuck together, always fighting for breath, with voices a mere whisper, gasping and saying their throats are closing. You can't fight the Seether. No one can. This dragon, it is unstoppable... and honestly... I don't know how much longer I can stand this."

In further support of my theory regarding Blighterghast's residence in Cygnar, some years ago an old miner related a tale to me of a peculiar cat-and-mouse game, a strange legend of a man—or perhaps it was an elf—who contested a dragon with magic for the span of several decades upon the peaks of the Wyrmwall. The truth of this tale I find difficult to credit, but the root of it is a recurrence in many dragon tales: they tend to toy with mortals—even powerful ones—for their own devious ends. Old timers throughout the west think this dragon keeps a vigil from its mountain peak, gazing toward Cryx. If this is in truth Blighterghast the Seether, it can only be guessed that he peers westward in anticipation of an attack by the renowned Father of Dragons.

If my resources are accurate—I take pride in the fact they often are—and if I were to harbor a guess, the Seether, and the rest of his kin for that matter, must remain vigilant for one thing above all others: an attack by one of their own. Sloth would likely mean death if one such as Blighterghast did not often keep his draconic wits about him, for above all things dragons hunger for other dragons. It has to do with the very source of their lineage, the powerful, immortal lifestone (see "About Lifestones"). In each dragon's heart is a large fist-sized gem of sorts. These are shards from the very heart of the Father of Dragons, Lord Toruk. I have read they emanate a foul aura and it is my belief that these lifestones are the very *source* of the dragonblight effect and exceedingly powerful:

The coveners bade us touch it not!
The stone glistened softly there,
Amidst the ruined heart of the dead wyrm.
It smoldered, a thing of pure evil.
And as a company we raised our gauntlets
[to shield our eyes]
And whispered oaths to the creator
While the pines bent and blackened,
And the wrens of the dale fell from on high.
Rash Prince Arworn charged his banners take it up.
But their hearts failed as a warrior reached,
And his flame was snuffèd in a trice.
—*Book II, The Wyrmsaga Cycle*

It is surmised that extreme cold might have some type of effect on the lifestones, but what this effect may be I cannot say. Unfortunately, the *Wyrmsaga* does little to enlighten us, as those who have read the translations know well that the doomed coven never made it into the northlands:

The coveners conjured a crucible then,
And the athame was placed therein

To turn over into the frozen deep.
I was told I should give escort,
And therewith agreed on my honor,
Much aware the Red Prince was wroth
And should seek my life, if that he could.
–Book II, The Wyrmsaga Cycle

To conclude this entry, I have crossed the lands north to south and east to west and have seen creatures both terrible and magnificent to behold. Of all of these I can say in honesty dragons are to be feared the most. I'd rather engage in a *kilbricht* duel with a pistol wraith, entertain the companionship of a dozen eldritch, be tethered before a stampede of Raevhan buffalo with nothing but a dagger in my teeth, or even chance the notion of gambling for my soul with an Infernal before acquiring the interest of one of Immoren's most terrible and magnificent beasts, the immortal, almighty dragon!

Combat

All dragons possess the following attacks and abilities from MM: bite, claw, wing, tail slap, crush, tail sweep, grappling, breath weapon, frightful presence, immunities, spell resistance, blindsight, and keen senses. They are all considered to be of age category 12 for determining things such as range and duration. See the MM for more information.

All dragons also have the following abilities:

Dragonblight (Su): The evil dragons of Caen warp and taint the land and creatures around them. The dragonblight may extend for miles around their lair, depending on the age and power of the dragon. Effects of the dragonblight include: tainted water, stunted vegetation, fouled crops and game, stillborn infants, and strange weather patterns. The effects of the blight on creatures is represented by the "blighted" template below. A dragon's blight-zone depends on the dragon's Hit Dice; the zone extends one mile for every Hit Die the dragon has. The blight takes time, however. A dragon must settle or lair in one area before the blight has any noticeable effect. For the first 2d6 rounds anything within several feet of a settled dragon blights, and then it grows, spreading a mile at a time every 1D4+1 days, until it reaches the dragon's maximum blight-zone.

Regeneration (Ex): Acid inflicts normal damage on dragons. All other damage regenerates at the rate of 20 hp per round.

Immunity (Ex): All dragons are immune to fear.

About Lifestones

A large fist-sized, shimmering gemstone pulsates within each dragon's heart. According to Orgoth lore, this is called an athanc. If the athanc, also referred to as a lifestone, is mistakenly left within the dead heart of a dragon's corpse, the beast will regenerate in just a few days. If the athanc is taken, it will eventually hatch, producing an infant dragon, or wyrmling. Over the next few years, the wyrmling will undergo accelerated growth into an adult dragon. It is believed this progression may be hastened, slowed, or stopped in various ways:

—Place the athanc in ice to prevent regeneration.
—Place the athanc or small dragon in very extreme heat, such as a volcano, to accelerate regeneration and growth.
—Place it in a special magic container to stop or accelerate growth.

If one ever has the opportunity to vanquish a dragon, always get the athanc, but never physically touch it! It is the source of the dragonblight. It is pure evil. Destroying an athanc may well be impossible—they are extraordinarily durable; entire covenants of wizards have tried and failed. It is suggested the athanc be placed in a magically created (or at least lead-shielded) carrier, and then an expert should be sought and consulted without delay.
One last note: It appears that athancs are good fare among dragons, for they seek one another with the idea in mind to consume the other's lifestone. This is evidently the primary conflict among dragonkind. If a dragon slays its kin and gulps down its athanc, it is said the feeder gains much power from doing so.

Scaefang

Colossal Dragon (Fire)	
Hit Dice:	*45d12+800 (950 hp)*
Initiative:	*+4 (+4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*40 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy)*
AC:	*47 (-8 size, +45 natural)*
Attacks:	*Bite +52 melee, 2 claws +47 melee, 2 wings +47 melee, tail slap +47 melee*
Damage:	*Bite 4d8+17, claw 4d6+8, wing 2d8+8, tail slap 4d6+25*
Face/Reach:	*40 ft. by 40 ft./25 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Breath weapon, crush 4d8+25, deathdust, frightful presence, tail sweep 2d8+25*
Special Qualities:	*Blindsight 360 ft., dragonblight, damage reduction 20/+3, immunities, keen senses, regeneration 20, SR 32*
Saves:	*Fort +33, Ref +21, Will +34*
Abilities:	*Str 45, Dex 11, Con 35, Int 31, Wis 32, Cha 35*
Skills:	*Appraise +58, Balance +48, Bluff +60, Climb +65, Escape Artist +48, Hide –6, Intimidate +60, Intuit Direction +59, Jump +25, Knowledge (geography) +58, Knowledge (history) +58, Listen +56, Search +56, Sense Motive +59, Spot +56, Swim +55, Wilderness Lore +59*
Feats:	*Alertness, Cleave, Endurance, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Hover, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Wingover*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*60*
Alignment:	*Neutral evil*
Advancement:	*Special*

"The flames of many elvish [souls] hath been snuffed where the Lord of the Black doth dwell in the darksome nether; in that place where all light doth disperse as smoke to wind."

— Unknown author

Scaefang is a massive, black-scaled beast with barbed, leathery wings and teeth and talons larger than the largest man and black as pitch. A nimbus of pure evil surrounds his form, and his baleful gaze glows sometimes purple, sometimes red. In addition to emanating fear like all of his kin, he also secretes a fog of ash that has been called "unlight," and to touch or inhale it is certain death. The ash actually settles in clumps and, once cool, hardens into a coal-like substance that can be touched, but when burned it gives off the same hot ash similar to Scaefang's terrible breath, the fiery *deathdust*.

Scaefang is also called the Soul Eater, the Ravager, and the Lord of the Black. Dwarves have a variant spelling of this dragon's name: Scylfangen (shil-fon-gen).

Breath Weapon (Su): Scaefang's breath weapon, called *deathdust*, is a cloud of ash and burning embers. This cloud deals 25d10 points of damage. Reflex save DC 44. The cloud moves away from the point at which it was released and in the direction in which it was directed at a movement rate of 20 feet and continues moving for 50 rounds. Strong winds can disperse the cloud, and water is an effective barrier against its effects.

Deathdust (Su): As a standard action, Scaefang may exude a cloud of ash possessing the same qualities as his breath weapon. It

inflicts 4d10 points of damage per round to any that come within its 170-foot radius (Fortitude save, DC 44). This cloud will cling to the ground if Scaefang opts to shed it and will remain active for 45 rounds after it is shed. It will then cool and solidify into a dark coal-like substance that, when burned, will give off a cloud of *deathdust*. One chunk of roughly 6 inches in diameter will yield a 20-foot cloud that deals 2d10 points of damage per round (Fortitude save, DC 24) and persists for 1d4+1 rounds.

Frightful Presence (Ex): Radius: 360 feet, affects: creatures less than 45 HD, DC 44.



Blighterghast

Colossal Dragon (Fire)	
Hit Dice:	*48d12+800 (1032 hp)*
Initiative:	*+4 (+4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*40 ft., fly 200 ft. (clumsy)*
AC:	*52 (-8 size, +50 natural)*
Attacks:	*Bite +68 melee, 2 claws +63 melee, 2 wings +63 melee, tail slap +63 melee*
Damage:	*Bite 4d8+20, claw 4d6+10, wing 2d8+10, tail slap 4d6+30*
Face/Reach:	*40 ft. by 40 ft./25 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Breath weapon, crush 4d8+30, frightful presence, hell shroud, tail sweep 2d8+30*
Special Qualities:	*Blindsight 360 ft., dragonblight, damage reduction 20/+3, immunities, keen senses, regeneration 20, SR 34*
Saves:	*Fort +40, Ref +23, Will +35*
Abilities:	*Str 50, Dex 10, Con 40, Int 33, Wis 30, Cha 35*
Skills:	*Appraise +62, Balance +51, Bluff +63, Climb +71, Escape Artist +51, Hide –7, Intimidate +63, Intuit Direction +61, Jump +71, Knowledge (geography) +62, Knowledge (history) +62, Listen +58, Search +58, Sense Motive +61, Spot +58, Swim +71, Wilderness Lore +61*
Feats:	*Alertness, Cleave, Endurance, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Hover, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Snatch, Wingover*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*66*
Alignment:	*Neutral evil*
Advancement:	*Special*

"Maintaining my calm I directed the bosun and his mates to weigh the anchor, then called the helmsman to bring her leeward and by the wind. We forged ahead in hopes to near the land at Highgate, but it was a fair distance yet. Everything stilled as the Old Ravager bellowed. I heard young Pidgen holler, 'Lookee astern, cap'n!' And there I did see an ochre haze on the horizon that spelled our doom."

— Captain Leukas Guster, logs of the Sea Raven

Blighterghast is an ancient, umber-colored beast with a maw the span of a lone-masted war sloop and pearl-colored talons as long as an Ordic destrier. He is well known for his ocher underbelly and the deep orange webbing of his wings. In addition to emanating fear, Blighterghast emits a pungent and toxic aura that sailors claim oft heralds his arrival; it is a strong smell like "hot pepper on the wind," according to the log of one Captain Leukas Guster. I gather this is a quality of Blighterghast's breath, a smoldering and reeking naphtha referred to by many as *hell's acid*.

Blighterghast is also called the Seether, the Old Ravager, the Boiler of Seas and at least a hundred other names by seamen and occupants in the vicinity of White Bay and the Broken Coast.

Breath Weapon (Su): Blighterghast's breath weapon, called *hell's acid*, is an adhesive naphtha that deals 25d10 points of damage, Reflex save DC 49. The following round anything hit by the naphtha additionally takes 15d10 points of damage (DC 49). A full-round action can be spent attempting to extinguish the flames (Reflex save, DC 49) before additional damage is taken. Immersion in water extinguishes the flames.

Hell Shroud (Su): As a standard action, Blighterghast may excrete an acidic miasma that obscures vision and burns flesh. The cloud inflicts 5d10 points of damage per round to any that come within its 180-foot radius (Fortitude save, DC 49) and also possesses obscuring qualities of the *fog cloud* spell (caster level 48). Blighterghast may also blow the cloud in the direction he wants it to go, fanning it with his wings, or release it mid-flight, whereupon it will travel in the direction he was flying. The hell shroud has a movement rate of 30 feet and lasts for 50 rounds.

Frightful Presence (Ex): Radius: 360 feet, affects: creatures less than 48 HD, DC 46.



Halfaug

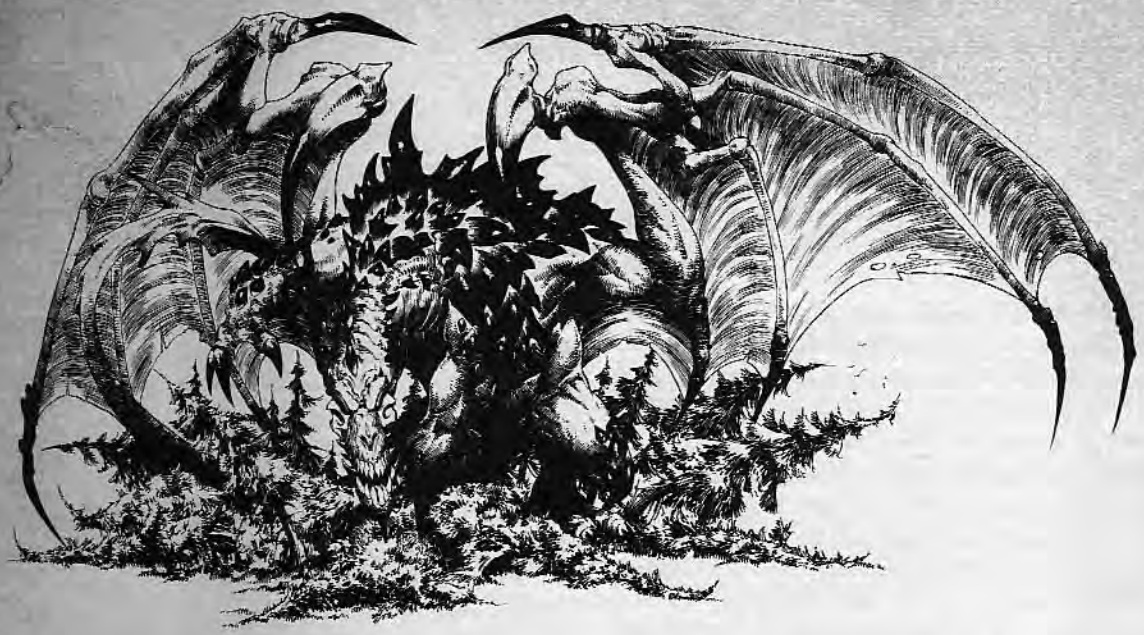
Colossal Dragon (Fire)	
Hit Dice:	40d12+400 (800 hp)
Initiative:	+5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed:	60 ft., fly 300 ft. (poor)
AC:	43 (-8 size, +1 Dex, +40 natural)
Attacks:	Bite +55 melee, 2 claws +50 melee, 2 wings +50 melee, tail slap +50 melee
Damage:	Bite 4d8+15, claw 4d6+7, wing 2d8+7, tail slap 4d6+22
Face/Reach:	40 ft. by 40 ft./25 ft.
Special Attacks:	Breath weapon, crush 4d8+22, frightful presence, searing aura, tail sweep 2d8+22
Special Qualities:	Blindsight 360 ft., dragonblight, damage reduction 20/+3, immunities, keen senses, regeneration 20, SR 30
Saves:	Fort +27, Ref +21, Will +25
Abilities:	Str 40, Dex 13, Con 29, Int 30, Wis 25, Cha 27
Skills:	Appraise +53, Balance +43, Bluff +51, Climb +58, Escape Artist +43, Hide –12, Intimidate +51, Intuit Direction +50, Jump +58, Knowledge (geography) +53, Knowledge (history) +53, Listen +47, Search +47, Sense Motive +50, Spot +47, Swim +58, Wilderness Lore +50
Feats:	Alertness, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Mobility, Power Attack, Snatch, Wingover
Climate/Terrain:	Any
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	49
Alignment:	Chaotic evil
Advancement:	Special

"Morrow, deliver us from the ravages of that wicked beast! No longer consent to the shepherd suffering her taking of the calf. No longer concede the toiler enduring the pestilence of the field. We beseech you! Give us deliverance from the fiery shadow of the Frost Mother. Spare your people the ruin of dragons!"

— Khard inscription upon an unearthed tablet, 797 B.R.

Halfaug is reputed to be an offspring of Scaefang's; she is a spiny dragon with black and silver wings and reflective scales that change from black to silver depending on the light. She is described in *Boorman's Annotated Wyrmsaga (and Studies of the Obk of the Northern Territories)* as a sleek creature with raking silver claws and of "...such a swiftness in the ether she doth outpace her very shadow." In addition to fear, Halfaug emanates "a stifling heat that did turn their spears and armor to slag and death did befall them as the warband choked, their final gasps stifled by intense shards of crimson flame in their ears, throats, nostrils, and eyes...."

Halfaug is also called Wyrmlich, Frostfire, the Frost Mother, and curiously the Preserver, which I can only guess came about as entire beings were found in the far reaches, encased in ice. Of note, a lewd and ages-old Khadoran appellative exists, pinning her as Old Whorefrost, and of even further



note, the Nyss refer to her in their native tongue as Glyssingfor, which means either "Great Fire Wolf" or "Great Fire Wyrm," if memory serves.

Breath Weapon (Su): Halfaug's breath weapon is a 70-foot cone of smoldering fire that deals 20d10 points of damage, Reflex save DC 39.

Searing Aura (Su): As a standard action, Halfaug may emanate an aura of extreme heat (150-foot radius) that is hot enough to liquefy metal, let alone flesh. This aura inflicts 2d10 points of damage per round, Fortitude save DC 39. Unattended, nonmagical items get no saving throw to resist being destroyed by the intense heat. Enchanted items are allowed a saving throw. An item in a character's possession gets the character's saving throw, unless its own is higher.

Frightful Presence (Ex): Radius: 360 feet, affects: creatures less than 40 HD, DC 38.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: These ancient beasts of legend indeed exist, and the mightiest of the mighty is Lord Toruk, the Father of Dragons, who lives in a massive black tower on the Isle of Cryx.

UNCOMMON: All dragons defile their surroundings, as they are anomalous creatures given to putrefaction and misery. This blight affects and warps all living things; be it fauna or flora makes no matter.

RARE: Dragonblood is a poison that alters the form. The beasts use their lifeblood to create their servitors, the twisted, malefic dragonspawn.

OBSCURE: To destroy a dragon, one must destroy its lifestone, or it will regenerate into a newborn dragon. Extreme cold may have some destructive or torpor-inducing effect on a lifestone, and, conversely, heat quickens the regenerative process; this is more believed than proven.

Treasure

Dragons are ancient beasts that have amassed prodigious treasures. Among their troves are immense gems, ancient coins, rare magical items, and often the bones of those to whom these treasures once belonged. Treat these finds as at least double the standard amount.

Hooks

Cygnaran scouts emerge from the wooded foothills at the base of the Wyrmwall, bedraggled, bleeding, and burned. They have comrades who have both been slain and captured back in those woods and implore for aid in rescuing any of those who live. They had been investigating reports of dark and twisted creatures lairing in the wood, but were not prepared for what they found. Several dozen dragonblighted soldiers have a holdfast at the base of a lofty mountain. Escorted by a grizzled hunter in search of dragonspawn, the scouts attempted to oust them but failed, and the spawn hunter was captured. They tell of a distant roaring in the mountains beyond that made their hairs stand on end, and a burning fog that oozed down the mountainsides and rolled over them (burning said hairs off).

Dragonspawn

Dragons have the ability to spill their own blood in order to create minions of undying loyalty—the dragonspawn. The dragon does this at will; it never happens spontaneously. The number of dragonspawn and their Hit Dice is determined by the dragon's Hit Dice. A dragon can create a number of Hit Dice worth of spawn equal to the dragon's Hit Dice, but no spawn may ever have more than one-fourth the dragon's Hit Dice (rounded down). For example, Halfaug, a 40 HD dragon, could create two 10 HD spawn and four 5 HD spawn (totaling 20 HD), but no more. Doing so comes at no cost to the dragon, unless the dragon is injured to below half of its hit points, at which point the spawn's hit points are pulled directly from the dragon's. The dragon may opt to eat any of its spawn, however, and regain the lost hit points. Dragonspawn, no matter what their form, are considered magical beasts (see *MM* for more information).

All spawn possess the following abilities:

Blindsight (Ex): Despite having no eyes, a dragonspawn can ascertain everything within 80 feet as though it were sighted.

Immunities (Ex): Dragonspawn are immune to fear, sleep, and paralysis effects.

Regeneration (Ex): Acid inflicts normal damage on dragonspawn. All other damage regenerates at the rate of 2 hp per round.

Special Abilities

1d8 Roll	Ability
1-3	None
4	Same breath weapon as creator, damage equal to one-fourth spawn's HD, duration (if any) equal to spawn's HD (in rounds)
5	Same aura or emanation as creator, damage and duration same as spawn breath weapon above
6	Spell resistance equal to spawn's HD-2
7	Damage reduction equal to spawn's (HD-2)/+1
8	Roll again on chart, spawn has multiple abilities; if 8 is rolled again, roll for another ability, and so forth

Dragonspawn Features

Legs

1d6 Roll	Feature
1-2	Biped, no tail
3-4	Quadruped, with tail
5	Snakelike tail, no legs
6	Biped, with tail

Arms

1d6 Roll	Feature
1-2	Two arms
3-4	Two arms and wings
5-6	No arms, with wings

Size	Claw Damage	Bite Damage	Movement*	Base Hit	AC
Fine	—	—	5 ft., fly 20 ft. (good)	1/8 d10	+2 natural
Diminutive	1	1	10 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)	_ d10	+3 natural
Tiny	1d2	1d2	20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)	_ d10	+4 natural
Small	1d3	1d3	20 ft., fly 40 ft. (good)	1d10	+5 natural
Medium-size	1d4	1d4	30 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor)	2d10	+7 natural
Large	1d6	1d6	40 ft., fly 70 ft. (poor)	4d10	+10 natural
Huge	1d8	2d4	40 ft., fly 80 ft. (poor)	8d10	+12 natural

*Fly movement is only if spawn has wings.

Sample Dragonspawn

This following is an example of Blighterghast's spawn. It is bipedal and wingless.



Large Magical Beast (Fire)	
Hit Dice:	*10d10+40 (95 hp)*
Initiative:	*-1 (-1 Dex)*
Speed:	*40 ft.*
AC:	*19 (-1 Dex, +10 natural)*
Attacks:	*2 claws +16 melee, bite +14 melee*
Damage:	*Claw 1d8+7, bite 2d4+3*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.*
Special Qualities:	*Breath weapon, damage reduction 8/+1, immunities, regeneration 2, scent*
Saves:	*Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +2*
Abilities:	*Str 24, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 3, Wis 7, Cha 8*
Skills:	*Hide +0, Listen +3, Move Silently +2*
Feats:	*Multiattack*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land and underground*
Organization:	*Any*
Challenge Rating:	*7*
Alignment:	*Neutral evil*
Advancement:	*None*



Combat

Breath Weapon (Su): The dragonspawn's breath weapon is an adhesive naphtha that deals 6d10 points of damage, Reflex save DC 19. The following round anything hit by the naphtha takes additional 3d10 points of damage (DC 19). They can take a full-round action to attempt to extinguish the flames



before taking the additional damage (Reflex save, DC 19). Immersion in water will extinguish the flames.

The Blighted

Those that dwell close to a dragon for an extended period of time will notice an immediate and very apparent effect: they become blighted themselves.

The blighted, whatever their original forms, gradually begin to take on a more reptilian appearance. Their skin toughens and becomes scaly, often sprouting horny, bony ridges, and their eyes darken and assume a snakelike demeanor, giving them enhanced vision in the absence of light. Their teeth and nails sharpen to points, and their olfactory senses become razor-sharp.

If a creature that is becoming blighted leaves the area of effect of the dragonblight, it ceases the transformation, but will once again begin changing should it re-enter the blight-zone. If the individual has consumed some of the dragon's blood, however, the effects are irreversible and unstoppable.

The amount of time it takes for a creature to become blighted varies from dragon to dragon, but it is usually close to one year's time of near-constant exposure. A creature that has been living in a blight-zone for a time (designated by the individual dragon) must make a Fortitude save equal to 10 + _ the dragon's Hit Dice + the dragon's Constitution modifier. Some dragons have found a way accelerate the blight by having their minions drink of their blood. This is a dangerous process; the drinker must make a Fortitude save equal to _ the dragon's Hit Dice + the dragon's Constitution modifier to simply survive the consumption of the blood. Success means that the imbiber is well on their way to becoming blighted and irrevocably dominated by the will of the dragon; failure obviously results in a particularly painful death. Partaking of the blood of a dragon has the effects of the dominate monster spell on the imbiber, with the caveat that if the dominated creature actually manages to make its saving throw to resist the effects of the dragon's blood, the dragon can choose to exert its will once again the following round, if it so chooses. Inevitably, the dominated individual will concede to the dragon's greater will.

Note that this is just one example of how dragonblight

affects most creatures and that there are many other forms of blight. Often, the dragonblight will create unique creatures or affect an entire group in an entirely different yet homogenous manner. The blight of Toruk, for example, has created a race of horned warrior-women, the Satyxis. DMs are encouraged to create their own unique blighted creatures or groups of creatures with abilities differing from those listed below.

Creating a Blighted

"Blighted" is a template that can be added to any corporeal creature (hereafter referred to as the "base creature"). The template uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Same as base creature.

Speed: Same as base creature.

AC: +4 natural armor due to leathery, scaly skin.

Attacks and Damage: The blighted, if they didn't have any already, gain sharp claws and teeth. The damage of these attacks is listed below and corresponds to the creature's size. Creatures with natural attacks better than those listed below retain their old damage rating.

Size	Claw Damage	Bite Damage
Fine	—	—
Diminutive	1	1
Tiny	1d2	1d2
Small	1d3	1d3
Medium-size	1d4	1d4
Large	1d6	1d6
Huge	1d8	2d4
Gargantuan	2d6	2d6
Colossal	2d8	2d8

Special Qualities: The blighted gain the scent ability plus the following:

Darkvision (Ex): The blighted gain darkvision 60 ft. If thebase creature already has darkvision, it is now doubled.

Immunities (Ex): Blighted creatures are immune to fear, sleep, and paralysis effects.

Regeneration (Ex): Fire and acid inflict normal damage on a blighted creature. All other damage regenerates at the rate of 2 hp per round.

Spell Resistance (Ex): The blighted gain spell resistance equal to their Hit Dice.

Saves: As base creature.

Abilities: The blighted gain +2 to Constitution, but suffer –4 to Wisdom.

Skills: As base creature.

Feats: The blighted gain the Alertness feat due to their heightened senses.

Climate/Terrain: Warm or temperate land

Organization: Any

Challenge Rating: As base creature +2.

Alignment: Usually evil

Advancement: Same as base creature.

Sample Blighted

This sample uses a 5th-level trollkin fighter as the base creature.



Trollkin	
Medium-size Humanoid (Troll)	
Hit Dice:	*5d10+20 (47 hp)*
Initiative:	*-1 (-1 Dex)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*13 (-1 Dex, +4 natural)*
Attacks:	*2 claws +7 melee, bite +5 melee*
Damage:	*Claw 1d4+2, bite 1d4+2*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Qualities:	*Darkvision 60 ft., immunities, improved healing, poison resistance 4, regeneration 2, scent, SR 2, toughness*
Saves:	*Fort +10, Ref +0, Will -1*
Abilities:	*Str 14, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 11, Wis 7, Cha 8*
Skills:	*Listen +7, Spot +7*
Feats:	*Alertness, Great Fortitude, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (claw), Weapon Focus (bite)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land and underground*
Organization:	*Solitary, gang (2–4), pack (2–6), band (20–40), blighted clan (80–160)*
Challenge Rating:	*7*
Alignment:	*Lawful evil*
Advancement:	*By character class*



Dread

Medium-size Undead	
Hit Dice:	*5d12 (32 hp)*
Initiative:	*-1 (-1 Dex)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*24 (-1 Dex, +15 natural)*
Attacks:	*Handblade +8 melee*
Damage:	*Handblade 1d8+5 melee*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Qualities:	*Undead, darkvision 60 ft., fear aura, damage reduction 5/+1, SR 28*
Saves:	*Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +5*
Abilities:	*Str 19, Dex 9, Con —, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10*
Skills:	*Climb +7, Handle Animal +3, Jump +8, Ride +5, Swim +8*
Feats:	*Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (handblade)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*8*
Alignment:	*Always neutral evil*
Advancement:	*By character class*

This example uses a 5th-level human fighter as the base creature.

Of all of that the ancient Orgoth left behind, perhaps nothing speaks of their potential cruelty as plainly as the dread. These magically created abominations were designed as servants to the wealthy and powerful, though I fear they functioned more often than not as bodyguards and assassins.

Dread appear as horribly mutilated humanoids, their blistered flesh interwoven with shards of shining metal and various weaponry, often completely replacing their hands and arms.

Used by Orgoth necromancers to instill fear on the battlefield and to terrify resistant populations into submission, squads of these creatures (often still recognizable as the persons they were in life) patrolled the streets after dark, ensuring curfews were strictly followed. Dread were also used to guard Orgoth fortresses, and in some remote ruins they may still lurk even today.



The creation of a dread of any kind is an abominably evil act and I cannot imagine where or how the Orgoth perfected this perverted science. They were most often created with the sacrifice of powerful warriors and wizards captured by the empire. These fell creatures belong in the pages of history—but I regret to report that they have not remained there.

Indeed, the dread once more walk the kingdoms. I do not know who has gained the knowledge of their construction, but I encountered one along the border of Ord not too long ago. It did not seem to be under direct command, and I found no master nearby. It may have been wandering aimlessly for hundreds of years, but after I slew the thing (it was a close call, let me tell you) it seemed... fresh.

CREATING DREAD

The process requires a Small, Medium, or Large living humanoid. The subject, who must be completely restrained, is prepared by the casting of *resist elements (fire)* followed by *permanency* upon their person.

A vat of 100 pounds of pure molten iron must be prepared, followed by a Craft (metallurgy) check (DC 25).

Once the subject has been adequately restrained, a hole is cut into his chest to the heart. The molten iron must be forcibly poured directly into the subject's still-beating heart for at least 2d6 rounds until it has been completely absorbed throughout the body. The molten metal causes 1d10 internal damage per round, regardless of the effects of *resist elements*.

After the subject reaches 0 hp and before death at –10 hp, the spells *gentle repose, dominate person,* and *soul bind* (requiring a black sapphire of 1,000 gp per HD) must be successfully cast upon him.

Finally, the dread is immersed in ice-cold water to set the metal used in its construction.

The metal superstructure of a dread provides it with armor-like protection from damage and may be enchanted to further increase its armor class. Weapons and other metal objects (such as climbing spikes, lantern holders, or shields) may be welded or similarly affixed to a dread's frame without causing it damage.

Hit Dice: d12

Speed: Same as the character.

AC: The dread has +15 natural armor.

Special Attacks: A dread retains all the character's special attacks and also gains those listed below.

Fear Aura (Su): Dread are shrouded in an aura of fear. Creatures in a 60-foot radius with less than 4 HD must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 dread's HD + dread's Cha modifier) or be affected as though by *fear* as cast by a sorcerer of the dread's level.

Special Qualities: The dread retains all the character's special qualities and gains those listed below. It also gains the undead type.

Damage Reduction: Dread gain damage reduction 5/+1.

Turning Immunity (Ex): Dread cannot be turned or rebuked.

Spell Resistance (Ex): Dread gain spell resistance 28.

Saves: Same as the character.

Abilities: Dread gain +2 to Str and suffer –4 to Dex. Being undead, dread have no Constitution score.

Skills: Same as character.

Feats: Same as character.

Combat

Dread are intelligent if uninspired combatants. If they are guarding an area with traps or natural hazards, they will attempt to lure invaders into them before moving in for melee combat.

Fear Aura (Su): See above.

Treasure

Dread may have enchanted weapons or other magic items bound to their iron bodies, but they carry no treasure for its own sake. Far more valuable would be any Orgoth loot that a dread may be guarding—there are a few ancient caches hidden within the Iron Kingdoms.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: None

UNCOMMON: The Orgoth created zombie-like minions of flesh and iron as guards.

RARE: The mere sight of a dread, as these creations are known, can cause the bravest hero to flee in terror.

OBSCURE: Dread are still being created today, by a small group of evil Cerylian wizards intent on rediscovering the Orgoth's arcane secrets.

Hooks

The underworld of a major city is abuzz with reports of a terrifying creature of flesh and iron. Have the local cutpurses stumbled onto an ancient Orgoth ruin beneath their very feet—or has a crime lord begun creating his own dread in order to expand his territory?



Dregg

Medium-size Humanoid	
Hit Dice:	*2d8+2 (11 hp)*
Initiative:	*+5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*18 (+1 Dex, +4 natural, +3 armored plates)*
Attacks:	*2 claws +4 melee, bite -1 melee; or by weapon +4 melee*
Damage:	*Claws 1d2+3, bite 1d4+1; or forearm blade 1d6+3 or longspear 1d8+3*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Qualities:	*Light sensitive, masochist, low-light vision, scent, wide-angle vision, damage reduction 5/+1*
Saves:	*Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1*
Abilities:	*Str 16, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10*
Skills:	*Listen +2, Move Silently +2, Spot +2*
Feats:	*Improved Initiative*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any underground or nocturnal land*
Organization:	*Squad (6–12), band (12–30), horde (40–100)*
Challenge Rating:	*2*
Alignment:	*Usually chaotic evil*
Advancement:	*By character class*

There are not that many creatures out there that make me realize just how lucky we civilized peoples really are. It seems that in most cases nature has some way of keeping the dark abominations of the night in check, for without them we'd surely be overrun. It is the sun that saves us from the wretched dregg, and on a bright afternoon I often give silent thanks for it and for whatever servant of Morrow it was who saved us from their stygian depths.



We were traveling in northern Khador when we were captured. They struck at night while most of us slept, but my men still managed to put up a good fight. I've seen few terrors in combat like the dregg. Our weapons did little to harm their rugged bodies, and when we did hurt them it only fired them up more. As I blasted the hand off of one with a grisly pistol shot, I swear I saw pleasure in its eyes. The chaos lasted only a few minutes, and in that time my band had been reduced to half its size. As the marauders feasted on the still-warm bodies of our companions, we were bound and led underground. There we discovered a whole world of tunnels and catacombs that seemed to stretch for miles. Just how far I care not to fathom, though the dregg's equipment—raided booty, all of it—seemed to come from all corners of the kingdoms.

There were some light sources down there by which I could see my captors, and I must say I've never witnessed anything like them. They are about the size of a normal human and bear normal humanoid appendages, but their bodies are as gaunt as could be imagined—the skin stretched so tight that in many places bone actually protrudes through, almost as if they'd been flayed. They had long bony snouts and bent haunches, which gave them a feral grace. Their eyes were milky white and seemed capable of moving independently—a trait that makes them hard to surprise in combat. Their bodies were pierced with metal rings and barbs all over, even through the bone, and I saw that many had fastened armored plates to these piercings. I've never seen a creature that seemed to be in a more painful natural state, though they seemed to revel in it.

Their speech was horrid—a sickly chortle punctured by the sucking and clucking sounds of the tongue in the back of

their throat. I couldn't glean very much of their culture while I was captive. They stayed in groups at all times, it seems, and all that I witnessed were warriors of some sort. The leader of the band that attacked us was a true terror who fought with a pair of long wicked blades strapped to his forearms, and even his lieutenant, clearly a sorcerer by trade, was a wicked combatant as well. I care not to imagine what sort of horrid deity those beasts might worship, though I saw no overt signs of religion.

The only thing keeping these creatures in check is the sunlight. Their skin blisters sickeningly, and they fall to the ground helpless and weak after even a few minutes of exposure. Needless to say, it was the sun that came to our rescue that day. At the time I had acquired a small sunlight beaming clockwork locket. They had taken us into a crystalline cavern, which refracted and multiplied the light from my simple device. After we broke loose, much of it is a blur. Running, fighting, climbing, and eventually breaking the surface and thanking Morrow that the sun had risen. The experience lent greater brilliance to the sight of a sunrise... and a dark apprehension to the sight of that same sun sinking into dusk....



Combat

Dregg are very skilled combatants. They always strike in groups, and they work well in a group dynamic, using well-coordinated attack patterns. They are raiders by nature, striking only at night (unless they are encountered underground), using guerilla tactics where possible.

Light Sensitive (Ex): Dregg suffer -2 to initiative and attack rolls made in light stronger than torchlight. This penalty rises to -4 in extremely bright light. Direct sunlight is even more inhibiting, causing their skin to blister and doing 1d4 points of subdual damage per round. Dregg rendered unconscious in this fashion won't die of exposure, but won't regain consciousness until it becomes dark again.

Masochist (Ex): Dregg delight in physical pain, and it has quite an unusual effect on them. Any spells, abilities, or skills meant to specifically cause pain fail to have their normal effect on a dregg, and instead the dregg gains a +2 morale bonus to all attacks and saves until combat has ceased (or 2d4 minutes in non-combat situations). They also receive this bonus after losing the first 25% of their hit points (2 hp, as above) in combat (it does not stack per multiple effects). This bonus is lost immediately if the dregg is healed in any way.

Wide-angle Vision (Ex): Dregg are able to move their eyes about independently of each other. This wide range of vision makes it impossible to flank a dregg; rogues may still use sneak attack, however.

Treasure

Dregg prefer treasure that has a direct military application, such as weapons, though they are known to keep anything that seems valuable when they commit a raid. Most items, however, are secreted away to well-hidden underground vaults. It is rumored that the wealth in some of these vaults would make the royal Cygnaran coffers seem like a beggar's purse.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: A race of strange, bony humanoids lives underground in many regions throughout the kingdoms.

UNCOMMON: The dregg have an intense aversion to sunlight.

RARE: Dregg revel in pain so much that it actually strengthens them, making them fierce combatants.

OBSCURE: Dregg are so vile that even Toruk, the Lord of Wyrms has been unable to recruit them into his armies. In fact, they seem to have no allies whatsoever, attacking whoever and whatever they please.

Hooks

There have been dregg sightings in the Undercity of Corvis, and people are disappearing. Unfortunately, the watch has been instructed not to investigate the matter, as a naive official has it in his head that the dregg will eliminate some of the underworld scum that have taken root there. If the dregg are left unchallenged, however, Corvis might face an infestation problem that could threaten the whole populace. Several of the underworld's gangs have banded together to fight the dregg off before they take hold, and they're looking for adventurers to join their ranks.

Dune Prowler



Large Beast	
Hit Dice:	*6d10+24 (57 hp)*
Initiative:	*+1 (+1 Dex)*
Speed:	*40 ft., burrow 10 ft.*
AC:	*17 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +7 natural)*
Attacks:	*2 claws +8 melee, bite +3 melee*
Damage:	*Claw 1d6+5, bite 1d8+2*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Frightful presence, improved grab, rend 2d6+7*
Special Qualities:	*Tremorsense*
Saves:	*Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +3*
Abilities:	*Str 21, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 14*
Skills:	*Hide +0*, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Search +0, Spot +5*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any desert*
Organization:	*Solitary, pair, or pack (4–10)*
Challenge Rating:	*6*
Alignment:	*Usually neutral*
Advancement:	*7–16 HD (Large); 17–32 HD (Huge); 33–50 HD (Gargantuan)*

Dune prowlers are true terrors of the Bloodstone Marches. Able hunters both above and beneath the sands, they can be formidable foes and even valuable allies. They are more intelligent than they might first appear and are patient, even meticulous hunters.

Dune prowlers stand between 8 and 9 feet tall, with thick reddish skin covered in dark bristles. These bristles are sensitive to vibrations carried through the sand and aid in the location of prey. Besides their heightened senses and their ability to burrow, the dune prowler's weapons are its wicked claws and speed. Few men can withstand the blows of a dune prowler and fewer still can outrun one.

The most intriguing feature of the dune prowler however is its dorsal hump, which holds both water and air, allowing the beast to hunt beneath the sands for extended amounts of time.

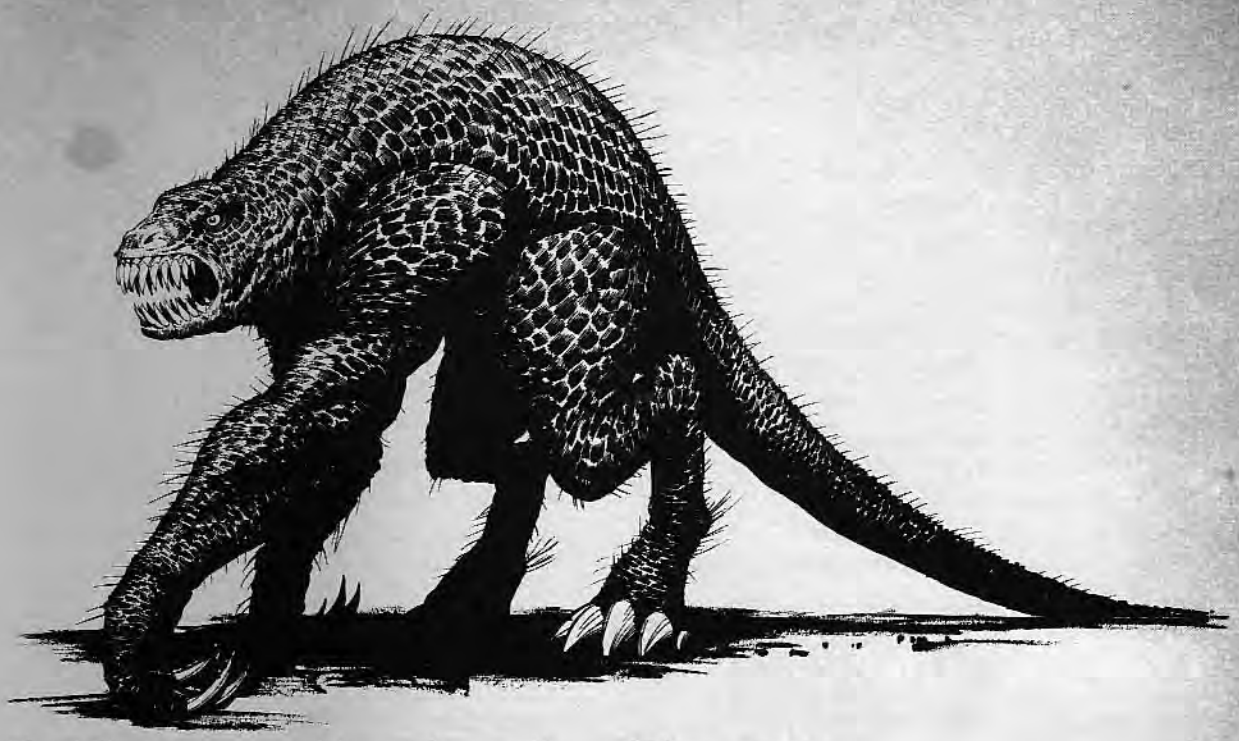


The dune prowler usually hunts from beneath the sands, only coming up for air hourly and the weekly drink of water. They seem to range across very specific yet extensive territories, only moving on from an area if there is no game to be found in the vicinity. They also keep lairs hidden away somewhere within their territory where they sometimes bring back coins and other goods.

A dune prowler's lair is quite an amazing site to see, being a meticulously constructed network of tunnels and chambers carved out of the Bloodstone Marches' crimson sandstone. The males of the species build these burrows in order to attract female companionship. The grander the den the more likely a mate will be found and kept.

Trinkets and baubles adorn the outer rim of each lair (I recommend not disturbing these ornamentations), while further inside it is much more utilitarian. Beware, however, of entering a dune prowler's den; it is usually guarded, and if young are present, then the female stays in the lair while the male forages for food.

Another interesting trait of dune prowlers is their ritualistic battles over territory, lairs, and mates. One on one combat for dominance is a common occurrence among dune prowlers, but rarely results in the shedding of blood, though when blood is shed the battle becomes one to the death. These clashes are mainly for dominance and to set the hierarchy of a pack.



Though I have not seen a tamed dune prowler, my guide Quimut has told me that there are individuals that have trained them as beasts of burden and even mounts. I must say that I prefer my pack mules and horses.

Combat

Sand beasts are remarkable hunters, using the sands to conceal them from their prey. They relentlessly attack with both claws and bite. A dune prowler will usually retreat if it is suffering more damage than its prey. When hunting in packs dune prowlers use their reach and flanking to maximum effect.

Frightful Presence (Ex): The presence of a dune prowler can inspire fear in its foes. Whenever a dune prowler attacks, charges, or howls all creatures that can see the dune prowler must make a Will save (DC 15) or become shaken for 1d6 rounds.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability a dune prowler must hit with a claw attack.

Rend (Ex): A dune prowler that gets a hold rends its opponent's flesh, dealing an additional 2d6+7 damage.

Tremorsense (Ex): Sand beasts automatically sense the exact location of any moving object that is in direct contact with the ground within 120 feet.

Skills: *A dune prowler, due to its coloration and affinity for burying itself in sand receives a +10 racial bonus to Hide checks when in its native environment.

Treasure

Armor smiths can use dune prowler hides to make armor. Armor made from dune prowler hide has no special properties, though it is prized for its rarity and typically increases the value of the armor.

Also of note is the membrane found within the dune prowler's hump. Once cured it makes about a dozen excellent waterskins worth about 5 gp each.

Finally, dune prowler eggs are considered a delicacy in some portions of the Iron Kingdoms and sell for about 5 gp each.

Hooks

- An armor smith who desires a batch of dune prowler hides for his business approaches the PCs. He is willing to pay for a small expedition to the Bloodstone Marches and has offered to share in the profits of the venture with the PCs.
- A caravan from Ternon Crag has gone missing, and the PCs are asked to find it and return its goods. When they come upon the abandoned caravan they find it has been ransacked by a pack of dune prowlers. It is up to the PCs to find any trinkets or baubles that the dune prowlers have brought back to their lairs.

Eldritch



Medium-size Undead	
Hit Dice:	*9d12 (58 hp)*
Initiative:	*+7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*26 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +5 elven chain, +2 ring of protection)*
Attacks:	*Touch +15 melee; or +2 longsword +18/+13 melee; or +1 ritual dagger +15/+10 melee; or masterwork shortbow +13/+8 ranged*
Damage:	*Touch 2d4+6 and ability score loss; or longsword 1d8+11; or dagger 1d4+7; or shortbow 1d6*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Ability score loss, create sythyss*
Special Qualities:	*Undead, +4 turn resistance, darkvision, damage reduction 15/+1, elven traits, immunities, spell-like abilities, spell resistance, eldritch weaknesses*
Saves:	*Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +5*
Abilities:	*Str 23, Dex 17, Con —, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 16*
Skills:	*Bluff +9, Climb +8, Disguise +6, Handle Animal +8, Hide +19, Jump +8, Listen +12, Move Silently +9, Ride +8, Search +9, Sense Motive +9, Spot +14, Use Magical Device +6*
Feats:	*Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land and underground*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*14*
Alignment:	*Neutral evil*
Advancement:	*By character class*
Magic Items:	*Bag of holding (type 2), brooch of shielding, cloak of elvenkind, +1 ritual dagger, elven chain, +2 longsword, +2 ring of protection*

This example uses a 9th-level elven fighter as the base creature.

The shrouded woods of Ios are a mysterious and secluded place, holding many secrets yet to be discovered by the kingdoms of men. Not the least of those is the elves themselves, and my limited experience with them has led me across the path of many a mysterious and unexplained tale. One such legend was that of the eldritch, a legend that eluded me for many years, though in time I would learn more of this one firsthand. My elven assistant Edrea had made elusive reference to the tale of Vyros Thossor, an elder who had succumbed to a dark temptation and become a horrid warped being. On one darkened night on the streets of Corvis, it was Vyros Thossor himself that I stumbled across… or I should say, who stumbled across me.

I'll not divulge the details of the encounter—I think I'm endangering myself enough just by including this entry—but I will impart a few details, should any of my readers stumble upon one of these vile abominations.

Eldritch are elves who live on in undeath. Though I've not discovered the reasons, there are many elder elves who show an intense fear of dying, and the eldritch is one result of that. These beings are seemingly approached by dark voices that tempt them to commit a horrible rite against their brethren to

live on eternally. Their bodies become warped, their skin shriveled and decayed, though in truth they are stronger and faster than they were in life. Smarter too, it seems, as eldritch are cunning creatures. They feed off of the life essences of other living creatures and seem to be able to drain this energy in different fashions, as suits their whims. They also gain an increased affinity for magic, and I have witnessed their natural powers myself. Lastly, eldritch are capable of creating undead minions that they call sythyss, which obey their master's will entirely.

For all of the mystery that surrounds the eldritch and the land they come from, know this: they are evil. Completely and entirely. An eldritch lives to hunt the living, and lest someone puts it down, it will go on doing just that… eternally.

Creating an Eldritch

Eldritch is a template that can be applied to any elven creature. Its type changes to undead, and it gains all of the following abilities:

Hit Dice: Increase to d12

Speed: Same as base creature

AC: Gains +5 natural armor bonus

Damage: Eldritch gain a touch attack that uses negative energy to deal 2d4+6 points of damage to living creatures; a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 eldritch's HD + Charisma modifier) reduces the damage by half. Upon a successful touch attack the eldritch may also choose to use its ability score loss attack as well.

Special Attacks: Ability score loss, create sythyss

Special Qualities: Undead, +4 turn resistance, darkvision 120 ft., damage reduction 15/+1, immunities, spell-like abilities, spell resistance, eldritch weaknesses

Saves: Same as base creature

Abilities: Increase as follows: Str +10, Dex +6, Int +2, Cha +4. As undead creatures eldritch have no Constitution score.

Skills: Eldritch receive a +6 racial bonus to Bluff, Disguise, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search, Sense Motive, Spot, and Use Magic Device checks.

Feats: Eldritch gain Alertness, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, and Lightning Reflexes, assuming that the base creature meets the prerequisites and does not already have these feats.

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: Same as character +4

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Advancement: By character class



Combat

Eldritch prefer to take their prey unawares and defenseless, using subterfuge and magic to achieve both of these goals.

Ability Score Loss (Su): An eldritch may elect to use this ability after making a successful touch attack. The victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 eldritch's HD + Charisma modifier) or suffer 1d4+1 points of temporary damage to one ability score of the eldritch's choice.

Create Sythyss (Su): An eldritch may only create and control a number of spawn equal to its Charisma modifier. If an eldritch slays an elf by draining its Constitution, it may choose to raise the creature as a sythyss. The newly raised sythyss is under the command of the eldritch that created it and remains enslaved until its master dies, at which time the sythyss crumbles to dust.

Darkvision (Ex): This ability replaces the character's low-light vision and has a range of 120 feet.

Immunities (Ex): Eldritch are immune to cold, electricity, and polymorph.

Spell-like Abilities: At will—*change self, charm person or animal, chill touch, dispel magic, expeditious retreat, protection from good*; 3/day—*alter self, charm monster, hold person, invisibility, haste, suggestion, contagion (age rot)*; 1/day—*bestow curse, circle of death, dominate person, finger of death, hold monster*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 14th-level sorcerer (save DC 10 + spell level + Charisma modifier).

Spell Resistance (Ex): Eldritch have spell resistance 11 + character level.

Eldritch Weaknesses: Eldritch are vulnerable to blessed weapons and holy water and suffer regular damage (ignoring damage reduction) from weapons made of entirely organic materials (such as bone or wood). Each year an eldritch must commit a series of thirteen ritualistic murders. If it fails to complete this ritual, it suffers 1 Strength damage per week until the murders are completed. The eldritch cannot fall below 1 Str.

Eldritch Characters

Eldritch are always neutral evil, which causes characters of certain classes to lose their class abilities. In addition, certain classes suffer additional penalties and bonuses. Clerics and paladins lose their ability to cast divine spells and class abilities, but gain the following special abilities:



Aura of Desecration (Su): This despoiling aura acts as a permanent *desecrate* spell centered upon the eldritch and emanating out to a range of 25 feet.

Rebuke Undead (Ex): Eldritch gain the ability to rebuke undead as an evil cleric equal to their current cleric or paladin level with a +4 circumstance bonus to rebuke checks.

Word of Despair (Su): This ability can be used once per day for each level of cleric or paladin the eldritch has and is considered to be a free action (but only once per round). With a single word the eldritch can cause overwhelming despair in an opponent, who must succeed a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 eldritch's HD + Charisma modifier) or be paralyzed with fear for 1d4 rounds.

Sythyss

A sythyss is an undead servant created by an eldritch. They do not gain the horrid rotting changes that an eldritch undergoes, but they do gain a deathly pallor sometimes accompanied by other markings.

Hit Dice:	Increase to d12
Speed:	Same as base creature
AC:	Gains +2 natural armor bonus

Attacks:	Sythyss gain a slam attack
Damage:	Slam 1d6
Special Qualities:	Undead, darkvision 120 ft., immunities
Saves:	Same as base creature
Abilities:	Increase as follows: Str +4, Dex +2. As undead creatures sythyss have no Constitution score.
Feats:	Sythyss gain Alertness, Improved Initiative, Toughness, assuming that the base creature meets the prerequisites and does not already have these feats
Climate/Terrain:	Any land and underground
Organization:	Solitary or gang (2–5)
Challenge Rating:	Same as base creature +1
Alignment:	Always lawful evil
Advancement:	By character class

Combat

A sythyss will obey its master's commands to the letter in combat.

Darkvision (Ex): This ability replaces the character's low-light vision and has a range of 120 feet.

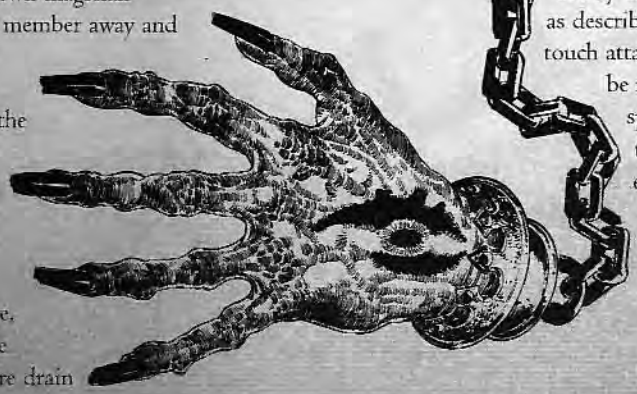
Immunities (Ex): Sythyss are immune to cold, electricity, and polymorph.

Sythyss	
Medium-size Undead	
Hit Dice:	*1d12+3 (9 hp)*
Initiative:	*+9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*17 (+5 Dex, +2 natural)*
Attacks:	*Slam +3 melee*
Damage:	*Slam 1d6+3*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Qualities:	*Undead, darkvision, elven traits, immunities*
Saves:	*Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +7*
Abilities:	*Str 17, Dex 20, Con —, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 17*
Skills:	*Appraise +4, Diplomacy +7, Handle Animal +7, Listen +2, Ride +7, Spot +2*
Feats:	*Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Toughness*

This example uses a 1st-level elven aristocrat as the base creature.

Eldritch Artifact: The Hand of Tadhg

The *Hand of Tadhg* is an ancient Ionian artifact. It once belonged to an eldritch named Tadhg, an elf rumored by many to have been the first eldritch. He was slain by an elven hero of old, and during the battle the eldritch's hand was severed and cast aside. An unknown magician secreted the severed member away and fashioned it into a powerful artifact.



Any who wield the *Hand of Tadhg* become completely immune to ability score and energy level draining attacks. Furthermore, the wielder gains the eldritch's ability score drain ability as if he possessed it himself; it works exactly as described, and the user must make a successful touch attack to employ it. The touch attack need not be made with the artifact. The user gains no special benefit from draining ability scores, though rumors claim that if one drains enough, they'll turn into an eldritch as well.

The left hand of evil...

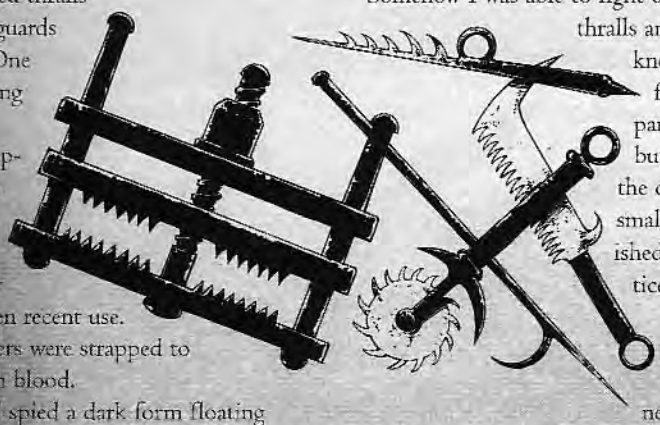
Excrutiator



Medium-size Undead (Semi-incorporeal)	
HD:	*11d12 (71 hp)*
Initiative:	*+3 (+3 Dex)*
Speed:	*20 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)*
AC:	*19 (+3 Dex, +4 natural, +2 deflection)*
Attacks:	*Wicked implement +10 melee; or 2 claw +10 melee, bite +5 melee*
Damage:	*Wicked implement 1d8+5; or claw 1d6+5, bite 1d4+2*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Improved grab, lingering torment, painwrack*
Special Qualities:	*Undead, replenishing sadism, +2 turn resistance, damage reduction 10/+1*
Saves:	*Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +11*
Abilities:	*Str 20, Dex 16, Con —, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 15*
Skills:	*Heal +12, Hide +6, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (anatomy) +13, Sense Motive +16, Profession (torturer) +18*
Feats:	*Exotic Weapon Proficiency (torture implements), Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus: Profession (torturer)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any underground*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*9*
Alignment:	*Always neutral evil*
Advancement:	*12–22 HD (Medium-size)*

I encountered this creature while at an Orgoth fortress archeological dig. Several exquisite examples of weapons and armor had been unearthed in tunnels near Ceryl when the professor leading the excavation suddenly disappeared, followed by several diggers. Whispers began; the place was cursed.

Soon enough, well-coordinated thralls beset the dig. They knew where guards were posted and avoided them. One witness claimed they were dragging people away alive. I rallied the guards and ventured into the deeper chambers. After several battles with the thralls, we encountered a gruesome scene—an old Orgoth torture chamber, lovingly maintained and clearly having seen recent use. The missing professor and workers were strapped to various devices that dripped fresh blood.



I heard a depraved giggle and spied a dark form floating next to the professor. This shadowy creature was draped in black rags, its face a strange metal mask with cruel steel teeth. Dangling from its rags was a variety of devices designed to cause suffering, and clasped in one clawed hand was such a device. The fiend set upon the professor, and we all felt an explosion of pain. Most of the guards huddled into fetal balls—weapons forgotten—as the attending thralls stepped forward.

Somehow I was able to fight off the pain. Dashing past the thralls and attacking the wraith, I knocked it away from the professor. This allowed my companions to gather their wits—but before we could finish it, the creature escaped through a small tunnel. I know not if it perished or continues its dark practice elsewhere.

Most excruciators are centuries old and plan accordingly, finding permanent lairs where they have a ready supply of victims. They feed upon pain and can regenerate wounds by causing suffering. Excruciators can last indefinitely without a victim, but become ravenous when deprived of

victims for longer than a year and sometimes slump into protracted periods of inactivity. Their strongest desire is to pry out each victim's deepest secrets, which they note in meticulous journals, written in archaic Orgoth or other forgotten tongues. Excruciators commonly know dozens of different languages and seem to have an innate knack for learning new ones.

Combat

The excruciator is an intelligent, self-willed undead capable of long-term planning. It uses lesser undead for defense and flees if overwhelmed, attacking again when circumstances are favorable. It prefers taking single victims alive and will employ its skill to wrest information from them about other potential victims or enemies. It is semi-incorporeal, having physical limbs and weapons but an incorporeal torso. It walks slowly and clumsily but is able to fly well.



Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the excrutiator must hit with its claw attack and can attempt this even on Medium-sized creatures. Subdued victims are usually strapped into a nearby torture device.

Lingering Torment (Ex): Excruciators can opt to make weapon and bite attacks as subdual instead of regular damage, with no penalty to hit. These subdual attacks are particularly painful; their weapons are all designed to maximize pain. Anyone suffering subdual damage from an excruciator receives a -4 circumstance penalty to Concentration or similar skill checks (which includes reloading a firearm).

Painwrack (Su): If not engaged in combat and the excruciator has an incapacitated victim, it can cause projected pain onto anyone within a 60-foot radius who fails a Will save (DC 17). The excruciator must first succeed on a Profession (torturer) skill check at a DC of 18 + the Wisdom modifier of victim. The effect is exactly the same as the spell *symbol of pain* within the radius. If the excruciator succeeds the check by 10 or more, there is a –4 penalty to resist the effect. This lasts for an additional 2d4 rounds after the excruciator is interrupted.

Replenishing Sadism (Su): An excruciator can regenerate half the subdual damage it causes to others by inflicting its lingering torment ability upon them. Therefore if an excruciator causes 10 points of subdual damage, it regenerates 5 hp.

Treasure

Although not attached to items, excruciators keep and store possessions owned by victims—which can accumulate into an impressive horde. Their imaginative torture devices sell well to certain collectors. The oldest excruciators may also have valuable weapons or coins from the Orgoth Empire. The best treasure of the excruciator is its journal(s), some of which contain extremely valuable information to those who can translate them.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: None.

UNCOMMON: These intelligent spirits haunt Orgoth ruins or sometimes relocate to other abandoned torture facilities. They choose lairs that have functioning (or repairable) torture implements.

RARE: Victims killed by excruciators rise as thralls in service to them. More powerful undead are also sometimes enslaved into service.

OBSCURE: True excruciators arise from the evil souls of Orgoth torture masters, who conducted dark rites during interrogations. They know innumerable secrets of causing suffering and are keepers of much lore that has been lost.

Excruciators can cause pain even to those who are normally immune. It may be possible to bargain to be spared by an excruciator by promising to bring other victims who know more valuable information.

Hooks

Adventurers are hired by an influential wizard of Ceryl to investigate an old Orgoth complex in the Wyrmwall Mountains. He seeks a number of books kept by the head inquisitor who had run the prisons. These are actually the journals of an excruciator, and the wizard is an infernalist seeking lore for dark bargains. Not only will the adventurers face the excruciator, but will have to deal with their employer—once the books are in his hands, he will try to eliminate them by summoning infernal myrmidons.

Farrow

Medium-size Humanoid (Farrow)		*Abilities:*	*Str 12, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10*
Hit Dice:	*2d8+6 (15 hp)*	*Skills:*	*Hide +2, Listen +4, Move Silently +2, Search +5*, Spot +7**
Initiative:	*+1 (+1 Dex)*	*Feats:*	*Alertness*
Speed:	*30 ft.*		
AC:	*17 (+1 Dex, +6 natural)*	*Climate/Terrain:*	*Any temperate land*
Attacks:	*Gore +1 melee; or greatclub +1 melee; or shortbow +1 ranged*	*Organization:*	*Family (5–20)*
		Challenge Rating:	*1*
Damage:	*Gore 1d8+1; or greatclub 1d10+1; or shortbow 1d6*	*Alignment:*	*Usually neutral*
		Advancement:	*By character class*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*		
Special Qualities:	*Scent*		
Saves:	*Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +0*		

The farrow are half-man, half-boar creatures that have the intelligence and wit of a man and the ferocity and tenacity of a boar. A typical farrow stands at about the height of a man, but walks with a stooped posture that gives it a shorter appearance. Its body is covered with bristly dark hairs over similarly dark skin. Its arms end in mannish hands, and its feet end in the cloven hooves found amongst common barnyard swine. The face is a strange mockery of human and boar: two surprisingly human-looking eyes set behind a large pig snout and enormous tusks jutting from the thing's mouth. The tusks are more pronounced amongst the male members of the species and may serve as a sign of dominance, good breeding stock, or both. Whatever the case may be, the tusks also serve as particularly nasty natural weaponry.



While the farrow are not above and may actually prefer using the weaponry given to them by their ancestry, they also rely upon crude arms fashioned by themselves or more elaborate weapons pilfered from the bodies of slain enemies. Farrow are often seen sporting greatclubs fashioned from the thigh bones of great beasts and crude shortbows of wood and sinew or wielding the heavy iron weapons of the Iron Kingdoms, presumably taken from one of the victims of their incessant ambushes of foreign invaders.

The origin of these beasts is unknown and may remain so. Cyganaran scouts first sighted them several decades ago in Widower's Wood. They've since been spotted ranging as far south as the Gallow Hills and as far north as the Merwyn region of Llael. Some believe there is a mad wizard lurking somewhere in the dark recesses of history that felt the need to tamper with nature and create these aberrations. They are not all bad, however. I had the pleasure of befriending Groth, a farrow shaman of Widower's Wood. If his name is indeed Groth I'm actually not certain, but when I asked for his name and he replied with a series of grunts and squeals, I decided to call him Groth.

I met Groth while I was hunting a particularly large dracodile that had been terrorizing a swampie village. To hear the swampies talk, the creature must have been the size of Lord Toruk himself! I'd soon find out just how close to the truth they were. I had been searching fruitlessly for days when I heard the sound of something very large thrashing about in the water mere yards away from me. I investigated, my lucky bow at the ready, and saw what appeared to be a boar-

like humanoid caught in the jaws of the largest dracodile I had ever seen! The only thing keeping the unfortunate creature from being eaten was a thick, totem-laden staff stuck in the upper and lower jaws of the great lizard. I immediately decided that I couldn't allow such a tenacious creature to be eaten alive in front of me, and fired several arrows into the dracodile. That got its attention, and the boar-man was able to escape its toothy maw. I then waded in with sword and dagger to finish the beast off. What an exhilarating battle!

Afterwards, I was able to ask the creature its name and where it came from. I soon found that it was a "he," and we decided that his name was Groth. He actually spoke a smidgen of Cygnaran mixed in with all the grunting and squealing. Groth apparently was a shaman amongst his people, who live in the deepest reaches of Widower's Wood. This noble soul felt that he owed me a debt of gratitude for saving him from the dracodile and offered to enchant the hide of the beast to protect me should I run afoul of any more dracodiles in the wood. As I could not drag the enormous carcass out of the swamp—though I wanted to, what an enormous specimen!—I agreed to allow Groth to fashion a suit of dracodile hide armor for me. I spent the next few days with Groth in his wattle and daub hut, and we became fast friends.

I occasionally wear the armor to this day—though it often smells of swamp gas on particularly hot, stagnant days—and always manage to pay Groth a visit whenever I venture into Widower's Wood.



Combat

The farrow prefer an ambush to all other forms of attack. They almost always smell their prey long before their victims are anywhere near them. As the farrow commonly appropriate their victims' weapons as their own, any of the above weapons may be substituted with another.

Skills: *Due to their unsurpassed sense of smell, the farrow receive a +4 racial bonus to Search and Spot checks.

Farrow Characters

The farrow's preferred class is barbarian, and most farrow chieftains are barbarians. Farrow shaman are usually adepts and prefer spells that aid in combat and stealth.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: The farrow are half-man, half-boar monsters.

UNCOMMON: The barbaric farrow are little more than animals that have learned to walk upright.

RARE: The farrow are actually capable of moderate civilization. Some farrow tribes have been able to keep their stolen firearms in working order, but have yet to learned how to manufacture ammunition. Watch out for them when they are on the hunt for more bullets.

OBSCURE: The farrow were created centuries ago as a slave race for a deranged wizard.

Treasure

As the farrow are fond of raiding human caravans, adventurers will often discover various human-wrought items amongst a farrow's belongings. These may range from magical armor and weapons to far more mundane objects.

Hooks

The PCs are on a well-traveled Cygnaran highway when the farrow leap up from their hiding places on the roadside and ambush them! This particular tribe has been able to keep its plundered rifles in working order and is willing to use them on their newest target. PCs who investigate may learn that a human wizard leads the tribe and has been using them to advance his own mysterious agenda. DMs may wish to substitute the farrow's Alertness feat with Exotic Weapon Proficiency (small arms).

Fog Drake



Large Magical Beast (Aquatic)	
Hit Dice:	*6d10+24 (57 hp)*
Initiative:	*+4 (+4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*30ft., swim 30 ft.*
AC:	*15 (-1 size, +6 natural)*
Attacks:	*Bite +9 melee, 2 claws +7 melee*
Damage:	*Bite 2d6+4, claw 1d6+2*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Bellow, improved grab*
Special Qualities:	*Amphibious, fog breath, mist sight*
Saves:	*Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +2*
Abilities:	*Str 19, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 15*
Skills:	*Hide +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +3*
Feats:	*Improved Initiative, Multiattack*
Climate/Terrain:	*Temperate marsh and aquatic*
Organization:	*Solitary or clutch (2–4)*
Challenge Rating:	*7*
Alignment:	*Usually neutral evil*
Advancement:	*Greater drake 7–12 HD (Large); grand drake 13–18 HD (Huge)*

Legends and tales fascinate me, as the origins of such things often lead to distant truths. One tale I believe to have a core of truth is a legend told by the swampies that live in Widower's Wood near Corvis.... They talk of a scaled serpent named Voorie. Normally I don't lend much credence to the tales of inbred swamp folk, but even I have to admit that something massive probably dwells in the swamps near Corvis. If Voorie does exist, my coin says she's a fog drake.

Fog drakes are bloated draconic creatures with speckled gray skin. Although they do have wings, they are too small and feeble to support flight. I hypothesize that they help in gliding through water, rather than the air. They tend to settle near wide rivers and large bodies of water and prefer to live out their several-century lifespan in one place when possible. The lair of a fog drake will usually be in a deep pond or swamp, as the beasts are amphibious and function as well in the water as they do on land.



From all indications, fog drakes tend to be about as intelligent as a dog or horse. They may resemble dragonkind, but they are not directly related and their actions are not tempered by intellect. Despite this, gobber shamans seem to have a way of peaceably dealing with fog drakes. These alliances are akin to the relationship between druids and their animal allies, but slightly more tenuous. Fog drakes are not given to these alliances easily, and it has been a documented source of destruction for more than one gobber tribe that pushed its luck.

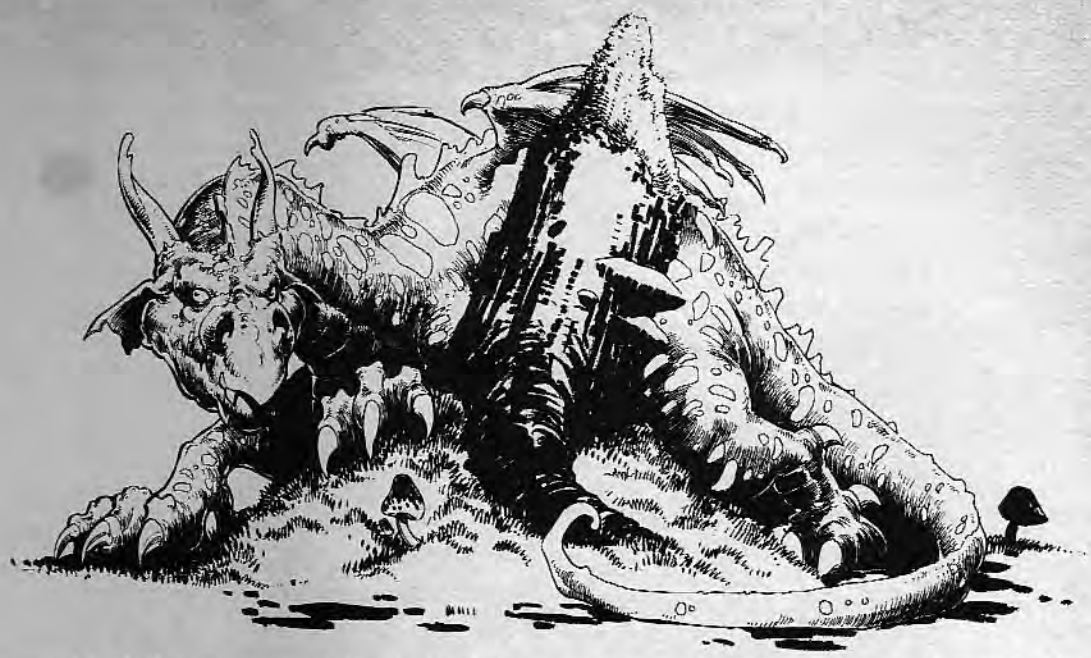
The fog drake gets its name from how it hunts its prey. The creatures can operate in thick fog, using it to their advantage when hunting. The eyes of a fog drake can see clear through the thickest mist. If the fog is not thick enough, massive glands in its throat can produce a thick organic mist that the fog drake "huffs" out of its gills.

Combat

Fog drakes will use natural mist and their own exhalations to their tactical advantage. They can see through any type of fog as if it were clear air. They tend to hunt near their lairs if possible, since they are lazy and have some trouble traveling over land for long distances. It is actually relatively easy to appease one, but once one is engaged in combat, it is a fight to the death.

Amphibious (Ex): Fog drakes can breathe equally well in water or air.

Fog Breath (Su): Fog drakes can emit a cloud of fog from their gills. This cloud expands to 100 feet in radius. The fog it breathes lasts for 24 hours and takes about 30 seconds (5 rounds) to produce. It can do this 3 times per day. The effects of this fog are exactly the same as the effects of the *obscuring mist* spell.



Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the fog drake needs to hit with a claw attack. It then pulls its prey into its powerful jaws for a bite attack.

Bellow (Su): A fog drake can release a horrible roar. Anyone caught in the path of its roar (a 40-foot cone) must make a Reflex save (DC 17) or be knocked back 5 feet and take 1d6 points of damage.

Mist Sight (Su): The fog drake can see through any mist or fog (natural or magical) as if it were clear air.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: These huge beasts dwell in the swamps, lakes, and marshes of Cygnar. They are very territorial, and usually are big enough to eat a calf whole. They are slow and sluggish unless angered.

UNCOMMON: Fog drakes can huff mist through their gills and mouth. The sound this makes is very distinctive and is a good warning that you are being stalked by one of these beasts.

RARE: Drakes collect treasure, though it's not clear why they do this. This treasure is usually deposited in hidden pits they use to secure their hoard.

OBSCURE: Fog drakes don't like to hunt. If you can offer up a freshly killed beast, it is more likely to take the offering than to press an attack.

Treasure

The fog-producing glands of a fog drake can be sold to an alchemist for 150 gp a pair. If a character can brew potions they can distill the gland's juices to create fog bombs that are equivalent to the spell *obscuring mist* as if cast at 10th level.

Eating a preserved fog drake eye (preferably pickled) allows the eater to see through fog as if it were clear air for 1d6 hours. The eyes may be preserved by anyone with the Brew Potion feat, 5 XP, and 125 gp.

The massive beasts eat their kills and deposit the waste in a pond or pit a few hundred feet from the lair. Searching through this is a disgusting but rewarding task. Those searching the offal must make a Fortitude save (DC 12) or contract filth fever. Searching will uncover standard treasure from the lairs of regular and greater (7–12 HD) drakes and double standard treasure for grand (13–18 HD) drakes.

Hooks

A fishing community has recently had trouble with the local legendary lake monster. In actuality a gobber tribe has moved in nearby. The tribe has managed to placate a fog drake living in the waters of the lake. It helps them destroy choice settlements, and in return it gets to eat all the livestock it can find. Thinking the drake is responsible, the community elders have recruited the PCs to find the beast and put a stop to its rampage. The gobbers however are enterprising enough to use this to their advantage, and will stage one last raid on the town while the PCs attack the drake.

Galvanite Sentinel

Medium-size Aberration (Electricity, Incorporeal)	
Hit Dice:	*4d8 (18 hp + bonus hp; typically 60)*
Initiative:	*+3 (+3 Dex)*
Speed:	*Fly 40 ft. (good), 20 ft. (walking in armor)*
AC:	*19 (+3 Dex, +6 banded mail, by example)*
Attacks:	*2 electric bolts +6 ranged; or slam +5 melee*
Damage:	*Electric bolt 1d8+5; or electric field 1d6+1; or slam 1d6+2*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Electrical shock*
Special Qualities:	*Animate armor, hardness (usually 10), immunities, incorporeal*
Saves:	*Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +4*
Abilities:	*Str 15, Dex 17, Con —, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 16*
Skills:	*Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Spot +4*
Feats:	*Point Blank Shot*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*6*
Alignment:	*Always chaotic neutral*
Advancement:	*5–8 HD (Medium-size)*

Most adventurers, soldiers, and scoundrels consider a suit of armor to be a good thing to have against your back, but I know of one case when it certainly is not. I once witnessed a bizarre spectral creature crackling with electrical energy that made a practice of animating suits of armor in order to stalk its prey. My encounter took place in a ruin not too far from Berck, but I've heard tales of these aberrations from various parts.

The creatures are relentless, although I do believe them to be somewhat intelligent. It's hard to say just what the drives them, although I have good word from an acquaintance of mine from the Fraternal Order of Wizardry that these beings subsist on the latent electrical energy of living creatures—an energy I'm not even sure exists, so I can't repudiate such a theory, but surely 'tis fascinating.



Combat

A galvanite sentinel is always found occupying a suit of metal armor, and that suit will almost always be a full suit, even if piecemeal. It attacks sluggishly, but steadily and doggedly, attacking creatures with its shocking abilities, feeding off its victims' latent electrical energy as it does so. If facing a lone opponent, it will use its electrical bolt ability, but it will revert to its electrical field ability if facing multiple opponents. It is intelligent enough to select weaker prey and to flee a losing battle, although it isn't very capable of recognizing subtle threats or using much strategy.

Animate Armor (Su): The galvanite sentinel has the supernatural ability to animate and occupy a suit of metal armor as a full round action. It will not choose heavily damaged suits, and it always favors a full suit, picking up additional pieces if necessary. A suit affected by this ability receives no saving throw unless it is in another's possession or is a magic item (save DC 15); it may not animate a worn suit. While occupying an animated suit the incorporeal creature itself may not be targeted except by attacks or abilities that specifically affect incorporeal creatures (thus everything affects the armor first). The galvanite sentinel gains bonus hp equal to the

armor's AC bonus times 10. It retains the armor's hardness. The galvanite sentinel is never affected by the armor's limitations, such as armor check penalty, reduced speed, etc. If it animates magical armor, then it may use the armor's abilities normally (and it may now only be struck by weapons that match the armor's bonus). It may not animate artifacts or intelligent magical items. When the armor's hp is depleted the armor is destroyed, at which point the galvanite sentinel's incorporeal self becomes vulnerable until it animates a new suit of armor.



Electrical Shock (Su): The galvanite sentinel may use this ability in one of two ways. The first is an electrical bolt with a range of 80 feet that does 1d8+5 damage, or it may create an electrical field in a 10-foot radius about it, which inflicts 1d6+1 damage to all in it. A bolt is considered a ranged touch attack. When the field is discharged, all in the affected radius may make a Reflex save (DC 15) for half damage; this is repeated at the beginning of each round if the field is maintained. Firing a bolt is a normal attack action; creating the field is a move-equivalent action, and it may be sustained indefinitely (movement cut to 5 feet for duration). It may never use both simultaneously. The galvanite sentinel always crackles with blue electrical energy; this may not be hidden nor diminished.

Immunities: When occupying an animated suit of armor the galvanite sentinel has all of the immunities of a construct, except immunity to mind-influencing effects; however these are lost when the armor is destroyed. It is always immune to electrical attacks.

Treasure

Galvanite sentinels never collect treasure of their own; however sometimes they animate magical suits of armor that may be of value. Unfortunately, these are usually destroyed in subduing the creature, but it might also collect piecemeal pieces of smaller armor, such as rings and bracers, that may go undamaged.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Galvanite sentinels are spectral creatures charged with electrical energy that animate suits of armor.

UNCOMMON: Most of the time these creatures seem to be found in ruins and other such locations, although sometimes they wander into civilized areas.

RARE: Galvanite sentinels feed off of latent energy found in living beings, and their appetite seems endless.

OBSCURE: These creatures have a knack for sniffing out magical suits of armor, and they get quite voracious when occupying one.

Hooks

Tales have arisen of a foul horned monster that is stalking the wilds of southern Cygnar, killing villagers and lone travelers. This is no monster, but in truth a galvanite sentinel that has animated a suit of magical *demon armor*. It has gained full use of the armor's abilities, and its high magical bonus means that most weapons can't even harm it.

Gatorman



Large Monstrous Humanoid (Aquatic)	
Hit Dice:	3d8+9 (22 hp)
Initiative:	+5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed:	30 ft., swim 20 ft.
AC:	14 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural)
Attacks:	Bite +4 melee, 2 claws -1 melee, tail swipe -1 melee; or by weapon +4 melee Damage: Bite 1d8+2, claws 1d6+1, tail 1d4+1; or heavy mace 2d6+2 or greataxe 2d8+2
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Improved grab
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 30 ft., hold breath, scent
Saves:	Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 14, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10
Skills:	Hide +6*, Move Silently +6, Spot +6, Swim +18*
Feats:	Improved Initiative
Climate/Terrain:	Warm or temperate marsh
Organization:	Pack (2–5), pod (5–20), tribe (20–80)
Challenge Rating:	2
Alignment:	Usually neutral
Advancement:	By character class

Not many people are aware of the secretive gatormen who occupy the dark, looming swamps of Cygnar. So elusive are these creatures that most believe them only to be a myth. A region like Cygnar sees its fair share of oversized gators from time to time (though you should see those that hide among the salty crags of the Broken Coast—those are some beasts I tell you!), so it's no surprise that folks would assume a sighting of such a strange creature to be an exaggeration of the mundane. I, however, can tell you that they are no myth at all.



Perhaps one of the reasons they are so rare is because of their stealthy nature. Much like regular gators, gatormen prefer to lie silently in wait for their prey, and I have found them to be crafty, tenacious, and—above and beyond all else—patient hunters. They have a penchant for laying traps, and this is how I encountered them. We had wandered up the Black River into their area and, given their territorial nature, an encounter was imminent. It was around a conspicuously shady bend that my guide's steamship became entangled in debris. And that's when they struck.

They herded us into their village, and I was able to learn a great deal very quickly. Their tribal society is stereotypical in many ways. They are presided over by a shaman (who typically keeps a few acolytes under his wing), and males and females adopt the usual tribal roles.

Childrearing is a bit more of a communal thing. Like most reptiles, gatormen (or I should say gatorwomen) lay eggs, and these are kept in a large incubation mound in the center of the village. The young are forced to grow up quickly, and half of the ranks of any hunting party are typically made up of juveniles (brash and eager to prove themselves, I'll note as well).

Despite their fierce nature, gatormen are not overly malicious creatures. They are far more intelligent than one might assume, and they can certainly be reasoned with (I must warn you of their incredible stubbornness, however). The shaman leading the pod that had captured my crew was a wise and crafty old lizard. He saw benefit in allowing us to bargain for our lives—and that benefit just so happened to be my enchanted Rhulian master foreman's goggles. Acquiring that handy tool had been quite a task, but all told I think I much

prefer actually *having* a head to wear goggles upon! In the end I'd have to say that my crew and I were quite lucky. Many gatormen tribes prefer to kill first and ask questions later and would just as soon have taken tribute as demanded it.

Combat

Full-grown gatormen are capable opponents, with claws, a powerful bite, and the ability to use tools. Small groups of gatormen will often sneak up on enemies by swimming underwater or leap up from a watery ambush. When a large-scale attack is needed, they are quite capable of forming well-organized combat units that are often supported by a druid shaman.



Gatormen will often try to latch onto smaller prey and drag them underwater to drown. They are less likely to do this when using weapons, but if they are fighting in or near water the chance increases greatly. They will also frequently attempt trip maneuvers with their tail attack.

Hold Breath (Ex): Gatormen can stay submerged for a number of minutes (not rounds) equal to their Constitution score. After this time they begin making Constitution checks as normal, but only once every minute.

Improved Grab (Ex): A gatorman may use this ability after a successful bite attack. Creatures held while submersed are subject to drowning.

Skills: * Gatormen receive a +3 racial bonus to Swim checks. Additionally, they receive a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks when submerged.

Treasure

Because of their habit of demanding tribute gatormen might have a wide variety of valuables at any given time (considered double standard treasure). They favor weapons over any other item, though one will usually have to pry them from their cold dead claws to get them.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: A secretive race of walking intelligent gators is known to skulk about in some marshy areas, waylaying travelers.

UNCOMMON: Gatormen are a tribal race that keep to themselves, but are known to attack or trade with others on occasion.

RARE: Gatorman flesh tastes kind of like chicken.

OBSCURE: These creatures are lead by shamans who claim to speak to the spirits of the swamp and who control all aspects of tribal life.

Hooks

• Kent Lawley is among those fortunate enough to have encountered a tribe of Black River gatormen and lived to tell about it. He accomplished this through no feat of strength or guile, but by giving up his family's most prized heirloom as tribute—a fantastic longsword called *Staffwright*. Lawley wants his family treasure back more than anything in the world, but unfortunately, the tribe's shaman, Ata'halne, has taken a shining to it. Lawley will pay quite a handsome sum to anyone who can return it to him.

• The Villmiew foundry of Lesser Cygnar has been having a bit of a gator problem lately, as workers have been disappearing while on the job. The foundry's foreman hires the PCs to eliminate the problem, but the PCs soon encounter a gatorman shaman who explains that the foundry's runoff is poisoning their waters. The workers aren't too interested in parleying at first, and the gatormen will only give them one pass at a peaceful resolution. The PCs must think quickly to find a solution before the river runs red.

Some tribes near Corvis have apparently seen much combat with bog trogs recently.

—VP

Gobbers

Small Humanoid (Gobber)	
Hit Dice:	*1d8 (4 hp)*
Initiative:	*+1 (+1 Dex)*
Speed:	*20 ft.*
AC:	*+12 (+1 size, +1 Dex)*
Attacks:	*Gobber—dagger +1 melee; or dart +2 ranged*
	Bogrin—dagger +2 melee; or halfspear +1 melee ; or shortbow +2 ranged
Damage:	*Gobber—dagger 1d4-1; or dart 1d4*
	Bogrin—dagger 1d4; or halfspear 1d6; or shortbow 1d6
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Qualities:	*Camouflage, low-light vision*
Saves:	*Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0*
Abilities:	*Gobber—Str 9, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10*
	Bogrin—Str 11, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 8
Skills:	*Escape Artist +3, Hide +8*, Move Silently +6*
Feats:	*Weapon Focus (dagger)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Gobber—Any plains, urban, or marsh*
	Bogrin—Any hill, mountains, forest, or desert
Organization:	*Family (8–20), tribe (10–30, 15–40, or 20–50), or kriel (30–150)*
Challenge Rating:	*½*
Alignment:	*Gobber—usually neutral*
	Bogrin— usually chaotic neutral
Advancement:	*By character class*

In my grandfather's day if you spotted a gobber near town, you'd put a crossbow bolt in its gut first and ask questions later. Prejudice still abounds, and even in places where a gobber wagon can sell its wares, people watch them warily and keep a hand on their pouches.

I have spent years studying this fascinating species and have found gobbers to be exceptionally adaptable. You can find them in virtually any climate and terrain. There are basically two distinct breeds of gobber, with notably different physiological features. The first are the clever common gobbers, while the second more warlike breed are the bogrin, sometimes called boggers.

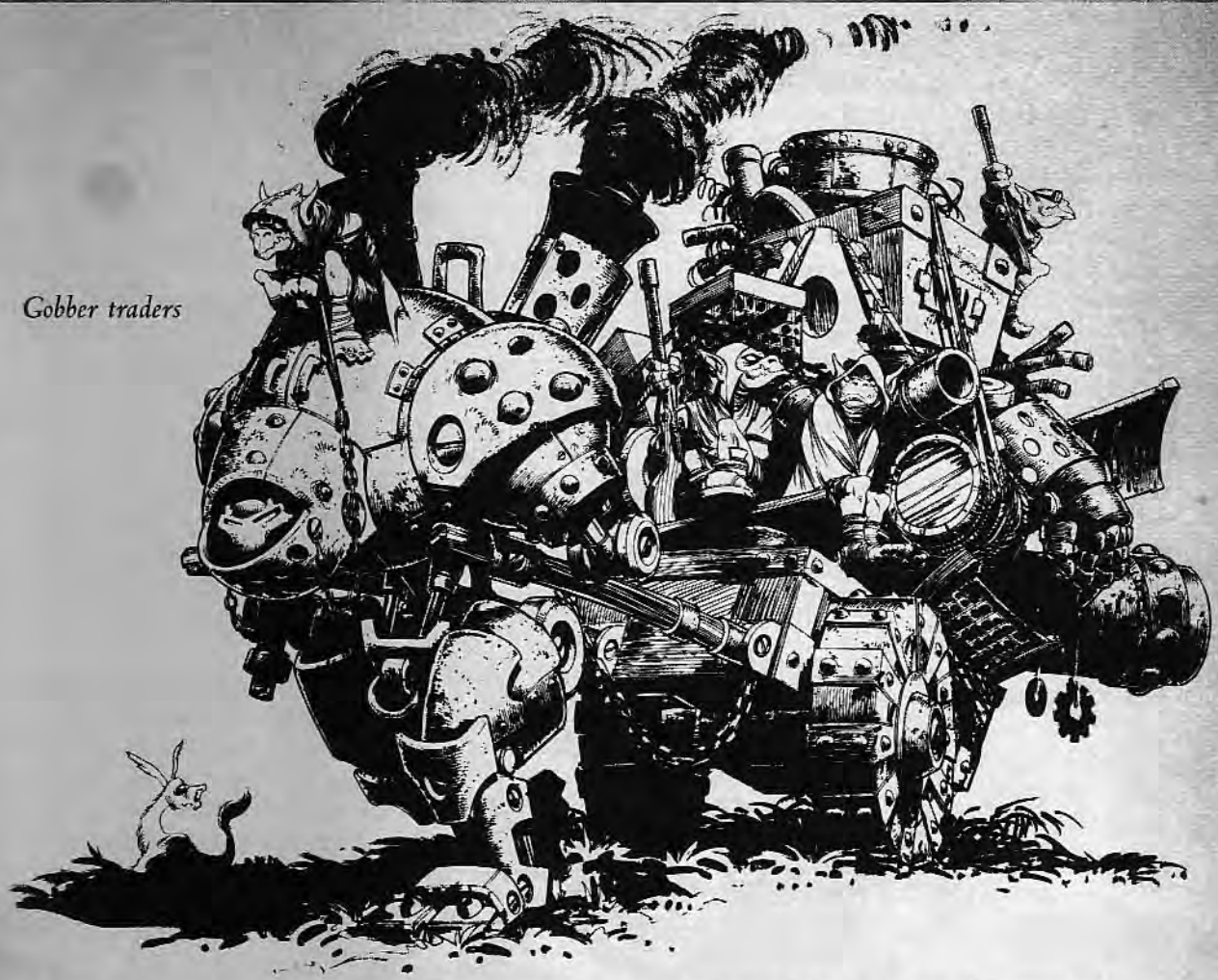
All gobbers are hairless, with large feet and nimble hands. They are small, ranging from three feet with the common gobbers up to almost four-feet-tall bogrin. Gobbers have smooth greasy skin that has the unique property of changing colors like a chameleon. This works best if they are naked or wearing little clothing. Their natural skin tone is greenish gray. Most gobbers live shorter lives than humans, with the average gobber living into their sixth decade. It is a rare gobber that lives to see 80 years.



Gobber mechanik

Gobbers speak a dialect of Molgur called Gobberish, a rapid-fire and arguably mangled version of the root language. It is more easily understood by ogrun and trollkin who speak similar dialects, but it bears less resemblance to the human Molgur tongue. Most gobbers also speak the common human language of their region, usually Cygnaran.

Local attitudes toward gobbers vary considerably. Near Corvis, swamp gobbers (a variety of the common gobber) have an unsavory reputation and are considered particularly primitive and



Gobber traders

treacherous. As in most places, these gobbers are more interested in making off with food and valuables than killing people. Areas inhabited by bogrin have strong local prejudices against the entire species, and the kingdom of Llael has never accepted gobbers of any kind.

Yet gobbers are becoming increasingly widespread and accepted, and the most common variant carries on a nomadic tradition between human cities. Some dress in gray hooded ponchos treated via alchemy to change colors like their own skin. They travel in huge wagons, containing everything they own. These wagons are covered with hanging pots, tools, and other items for trade, clanging loudly enough to be heard from far away as they creep down the road.

These particularly sociable variants of the common gobber are sometimes called "scavenger gobbers" and have a reputation for picking among trash heaps and junk yards. Over a period of weeks I observed one group working in the Corvis scrap yards where they patched together a functional steam engine from rusty pieces of detritus. Checking on them later, I learned the engine was traded for a supply of brandy and wine, which was in turn traded for a collection of weapons, including crossbows and even several old pistols. Quite a profit given they started with trash; reminds me of the proclivities of certain junker relatives of mine.

There are more primitive gobber variations in several locations, including the aforementioned swamp gobbers common in the Widower's Wood. Even these gobbers establish tenuous contact with the nearest dominant species in order to barter with those who could use their wares. Nonviolent by nature, common gobbers are capable of defending themselves and sometimes misunderstand the violent way other races respond to their acts of theft.

Much of the traditional distrust of gobbers is due to the second breed, the bogrin, or boggers. These are a distinctly different stock of gobber, nearly a foot taller and weighing almost half again. They are strong physically and far more aggressive. Boggers can be recognized by the pronounced ridge of bone along their skulls, starting at the bridge of the nose and ending at the back of their cranium. Bogrin are just as adaptable as the common gobbers, although they prefer to settle in the wilds.

Gobbers

There are distinct varieties of bogrin found in the mountains, forests, and desert wastes. They are particularly well entrenched in Cygnar's Wyrmwall Mountains as well as the northern mountains of Khador and Rhul.

Bogrin conduct bloody ambushes against other races when they believe they can overwhelm them. They are usually cowardly and avoid a direct assault, stacking the odds in their favor with traps and their knowledge of local geography. The boggers are particularly fond of arson, setting habitations ablaze in the dead of night. However, even though most are brutal and violent, there are some bogrin who have become integrated into civilization and amended their ways. It is far less common to find this breed dwelling among humans compared to their more intelligent and peaceful gobber relatives.

All gobbers have an intuitive knack for alchemy. Some scavenger gobbers have been accepted into machine and alchemy shops in Fharin and Ceryl, where they have proven as capable as any humans working there. Skill at least with primitive alchemy is also prevalent with the bogrin, which are noted for creating excellent flammable concoctions as well as some ingenious poisonous gases.

Don't let a few positive experiences with civilized gobbers blind you to their danger in the wilderness. The bogrin can be vicious when their courage is up. I saw a tribe set an entire mining camp afire in the Cardare Mountains, laughing while their victims screamed and burned. It was a chilling sight to behold.

Note on Lexicon: Some of my colleagues have criticized me for my preference for the colloquial term "gobber." It is true that goblin is the proper name for these creatures, however gobber has become so universal in Cygnaran and other tongues that I see no need to fight it. There are few outside the halls of academia who still refer to them as goblins, and all gobbers I have spoken to prefer the less formal term as well.



Gobber rogue

Combat

Most goblins are cowardly in battle, but ambush travelers occasionally, especially in winter when food supplies have run low. Ambushes usually start with some sort of trap, followed by a barrage of darts or other ranged attacks before charging with melee weapons.

Gobbers rarely attack a group of more than ten opponents, unless they have overwhelming numbers. Their goal in most cases is to surprise the enemy and make off with food and other valuables; they will only fight to the death when they have no other choice.

Gobber Traits (Ex): All gobbers benefit from a number of shared racial traits.

Low-light vision: Gobbers can see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, or similar conditions.

+1 racial bonus to saving throws vs. poison.



Bogger warrior

+2 racial bonus on Alchemy checks. Gobbers have an innate curiosity and love of mixing substances and experimenting with their effects. They do not automatically have ranks in Alchemy without training, however.

+2 racial bonus to Escape Artist and Move Silently checks. Gobbers are taught from infancy the ways of stealth and wriggling loose from capture.

*Camouflage: Gobbers can blend into their surroundings by subtle changes in skin color. This grants a +4 circumstance bonus to Hide checks, adjusted down depending on how much skin is covered. (+4 for virtually nude, +3 for 25% covered, +2 for half covered, and +1 if 75% covered.)

Common Goblins ("Gobbers")

These are the most numerous, intelligent, and socially adept gobbers. There are several variants of this breed, but all share the same physiology and basic nature. They stand just over 3 feet tall, with green skin by default, although they sometimes use their camouflage ability to match their pigment to the skin of humans with whom they have regular contact. Those who deal regularly with humans are easily spotted by their noisy trade wagons that serve as both a home and a source of livelihood. Nomadic gobbers travel in tribes of 10–30, composed of loosely related families under the leadership of a patriarch or matriarch.

Gobbers are most rare in Llael, where some people still attack goblins on sight. In the other kingdoms local laws sometimes protect them. Some tribes have formal treaties guaranteeing their right to travel the roads and sell their wares. Most gobbers are nomadic, although families may settle down in human towns if they are able to find a niche for themselves, and some gobber villages have sprung up near human cities. There are particularly large gobber towns on the outskirts of Fharin in Cygnar, Berek in Ord, and Khardov in Khador. They enjoy locations noted for lively merchant trade and open markets.

The most notable primitive variant are the swamp gobbers, which are numerous in marshy terrain across the Iron Kingdoms. These reclusive goblins are wary of nearby humans

and prone to ambushes and attacks, although primarily for the purpose of acquiring food or useful items. Swamp gobbers are less technically adept than their urban relations, but have invented some tools to aid in ambushes, such as a device using bellows and an alchemical mixture to create fog-like smoke. Another primitive variant can be found in the plains of southern Khador, adept at stalking the grasslands and bringing down large game by steering them into pit traps. These plains gobbers may be the ancestors of the modern urban variant.

Gobbers prefer daggers or short swords and craft excellent darts. Particularly well-equipped scavengers might have light crossbows or even a repaired old pistol. Gobbers sometimes wear armor, generally leather, studded leather, or homemade chain armor.

Bogrin ("Boggers")

This breed is noticeably larger and stronger than the standard goblin, with warriors standing almost four 4 tall and considerably more muscular and stout. Bogrin have a distinct ridge of bone the length of their skulls. Some boggers are fond of body markings such as ritual scars or tattoos, particularly if sharing territory with trollkin. Although they are less sociable than common gobbers, bogrin sometimes ally themselves with stronger races for purposes of survival. This is particularly common in the Scharde Islands, as well as the Wyrmwall Mountains. There is a longstanding relationship between Devourer-worshiping trollkin and bogrin and the two species generally get along. In the majority of these situations the bogrin are subservient to the trollkin, but not always.

The most numerous are the mountain bogrin, noted for their large tribes (called "kriel") and extremely aggressive behavior. Mountain boggers are the least nomadic of all variants, settling into territories for long periods of time. They make their homes in cave networks and abandoned mines. They are passable miners in their own right, and if they have access to ore will smelt their own iron and craft weapons and tools, which are generally of good quality. Bogrin can also be found in most major forests, in smaller tribes and living in impermanent dwellings usually near a good source of prey. They have also adapted to life in the Bloodstone Marches, but these desert boggers are very elusive and avoid contact with other races entirely.

Bogrin are capable of sophisticated ambushes including extensive use of traps and diversionary tactics, with fire as a favorite weapon. They wear hides, can climb exceptionally well, and are adapted to the high mountains. They are particularly bloodthirsty and sometimes kill with little provocation.

Boggers wield daggers or halfspears and also employ short bows. A favorite tactic is to attack from above by pouring a sticky flammable substance onto invaders, then firing flaming arrows into them (with a combined effect similar to alchemist's fire, PH). Some bogrin have rigged their villages with firetraps and are willing to destroy their homes to kill invaders. Forest bogrin are noted for mixing potent poisons and have developed a poisonous gas-blowing device similar to the fog-blower used by swamp gobbers. This device creates an effect nearly identical to the spell *stinking cloud* but with a +4 bonus to saving throws due to its non-magical nature. The desert boggers of the Marches have invented a substance that can turn regular sand into quicksand, miring victims with the same effect as the spell *entangle*.

Bogrin Traits (Ex): These are in addition to the base gobber traits above except as noted.

Immune to the dangers of natural extreme cold or heat. This makes them perfectly comfortable in any temperature from 0–110° F, suffering none of the regular exposure consequences.

+2 racial bonus to Climb checks.

Bogrin do not gain the +2 bonus to Escape Artist like regular gobbers.

Bogrin have a -2 racial penalty to Bluff and Diplomacy skill checks.

Gobber Characters

For information on gobbers as player characters, consult the playable race appendix (pp. 236).

Treasure

Gobbers keep whatever they have managed to acquire by scavenging, raiding travelers, or trading. They prefer barter to coinage, although leaders sometimes keep a stash of currency. The homemade weapons of the civilized gobbers are of surprisingly good quality, although often made of inferior substances like bone or an amalgam of lesser metals. Some gobbers have special ponchos that smell peculiar but allow full racial camouflage bonus as if they were naked. They are secretive about how these are made, but it is rumored the alchemy involves gobber sweat and even urine. These articles do not function for non-gobbers, but can be patched together and are receptive to enchantment.

Gobber villages are often amazingly intricate, such as this one near Merywyn.



Legends & Lore

COMMON: Gobbers make thievery a habit, but most aren't particularly violent.

UNCOMMON: Gobbers enjoy barter and will not ambush those who are willing to trade. The wild bogrin are far more dangerous and prone to attacking strangers without provocation.

RARE: Gobbers have a knack for alchemy and provide good fortune to wizards who take them in as assistants.

OBSCURE: A knowledgeable wizard of 9th-level or higher can create an enchanted human-sized robe from three gobber ponchos for 1,000 gp which provides a +4 circumstance bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks. This is commonly referred to as a *robe of gobberkind*.

Water wheels and other simple industrial fixtures are quite common. —VP

Gorax



Large Giant	
Hit Dice:	*3d8+6 (19 hp)*
Initiative:	*+3 (-1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*13 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +5 natural)*
Attacks:	*2 claws +5 melee*
Damage:	*Claw 1d6+4*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.*
Special Qualities:	*Scent*
Saves:	*Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +1*
Abilities:	*Str 18, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 5*
Skills:	*Listen +2, Spot +2*
Feats:	*Improved Initiative, Run*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land or underground*
Organization:	*Solitary, pair, or pack (2–5)*
Challenge Rating:	*2*
Alignment:	*Usually neutral evil*
Advancement:	*4–6 HD (Large)*

The gorax is a distant cousin to the ogrun, though more animal in instinct and habit. In appearance they resemble some mad cross between an ogrun and a bear. These may be, in fact, the direct precursors to the ogruns that are growing in number today, but unlike their brainier (albeit barely) cousins, the gorax is a breed on the decline. They have suffered in past decades from being hunted for their young. Up until recent years, beastmasters were paying good coin for gorax pups, since various armies were employing these beasts as forward shock troops. "Send in the g'raxies!" was a call often heard on battlefields. During these times, the beasts perished in the thousands. Those that survived the battle were often put down regardless. Once they had the taste of blood during the heat of battle, they were all the more difficult to control, and it was often more feasible to start training a new lot. However, the cost of feeding them and their feral natures made this a passing frenzy in time, and it is becoming more and more rare to see gorax in captivity anymore.



Still, they are hunted and captured in smaller numbers. A popular trend in the past fifty years throughout the larger cities—primarily in underground circles—is gorax pit fighting. I have witnessed such an event myself not so long ago, and to see money changing hands as these roaring, slavering brutes tore each other apart for the entertainment of the masses produced a sinking feeling in my stomach. I don't know why I feel a certain sense of pity for these beasts—perhaps it is because, in my opinion, they are so much more animal than monster. Just recently these battling creatures have become common fare in the Corvis Arena (I thought I saw some councilors and other notables frequenting the pit fighting dens!).

All in all, today these creatures are rarely captured (unless for the aforementioned pit fights). Instead, they are simply exterminated when they cross into human territory, which may be for the best since whenever this happens the results are generally ugly. Gorax are meat-eaters most definitely, and man can often be found near the top of the menu.

One last interesting fact for this entry; "like stink on a g'rax" is a well-known phrase, but it may surprise anyone not in the know that the distinct smell of a gorax is not just from its sweat—and whatever other odors it's been rolling in—but from its saliva. For men, saliva is merely a digestive aid—and sometimes a dis-

gusting missile of indignation for those of lesser breeding—but for the gorax, saliva is a distinctive marker that is used for two primary reasons. One, in a pack environment, gorax spit on their food in order to claim it from other members of the pack. And the other reason is for attracting mates. During the mating season, the female gorax produces as much as seven times the amount of normal saliva, drooling constantly. Not a particularly endearing quality to us, to be sure, but it drives gorax males simply wild—or shall I say, wilder.



Combat

The gorax will attack anything that they perceive as prey or a threat. Only the promise of sparkling shiny objects can throw them off a kill… sometimes.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: The gorax is a primitive cousin of the ogrun.
UNCOMMON: Gorax collect shiny trinkets, which the male gorax uses to court females.
RARE: Young gorax can be tamed and trained, but few remain in such service today. They have a tendency to go berserk under pressure—there is a 5% chance that when a gorax has lost half its hit points it will go mad and attack the closest living target.
OBSCURE: Anyone who meets a gorax is advised to throw down a handful of coins or other shiny objects and flee. If the gorax fails a Will save (DC 8), the "shinies" will make the creature lose interest in attacking (if temporarily). If engaged in combat or protecting cubs, this tactic will be completely useless and the gorax will fight until death.

Treasure

There will always be at least 1d4 gems of varying worth and other shiny objects scattered about the gorax's filthy lair.

Hooks

• During a venture into the underground of a large city, the PCs somehow find some among them—or all of them—seized and tossed into a deep pit. A crowd gathers around, looking on and jeering, as a gate in the opposite wall rises up and a gorax (or two or three) comes rushing at them with bloodlust in its yellow eyes. Coins start getting tossed back and forth above. The fight is on!

• A flustered farming community has had the ill pleasure of a pack of voracious gorax settling in the woods above their fields. The pack has already dragged off a few villagers, and the beasts are just too formidable for the farmers to fend off with their sundry assortment of picks and firebrands. They'll scrap together what coin they can if the PCs would be so good enough as to rid them of this flesh-hungry nuisance.

It amazes me that these beasts were ever trained for war. I'd certainly not want one in my regiment! —VP

Gorgandur

(Immature specimen)

Colossal Magical Beast	
Hit Dice:	*35d10+10 (542 hp)*
Initiative:	*+8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*20 ft., burrow 20 ft., swim 20 ft.*
AC:	*36 (-8 size, +4 Dex, +30 natural)*
Attacks:	*Bite +42 melee, ram +40 melee, crush +40 melee, tail slap +40 melee, tail sweep +40 melee*
Damage:	*Bite 4d8+15, ram 2d8+7, crush 4d8+22, tail slap 3d8+22, tail sweep 2d8+22*
Face/Reach:	*40 ft. by 80 ft./15 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Corrosive sludge, earthquake, improved grab, swallow whole*
Special Qualities:	*Damage reduction 20/+3, scent, SR 25, frightful presence, tremorsense*
Saves:	*Fort +33, Ref +25, Will +13*
Abilities:	*Str 40, Dex 18, Con 30, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 18*
Skills:	*Climb +25, Listen +12, Search +12, Spot +16*
Feats:	*Blind-fight, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Iron Will, Multiattack*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land and underground*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*25*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*36+ HD (Colossal)*

There are some things in this world that you simply don't trifle with. They trifle with you. And when they do you are at their complete mercy. The legendary Gorgandur is one such creature. There are only four of these beings rumored to be in existence, and for that I am quite thankful. We've also seen a marked decrease in their activity over recent decades, which is something else to be thankful for.

Records of these beasts go back hundreds of years, and there are several legends that lay claim to them. The ancient Memites wrote of them in the *Olknurizon*, calling them the Gormalaine: they were said to be a punishment left here on Caen for us by Menoth. The legends that seem the more pervasive, however, are that these beasts are the whelps of the Devourer Wurm and follow its example, spreading chaos and destruction wherever they may. From what I have heard from reports, these creatures do not go out of their way to seek out victims, but do not hesitate to obliterate those foolish enough to raise their ire.



If you're breathing, then you've probably never witnessed a Gorgandur in person, though I have had the opportunity to speak to one or two rare survivors. They are colossal serpents that dwell deep in the earth (near subterranean warm pockets in volcanic areas, I believe). Every few decades they wake from their slumber and unleash themselves upon the world to cause widespread destruction and eat the inhabitants and livestock of several towns while they're at it. I've never heard tell of one of these beasts being slain, nor could I even imagine one.

Combat



When a Gorgandur engages in combat it attempts to kill and then eat everything, and that's generally what it does. It will attack first with a blast of corrosive sludge, then it will set to smashing everything to pieces. Should some force manage to do critical damage to the Gorgandur, it would flee back from whence it came.

Corrosive Sludge (Su): A Gorgandur can spit forth a corrosive goo in a 100-foot cone. This does 45d12 damage to all in the area. Those affected may make a Reflex save (DC 31) for half damage. It may use this attack once every 1d6+1 rounds.

Attacks: The Gorgandur's crush attack affects opponents of Large size or smaller, and it affects as many creatures as can fit under its body (see Face/Reach). Those creatures that fail a Reflex save (DC 31) are considered pinned; those that fail to escape take crushing damage each round. The Gorgandur's tail sweep affects a 50-foot diameter half circle at the creature's rear; creatures of Small size or smaller are not affected by it. Affected creatures may make a Reflex save (DC 31) for half damage.

Earthquake (Su): By slamming itself down upon the ground as hard as can be, a Gorgandur can cause an earthquake. This is in all ways like *earthquake* cast at 20th-level, except that any fissures opened do not close, as the effects are permanent.

Frightful Presence (Ex): A Gorgandur produces a constant low rumbling that inspires terror in all creatures within 300 feet (deafened creatures are still affected). They must make a Will save (DC 31) or suffer the following: Creatures of 15 HD or less are shaken for 6d6 rounds; creatures of 10 HD or less are panicked for 6d6 rounds; creatures of 5 HD or less become frightened for 6d6 rounds. This is a fear affect.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this a Gorgandur must make a successful bite attack.

Swallow Whole (Ex): With a successful grapple check, a Gorgandur can swallow any creature of Huge or smaller size that it has already grabbed. Once swallowed, creatures suffer 3d8+15 constriction damage per round as well as 2d6 acid damage per round. Swallowed creatures may attempt to hack their way out by doing 50 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 20). Muscular action closes this hole up; additional victims must cut themselves free separately.

Because of its extremely large gullet, a Gorgandur can swallow two Gargantuan, four Huge, eight Large, sixteen Medium-size, thirty-two Small, sixty-four Tiny, one hundred and twenty-eight Diminutive, and two hundred and fifty-six Fine opponents.

Tremorsense (Ex): A Gorgandur can sense the location of anything in contact with the ground within 300 feet.

Treasure

If you see a Gorgandur and you get away from it with your life, consider that treasure enough. There is, however, a strange tale of a survivor who claimed the fallen tooth of a Gorgandur. Several wealthy collectors offered him a king's bounty for it, but the individual, a hunter by trade, kept the tooth as an eccentric artifact.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Ancient legends tell of colossal serpents that live in the earth, venturing forth rarely and with destructive consequences.
UNCOMMON: These beasts are called Gorgandur, and there are thought to be four of them in existence. Legend also says that these beasts are nigh immortal, as no legend exists of one ever being slain or dying off.
RARE: The underground lairs of two of Gorgandur are known by a few gifted trackers—one is hidden beneath the Cardare Mountains, and the other within the Glass Peaks.
OBSCURE: It is true that the attacks of these serpents have all but ceased for the past several decades—40 years in fact. The reason is that all four of these creatures are spawning. Soon each will release about a dozen young (approximately 10 HD) upon an unsuspecting world.

Hooks

A serpent-worshipping Devourer sect has located one of the Gorgandur's lairs, and they have begun preparations to awaken the thing. The ghastly ritual requires the blood of several dozen virgin sacrifices as well as collecting several forgotten ancient artifacts. It's a tall order, but this sect is powerful enough that it just might do it. The PCs are called in to stop them. The catch is that, should the sect awaken the beast, they'll not only have it, but its clutch of about a dozen young rampaging about the countryside and eating everything in sight.

Gremlin

Tiny Fey (Grymkin)	
Hit Dice:	*1/2 d6 (1 hp)*
Initiative:	*+2 (+2 Dex)*
Speed:	*20 ft.*
AC:	*14 (+2 size, +2 Dex)*
Attacks:	*Small shortspear -2 melee; or bite -2 melee; or small shortspear +4 ranged*
Damage:	*Small shortspear 1d4-4; or bite 1d2-4*
Face/Reach:	*2 ½ ft. by 2 ½ ft./0 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Glitch*
Special Qualities:	*Darkvision 90 ft., device merge, natural invisibility*
Saves:	*Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +2*
Abilities:	*Str 2, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8*
Skills:	*Balance +5, Climb +7, Craft (junk metal) +3, Disable Device +10, Hide +13, Jump +1, Listen +7, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +5, Spot +5*
Feats:	*Alertness*
Climate/Terrain:	*Urban*
Organization:	*Gang (2–5), pack (6–20), or horde (21–50)*
Challenge Rating:	*¼*
Alignment:	*Always chaotic neutral*
Advancement:	*1–2 HD (Tiny)*

Reviled by mechanics, engineers, and priests of Cyriss, gremlins are the bane of steamwork, clockwork, and other complicated metal devices. Not only are gremlins infamous for making constructs such as steamjacks malfunction, they are also noted for the often cruel mischief they visit upon others.

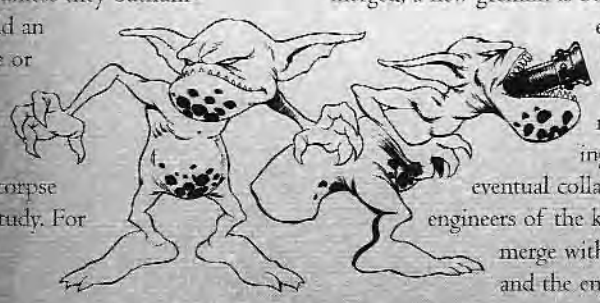
In my efforts to uncover more information about these roundly despised grymkin, I made provision to accompany Aliss Holm, one of Corvis's six expert exgremlinators, on one of her routine visits to Engines East.

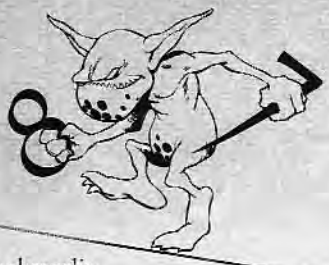
Within the industrious facility, I noted the presence of a number of domestic felines that I assumed were present to keep the number of rats down. Aliss informed me that not only do they keep the rats under control, but they also serve the same purpose as regards gremlins. Cats hate gremlins and hunt them in preference to other prey. For their part, gremlins fear cats and will not attack one unless they outnumber it at least three to one. Should an establishment's cats evince unease or start to disappear, it is usually a clear indicator that the gremlins are on the rise.

Aliss presented me with the corpse of a recently killed gremlin for study. For the subject of such loathing, the gremlin presented a surprisingly comical appearance, with a disproportionately large round head balanced precariously atop a scrawny neck, a rotund potbelly, and short spindly limbs ending in oversized hands and feet. Its hairless pale gray skin was slightly metallic, its head dominated by a large needle-toothed mouth, two tiny silver eyes, a pair of extremely long pointed ears, and a complete lack of apparent nose.

Far from being defenseless, gremlins scavenge and utilize discarded scraps of metal to create various gadgets. They favor miniature spears for use as weapons, basic levers, and even crude lockpicks, bind springs to their feet to aid in jumping, and create grappling hooks, caltrops, and other sundry devices out of old wire, nails, and cogs.

Gremlins reproduce in bizarre manner, by physically merging with an appropriate and fully operational device, oftentimes ruining it in the process. At the end of a week thus merged, a new gremlin is born, and both parent and duplicate emerge from the device. Particularly large devices, such as those used in factories, may be plagued by a number of merged gremlins, leading to continual malfunction and eventual collapse. It is of no comfort to the engineers of the kingdoms that gremlins do not merge with inert or broken down machinery, and the engineers' irritation is further aggra-



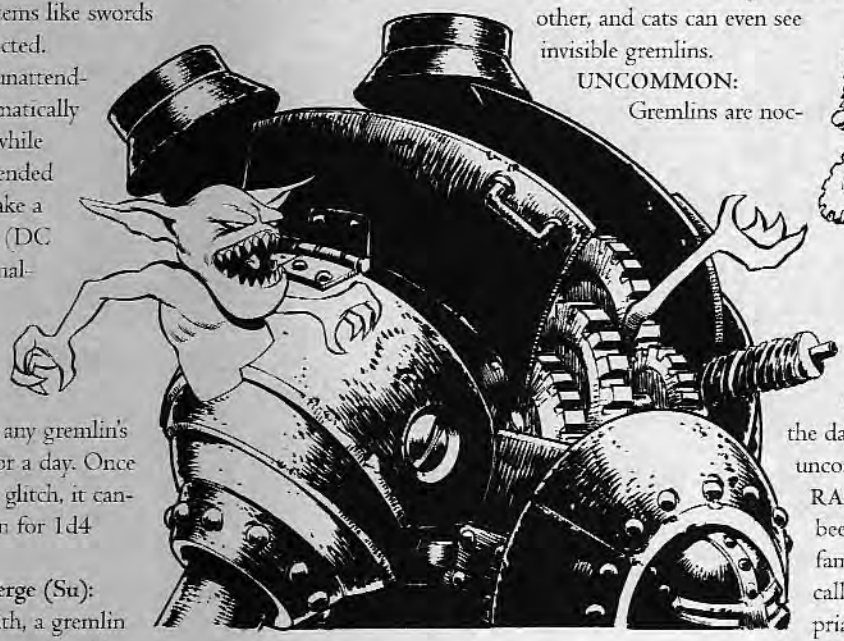


vated by the fact that merged gremlins are best removed by a skilled (and expensive) exgremlinator utilizing the appropriate paraphernalia.

Combat

While not particularly violent, gremlins do enjoy tormenting other beings by making devices malfunction at inopportune moments, sneaking up and prodding them with spears before fleeing, leaving caltrops on seats, and so on. When faced with any serious threat, they prefer to flee.

Glitch (Su): A gremlin may cause a brief malfunction in a single complex device such as a steampress or crossbow. Simple items like swords cannot be affected. Nonmagical, unattended items automatically malfunction, while magical or attended items must make a Fortitude save (DC 10) to avoid malfunction. If the check succeeds, that device cannot be affected by any gremlin's glitch power for a day. Once a gremlin uses glitch, it cannot use it again for 1d4 rounds.



Device Merge (Su): Once per month, a gremlin may physically merge with a mechanikal device. A magical or attended device may make a Fortitude save (DC 10) to resist the merge. Once merged, the gremlin can use its glitch power on the device at will, and also absorbs some of the elements of the device, compromising its integrity; the device's hardness is reduced by 1 per week, and its hit points are reduced by 1 per day. This is a gremlin's means of procreation.

Natural Invisibility (Su): A gremlin may become invisible as a standard action, although it does not remain invisible if it attacks. A gremlin's invisibility does not affect cats.

Skills: Gremlins use their Dexterity modifier for Climb checks. They have a +2 racial bonus to Climb, Jump, and Listen checks, and a +7 racial bonus to Disable Device checks.

Treasure

Gremlins are not known to acquire and hoard material possessions, beyond those worthless items they craft out of scraps of metal, discarded nails, and other industrial detritus.



Legends & Lore

COMMON: Cats and gremlins loathe each other, and cats can even see invisible gremlins.

UNCOMMON: Gremlins are nocturnal; they can operate during the daylight hours, but find it uncomfortable.

RARE: Arcane spellcasters have been known to acquire gremlin familiars. If such an individual calls for a familiar in an appropriate location, and is of at least 5th-level, a gremlin may answer the call at the DM's discretion.

OBSCURE: Cyriss bears a particular hatred for the monkey-wrenching grymkin and grants her clerics the ability to turn unmerged gremlins, as other clerics turn undead.

Hooks

Rumors abound that rival engineers and factories sometimes attempt to sabotage each other's work by introducing gremlins onto the premises. The characters could be employed to covertly drop one or two gremlins into a factory, or prevent such sabotage.



Gristle & Flay



Gristle	
Medium-size Fey (Grymkin)	
Hit Dice:	*7d6+21 (45 hp)*
Initiative:	*+0*
Speed:	*40 ft.*
AC:	*14 (+4 natural)*
Attacks:	*2 slams +7 melee, bite +2 melee*
Damage:	*Slam 1d6+4, bite 1d8+2*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Fear aura, improved grab, swallow whole*
Special Qualities:	*Darkvision 90 ft., regeneration 5, scent, SR 17*
Saves:	*Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +6*
Abilities:	*Str 19, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12*
Skills:	*Climb +9, Disguise +6, Hide +7, Intimidate +10, Jump +9, Listen +8, Move Silently +7, Spot +8*
Feats:	*Alertness, Dodge, Power Attack*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any non-aquatic*
Organization:	*Unique pair (always appears with Flay)*
Challenge Rating:	*6*
Alignment:	*Always chaotic evil*
Advancement:	*—*

Flay	
Medium-size Fey (Grymkin)	
Hit Dice:	*6d6+12 (33 hp)*
Initiative:	*+2 (+2 Dex)*
Speed:	*40 ft.*
AC:	*14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural)*
Attacks:	*Bite +6 melee*
Damage:	*Bite special*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Constrict 1d6+2, fear aura, improved grab, puppeteer*
Special Qualities:	*Darkvision 90 ft., regeneration 5, SR 17*
Saves:	*Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +8*
Abilities:	*Str 15, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 12*
Skills:	*Balance +9, Climb +6, Disguise +5, Hide +8, Intimidate +6, Jump +9, Listen +5, Move Silently +9, Spot +6, Tumble +9*
Feats:	*Dodge, Iron Will, Mobility, Weapon Focus (bite)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any non-aquatic*
Organization:	*Unique pair (always appears with Gristle)*
Challenge Rating:	*6*
Alignment:	*Always chaotic evil*
Advancement:	*—*

Peasants the kingdoms over hold chilling tales of the doings of wicked grymkin. Although the jaded and more sophisticated among us may scoff at many such tales as the fancies of superstition, my investigations and studies have shown that even the most outrageous stories often contain a kernel of truth—or in a rare few cases a terrifyingly accurate portrayal. Such tales, spun around campfires and hearths to scare both children and adults, often recount the foul depredations of a pair of grymkin known only as Gristle and Flay. I have found these tales to be but shallow representations of the true horrors of these legendary fiends.

I have recorded tales that place these monsters in locations as diverse as the mountain footpaths of Rhul, crossroads in the Protectorate of Menoth, and even shadowed byways in the



bowels of the Corvis Undercity. It seems the wretched pair know no boundaries, though why they range so far remains a mystery. Similarly, their aims remain unknown, beyond the obvious relish with which they inflict pain and suffering upon those unfortunate enough to attract their attentions.

It was upon my return journey to Corvis, following my successful expedition to uncover more knowledge on the bridge trolls of Merywyn that I discovered the tales of Gristle and Flay to be all too much a reality.

A mere three days' ride outside Corvis, the merchant's caravan with which I was traveling was set to camp down for the night, as dusk was gathering. Guards were set, a campfire started, and I made ready to settle for the evening. It was then that Jalif Yale, our merchant host, spotted a hulking cloaked figure, deep within the shadows at the edge of the campfire's light. The alarm was quickly raised, and a challenge issued; the figure merely stalked forward into view, seemingly unconcerned. What I saw then made my stomach knot and my blood turn to ice.

The cloak was thrown off to reveal a nightmarish creature, a naked, inhumanly muscular and hairless man, his face a grotesque mask of insane amusement, his mouth far too broad, full of far too many teeth. His skin was crawling with disturbing tattoos that writhed and twisted, and as we watched in stunned horror, his skin peeled away from his body wetly, to stand on its own, hollow and smiling. The camp immediately became a confusion of screaming panic, as guards and travelers alike fled in blind terror. The guard next to me became hysterical, and it was all I could do to prevent him from running and hopefully defend him from Gristle and Flay, should they choose to attack. As I watched helplessly, the grymkin began to hunt my fellow travelers.

Flay moved with the horrifyingly swift and jerky motions of a marionette, leaping upon a guard and "swallowing" her, his skin fitting over her fear-wracked body like a glove. The ghastly realization that she was still entirely aware occurred to me when I looked into her horrified eyes. Sickeningly, as Flay began to move, he began to make her move in step with him. Gristle clutched a struggling merchant in his skinless fists, his twisted grin growing broader as Flay cavorted closer, still fitted like a sheath around the female guard. Flay reached down with the

guard's hand and retrieved a dagger dropped in the panic, and then began to slowly cut up the merchant bound in Gristle's iron grasp. The guard, aware of the horror she was inflicting from within Flay, wailed piteously, her cries drowned out only by the agonized screams of the merchant. When the merchant was close to death, Gristle's broad mouth opened impossibly wide, swallowing the mewling unfortunate, the fiend's stomach stretching to accommodate a meal little smaller than its devourer. The merchant's weakly twitching form could be seen in horrifying silhouette through the skinless flesh of Gristle's stomach. Flay began to constrict around the form of his unwilling "puppet," crushing flesh and bone until the female guard's whimpers ceased. With a lurch, he then peeled free from her ruined form, and the horrific pair danced gleefully back into the darkness beyond the camp.

My travels have brought me into contact with many beasts and entities, both fair and foul, but few encounters have etched themselves into my mind with such brutal clarity.

Rich and poor, young and old, those alone and those in numbers, have all been the victims of Gristle's and Flay's nightmarish attacks, the only common link being that of one or more survivors left to tell the tale.

Combat

Gristle and Flay can be cunning or bold, depending on their capricious whims. They have been known to appear suddenly and dramatically, ambush or stalk victims patiently, and even disguise themselves to move amid the unsuspecting, Flay covering Gristle, the two concealed beneath cloak or robe and cowl or hat.

As soon as they attack, they incapacitate those weak of will with their horrific countenances, rendering their unfortunate prey more easily dealt with. The duo prefers to toy with their victims, wringing every ounce of terror, pain, and misery they are capable of—seldom is anyone killed outright.

Due to the corpse-like appearance of the pair, it is not unknown for clerics to mistakenly attempt to try and turn them, a mistake that often proves to be the unfortunate cleric's last.

Gristle

Gristle is the more brutish of the two grymkin and has been known to pummel and bite victims into submission, before swallowing them whole, torturing them, or grabbing and presenting them to Flay for a period of shared torment.

Fear Aura (Su): Gristle emanates an aura of revulsion with a 60-foot radius. Any creatures with less than 5 HD that look at Gristle must make a successful Will save (DC 14) or suffer the effects of *fear* for 10 rounds.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Gristle must hit with a slam attack.

Swallow Whole (Ex): With a successful grapple check, Gristle is capable of comfortably swallowing opponents of up to Medium-size or smaller that he has grabbed. Once swallowed, the creature suffers 1d6+2 points of crushing damage per round, as well as 5 points of acid damage from digestive acids. Provided it has the means, the creature may cut its way out by doing 10 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 12). The hole is closed up after the creature exits; any other swallowed victims must cut their own way out. Gristle may swallow one Medium-size, two Small, four Tiny, eight Diminutive, or sixteen Fine or smaller opponents.

Regeneration (Ex): Fire and holy or blessed weapons and water deal normal damage to Gristle. He can regrow a lost limb or body part in 3d6 minutes, or he can reattach a severed limb instantly.

Flay

Flay displays far more creativity and finesse in his application of fear and suffering than does Gristle. His decisions usually lead the pair.

His favored attack is to swallow and engulf a victim (a bite attack using improved grab), fitting tightly around them like a second skin, controlling all their actions (using puppeteer), forcing them to perform terrible deeds while they remain completely aware of everything they are forced to do while within him. His fun over, he then constricts around his victim, crushing them to death. He will not engulf victims in spiked armor, lest he damage himself.

Constrict (Ex): Flay may constrict an opponent that has been successfully grabbed with a successful grapple check, dealing 1d6+2 damage.

Fear Aura (Su): Flay emanates an aura of chilling fear with a 60-foot radius. Any creatures with less than 5 HD that look at Flay must make a successful Will save (DC 14) or suffer the effects of *fear* for 10 rounds.

Improved Grab (Ex): After a successful bite attack, Flay may engulf any Medium-size or smaller humanoid opponent.

Puppeteer (Su): Any victim successfully ensheathed by Flay with improved grab must make a Will save (DC 15) or be subject to the effects of dominate person. The effects last as long as Flay remains wrapped around the victim.

Regeneration (Ex): Fire and holy or blessed weapons and water deal normal damage to Flay. He can regrow a lost limb or body part in 3d6 minutes, or he can reattach a severed limb instantly.

Treasure

Gristle and Flay have never shown any interest in acquiring or carrying possessions of any kind, beyond any garb they temporarily disguise themselves with.

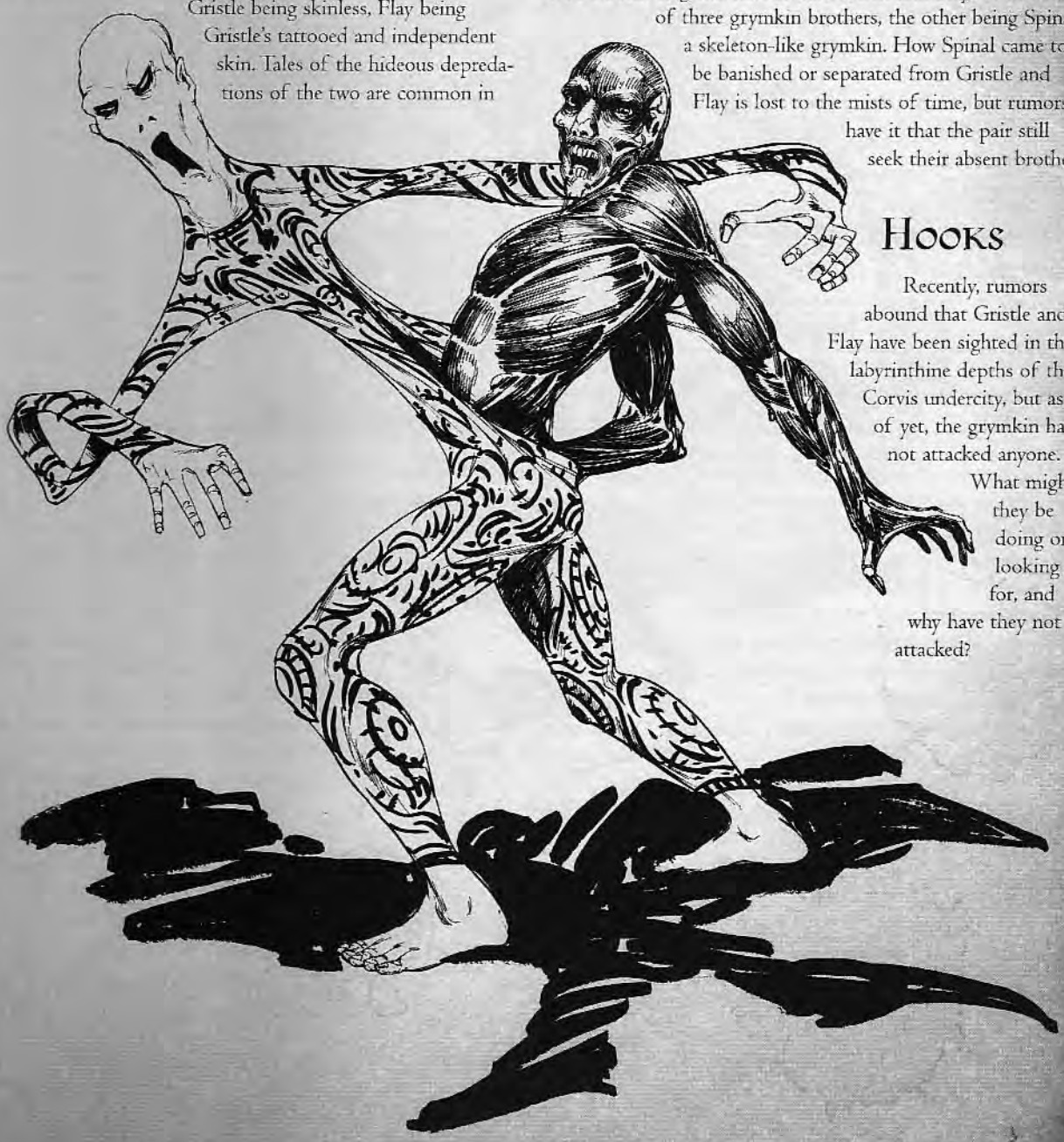
Legends & Lore

COMMON: Gristle and Flay are two legendary grymkin, Gristle being skinless, Flay being Gristle's tattooed and independent skin. Tales of the hideous depredations of the two are common in all lands. Gristle and Flay only ever attack at night, and vanish at the break of dawn.

UNCOMMON: Anything encircled by an unbroken ring of holy water is safe from their attacks. Similarly, Gristle and Flay cannot enter hallowed ground.

RARE: Gristle and Flay can be destroyed by fire and weapons and water blessed and made holy, but they always reform a year and a day after being destroyed, in some remote, seemingly random locale.

OBSCURE: Legends have it that Gristle and Flay are but two of three grymkin brothers, the other being Spinal, a skeleton-like grymkin. How Spinal came to be banished or separated from Gristle and Flay is lost to the mists of time, but rumors have it that the pair still seek their absent brother.



Hooks

Recently, rumors abound that Gristle and Flay have been sighted in the labyrinthine depths of the Corvis undercity, but as of yet, the grymkin have not attacked anyone. What might they be doing or looking for, and why have they not attacked?

Guardian Giant



Huge Giant	
Hit Dice:	*20d8+140 (230 hp)*
Initiative:	*+6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*50 ft.*
AC:	*24 (-2 size, +7 natural, +9 half-plate)*
Attacks:	*+4 Gargantuan greatsword +34/+29/+24*
Damage:	*+4 Gargantuan greatsword 4d6+18*
Face/Reach:	*10 ft. by 10 ft./15 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Spell-like abilities, hypnotic stare*
Special Qualities:	*Damage reduction 15/+2, SR 18, all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.*
Saves:	*Fort +19, Ref +8, Will +14*
Abilities:	*Str 39, Dex 15, Con 24, Int 17, Wis 22, Cha 16*
Skills:	*Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +8, Listen +12*, Search +13*, Sense Motive +22*, Spot +23**
Feats:	*Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (Gargantuan greatsword)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Special*
Organization:	*Unique*
Challenge Rating:	*20*
Alignment:	*Lawful neutral*
Advancement:	*21+ (Huge)*

I came across this creature but once, many years ago while prospecting high in the mountains of Rhul. A fearsome being it was, 20 feet tall and as broad as a tavern, with great three-fingered fists clutching a greatsword taller than a ciola tree. Most striking of all was its head, completely ringed with six dark eyes. Upon its palms there were also—amazingly—eyes. Quite passively it regarded me as I approached, weapons sheathed and hands held up in a gesture of peace.

Behind the giant, carved into the side of the mountain were two enormous doors of stone, overgrown with moss and covered with fine writing in a tongue I did not recognize.

To my surprise, he greeted me in the common speech of Cygnar. The giant sat upon a low block of stone before the mysterious portal, and we conversed for some time.

"How long I have been here, I do not know," it told me. "But I have seen the seasons change countless times. I am the keeper and the way, the watcher and the warden. Do you carry the mark that will free me of my long vigil?"

I assured him I did not.

"Ah, then that is sad," said the giant, bowing his great head. "But it is passing pleasant to have company. What fares abroad in the world?"

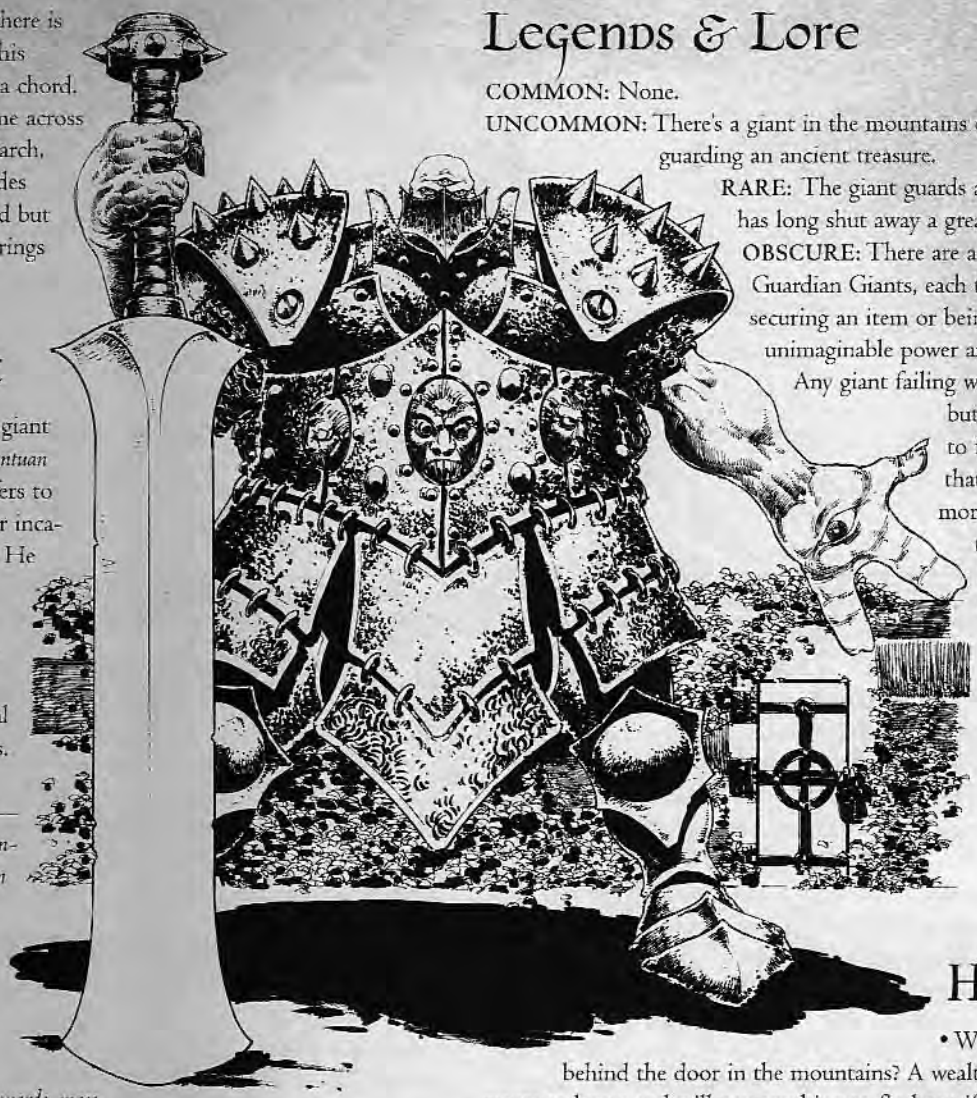
I expounded upon the kingdoms in great detail, until long after the sun had set. Late in the evening, curiosity overcame my manners, and I ventured to inquire about the nature of the secret behind the doors.

"It is a power and a possession far beyond your ken, small mortal," the giant answered. "My master named me Gorgolorbaramamiatt: 'He who bars the gates of reason.' None shall pass who bear not the mark."

That night I slept under the watchful gaze of the unblinking giant, and when I awoke, I left him to his long vigil, promising to return one day.

I have pondered long and hard about my encounter with the giant, consulted tome after tome with no mention of the

doors. However, there is something about his name that strikes a chord. I know I have come across it in previous research, though where eludes me now. If I could but remember why it rings so familiarly…



Combat

The guardian giant wields a *+4 Gargantuan greatsword*. He prefers to disarm, subdue, or incapacitate attackers. He will fight to the death if he is unable to prevent interlopers from entering the portal by peaceful means.

Spell-like Abilities: At will—*alarm, comprehend languages, identify, charm person, arcane lock, clairaudience/clairvoyance, tongues, dimensional anchor*; 3/day—*dominate person, false vision, passwall, guards and wards, mass suggestion*; 1/day—*vanish, mass charm*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 20th-level sorcerer (save DC 13 + spell level).

Hypnotic Stare (Sp): The giant can hypnotize up to 3d10 HD of creatures three times per day as per the 1st-level spell *hypnotize* cast by a 20th-level sorcerer.

All-around Vision (Ex): *The six eyes circling his head give the guardian giant a +10 bonus to Search and Spot checks. Due to his nature as a guardian, he receives a +6 bonus to Sense Motive checks. He receives +4 bonus Listen checks, and he cannot be flanked.

Treasure

Gorgolorbaramamiatt wields *Mbeahandarieth, Terror of the Trolls, +4 Gargantuan greatsword*, which would be valued at 45,000 gp.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: None.

UNCOMMON: There's a giant in the mountains of Rhul guarding an ancient treasure.

RARE: The giant guards a door that has long shut away a great evil.

OBSCURE: There are a handful of Guardian Giants, each tasked with securing an item or being of unimaginable power and pure evil. Any giant failing would be dire, but if all were to fail it is said that a force more sinister than even the Dragon King would arise.

Hooks

• What lies behind the door in the mountains? A wealthy scholar wants to know and will pay anything to find out if the rumors of a massive treasure hoard are true. A share of the loot will go to the party if they are successful and speak of the mission to no one.

• The Dwarves of Rhul have long known of the giant's presence. They've heard of an expedition to open the door—and would like to prevent it; whatever's behind that door should stay there if a beast of such power is its guardian. The party must stop this investigation, but the dwarves fear it may be too late…

"I am a ward and a warning. Woe betide those who seek to defeat me and enter this unhallowed place." — The giant Gorgolorbaramamiatt

Hollowed



Medium-size Undead		*Abilities:*	*Str 16, Dex 12, Con —, Int 7, Wis 14, Cha 16*
Hit Dice:	*4d12 (26 hp)*	*Skills:*	*Hide +8, Move Silently +8, Listen +8, Spot +9*
Initiative:	*+1 (+1 Dex)*		
Speed:	*30 ft.*	*Climate/Terrain:*	*Any*
AC:	*14 (+1 Dex, +3 natural)*	*Organization:*	*Solitary*
Attacks:	*Slam +5 melee*	*Challenge Rating:*	*6*
Damage:	*Slam 1d6+3 and energy drain*	*Alignment:*	*Always chaotic evil*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*	*Advancement:*	*5–8 HD (Medium-size)*
Special Attacks:	*Energy drain, consume organs*		
Special Qualities:	*Undead, reawaken*		
Saves:	*Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +6*		

In the realm of Ord, in a dark, rough wood not too far from the city of Five Fingers, I once encountered a cult of worshipers known as the Cult of the Despoilers. They are believed a horrid offshoot of the questionable Cult of the Devourer Wurm, though my studies have uncovered hints that it may in fact be a Devourer cult corrupted by Thamar's agents—which would explain their passion for and powers of undeath, something usually absent from most Devourer enclaves. This cult was responsible for many depravities, but one that is still lurking about today is a breed of restless dead known as the hollowed.

These unfortunates were victims captured by the cult and tortured in a slow death. All of their internal organs were removed and consumed in a ghastly ritual to the Devourer. The victim, however, was never spared the agony of his pain through death. Instead the victim would rise several days later and begin a horrid existence of undeath in which its only purpose and desire were to consume the whole organs of living beings so that it might regain life.

When one encounters a hollowed, they will come face to face with a shambling corpse, usually with fresh organs dripping from various holes in the cadaver. Don't be fooled, however, as these creatures are quite powerful for all of their decayed appearance, and their touch alone can suck the life right out of a man, so as to preserve the internal organs intact. They favor stalking their opponents or using guile where possible. They can be quite tricky; however, an experienced traveler will know that each hollowed tends to stick to a single strategy. Of course, once you find out what it is, it may be too late.

Aside from the obvious terror of such a creature, there are two things that make them most horrible. The first is that ancient rumors hold that if a hollowed actually completes its entire set of organs in "one moon," it will come back to life. Secondly, it is said by the cult that these reawakened creatures are faithfuls of the Devourer and carry out the practice of its cult in true form—stalking their former friends and loved ones for consumption and posing as living members of society. I've never seen this tested, but I can only fathom the terror of such a creature returned to living existence.

The second horrifying fact is that these creatures have been encountered in all corners of the Iron Kingdoms—which doesn't really say so much about the terror of the hollowed as it does about just how widespread the activities of the Cult of the Despoilers had been. Of course, no one really knows for sure what exactly happened to the cult. All we see today are their horrid, walking dead creations. But that doesn't mean they're not out there somewhere....

Combat

Hollowed have been known to use various techniques in stalking their prey, most of them devious. Some will lie still and motionless along the side of the road until someone comes to inspect them, while others will shamble about concealed under a cloak until it gets close enough to attack a victim. Whatever strategy it uses, it will only use one, and this attack mode usually bears some sort of echo of the creature's former existence. In any case, when a hollowed engages a creature in combat, it fights to the bitter end, focusing entirely on its initial target. It will focus on using its level drain, so as to preserve the internal organs.



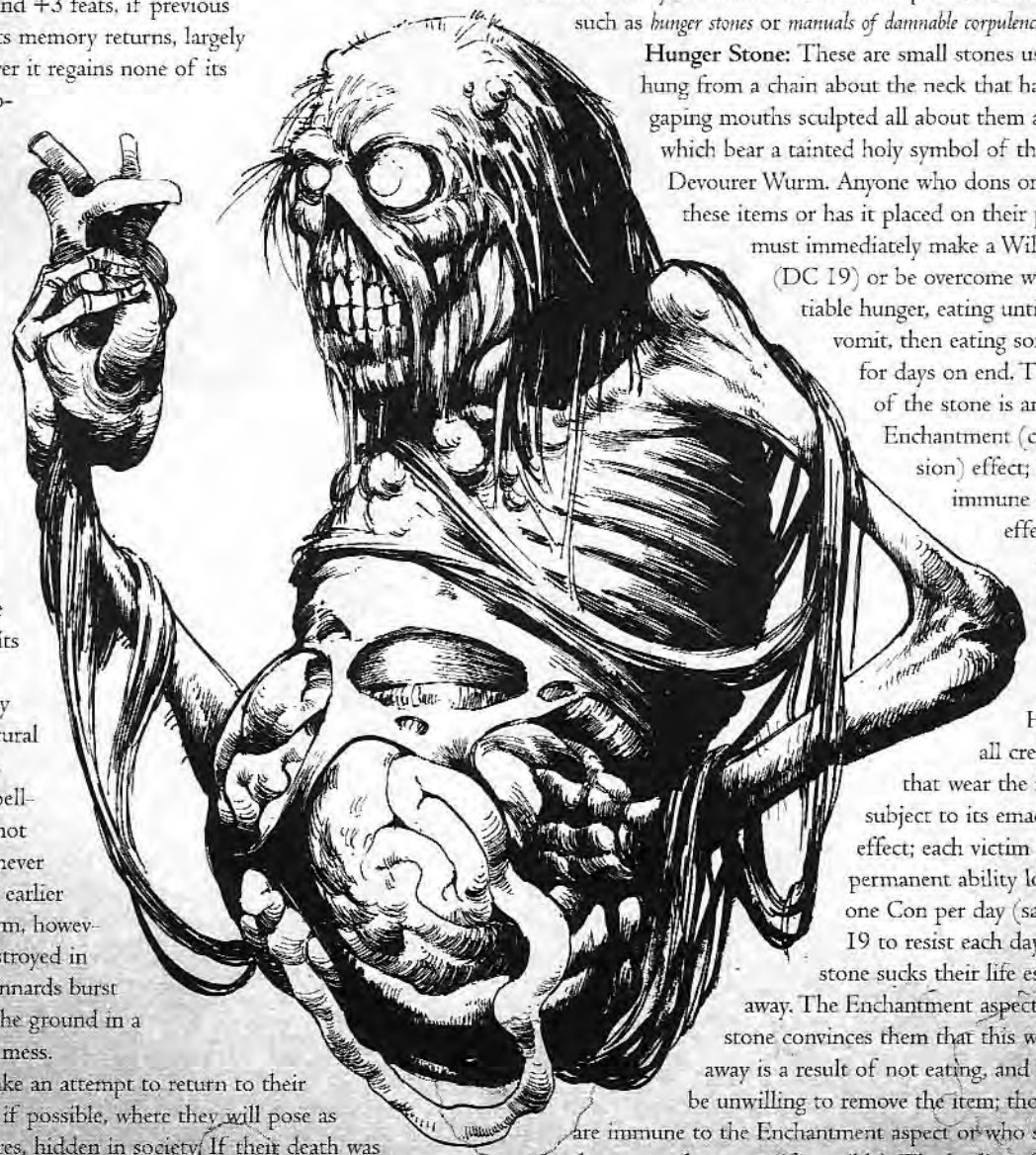
Energy Drain (Su): The strike of a hollowed deals one negative level. This may be removed by a Fortitude save (DC 15).

Consume Organs (Su): Once a victim is killed, the hollowed will rip open the chest cavity and begin consuming organs whole. The creature's jaw unhinges like a snake's and stretches to accommodate all organs. The order of consumption does not matter; all organs rearrange themselves in the hollowed's body of their own accord. The creature will consume all major organs found in the torso as well as the brain (but not the spinal cord). It will only consume organs of a creature of its own race (usually human), and it will only consume intact organs.

Reawaken (Su): If the hollowed is able to consume all major organs within 24 hours, it undergoes a transformation back to (un)life. Note that all organs consumed must be intact,

and multiple kills may be necessary. Upon completion the hollowed's body transforms, the chest and stomach cavities closing up and pale tight skin enshrouding the body.

The creature then becomes an intelligent undead that is a dark incarnation of its living self. Its Intelligence rises to its previous level minus 3 (or +5 to the existing Intelligence if its previous Intelligence is unknown), and the creature regains the use of all skills (at half their value) and feats it knew (or +20 skill points and +3 feats, if previous unknown). Its memory returns, largely intact, however it regains none of its previous emotional self (and can't remember anything about it); thus no alignment change (it stays chaotic evil). The creature then lives only to torture those it knew in life and consume the flesh of its own kind. Extraordinary and supernatural class abilities (including spellcasting) are not returned. It never reverts to its earlier hollowed form, however if it is destroyed in combat, its innards burst forth upon the ground in a gooey, black mess.



Most make an attempt to return to their previous life if possible, where they will pose as living creatures, hidden in society. If their death was widely known or witnessed, it will either stalk its former family and acquaintances from the shadows or move on to set up shop elsewhere. Regardless of how, though, absolutely all will return to stalk society in some way. Virtually all reawakened of the Wurm gain levels as clerics in the worship of the Devourer (though, they in truth draw their energies from Thamar). They have access to the Chaos and Destruction domains.

Treasure

Hollowed do not actively seek new valuables, although they may possess any number or type of items from their previous existence. They are sometimes found to possess cult artifacts such as *hunger stones* or *manuals of damnable corpulence*.

Hunger Stone: These are small stones usually hung from a chain about the neck that have small gaping mouths sculpted all about them and which bear a tainted holy symbol of the Devourer Wurm. Anyone who dons one of these items or has it placed on their person must immediately make a Will save (DC 19) or be overcome with insatiable hunger, eating until they vomit, then eating some more for days on end. This aspect of the stone is an Enchantment (compulsion) effect; creatures immune to such effects are not affected by it.

However, all creatures that wear the item are subject to its emaciating effect; each victim suffers permanent ability loss of one Con per day (save DC 19 to resist each day) as the stone sucks their life essence away. The Enchantment aspect of the stone convinces them that this wasting away is a result of not eating, and they will be unwilling to remove the item; those who are immune to the Enchantment aspect or who save may simply remove the stone (if possible). The bodies of those who die of this effect crumble to ash within 1d4 hours of death.

Manual of Damnable Corpulence: These mysterious tomes are said to contain the secrets of creating a hollowed, as

well as even stranger creatures. It preaches at great length on the hunger of the Wurm, and it contains the formulae for many of the cult's rituals and even the secrets to invoking some of the Devourer's own magic. They are exceedingly rare and usually only in the possession of a Spoliate (high priest, 12th-level or higher).

Legends & Lore

COMMON: The hollowed are risen dead, created by a chaotic and ancient cult.

UNCOMMON: They are progeny of the Cult of the Despoilers, which is rumored to still be active even today.

RARE: Once a hollowed completes its set of organs, it undergoes a transformation into a more advanced and insidious form of creature.

OBSCURE: The cult believes that the hollowed are the physical connections of the Devourer to Caen and that all of their grisly meals are not filling their own bellies, but rather its. In truth, their destructive undead energies are being harnessed by Thamar, though to what end is anyone's guess.

The Cult

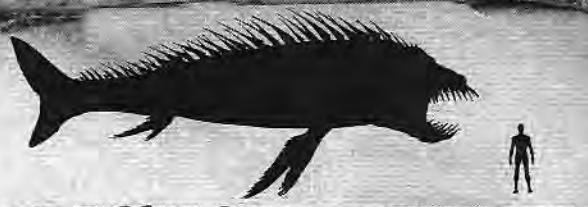
The Cults of the Devourer Wurm are as mysterious and varied as they come, but this in turn reflects the nature of the Wurm itself. It is a being of nature and chaos that few understand, but which some do worship and others draw power from. The hollowed is the product of but one aspect of the cult (one that emphasizes the all-consuming/anti-civilization aspect), although Thamar's corruption is what truly makes beings such as the hollowed possible.

Hooks

Sects of the Despoilers' cult can be found in all parts of the realms, although they seem to be more common in Khador. When discovered, local officials always seek to have them wiped out, usually hiring adventurers for the job. Unfortunately, many of these adventurers are never seen again... at least not as they were known in life.

The influence of the Despoiler's creation is widespread. Indeed, just recently a rash of incidents in the Redhook district of Corvis have been reported. The details tell of harlots and homeless torn physically apart, eviscerated, with tooth marks on their torsos and their organs often missing. To date, the watch has turned up nothing at all, save for reports of a mysterious cloaked figure often seen in the area, shambling along the wharfside. I daresay, this cries of the modus operandi of the Hollowed. I have sent a packet to the watch command with my findings on these abominations in the hopes of aiding them stop these killings. Of course, I also urged that if they did turn up such a creature, I would be most interested in making the journey to offer my professional examination. One can only pray to Morrow that the horrible killings are allayed, and if it is indeed a creation of the Despoilers, it be put to rest.

Hull Grinder

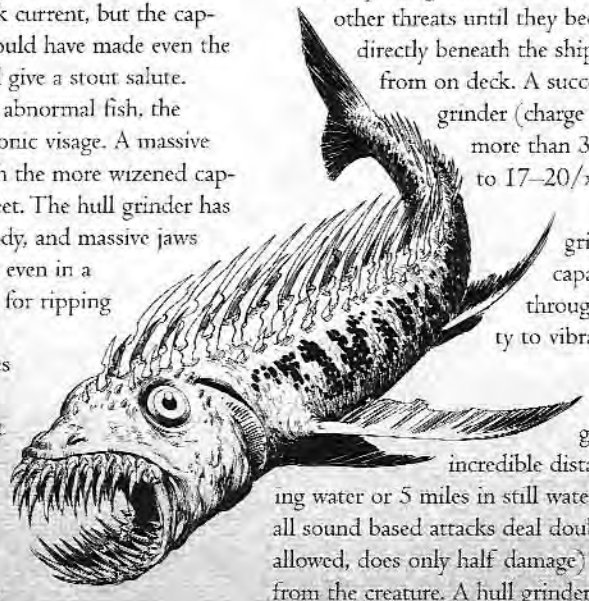


Huge Beast (Aquatic)	
Hit Dice:	*12d10+36 (102 hp)*
Initiative:	*+3 (+3 Dex)*
Speed:	*Swim 40 ft.*
AC:	*20 (-2 size, +3 Dex, +9 natural)*
Attacks:	*Ram +14 melee; or 2 Bite +14 melee*
Damage:	*Ram 2d8+7; or bite 2d8+7*
Face/Reach:	*10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Charge*
Special Qualities:	*Scent (aquatic), blindsight, improved hearing*
Saves:	*Fort +11, Ref +11, Will +4*
Abilities:	*Str 25, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 9*
Skills:	*Hide +4*, Move Silently +7, Listen +15, Intuit Direction +2*
Climate/Terrain:	*Temperate and warm aquatic*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*8*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*12–24 HD (Huge); 24–32 HD (Gargantuan)*

I've spent many a journey traveling down the rivers of the Iron Kingdoms, and I've seen many things that would send the weak of heart scurrying to land. The most startling and perhaps most dangerous of such creatures I encountered while sailing the Dragon's Tongue aboard the steamship *Palaxis*, captained by the great Khadoran Halford Bray. His ship was torn asunder from below by a dreaded hull grinder. I was whisked ashore by a freak current, but the captain made a stand with his ship that would have made even the legendary Dirgenmast Captains of Ord give a stout salute.

Although I believe it to truly be an abnormal fish, the beastly hull grinder sports quite a demonic visage. A massive 15 feet is typical of its length, although the more wizened captains whisper of beasts as long as 30 feet. The hull grinder has jagged hooks and barbs all along its body, and massive jaws which arc outwards, an unusual growth even in a species such as this, making them ideal for ripping into large objects.

Above all else, the hull grinder hates being disturbed, especially by noise. Steamboats traveling a quiet river are at the absolute most risk, although the hull grinder has been known to attack other, seemingly silent, vessels. Creatures screaming and splashing about in the water are also, likewise, in grave danger.



Combat

When attacking, the hull grinder will wait on the bed of the river, kicking up mud if necessary for concealment, until the vessel or creature passes overhead. It will then strike swiftly with its spines or jaws. When attacking ships it focuses solely on rupturing the hull of the ship from beneath, ignoring other threats until they become immediate. While directly beneath the ship, it is quite difficult to target from on deck. A successful ram attack by the hull grinder (charge maneuver) initiated from more than 30 ft. increases the critical hit to 17–20/x3 for that attack alone.

Blindsight (Ex): The hull grinder can function at full capacity in complete darkness through hearing, smell, and sensitivity to vibrations in water.

Improved Hearing (Ex): When submerged, the hull grinder can hear sounds at incredible distances, as far as 2 miles in flowing water or 5 miles in still water. Because of this sensitivity, all sound based attacks deal double damage (a save for half, if allowed, does only half damage) and force an immediate retreat from the creature. A hull grinder never retreats, however, from its lair and will defend it to the death. They receive a +6 racial bonus to Listen checks.



Skills: *Hull grinders gain a +8 racial bonus to Hide checks in muddy or dark water.

Treasure

The long barbs of the hull grinder are prized by sailors for their durability, lightness, and the fact that they float if cast with a wooden handle. These items have a hardness of 8 with 20 hp per inch of thickness. Blades crafted of them gain a +2 enhancement bonus to strike (but not damage) due to their light weight and good balance. Similarly, items constructed of them grant a +2 enhancement bonus to skill checks where applicable. Raw unworked barbs typically sell for 10–20 gp.

Hull grinders keep no treasure, though sunken ships litter the riverbeds near their lairs and may contain anything imaginable.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Hull grinders hide in muddy or dark water and always attack by surprise.

UNCOMMON: They are very territorial, each defending a regular area surrounding its lair.

RARE: They are sensitive to sound and can be scared off easily by loud noises or avoided by "silent drifting" past known lairs.

OBSCURE: A hull grinder will remember the "voice" of an engine that's scared it off before and will avoid it unless provoked.

Hooks

• Legends speak of a hull grinder mating pool far up the waters of the Black River. Clearly no sane captain would ever venture there, however this is just what the ill-fated Captain Elarus Monstroone did with the legendary Berklaire family treasury aboard when fleeing fearless pirates. Were anyone to ever brave those dangerous waters, they just might discover how much the old Berklaires of Corvis (since fallen into ruin) were worth.

• Legends also speak of a dread captain who pilots his ghostly ship up and down the waters of the Dragon's Tongue at night, searching in death for something that he could never find in life. None know just what this item is, but rumors persist that it lies in the belly of a hull grinder as old as the Dragon's Tongue itself.

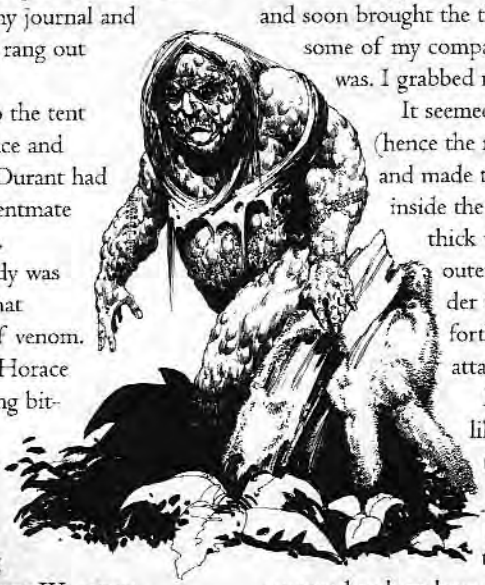
Husk



Medium-size Vermin	
Hit Dice:	*8d8+8 (44 hp)*
Initiative:	*+0*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*18 (+8 natural)*
Attacks:	*2 slams +6 melee*
Damage:	*Slam 1d3*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Swarm*
Special Qualities:	*Vermin, hive intelligence, fire vulnerability*
Saves:	*Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +2*
Abilities:	*Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 6*
Skills:	*Hide +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*4*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*9–11 HD (Medium-size)*

I encountered this abomination years ago on the road to Fellig. My companions and I had made camp for the night under the shelter of a small copse of trees. I had just spent a few hours writing in my journal and was drifting off to sleep when an alarm rang out throughout the camp.

Apparently, someone had stolen into the tent shared by two of my companions, Horace and Durant, and slain the sleeping Horace. Durant had been returning to the tent to wake his tentmate for watch duty when he found the body. Studying the remains, I saw that the body was covered in hundreds of small wounds that seemed to be swollen with some kind of venom. There were also numerous bruises, like Horace had been viciously pummeled while being bitten by a swarm of insects. Suddenly another alarm went up on the edges of our camp. The culprit had been found!



Investigating, my comrades and I saw what appeared to be a man walking with a shambling gait away from our camp. We repeatedly told him to stop, that we had numerous crossbows trained on him, and that there was no escape. We received no reaction. Losing patience, Durant drew his longblade and charged.

The "man" spun around, and what we saw shocked us all. He was one of the walking dead, or so we thought. His desiccated, web-strewn body had numerous spiders of all sizes pouring from every orifice and crawling all about it. Undeterred, Durant hacked his sword into the side of the thing. It sounded as if he were trying to fell a small tree as it thudded into the creature's tough, dry flesh, and a horde of flying spiders came bursting forth from the thing's body. The rest of us engaged it with whatever weapon we had at hand and soon brought the thing down. As much as it disgusted some of my companions, I had to know what this thing was. I grabbed my dagger and set to work.

It seemed that the body was merely a husk (hence the name); that it had been hollowed out and made the home for a colony of spiders. Deep inside the chest cavity I found a large cocoon of thick webbing. As soon as I had pierced the outer coating of webbing, an enormous spider the size of a trollkin's hand exploded forth from the cocoon. I quickly evaded its attack and put it down with my blade.

I speculate that this "heart spider" is like a queen in a beehive for the husk, that it gathers all of the other spiders (many of different species) about it for protection. I shudder to think of how this thing came to be, as the husk appeared to have been assembled and stitched together by human hands.

Combat

Besides pummeling with its relatively ineffective fists, the husk's first method of attack is to get close enough to its victim to allow the myriad spiders that make up its "hive" to swarm over its victim.



Swarm (Ex): As a free action, many small spiders can swarm from the husk's body and onto the body of any creature engaged in melee with it. The swarm attacks as a separate creature with the same attack bonus of the husk (+6 melee), does 1d4 points of damage, and can only attack one Medium-size creature at a time. This poisonous attack (DC 15) has initial and secondary damage of 1d6 Strength. Individual spiders in the swarm generally have 1–2 hit points and an armor class of 15. There will be 10–30 of such individuals in a swarm.

Hive Intelligence (Ex): The husk is in reality a colony of spiders controlled by the heart spider that inhabits and animates a Medium-size humanoid corpse. The myriad spiders that make up the husk exist only to feed and protect themselves and the heart spider. A heart spider separated from the hive will not survive for long, as the hive is its only protection. It also spins a cocoon of webbing around itself while lairing in the chest of the husk, through which the smaller members of the hive can feed it. If the heart spider is encountered outside of the husk, it has 4 hp, an AC of 14, and has a weak non-poisonous bite (1d2 damage). Destruction of the heart spider or the husk results in the hive's dispersal.

Fire Vulnerability (Ex): The husk's dry, parched flesh causes it to take double damage from fire attacks unless a save is allowed for half damage. If the husk succeeds in a save attempt it takes half damage; if it fails it takes double damage.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: None.

UNCOMMON: The husk is a rarely seen form of walking dead.

RARE: The husk is not undead. It is in fact a colony of spiders that inhabits and animates a human corpse.

OBSCURE: The husk is controlled by a "queen" spider of sorts that lives within its chest cavity. Destroy the queen, and you destroy the husk.

Treasure

The husk's host's body may have small items of wealth adorning it, depending on the wealth of the individual in life.

Hooks

The PCs have set up camp when a husk attacks them. This husk has more in mind than feeding however. The heart spider within is gravid with enough eggs to create husks out of the entire party!

Infernal, Curator



Medium-size Outsider (Infernal, Nonokrion Order)	
Hit Dice:	*11d8+33 (82 hp)*
Initiative:	*+5 (+5 Dex)*
Speed:	*40 ft.*
AC:	*27 (+5 Dex, +16 natural, +6 armor)*
Attacks:	*By weapon +16/+11/+6 melee; or 2 claws +13 melee*
Damage:	*By weapon; or claw 1d4+2*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Pain touch, soul mark, spell-like abilities, spells, summoning*
Special Qualities:	*Immunities, infernal presence, languages, life essence bargaining, metamagic mastery, resistances, telepathy, darksight, spell resistance*
Saves:	*Fort +10, Ref +14, Will +16*
Abilities:	*Str 18, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 19, Wis 22, Cha 22*
Skills:	*Bluff +20, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +20, Forgery +9, Gather Information +20, Innuendo +16, Intimidate +12*, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (infernal lore) +12, Knowledge (specialty field) +12, Listen +13, Move Silently +10, Search +13, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +12, Spot +13*
Feats:	*Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse, +4 additional from the following: Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Quick Draw, Spell Penetration, Combo 1 (Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack), Combo 2 (Ambidexterity, Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting), Combo 3 (Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave). Although curators may use exotic weapons, they are not considered exotic to a curator (and thus do not require a feat to employ).*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*12*
Alignment:	*Always lawful evil*
Advancement:	*12–18 HD (Medium-size); 19–30 HD (Large)*

I count myself quite fortunate that I've had only one encounter with one of the class of Infernal known to infernalists as the curator. I had been entrapped by a fellow student, named Adney Arkhim, gone mad in my early days at the university. I was bound and gagged, and the would-be infernalist had planned to use my soul as a bartering chip for some petty gains. Unfortunately for Arkhim, the curator didn't care for the particulars of the contract, and it seems some additional terms of etiquette had been violated. I've never in my whole existence seen anyone as brutally tortured as that poor chap was. There were things done to him that simply should not be repeated. How I escaped that encounter with my own soul intact I'll never know.

A complete treatment of the curators and their infernal ilk is outside the scope of this tome, but I will mention a few of their particulars here. Infernal curators are those designated to negotiate contracts with infernalists (those foolish enough to practice summoning them), make power plays for the Infernals among the nations of men, and harvest as many mortal souls as possible. They are cunning and powerful manipulators, and only a dire fool would attempt to gain leverage over one through an infernalist contract. Any gains, I can assure you, are illusory.

Fortunately, curators can only typically make their way into this realm when directly summoned, although that summons bears little control over them. Although humanoid in appearance, they are always physically warped in torturous ways. They boast an extremely wide range of supernatural powers, and I have word that they are universally masters of the arcane arts as well.



Combat

Curators tend to avoid direct conflict; when force is necessary they will usually call upon the powers of a myrmidon Infernal. If forced to defend themselves, they tend to rely on their spells and spell-like abilities, although many are masters with melee weapons as well.

Curator Qualities

These are abilities common to all infernal curators.

Equipment: All curators wear +4 magical leather armor that, because of its strange design, incurs no penalties to movement or casting. Their weapons additionally are usually magical, although the bonuses and special abilities of those weapons vary. Typical weapons of choice include greatswords, scythes, spiked chains, or falchions. They may be carrying additional magical items if it suits their needs at the time.

Immunities (Ex): Curators are immune to all mind-influencing and charm effects as well as poison. They also can suffer the environments of both Caen and Urcaen, as well as those of their native domain, without penalty.

Infernal Presence (Su): *When a curator answers a summons, the immediate environment becomes warped. This has a maximum range of 500 feet, however it restricts itself to the immediate area (for example, if summoned in a room, it closes off the room, if summoned in a warehouse it closes off the warehouse, etc.) Everything gets dark, there are strange sounds and lights, distant cries and the rattling of chains can be heard, a wind picks up where there should be none, and so forth. These circumstances cannot be dampened, and the summoner becomes trapped in this area (doors lock, debris blocks escape routes, etc.; escape by mundane means is impossible) unless the curator wishes otherwise. These circumstances also grant the infernal a +4 circumstance modifier to Intimidate checks. Any spell cast to overcome any of these effects (for example, a divination to locate the summoner, a teleportation to escape, etc.) must overcome a spell resistance of 20 + the curator's HD.

Infernal Discerning Beast: *Curators are sometimes accompanied by a small infernal that has the innate spell-like ability to detect lies at will (as per the spell *discern lies*, cast as by a 12th-level cleric). Forms vary, but all are small, bizarre abominations; they communicate with the curator through telepathy. The bizarre nature of these creatures adds an additional +2 circumstance bonus to the curator's Intimidate checks.

Languages (Su): Curators understand all forms of verbal, somatic, and written communication with complete proficiency, and they may communicate through any form, so long as it is a physical possibility; should it be impossible, telepathy will be used.

Life Essence Bargaining (Su): Occasionally curators will accept life essence as payment for a service. This benefits the individual curator and is thus not their primary objective, but a curator is always glad to boost its own power. An infernalist may "sell" his own stat points to the curator, and once the curator has garnered enough essence (in the form of points) it can in turn boost its own stats. The conversion rate is 5 to 1; thus if a cura-

for had bargained away 5 points of Constitution from various infernalists, it could boost its own Constitution by 1 point. All ability score points bargained away in this fashion are lost permanently and irrevocably.

Metamagic Mastery (Su): Their close relationship with arcane magic allows them to use two of the following feats on a single spell without having to pay any of the costs (no increased level costs, etc.): Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Heighten Spell, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Silent Spell, Still Spell. They may use additional metamagic feats (beyond two) to enhance a spell, but they must pay half of the listed cost for using it. They may use metamagic feats not listed here, always only paying half of the listed cost for the enhancement.

Pain Touch (Su): As a standard touch attack, all curators can cause excruciating pain in a target. A struck target immediately suffers 1d6+2 subdual damage and must make a Fortitude save (DC 21). Those who fail suffer one point of temporary Constitution loss and suffer a penalty of -2 to all attacks, skill checks, and saving throws for 2d6 rounds. This penalty is cumulative with subsequent attacks.

Resistances (Ex): Each curator has resistance of 20 to two of the following: acid, cold, electricity, fire.

Telepathy (Su): Curators can communicate via telepathy with any creature within 90 feet that is capable of understanding it, though they usually choose to speak aloud.

Darksight (Su): Curators can see clearly in absolutely any kind of darkness, magical or otherwise.

Soul Mark (Su): Curators can place an invisible mark upon any soul marked for collection, which includes anyone they kill as well as souls sold in deals. This mark ensures that the soul will remain in this realm after death, until the Infernals collect it. Anyone under the effects of a *protection from evil* spell is immune to this effect under involuntary circumstances only. Paladins, clerics (of all kinds), and other religious servant PC classes are immune to this ability, though they may forego this immunity voluntarily. At the DM's option characters that, while not paladins or clerics, who are particularly pious might be allowed a Will save (DC 25) to resist this. Circumstances such as bearing a holy symbol or being on holy ground might, at the DM's option, add a circumstance bonus to the roll.

Spell-like Abilities: At will—*arcane mark, detect magic, invisibility, light, mage hand, read magic, sending*; 3/day—*charm person, clairvoyance/clairaudience, detect thoughts, dispel good, dispel magic, hold person, legend lore, lesser geas, mage armor, scrying, suggestion, teleport without error, true seeing*; 1-day—*geas*. These are cast as if by a wizard of level equal to the curator's HD (Save DC usually 15 + level of the spell). The spells *geas* and *lesser geas* may only be cast upon a subject to force them to fulfill a contractual agreement.

Spells: All curators have the spell-casting abilities of wizards equal in level to their hit dice. Virtually all curators specialize in one school of magic, although general abilities vary greatly. The schools of Conjuration, Divination, Enchantment and Illusion are slightly more common than others.

Spell Resistance (Ex): All curators have a spell resistance of 10 + their HD.

Summoning (Su): A curator can summon additional Infernals to Caen in certain circumstances. One is when it delegates its contractual duties to a myrmidon level Infernal for execution, in which case it summons the necessary myrmidon, instructs it about its duties, and then departs. Another is as a defense mechanism whereby the curator summons a myrmidon to fight in its place by literally swapping places with it instantaneously as a free action (the myrmidon comes to Caen, and the curator returns home).

Specialization

In addition to those qualities common to all curators, every curator bears some form of specialization. A typical curator will have 1d4-1 of these abilities. What follows are merely examples; some are far more common than others.

Tricks of the Trade (Ex): Because of their individual personality or because of advantages garnered in past deals, curators oftentimes have a specialty area when it comes to bargaining. When negotiating deals where they are able to play these advantages they gain a +4 circumstance bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Sense Motive checks. Some examples of advantages are as follows:

Contagious Wrath: The curator has a knack for stoking the fires of anger within an individual. They gain a bonus when vengeance upon another is at stake in a deal.

Deferred Payment: These Infernals have a penchant for setting circumstances up for greater future gains, rather than immediate gains, and will take deferred forms of payment that oftentimes seem quite innocuous. They gain a bonus versus subjects whose needs are very immediate.

Well Connected: The infernal has many connections on Caen. It gains a bonus when negotiating in regards to setting deals up through human (or humanoid) contacts.

Bargaining Chips: The infernal has established a treasure hoard of some sort somewhere on Caen that it uses in negotiating (it does not desire wealth itself). It gains a bonus when wealth is the desired gain of a contract.

Fruits of Desire (Su): The curator has the ability to summon illusory visages in a negotiating target's mind of the target's greatest desires. This is an Enchantment effect, and protection against such effects affects this ability. Victims receive a Will save (DC 21) to resist this ability. Those that fail suffer a -4 penalty to saves versus additional Enchantment (charm)

spells cast by the curator during that particular negotiation. Additionally, the curator gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Sense Motive checks against the target.

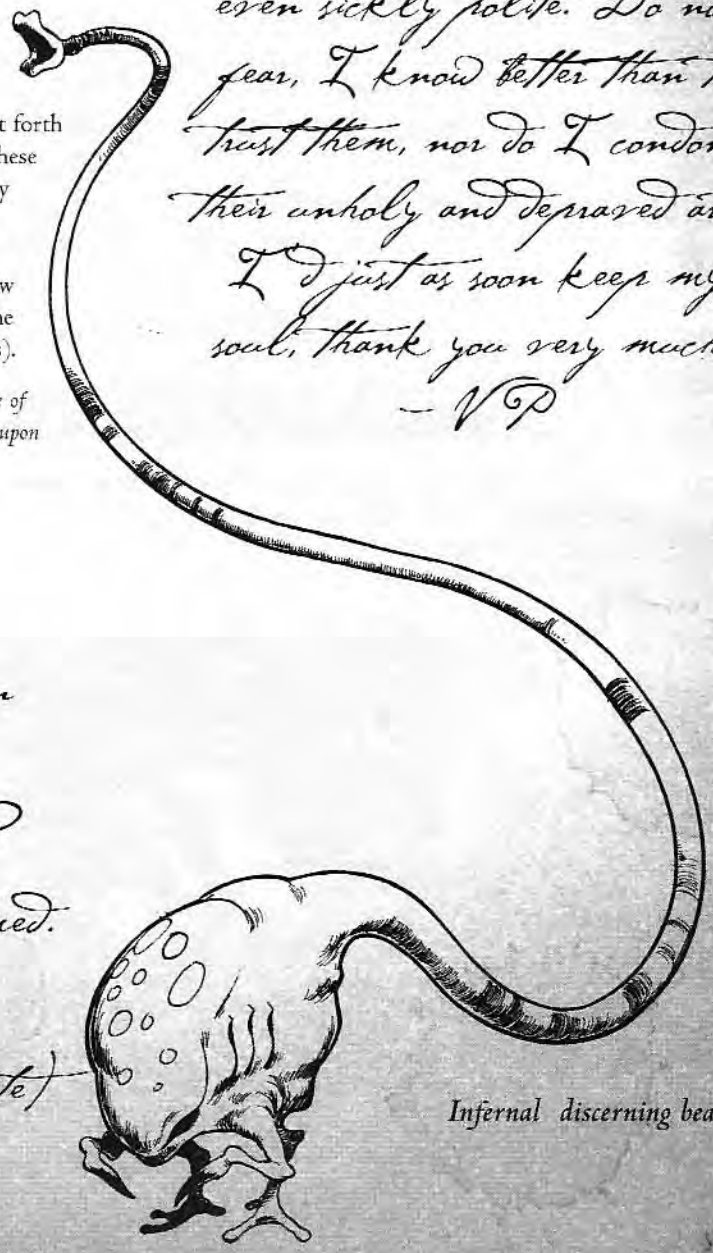
Nocturnal Terror (Su): Once the Infernal has sealed a contract with a given individual, it may reappear in that individual's dreams, turning them into horrid nightmares at the center of which is always the curator. The Infernal may not use any special abilities while in these dreams, nor may it be affected in absolutely any way. Curators frequently use this ability to terrorize dealmakers into making further deals and committing acts outside the bounds of their agreement. Once the victim completes its contractual obligation, the Infernal may no longer exercise this ability over them.

Pain Lightning (Su): The infernal may shoot forth streaks of purple lightning from its fingertips. These function just as the pain touch ability, except they have a range of 30 feet. The attack is made as a ranged attack, not a touch attack. The lightning bolts may be kept fixed on a target, however a new attack roll is still required each round to affect the target again (don't forget the cumulative penalties).

"That simple, eh? I just sign here, and you'll take care of everything, right?" — The infamous Ciarda Isaebal, upon signing her first infernal contract

I have indeed spoken with infernalists though I oft wish I had not. They are dangerous, but often knowledgeable and sometimes even sickly polite. Do not fear, I know better than to trust them, nor do I condone their unholy and depraved arts. I'd just as soon keep my soul, thank you very much!
— VP

Magnus — Unknown number.
Architects — Only 9?
Executors — 81, confirmed.
Curators — 6,561.
Myrmidons (warrior caste) — Countless.



Infernal discerning beast

Infernal, Soul Stalker

Large Outsider (Infernal Myrmidon)	
Hit Dice:	*14d8+42 (105 hp)*
Initiative:	*+6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*40 ft.*
AC:	*26 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +15 natural)*
Attacks:	*Bite +20 melee*
Damage:	*Bite 4d6+7*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft. (coiled)/10 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Frightful presence, improved grab, constrict 4d6+7*
Special Qualities:	*Blindsight, damage reduction 15/+1, invisibility, scent, soul bound*
Saves:	*Fort +12, Ref +11, Will +11*
Abilities:	*Str 25, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 10*
Skills:	*Climb +20, Hide +12, Listen +16, Move Silently +15, Search +16, Spot +16, Wilderness Lore +16*
Feats:	*Endurance, Improved Initiative, Run, Track*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*12*
Alignment:	*Always lawful evil*
Advancement:	*15–18 HD (Large); 19–22 HD (Huge)*

These infernal hounds are some of the most horrifying beasts I've ever had the displeasure of meeting. Several years ago, I traveled to Ceryl to meet with an acquaintance of mine by the name of Leander Ambrose. Leander was going to shed a little light on the nature of infernal contracts for me. He himself was no infernalist (or so I thought), but rather more of a scholar and expert on the subject.



I arrived at Leander's plush apartment over a curio shop in the Trade District ready for some insightful conversation. As I climbed the wooden external stairwell to the top floor of the building, I swore I heard some sort of commotion inside Leander's apartment. I pulled my blade and quietly pushed open the door, which stood ajar. I was not at all ready for what awaited me inside.

By the light of a single uncovered window, I witnessed a great serpentine beast as long as two horses sitting in the center of Leander's disheveled study. It was coiled around the motionless body of Leander. Anger seized me and I leaped completely over Leander's posh Ordic divan and stabbed at the creature's back. That got its attention, but accomplished very little else. It quickly released Leander and struck at me like a swamp viper, and a wave of undoubtedly magical fear washed over me, dropping me to my rear. The creature then abruptly leapt over me and fled out the door. I shook off the magical terror and gave chase as far as the door. With one look outside, I could see no sight of the beast in the adjacent alleyway.

Looking at Leander's corpse, I saw that he had been hideously tortured then killed. Multiple bite wounds riddled his body, many of his bones were crushed, and his throat had been torn out. Exploring his apartment, I found what could only be explained as the trappings of an infernalist—one that makes pacts with foul beings not of our world. I'll not go into any more gruesome details.

I've done a bit of research in the time that has passed since that dreadful day and found that these beasts are called soul stalkers. Infernals use the stalkers to collect souls marked and barred from the afterlife. I don't know the exact nature of their comings and goings, but given that Infernals must be summoned to this realm, I can only infer that they are somehow included in the minutiae of some infernal contracts. They may not be truly summoned by infernalists, but rather they may possibly be created on the spot when Infernals need souls collected from Caen.

Fortunately, I believe that these stalkers are here to fetch specific souls. They don't wander the countryside, slaying all in their path, though it seems that their masters aren't overly concerned if the stalkers manage to kill a few innocents along the way to their quarry.

Combat

Infernals use soul stalkers to collect souls, and the stalkers rarely let anything get in the way of that task. If someone or something stands in their path, the stalkers will typically attempt to circumvent the obstacle, but at times they will plow right through who or whatever stands in their way. After collection, the stalker confines the souls within its body and then returns to its master.

Soul Hound (Su): Soul stalkers have the uncanny ability to detect any marked soul in their vicinity. This ability works like a constant *locate creature* spell and functions as if cast by a 14th-level wizard. This ability, coupled with their scent ability, allows them to track virtually anything, anywhere.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a soul stalker must hit with a bite attack. If it gets a hold, it can constrict.

Constrict (Ex): A soul stalker deals 4d6+7 points of damage with a successful grapple check against Large or smaller creatures.

Invisibility (Sp): 3/day—This ability functions like the *invisibility* spell, as if cast by a 14th-level wizard. This ability can be used only on the soul stalker.

Frightful Presence (Ex): This ability makes the stalker's presence disconcerting to its foes and is triggered whenever it attacks.

Blindsight (Ex): Despite lacking eyes, souls stalkers suffer no penalties in combat. They can perceive all foes within 120 feet as a seeing creature would. Beyond that range, they treat all targets as being totally concealed.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Soul stalkers are essentially infernal hounds used to track down marked souls.

UNCOMMON: Soul stalkers are not summoned; they are created by other Infernals whenever there is a glut of souls to be collected.

RARE: Soul stalkers are generally sent to fetch the infernally marked souls of the dead, but are also sometimes sent to collect the souls of the living. They do this through ghastly acts of torture.

OBSCURE: If your soul bears no infernal mark and you cross paths with a stalker, simply get out of the way. If you're lucky, it will ignore you for its true quarry.

Treasure

Soul stalkers generally carry no treasure. Their remains may fetch untold amounts of wealth from collectors.

Hooks

The PCs find themselves gainfully employed as bodyguards for a powerful wizard, who claims that a rival is out to destroy him. What the PCs don't know is that the wizard is an infernalist, and his soul has been marked by the Infernals for collection. A soul stalker has been tracking him for weeks, and he now needs cannon fodder to protect him from the infernal hound.



Infernal, Umbral Reaver



Umbral Assassin	
Medium-size Outsider (Infernal Myrmidon)	
Hit Dice:	*11d8+33 (82 hp)*
Initiative:	*+9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*40 ft., climb 20 ft.*
AC:	*29 (+5 Dex, +12 natural, +2 leather)*
Attacks:	*Masterwork kris short sword +17/+12/+7 melee*
Damage:	*Masterwork kris short sword 1d6+3*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Frightful presence, poison, sneak attack +8d6*
Special Qualities:	*Umbral abilities, damage reduction 15/+1*
Saves:	*Fort +10, Ref +12, Will +9*
Abilities:	*Str 17, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 14*
Skills:	*Balance +10, Climb +21, Escape Artist +14, Hide +19, Intimidate +12, Jump +17, Move Silently +19, Open Lock +19, Search +12, Spot +12*
Feats:	*Exotic Weapon Proficiency (kris short sword), Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (kris short sword)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*10*
Alignment:	*Always lawful evil*
Advancement:	*12–15 HD (Medium-size)*

Umbral Sorcerer	
Medium-size Outsider (Infernal Myrmidon)	
Hit Dice:	*10d8+20 (65 hp)*
Initiative:	*+4 (+4 Dex)*
Speed:	*40 ft., climb 20 ft.*
AC:	*24 (+4 Dex, +10 natural)*
Attacks:	*Kris dagger +14/+9 melee*
Damage:	*Kris dagger 1d4+3*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Frightful presence, poison, shade leech, spells*
Special Qualities:	*Umbral abilities, damage reduction 15/+1*
Saves:	*Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +10*
Abilities:	*Str 16, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 20*
Skills:	*Alchemy +14, Climb +21, Concentration +15, Hide +18, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Move Silently +18, Scry +17, Spellcraft +17, Use Magic Device +18*
Feats:	*Combat Casting, Maximize Spell, Spell Penetration*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*10*
Alignment:	*Always lawful evil*
Advancement:	*11–14 HD (Medium-size)*

Red writes of even more powerful Umbrals—truth?

Infernal, Umbral Reavers

I hesitate to discuss these fiends, but it is my duty as a scholar. First, they are Infernals, creatures of pure evil who do not ordinarily walk our world. Even more frightening, the charm used to bring a reaver into service is so simple a child could do it, and it involves a price on the soul which can never be repaired. I have not studied infernalism, but I do know other such creatures require powerful spells, elaborate contracts, and delicate preparation. Not so with umbral reavers. I believe they have worked out some ancient pact, beyond the scope of any single generation of mortals, whereby they have more ready access to our world, able to come here when called, even by the powerless and uninitiated.

I have never seen these Infernals first hand, thankfully. But I have spoken to reliable witnesses who have seen them appear from nowhere, dispatch their targets, and vanish. Reavers are definitely not human, but they imitate our form. Gender is a choice for them—although they definitely prefer the female form, perhaps because the majority of their targets are male. I suspect their true form is as empty of detail as the shadows from which they draw their power. Individuals have proper names, though I do not wish to repeat any of them here.

All reavers have an affinity for shadows, into which they can leap to evade their opponents. They have great capacity for stealth. If you watch an umbral hop into shadow, watch your back, for she will spring upon you from anywhere there is darkness. Keeping to a room with bright lights and no shadows is a good defense. Be warned they are not directly weakened by light, but it does rob them of certain powers.

Umbral reavers employ wavy-bladed weapons, which they keep coated in noxious poisons. All reavers can climb nimbly, and possess unnatural quickness and strength of limb.

They are most commonly called for the task of murder, and I have never heard of one of these assassins failing once called upon. The price is steep, for they take a portion of one's soul and essence as payment, and the bargainer's shadow is diminished as a visible mark of this pact.



Umbral assassin

Summoning

Umbral reavers are the easiest of all Infernals to summon because they require no arcane or divine magic. Research is still required to learn the ceremony, and a passing knowledge of infernal lore certainly helps, but no actual spell is cast. True infernalists—those who make it their life's work to negotiate with Infernals—do not deal with these creatures, as there is no contract to be bargained, and the price on one's soul is automatically paid.

The following lists the basic summoning ceremony used for the assassin; adjustments for the other reavers follow.

Umbral Reaver Summoning Ceremony

Assassin: In a darkened room with no windows, the summoner lights a black candle made with the blood of a winter calf. Next to the candle an offering is placed. The offering must be a valuable item, but more importantly must have significant personal value to the summoner. In the flame of the candle, the summoner blackens a dagger of pure silver and uses its edge to cut his palm. Using his own blood, the summoner writes the name of his enemy on a piece of parchment. Pressing the wound of his hand against his heart, he says the following aloud: "By my blood, by my shadow, by my soul, death to him whom I have named!" The summoner then burns the parchment in the candle. An umbral assassin will step from his shadow and inspect the offering. If the offering is insufficient, the reaver will attack the summoner, whose soul will be enslaved if slain. If the offering is acceptable, the reaver will step into his shadow, then emerge from the shadow of the enemy listed on the parchment (as if using *teleport without error*), and immediately attack.

Umbral reavers that attack their summoner will do so with the same deliberation and stealth as they would a regular target. They will pretend to be going after the summoner's target but will instead slip into the shadows and attack the summoner the moment he is vulnerable.

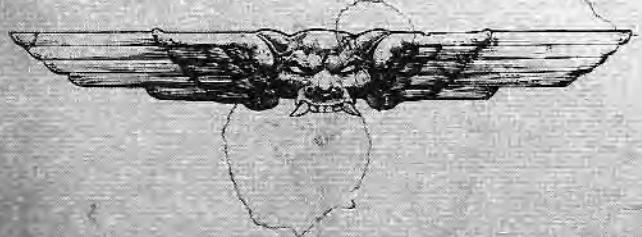
Sorcerer Ceremony Changes: The sorcerer ceremony is the same except the following: 1) The offering must be an enchanted item, preferably with a historical connection to the summoner's bloodline. 2) The name written on the parchment must include the formal name of a specific umbral sorcerer, along with the name of the enemy or location to be attacked. 3) The spoken invocation becomes: "By my blood, by my shadow, by my soul, bring destruction on my enemies!" At the end of the ceremony the umbral sorcerer steps into the summoner's shadow and appears at the enemy destination listed on the parchment to plot its attack.

Warrior Ceremony Changes: The warrior ceremony is the same except the following: 1) The offering must be a weapon, preferably with a historical connection to the summoner's bloodline. 2) The name written on the parchment must be the formal name of a specific umbral warrior. 3) The spoken invo-

Infernal, Umbral Reavers



Umbral Warrior	
Medium-size Outsider (Infernal Myrmidon)	
Hit Dice:	*13d8+52 (110 hp)*
Initiative:	*+3 (+3 Dex)*
Speed:	*40 ft., climb 20 ft.*
AC:	*31 (+2 Dex, +14 natural, +5 chain mail)*
Attacks:	*Kris greatsword +20/+15/+10 melee*
Damage:	*Kris greatsword 2d6+5*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Frightful presence, poison, shade touch*
Special Qualities:	*Umbral qualities, damage reduction 20/+1*
Saves:	*Fort +12, Ref +11, Will +9*
Abilities:	*Str 20, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 13*
Skills:	*Balance +3, Climb +18, Hide +12, Intimidate +13, Jump +10, Listen +19, Move Silently +12, Search +11, Sense Motive +11, Spot +19*
Feats:	*Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (kris greatsword)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*11*
Alignment:	*Always lawful evil*
Advancement:	*14–18 HD (Medium-size)*



cation becomes: "By my blood, by my shadow, by my soul, I beg for protection!" At the end of the ceremony, the umbral warrior retreats into the summoner's shadow and is dormant until the summoner is injured in an attack, at which point it springs into action.

Consequences of Summoning

Assassin: While the reaver is active, the summoner will cast no shadow. Once the victim or assassin has been slain, the summoner's shadow will become permanently faded. This can be noticed by knowledgeable clerics, paladins, or dabblers in infernal lore on a Knowledge (infernal) check (DC 20). Enacting this ritual places a mark on the summoner's soul (detectable with *detect evil*), and they will not be protected in the afterlife by their deity (even if evil). If they are not already of evil alignment, their alignment will become tainted by infernal corruption one step in that direction. (Chaotic good becomes chaotic neutral, and chaotic neutral becomes chaotic evil.) Furthermore the summoner permanently loses one point of Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity. If the ceremony is repeated, the summoner's shadow will fade even more, becoming almost unnoticeable, and alignment will again move one more step toward evil, and another ability point will be lost. If a person is truly repentant after summoning these creatures, alignment changes might be reversible at the GM's option by a difficult quest for their church and an *atonement* ceremony, but their soul will remain marked and doomed in the afterlife short of direct divine intercession.

If the ceremony is repeated more than three times, there is a 50% chance the assassin will attack the summoner regardless of the offering (as above in regards to method of attack).

Sorcerer Summoning Consequences: Summoning a sorcerer incurs the same consequences as an assassin.

Warrior Summoning Consequences: The shadow of the summoner will not perfectly mirror the actions of the summoner while the warrior is dormant. The head may look a different direction; the arms and body might assume a different posture—this can be noticed on a Spot check (DC 18) so long as the summoner is casting a shadow. The DC may be lower if someone is specifically looking for this.

Combat

Each type of reaver has a different approach to combat, but all prefer to catch opponents surprised or flat-footed. Most reavers prefer to slay a target as quickly as possible.

Frightful Presence (Ex): This power makes the creature's presence unsettling to foes, and is triggered whenever they spring from the shadows to attack (see MM). The save DC is

17 for assassins and warriors and 20 for sorcerers.

Immunities (Ex): All umbral reavers are immune to cold, poison, and petrification attacks. They take half damage from fire and electricity and cannot be blinded.

Darkvision (Ex): Umbral reavers have darkvision 60 feet.

Shadow Evade (Su): In a move-equivalent action, the umbral reaver can enter any nearby shadow and Hide even if they are being observed. Successful Hide versus an opponent's Spot check means the reaver has gone invisible. They can then teleport to any shadow within line of sight. This is done to gain an automatic flanking attack.

Poison (Su): Reavers have the supernatural ability to maintain a coating of poison on their blades. This is an injury poison that requires a Fortitude save (DC 18), and failure causes the temporary loss of one ability score, which varies by reaver type. Each round later, if a following save is failed, there is cumulative ability score loss. Once a single save has been made the poison causes no further effects, nor will subsequent strikes with the poisoned weapon require further saving throws.

Umbral Assassin

Assassins never talk or answer questions during their attacks, although they may react with amusement to pleading or begging by a target. Once the target is killed, the blackened silver dagger from the summoning ceremony is stabbed into the victim's heart.

Assassins usually appear as beautiful but extremely pale-skinned female humans, with lithe bodies, black hair, purple eyes, and moving with sublime grace. They are dressed in tight form-fitting leather armor and wield a kris short sword. They cast no shadow but are otherwise quite solid and real. The armor and swords are sometimes enchanted (25% chance each or GM's discretion).

Combat

The umbral assassin's primary combat technique is to use its sneak attack (just like a rogue) to deliver an immediately crippling wound. The initial strike, as they step out of the target's own shadow, is always a successful sneak attack unless the target has extraordinary or supernatural means of detection (such as uncanny dodge). Even if this fails, an umbral assassin is a dangerous combatant.

An assassin must slay its target within a single week or die trying. If their initial attacks fail or they are clearly facing a powerful target, the assassin will use its time to best effect, lying in wait and attacking when its target is most vulnerable. Some assassins enjoy cruelty and torment their target prior to killing them, but they usually do not waste such time.

Poison (Su): Assassin poison causes the temporary loss of 1d6 Constitution in the first round and 1d4 on following rounds (if subsequent saves are failed).

Umbral Sorcerer

Sorcerers are perhaps the most dangerous of the umbrals, able to unleash powerful spells. Sorcerers are summoned when an enemy is believed to be more susceptible to magic or if the summoner desires to destroy numerous lesser enemies or an entire building or other location.

Once the summoning ceremony is complete, the umbral sorcerer will appear from the shadows of the target or destination named in the burned parchment, causing whatever destruction is required. Once the enemy or location has been eliminated, the sorcerer will leave the blackened silver summoning dagger at the center of the destruction.

Umbral sorcerers usually appear as gaunt women garbed in a semi-translucent black gowns. They wield wavy bladed kris daggers, dripping with poison. They sometimes (25% chance or GM's discretion) manifest with one or more other useful (generally offensive) magic items, and their kris dagger is also sometimes enchanted (25% chance or GM's discretion).

Combat

Sorcerers are exceptionally intelligent, and they will take every possible advantage. They frequently remain hidden upon manifesting and try to discern the strength of their target, probing with lesser spells before engaging a full-out attack. If they determine their target is weak and easily overcome, they will attack with a barrage of offensive magic in an attempt to obliterate them decisively. Otherwise more indirect methods will be taken against stronger or better prepared foes. Sorcerers always prefer to use spells, but are also capable of melee using their poisoned dagger. If the summoner's magic item offering is useful in the attack, the sorcerer will employ it against the targets, along with any other magic items



Umbral sorcerer

if any) they may possess. If facing a spell-caster, the umbral sorcerer will use shadow evade, Hide, and Move Silently to sneak up on the caster and employ its shade leech power to drain spells.

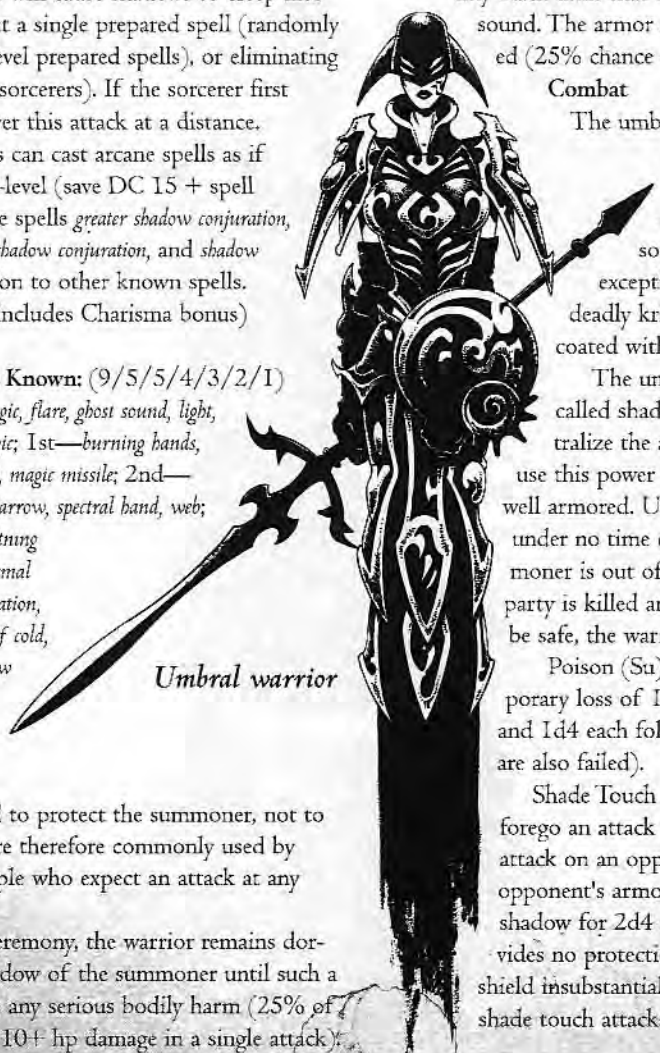
Poison (Su): Sorcerer poison causes the temporary loss of 1d6 Strength in the first round and 1d4 each following round (if a subsequent saves are failed).

Shade Leech (Su): Umbral sorcerers can forego regular attacks or spellcasting to attempt a special touch attack on an opponent. If successful, this will cause shadows to creep into the target's mind, wiping out a single prepared spell (randomly chosen among the highest level prepared spells), or eliminating a single daily spell slot (for sorcerers). If the sorcerer first casts *spectral hand*, it can deliver this attack at a distance.

Spells: Umbral sorcerers can cast arcane spells as if they were sorcerers of 12th-level (save DC 15 + spell level). They always know the spells *greater shadow conjuration, greater shadow evocation, shades, shadow conjuration,* and *shadow evocation* as a bonus in addition to other known spells.

Sorcerer Spells/Day: (includes Charisma bonus) 6/8/7/7/7/6/3.

Sample Sorcerer Spells Known: (9/5/5/4/3/2/1) 0—*arcane mark, daze, detect magic, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, ray of frost, read magic*; 1st—*burning hands, change self, color spray, hypnotism, magic missile*; 2nd—*darkness, invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, spectral hand, web*; 3rd—*fireball, gaseous form, lightning bolt, major image*; 4th—*phantasmal killer, wall of fire, shadow conjuration, stoneskin*; 5th—*cloudkill, cone of cold, greater shadow conjuration, shadow evocation*; 6th—*circle of death, greater shadow evocation, shades.*



Umbral warrior

Umbral Warrior

Warriors are summoned to protect the summoner, not to slay a specific enemy, and are therefore commonly used by paranoid unscrupulous people who expect an attack at any time.

After the summoning ceremony, the warrior remains dormant, hiding within the shadow of the summoner until such a time as the summoner takes any serious bodily harm (25% of their total hp in damage or 10+ hp damage in a single attack). At this point, the warrior will spring forth from the summoner's shadow and attack whoever or whatever is threatening the summoner. They will remain until the attacker(s) or the umbral warrior has been slain. This is a one-time protection, after which the warrior fades away. The warrior does not distinguish between "minor threats" which the summoner could deal with versus more serious threats. As soon as the summoner incurs adequate wounds, the warrior will manifest. There is no time limit on a dormant umbral warrior, which could wait for years prior to manifesting. Once threats have been eliminated, the warrior leaves the blackened silver dagger from the summoning ceremony on the ground by the slain attacker(s).

Umbral warriors usually manifest as attractive women, generally quite tall (over 6 feet), and very muscular, with short spiked black hair and crimson eyes. Each wields an enormous kris greatsword. They are armored in chain mail composed of tiny black links that shimmer darkly but make no sound. The armor and sword are sometimes enchanted (25% chance each or GM's discretion).

Combat

The umbral warrior's first priority is to protect its summoner. It may switch targets in mid-fight if the summoner becomes threatened by someone else. The umbral warrior is exceptionally strong and skilled with its deadly kris two-handed sword, which is coated with poison.

The umbral warrior has a special ability called shade touch that can be used to neutralize the armor of an attacker. It will only use this power if the opponent is particularly well armored. Unlike a shadow assassin, they are under no time constraints, so long as their summoner is out of danger. Once the threatening party is killed and the summoner is confirmed to be safe, the warrior will dissipate and vanish.

Poison (Su): Warrior poison causes the temporary loss of 1d6 Dexterity in the first round and 1d4 each following round (if subsequent saves are also failed).

Shade Touch (Su): An umbral warrior can forego an attack in a round to attempt a touch attack on an opponent's armor. If successful, the opponent's armor becomes insubstantial, fading to shadow for 2d4 rounds. Insubstantial armor provides no protection. Rendering both armor and shield insubstantial would require two different shade touch attacks.

Treasure

Umbral reavers do not carry valuables other than the offering and silver dagger used in their summoning. Their blades and armor are at least of masterwork quality, often decorated, and could fetch up to ten times the listed cost for short sword.

greatsword, and dagger (respective to type). If sold to an actual collector of infernal artifacts, these items can command prices up to one hundred times the regular cost. In some cases these items are enchanted (generally +1 or +2) and will be worth considerably more. Any alchemist would pay quite well to get their hands on a vial of umbral reaver blood, due to their extreme rarity.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Umbral reavers are Infernals, but can be summoned via a relatively simple ceremony, usually for the purpose of assassinating someone.

UNCOMMON: There are three types of reavers: assassins, warriors and sorcerers. The details of the assassin summoning ritual can be attained at this level of lore.

RARE: Knowledge of warrior and sorcerer summoning ceremonies can be attained at this level of lore, along with specific formal names. Reavers have an ability to evade attacks and flank enemies, which does not function in a room with bright light and no shadows. People who have summoned reavers show faded shadows and a mark upon their soul visible with detect evil.

OBSCURE: Someone who has a dormant umbral warrior watching over him can be detected by his peculiar shadow. Warriors have an ability to make armor insubstantial, and sorcerers have an ability to make casters forget their spells. It is rumored that the weapons of reavers are sometimes cursed, such that those who keep and use them attract malevolent attention. It is also said reavers are watched over by members of the Curate Proconsular of the Nonokrion Order, and those who attempt to exploit their summoning or avoid the consequences thereof may draw the attention of higher infernal powers.

Hooks

A murder investigation that is baffling the local authorities comes to the attention of the PCs, where an important local councilman died with no signs of breaking and entering. The only clue is a single silver dagger left in his chest. Researching this lead, the PCs learn about Infernals and the umbral reavers. They will be able to track down the man behind the murder based upon his peculiar shadow. If they engage him they will find a formidable umbral warrior protects him, and if he escapes he will be foolish enough to risk summoning another assassin or sorcerer to destroy the PCs before they can prove his guilt.



Symbols like these can be seen on the Umbrals and in related writings. They bear a relation to glyphs of the Nonokrion Order, but there are subtle differences... one wonders what the relationship is between the Umbral Reavers and the other Infernals that come to Caen.

— VP

Iron Lich



Large Undead	
Hit Dice:	*12d12 (78 hp)*
Initiative:	*+4 (+4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*30 ft. (can't run)*
AC:	*24 (-1 size, +15 natural)*
Attacks:	*2 slams or claws +11 melee; or quarterstaff +13/+8 melee*
Damage:	*Slam or claw 1d8+5; or quarterstaff 1d6+7*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Spells*
Special Qualities:	*Undead, +4 turn resistance, damage reduction 10/+1, immunities*
Saves:	*Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +11*
Abilities:	*Str 20, Dex 10, Con —, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 16*
Skills:	*Concentration +18, Craft (steamworks) +7, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Listen +10, Scry +13, Search +10, Sense Motive +10, Spot +10*
Feats:	*Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Create Thrall, Heighten Spell, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land and underground*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*14*
Alignment:	*Usually Neutral evil*
Advancement:	*By character class*

This example uses a 12th-level human wizard as the base creature.

How many times must my research be interrupted? In this field it seems far too many for my liking. I suppose, it *is* my choice. I could stay in the university, studying more ancient tomes than ancient tombs, but out in the field is where real knowledge and history are found.

One such interrupted dig was deep within the Wyrmwall Mountains. My team and I had spent weeks searching for the hidden pass that would take us to the tomb of Ardin, archwizard of Caspia. We found the tomb and set to mapping and disarming the many traps laid about it. After several days of this, we finally made our way into the central chamber where Ardin himself was allegedly interred with the legendary *Dirgestaff of Shyrr*.

For the life of me, I could not decipher the crawling script etched into the face of the large stone doors just outside the burial chamber. I recall my study was cut short by a scream, followed seconds later by another. My colleagues brandished their weapons, and I did the same. We stood ready to face whatever horror caused our bearers outside to shriek in such a way.

Whatever it was now came stomping toward the chamber, nothing between the doors save us and our blades. Abruptly, several thralls, covered in more runes than I had ever thought possible, sallied forth from that ancient crumbling archway, followed by a hissing, steaming monstrosity that I swear had to be a small steamjack save for that hideous human skull atop it, eye sockets aglow. It turned a malevolent visage upon me and gestured with a mechanikal staff. I felt my limbs and joints become rigid as a board, held fast by its magics. Glancing around as best I could, I saw I was not the only one affected by the paralytic enchantment; we were all, every one of us, frozen in place. I remember thinking about all that I had seen and encountered in my days, and what an absurd way this was to end them, standing in place like some slack-jawed buffoon.

But the iron lich stepped past me, toward the sealed tomb, and spoke a word. The chamber door opened of its own volition, and the lich disappeared inside. While their master was within, the thralls amused themselves by torturing and killing my comrades. Whether they did this for their amusement or by their master's order was beyond me. I simply prayed to Morrow that the magic would expire before it came to my

turn. I hoped at least to go down with a fight, and perhaps take a few of them with me.

Moments later, the iron lich returned from Ardin's chamber, bearing two staves—the one it bore upon entering and the other presumably the *Dirgestaff of Shyrr*. It hissed a few arcane words and walked out of the tomb, followed diligently by its thrall servitors. Why did it let us live? I can only assume we were beneath its notice. It had what it had come for—to my everlasting chagrin—and our presence was of no matter whatsoever. Albeit several companions of mine lay in a pool of blood, slaughtered like lambs, I, for one, am grateful to have survived the day, and my encounter with an iron lich.



Creating an Iron Lich

In an attempt to attain immortality, the iron lich has sold its flesh and replaced it with a complex, mechanikal apparatus that sustains its existence. The soul-fueled furnace on its back powers an intricate system of pumps and pistons that give the lich mobility and the strength of a half dozen men. Only the lich's skull, suspended weightless in an iron hood, betrays the once mortal life of this incarnation of evil.

"Iron lich" is a template that can be added to any humanoid creature that can complete the process required to create the iron lich's mechanikal body. The creature becomes Large sized, and its type changes to undead. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted below.

Hit Dice: Increase to d12.

Speed: Same as base creature.

AC: The base creature's natural armor increases by +15.

Attacks: The creature gains a slam attack and a claw attack that deal 1d8+5 points of damage.

Special Attacks: An iron lich retains all the creature's special attacks that would not be affected by the almost total replacement of its physical body and also gains those listed below:

Spells: The iron lich can cast any spells it could cast while alive. These spells now rely on souls to power them, however. The amount of spell levels the iron lich can derive from a soul depends on the level of the soul. A soul will power four times its level in spell levels. The soul of a 2nd-level fighter, for example, will power one 8th-level spell, or six 1st-level spells and one 2nd-level spell, and so on. An iron lich with no captured souls in its soul cages can cast nothing but 0-level spells.

Special Qualities

Turn Resistance (Ex): An iron lich has +4 turn resistance.

Damage Reduction (Ex): Iron liches have damage reduction 10/+1.

Cold Vulnerability (Ex): An iron lich suffers no damage from cold attacks, but is *slowed* one round for each 10 points of damage that would have been inflicted. The effects are not cumulative.

Immunities (Ex): Iron liches have fire and electrical resistance 20.

Special Healing (Ex): An iron lich is not affected by heal spells. *Mending* cures 1 hp. *Fabricate* cures 5d8+5 hp. *Iron Body* cures all damage done to an iron lich.

Reliance on Fuel (Ex): Iron liches need a necromantic fuel called necrotite to function. They require refueling (roughly 5 pounds of necrotite) every 12 hours. If not refueled, its next hour of operation is spent fatigued. After that, the iron lich becomes exhausted for an hour, after which it is stunned. Its firebox then needs to be re-lit before it can function again. An iron lich engaged in strenuous activity or combat must refuel after 6 hours.

Firebox Vulnerability (Ex): An iron lich's firebox fails when it is completely submerged in water or other liquid. Iron liches without a burning firebox are considered stunned.

Soul Sight (Su): Iron liches have the ability to see souls as if they had *reveal soul* cast at all times. They capture and hold these souls in *soul cages* to fuel their spells.

Saves: As base creature.

Abilities: An iron lich suffers -4 to its Dexterity and gains +1 to Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. Its Strength is raised to 20. It has no Constitution score as a result of its undead state.

Skills: As base creature.

Feats: As base creature.

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: As base creature +2.

Alignment: Usually neutral evil

Advancement: By character class

Combat

Magic Items Carried: *Minor circlet of blasting, +2 unholy quarterstaff of spell storing, scroll of chain lightning* (12th-level).

Legends & Lore

COMMON: None.

UNCOMMON: An iron lich is an unholy combination of undead and mechanika. It's hard to believe that any wizard, no matter how mad, would do this to himself.

RARE: Some say that iron liches can control both thralls and steamjacks just by concentrating.

OBSCURE: It is rumored that at least one of the Lich Lords of Cryx is in fact an iron lich.

Treasure

Iron liches will always have at least double the standard amount of treasure, some of which will be found on their person.

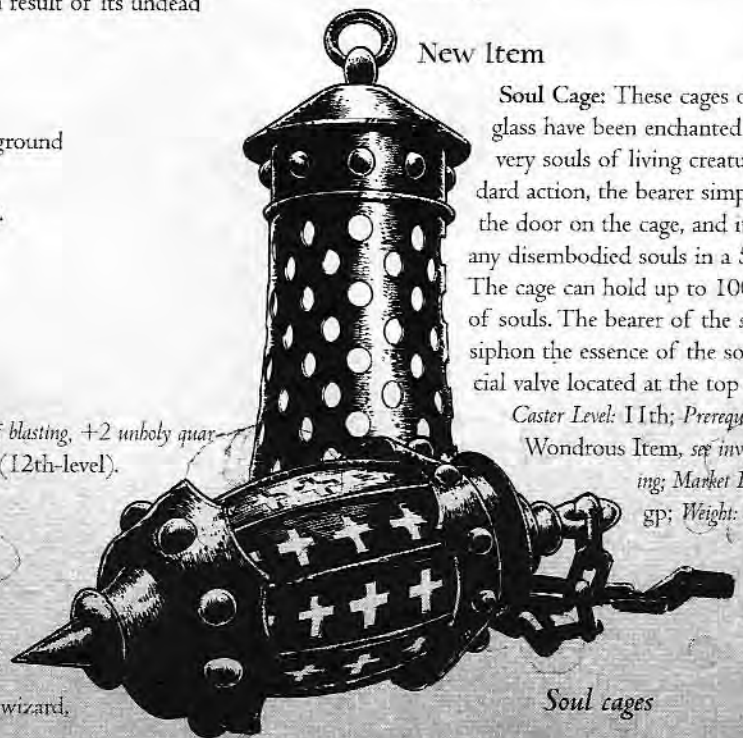
Hooks

A wealthy landowner has been courting a local beautiful wizard for several months now and hasn't seen or heard from her in weeks. He would normally chalk this up to rejection, but he hasn't even received the usual threats of violence from her. He needs the PCs to visit her in her keep (which he won't go near, especially after his last visit left him in the form of a fuzzy bunny for several hours) and make sure that all is well with her and deliver his gift of fine Cygnaran brandy unto her. The lady wizard has recently completed her transformation into an iron lich and couldn't care less about the brandy or the unfortunate delivery boys who are about to stumble into her laboratory.

New Item

Soul Cage: These cages of metal and glass have been enchanted to contain the very souls of living creatures. As a standard action, the bearer simply has to open the door on the cage, and it will pull in any disembodied souls in a 50-foot radius. The cage can hold up to 100 levels worth of souls. The bearer of the *soul cage* can siphon the essence of the souls via a special valve located at the top of the cage.

Caster Level: 11th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *see invisibility, true seeing; Market Price:* 30,000 gp; *Weight:* 3 lbs.



Soul cages

I know not who will find this, if anyone will. Perhaps I should not speak and let the families cherish their illusions for the dead and dying here. My legs are trapped under a fallen wall and I am fading in and out from the pain. The bones are shattered. I can taste blood on my lips, mingled with the accursed rain. Breathing is hard. Don't think I can last much longer, but I have to bear witness to the horror I have seen.

My name is unimportant, but let it be known that Draime's Raiders fought well and bravely. We ran afoul of a Khadoran border patrol. They weren't supposed to be anywhere near here. It was a blood bath. The fallen of both companies were littered across the road, and we were forced to take cover and dig in for the night. That's when the nightmare truly began.

I was huddled in a pit half-filled with mud and rainwater, damn cloak completely soaked. Beating my limbs barely provided any heat...too sodding cold. I was watching my breath on the night air and cursing my luck when I suddenly heard the rasping clank of grating metal. I wish I hadn't, for when I peered over the edge of the trench, I saw an image that will remain etched in my brain as I draw my last breath.

At first I thought it an armored madman, so much did the rain obscure my sight ; a heavily armored figure stooped low over a fallen Khadoran in a muddied puddle. It held some type of odd-looking lantern aloft. The Khadoran's arm reached out weakly for the figure, as if beckoning for aid, but the armored one raised a heavy staff and jammed it into the face of the dying man. A baleful green light then manifested within the lantern. I knew not what to make of it, but then it faced our position, a victor's grin and twin points of hellish green fire upon its grisly visage, atop a body constructed of black iron. It was looking at me! My doom was in that gaze.

I scrambled out of the trench and ran as it approached. Then, the screaming began. My blood was as ice when the first howl of agony rent the air, a terrible and unholy cry. I've heard men beg, heard them shriek as their lives were extinguished in hails of fire and lead, but no agonies I know of should be able to draw such a cry from a man. I could feel the heat, see the flames dance on the stones of the walls nearby, feel the crackle of unnatural energy in the air. Those moments were an eternity. I did not even notice as a sundered wall came crashing down on top of me.

Lying there, I could do nothing but watch the surreal sight of that thing stalking amid the broken and burned bodies of my friends and enemies, flames guttering in pools on the mud. I could not help but think the glow of its cage beautiful, so filled it was now with the lights—the souls!—it had taken from those it had killed.

Growing weaker now...how long have I lain here? Why was I left alive? Can barely write. If I had any faith left in me, I would pray to Morrow...but I fear I am Thamar's now.

—Transcribed from a journal found on an unidentifiable mercenary officer of Draime's Raiders

Iron Maiden

Medium-size Construct	
Hit Dice:	*10d10 (55 hp)*
Initiative:	*+4 (+4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*24 (+14 natural)*
Attacks:	*2 slams +12 melee; or 2 claws +12 melee*
Damage:	*Slam 1d6+5; or claw 2d4+5*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Improved grab, impale, berserk*
Special Qualities:	*Spikeskin, construct, damage reduction 15/+1*
Saves:	*Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +4*
Abilities:	*Str 20, Dex 11, Con —, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 4*
Skills:	*Balance +7, Climb +7, Hide +7, Listen +3, Move Silently +7, Sense Motive +3, Spot +3*
Feats:	*Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Run, Track*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land and underground*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*7*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*11–16 HD (Medium-size)*

The iron maiden is both an incredible creation and a travesty of the soul. On one hand, it is a construct of unsurpassed loyalty and wit, and on the other it is the enslaved spirit of a great warrior of the fairer sex. This construct is created by practitioners of the arcane as a means of self-preservation, or it is created for others in positions of wealth or authority for that same reason; the iron maiden is an effective bodyguard if ever there was one.



This construct, at first glance, appears to be a shapely woman, hooded and cloaked, as if engaged in some manner of skullduggery. Looking closer, one notices the distinct shine of metal hither and thither and a somewhat rigid gait and bearing. Whenever the maiden or its master are threatened the construct reveals its true nature—hundreds of razor-sharp spikes and barbs spring from every portion of its body, ready to rend and kill at the drop of a coin.

My friend Barien Caulfield of the Fraternal Order of Wizardry related the following to me:

"The metallic body is formed from the finest and purest iron to be found in the kingdoms; purity of the iron must be ensured to withhold the powerful and fierce spirit to be contained inside. Only the most excellent artificers are allowed to take part in the creation of an iron maiden, and once the body is fashioned the wizard who is the binder inspects the work of the artificer. If it is to his or her liking, they summon the spirit of a female warrior from the lands of the dead and encase the spirit in the still-cooling iron body. The bound spirit soon finds it has very little control over her new body and little way of exercising her will on the world around this form. Often, this moment of truth is enough to forever bind the spirit to eternal servitude, but even so the newly made maiden tends to eventually lose her sense of self; in due time, the more sexless 'she' feels, and the more construct 'it' then becomes.

"In the weeks to follow from its birth, a maiden must be taught the ways of its nature and the purpose for which it was created—as bodyguard and assassin. The magics inherent in the creation of an iron maiden give it the abilities required to carry out these tasks: the ability to move with a measure of

silence, to skulk about in the shadows, and the hidden weaponry to dispatch its target. Ironically, it is the spirit that gives the construct its gift for learning and intuitiveness that may—in the direst of circumstances, but has been known to have happened—cause it to break free of its master's will and wreak havoc on its surroundings. The iron maiden, because it has no apparatus created for the purpose, cannot speak or create any auditory emissions. If the spirit in life had the ability to write, then the maiden may do so, if it has the presence of mind and the permission of its master."



The mistake has been made in the past of allowing an iron maiden to express itself in writing, and, somehow rediscovering its former passions, the construct brought the master's house down around him, proceeding to tear through several bourgs of Corvis before finally being dismantled by an immense show of force by the city watch. Unfortunately for him, the incautious master had been slain by the maiden, a testament indeed that the spirit of the iron maiden is unpredictable at best.

Combat

Iron maidens attack only at their master's bidding, when they are attacked, or when they are berserk. All of their attacks are carried out with brutal efficiency.

Spikeskin (Ex): An iron maiden can cause hundreds of spines, hooks, needles, and barbs to spring forth from virtually every square inch of its body as a free action. This gives the maiden its impale attack and the option of using a claw attack in lieu of a slam attack.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the iron maiden must hit with a claw attack.

Impale (Ex): A maiden that gains a hold latches onto an opponent's body and pulls them to its breast to be impaled upon dozens of hideous metal spikes. This attack automatically deals 3d4+8 points of damage.

Berserk (Ex): When a maiden enters combat, there is a cumulative 1% chance each round that the bound spirit within it breaks free and goes berserk. The unbound construct runs amok, attacking the nearest creature or smashing a random object if no creature is within reach, then moving along to spread more chaos. The maiden's master, if within 100 feet, can try to regain control by speaking firmly, persuasively, or threateningly to the construct, which requires a successful Charisma check (DC 15). It takes 30 seconds of rest by the maiden to reset its berserk chance to 0%.

Resistances(Ex): Iron maidens have fire and electrical resistance 20.

Special Healing(Ex): Iron maidens are not affected by healing spells. *Mending* cures 1 hit point. *Fabricate* cures 5d8+5 hit points. *Iron body* cures all damage done to an iron maiden.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Only a fool dares to try the patience of a man protected by a maiden.

UNCOMMON: Iron maidens are possessed of an alien intellect, unheard of in modern mechanika.

RARE: The maiden's body is simply a conduit for the spirit of a deceased woman.

OBSCURE: Excessive exposure to a maiden's former life may awaken buried memories giving the bound spirit free reign of its forged metal body.

Treasure

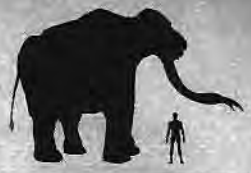
An iron maiden's body is made of the purest iron to be found in the Iron Kingdoms. A large amount such as that found comprising the maiden's body could fetch a hefty sum at the Steam & Iron Workers' Union, Engines East in Corvis, or Engines West in Point Bourne. Wheeling an inert iron maiden into either one of these establishments may raise a few eyebrows, to say the least.

Hooks

• A well-to-do wizard was recently denied membership in the Fraternal Order of Wizardry. In retribution, he would like some expendable hirelings to battle the head of the order's iron maiden whilst he engages the offending wizard. The outraged wizard will pay handsomely for any unscrupulous ruffians willing to take on this errand, no questions asked.

• A formidable wizard in Corvis has been slain by his own iron maiden—perhaps even the spurned wizard above! The wizard somehow lost control of the construct and it is now ravaging the streets of the city. The maiden has already plowed through a squad of Watchmen, and now an affluent noble appeals to the PCs for help in dispatching the berserk construct.

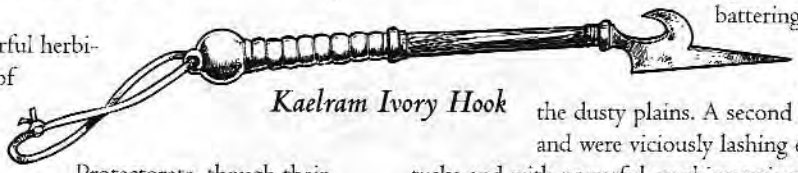
Kaelram



Huge Animal	
Hit Dice:	*12d8+60 (114 hp)*
Initiative:	*+1 (+1 Dex)*
Speed:	*50 ft.*
AC:	*16 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +7 natural)*
Attacks:	*Gore +17 melee, 2 slams +11 melee*
Damage:	*Gore 3d6+15, slam 2d6+5*
Face/Reach:	*10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Trample 3d6+15*
Saves:	*Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +4*
Abilities:	*Str 30, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 7*
Skills:	*Jump +15, Listen +5, Spot +5*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any desert*
Organization:	*Solitary or herd (4–16)*
Challenge Rating:	*9*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*13–23 HD (Huge)*

It was while traveling through the parched northern regions of the Protectorate of Menoth that I endeavored to discover more about the Bloodstone kaelram, a common beast that bears the exotic moniker of "thunderhead," on account of the resounding blows it strikes during its mating season duels.

These massive, powerful herbivores are used as beasts of burden throughout the rural north of the Protectorate, though their value extends far beyond that of any common dray beast. Judging by the preponderance of kaelram hide tents, bowls, tankards, armor, fresh and dried kaelram cuts, and the outrageous prices commanded for intricately carved kaelram head studs, I would not hesitate to say that this beast also forms a staple of the local economy.



Kaelram Ivory Hook

Having ample opportunity to study domesticated kaelram, I must admit to the beast's intimidating nature, for it is a massive mammal, striding powerfully atop four long, strong legs. Its dusty hide has a smooth, pebble-like texture, and its feet end in tough splayed hooves that grant it purchase in the arid sands of its native habitat. Its flat face and tiny eyes are overshadowed by the enormous pair of tusks that juts out from its small mouth.

Eager to observe these powerful beasts in their native habitat, I once again enlisted Quimut and set forth into the arid lands of the southern Bloodstone Marches. A few hours outside of the Protectorate, we were in the process of skirting a small foothill when Quimut gestured for me to stop. Doing as I was bid, I felt the ground reverberate as a small herd of kaelram loped into view. As I watched, fascinated, a rumbling bellow split the air, and the herd's dominant male turned, snorting, to face a lone challenger. Without a moment's hesitation, the two bulls thundered towards each other, heads lowered. They met head to head like living battering rams, and the booming crack of their impact echoed across the dusty plains. A second later, the two reared up and were viciously lashing each other with their tusks and with powerful crushing swipes of their forelimbs. Moments later, the challenger lay dead. Seldom have I seen such speed in so powerful an animal; small wonder several Shael tribes make use of the kaelram as a beast of war.

Combat

Kaelram are aggressive combatants, their first instinct to charge, gore, and trample anything they consider a threat. Should the unfortunate victim of a kaelram charge survive and continue to move without fleeing, the kaelram will rear up on its hind legs and proceed to repeatedly gore and stomp the victim. These animals are so obnoxious that they seldom flee even serious threats, save when the protection of their calves is an immediate concern.

Trample (Ex): A kaelram may trample Medium-size or smaller targets for automatic damage. If such a target attempts to avoid the trample, they may make a Reflex save (DC 26) to take half damage. (For more information, see MM).

Treasure

A trained kaelram suitable for use as a beast of burden usually sells for 500 gp. A kaelram barbarian-trained for use as a war-mount and living battering ram would be traded for no less than 1,000 gp in appropriate goods, such as metal weapons and armor, if the Shael ever demonstrated any desire to sell such a beast.

The hide of a kaelram, suitable for domestic use in the making of items such as bowls, tough tents, or hide armor, typically fetches 20 gp in the markets of the Protectorate of Menoth. Kaelram meat is sold for 6 sp per pound.

The kaelram's tusks are extremely valuable and are worth as much as 100 gp each to skilled ivory carvers.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Kaelram tusks are highly prized by many artisans and once carved and polished can command handsome prices.

UNCOMMON: Kaelram instinctively judge threats based on a combination of speed and size. A smaller or slower moving animal is far less likely to be attacked. Standing stock still or playing dead will usually avert a kaelram attack.

RARE: While kaelram vision is particularly sensitive to motion it is otherwise quite poor. These animals are just as likely to charge swift-moving wagons as a rival kaelram.

OBSCURE: Kaelram dung, though pungent in the extreme, has powerful astringent properties when fresh.

Hooks

Kaelram are valuable animals, and eager to cash in on the wealth generated by foreign demand for carved kaelram tusks, many individuals are turning to hunting the beasts. The party could be one such enterprising group. As if the animals themselves weren't enough to contend with, local Shael tribes take a very dim view of outsiders hunting kaelram on their land...



Magnificent beasts— must acquire one for the zoo at Caspia as King Leto requested.

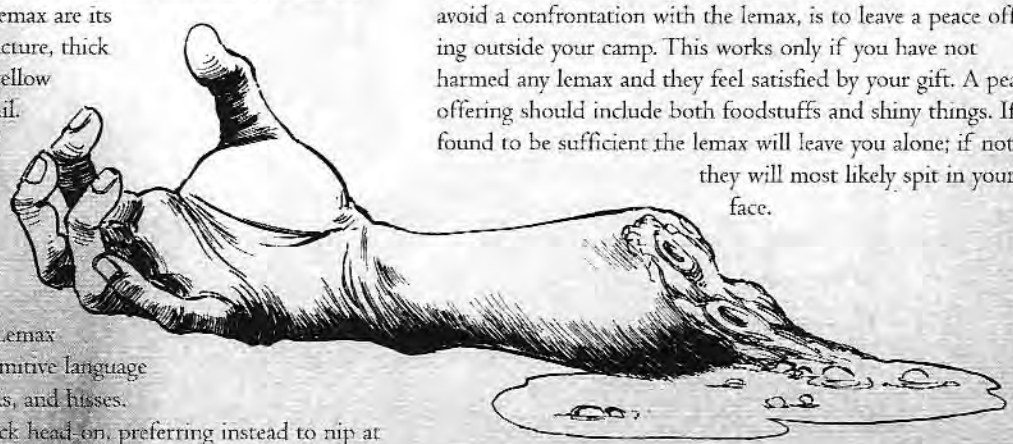
Lemax



Small Beast	
Hit Dice:	*½ d10+2 (4 hp)*
Initiative:	*+2 (+2 Dex)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*14 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +1 natural)*
Attacks:	*Claw -1 melee; or bite -1 melee; or acidic spit +3 ranged*
Damage:	*Claw 1d3-2; or bite 1d3-2; acidic spit 2d2+1 and nausea*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Acidic spittle*
Special Qualities:	*Darkvision 60 ft.*
Saves:	*Fort +4, Ref +4, Will, +1*
Abilities:	*Str 6, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 10*
Skills:	*Balance +10*, Climb +4*, Hide +3*, Listen +3, Move Silently +3*, Spot +3*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any forest*
Organization:	*Gang (4–9), troop (10–40 plus 1 2 HD alpha male), tribe (40–400, including 1 2 HD beta male per 20 adults, 1 3–4 HD alpha female per 50 adults, and 1 4+ HD alpha male)*
Challenge Rating:	*½*
Alignment:	*Usually neutral*
Advancement:	*2–3 HD (Small); 4–10 HD (Medium-size)*

The lemax (or "lizard monkey") unfortunately can be found scattered throughout the forests of the Iron Kingdoms. At their best they are a nuisance and at worst outright brigands. Over the years I have had more than my fair share of run-ins with these pests, and, though individually weak, beware of them when they're in numbers.

A grotesque mixture of scaly skin and tufts of hair, the main features of the lemax are its exaggerated facial structure, thick black mane, glowing yellow eyes, and prehensile tail. Their main weapon is an acidic spittle that they emit from a mucous sack located deep within their throat, but they also love to throw rocks. Lemax have a unique but primitive language of hoots, howls, clicks, and hisses.



Lemax rarely attack head-on, preferring instead to nip at your heels (until one day you wake up to find your feet missing). They are persistent pests, always testing your nerves and patience. They excel at harassment, especially in the night. They bellow and bawl, scare horses, and they even sneak into camps just to kick out your fire. It is also not uncommon to wake from a quiet evening's rest to find your sacks rummaged through and your best pair of trousers drooled on. But I digress.

The trees are a home to the lemax, and it is best to camp in clearings if at all possible when traveling through their territory. Another piece of advice I would give, if you wish to avoid a confrontation with the lemax, is to leave a peace offering outside your camp. This works only if you have not harmed any lemax and they feel satisfied by your gift. A peace offering should include both foodstuffs and shiny things. If found to be sufficient the lemax will leave you alone; if not they will most likely spit in your face.

Combat

Lemax prefer to outnumber their opponents and rarely attack any group that they do not outnumber two to one. They tend to use hit and run tactics and use their skills and abilities to their utmost advantage.

Acidic Spittle (Ex): A lemax's main defense is its acidic spittle. This attack is considered a ranged touch attack and has a range of 30 feet. It deals 2d2+(1/EHD) points of acid damage, and unless the victim makes a Fortitude save (DC 10) he becomes nauseated for 1d4 rounds. Once a lemax has used this ability it cannot use it again for one hour.

Skills: *Lemax use their Dexterity modifier for climb checks and receive a +8 racial bonus to Balance checks from their tails. They also gain +4 circumstance bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks made in forested areas.



Treasure

Lemax mucous sacks are useful to both alchemists and arcane spell-casters and are worth about 10 gp each. Lemax also have cheek pouches where they store their "shiny things." Each pouch has a 75% chance of holding said shiny things. If a cheek pouch is found to contain shiny things, then there is a 75% chance that coins are found, 20% chance that a gem of some sort is found, and a 5% chance that a piece of jewelry is found.

Coins found in a lemax's cheek pouch usually number 2–20 2d10) of a random type (1d10, 1–2: copper, 3–5: silver, 6–9: gold, 10: platinum). Gems found in a lemax's cheek pouch vary widely in their worth. Jewelry in a lemax's cheek pouch varies widely in its worth as well (use the art table in the DMG for inspiration).

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Don't get spit on by lemax—it hurts and smells bad too!

UNCOMMON: Lemax have cheek sacks where they hide their shiny things. Their mucous sacks are valuable to alchemists and arcane spell-casters alike. Peace offerings that include shiny things are accepted more often than not (25% chance of failure.)

RARE: When a lemax is pleased with an offering or likes an individual, it regurgitates its most recent meal as a sign of its acceptance and appreciation.

OBSCURE: Peace offerings that include bananas and/or other yellow things are almost always accepted (5% chance of failure.)

Hooks

An enterprising gobber alchemist from Five Fingers approaches the PCs, offering to pay them handsomely if they can bring him no less than one dozen live lemax. He claims that he needs their acid pouches for his alchemical research. The truth is that he is going to set them free in his former employer's lab (he was recently fired) as a sweet revenge (the money he's using to pay the PCs is stolen from this same former-employer).

"I think he likes you, Edrea. He only spit on my leg!" — *Lynus Wesselbaum*

Mechagargoyle

Small Construct	
Hit Dice:	*5d10 (28 hp)*
Initiative:	*+5 (+5 Dex)*
Speed:	*20 ft.*
AC:	*31 (+1 size, +5 Dex, +15 natural)*
Attacks:	*2 claws +7 melee, bite +5 melee*
Damage:	*Claw 1d4+3, bite 1d2+1*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Spell-like abilities, stunning strike 1d6+1*
Special Qualities:	*Construct, damage reduction 20/+1, regeneration, vigilance*
Saves:	*Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +1*
Abilities:	*Str 17, Dex 20, Con —, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 12*
Skills:	*Balance +8, Climb +7, Intuit Direction +5, Listen +8, Spot +10*
Feats:	*Flyby Attack, Multiattack.*
Climate/Terrain:	*Urban*
Organization:	*Solitary or band (2–5)*
Challenge Rating:	*6*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*2–4 HD (Tiny); 6–10 HD (Medium-size); 10–15 HD (Large)*

When I was still a junior scout in the Cygnaran military, I made my first trip to Point Bourne, and it was there that I first encountered one of these bizarre mechagargoyles. I had remembered my father telling me about them when I was quite young. He had that distant look in his eye that he always got when speaking of such constructs—that look that somberly acknowledged that he was just a poor junker who could at best only hope to sell parts for such a creation, never possessing the skill or resources to create one himself. Clearly he thought they were impressive, and finally viewing one I had to agree. The mechanika I witnessed was sculpted in the likeness of magnificent winged feline, and it sat patiently atop one of the city's more garish estates.



Although there is a long-standing craftsman's guild in Merin that claims to have originally mastered the art of mechagargoyle construction, my father had always insisted that they bore more esoteric origins. He claimed that only the crafty faithful of Cyriss could have crafted such a wonder, although I've never found evidence to back up his claim. The strange thing about these constructs that distinguishes them so much is that their internal drive comes from a spirit that takes residence inside the shell of the construct, which is itself quite mundane. Only the most finely constructed forms will attract an animating spirit, and once one has taken up residence it will never leave its metal body. Constructing a shell is a rare art, and even the best craftsmen often find their works spurned by the fickle spirits.

Simplicity seems to be their nature of the mechagargoyle. They are universal in their purpose, which is to protect an occupied building in just about any urban city. They are very patient creatures, and despite the residing spirit, I've never witnessed one bearing any personality. The only thing they require of the tenants whose buildings they guard is a regular supply of processed iron, preferably in bars. Those who fail to provide for their gargoyles soon find them gone.

Mechagargoyles come in all varieties (from animal shapes, to humanoids, to even stranger things), although most are about 3 or 4 feet in height or length. The craftsmanship required to construct one



is the highest, and those that bear fine and intricate ornamentation seem to have a better success rate in the creation process. For a construct, they are surprisingly nimble, and they are quite vigilant in their guard duties. The magic that binds them together also enables them to fly, as well as exercise a few other abilities. Although intelligent, they are completely incapable of communication (so you had better know what to do when one lands on your stoop).

Combat

Mechagargoyles will typically initiate combat with their spell-like abilities and then follow up with melee combat if necessary. If overpowered, they will flee, never to return to that ward. The attack forms and damage scores listed above are those of a typical mechagargoyle. Because forms vary widely, other types of natural attacks may be possible.

Spell-like Abilities: At will—*fly*; 5/day—*flare, darkness*; 3/day—*lightning bolt, gust of wind*. They cast these spells as an 8th-level wizard (save DC 11 + spell level).

Stunning Strike (Su): A melee strike by a mechagargoyle deals an additional 1d6+1 electrical damage. On a successful critical strike, the victim must also make a Fortitude save (DC 13) or become stunned for 1d4+1 rounds. There is no visual discharge with this attack, even in darkness.

Regeneration (Su): As long as they are fed a steady diet of processed iron (at least 5 pounds a week) mechagargoyles heal damage as a normal living creature.

Vigilance (Ex): Mechagargoyles are eternally vigilant and may not be surprised.

Treasure

A mechagargoyle is a treasure in and of itself; however they may not be pressed into service and will always flee if captured. They choose their wards spontaneously, and only leave them when they are not properly fed.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: In more affluent cities, some of the gargoyles perched atop buildings are actually living constructs that come to life to protect the building.

UNCOMMON: These creations are mechanika shells housing a living spirit of some kind.

RARE: If one lands on your building, then you are quite lucky. To keep it you must feed it refined iron.

OBSCURE: The clerics of Cyriss are said to build the best mechagargoyles, and theirs are rumored to have vastly greater magical abilities.

Hooks

A wealthy scholar of the arts in Ceryl was fortunate enough to have a stray mechagargoyle make his home its ward. He was both fond of and fascinated by the creature and maintained it well. Unfortunately, a disreputable black market dealer in the area caught wind of the gargoyle's presence and decided to steal it. After capturing it three times only to have it fly back to its previous ward, the dealer has caught it once again and plans to sell it on the black market (for parts if he has to). The original owner is desperate to regain his home's companion and is seeking help.

Mechanithrall

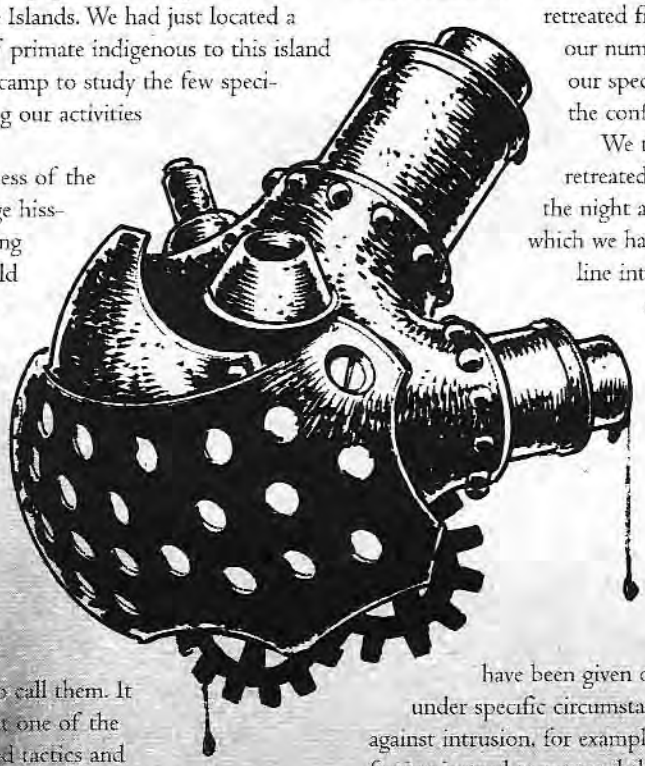


Medium-size Undead	
Hit Dice:	*4d12 (26 hp)*
Initiative:	*+4 (+4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*21 (+1 Dex, +10 natural)*
Attacks:	*2 slams +4 melee*
Damage:	*Slam 1d8+3*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Steamslam*
Special Qualities:	*Undead, +2 turn resistance*
Saves:	*Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4*
Abilities:	*Str 16, Dex 13, Con —, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6*
Skills:	*Climb +6, Hide +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Spot +3*
Feats:	*Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land and underground*
Organization:	*Any*
Challenge Rating:	*3*
Alignment:	*Usually lawful evil*
Advancement:	*5–7 HD (Medium-size)*

I've only once had the unfortunate occasion to meet these foul undead perversions. I was in the company of some fellow explorers out of Highgate, surveying one of the many unnamed Scharde Islands. We had just located a very rare nocturnal species of primate indigenous to this island alone and had retired to our camp to study the few specimens we had captured and log our activities for the day.

Suddenly, from the darkness of the trees around us came a strange hissing, like that of a kettle boiling over. My friend Erlin Caulfield then gave out a strangled cry. Turning about, I saw a horrible amalgamation of metal and desiccated flesh standing over poor Erlin's crumpled form. Looking around, I saw at least a dozen of these monstrosities assailing the rest of my party. I quickly grabbed my trusty bow and began firing arrow after arrow into these "mechanithralls," as I came to call them. It took several arrows to fell but one of the creatures, so I quickly changed tactics and used the swill our guides had been drinking, called Finger's Finest, to best effect. After dousing them with the liquor and lighting them in our campfire, my flaming arrows seemed to have more of an impact on our enemies, as flames generally do. It is my opinion that the mechanithralls were "called off" somehow, as they then turned in unison and retreated from our camp. We counted two of our number lost to the attack, and all of our specimens had escaped their cages in the confusion.

We then hastily packed our gear and retreated to our boat. We spent the rest of the night anchored in the shallow cove in which we had come aground, eyeing the shoreline intently, hoping that the mechanithralls couldn't swim. We steamed for Highgate first thing the next morning. Someone or something had made those terrible things, and I had the feeling that I didn't want to meet him.



Combat

Mechanithralls attack only at their master's behest or if they have been given orders to attack certain beings under specific circumstances (guarding a door or passage against intrusion, for example). They never use weapons, preferring instead to pummel their foes.

Steamslam (Ex): Once every 1d4 rounds, a mechanithrall can use the steam built up in its mechanikal fittings to deliver a

powerful punch to its opponents. It gains a +8 attack bonus for the steamslam attack only and deals 3d6 points of damage.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: None.
UNCOMMON: Mechanithralls are a hideous combination of undead and mechanika.
RARE: The mechanithralls are created somewhere in the Scharde Islands, and a few have even been spotted along some of the more uninhabited coasts of Cygnar.
OBSCURE: Lord Toruk, the dragon king of Cryx, sanctioned the mechanithralls' creation for unknown reasons, though the Dragon King seems to be brewing something major.



Treasure

A mechanithrall's vanquisher may scavenge whatever pieces of mechanika may be left on its broken body. Mechaniks on the mainland will pay handsomely to have the opportunity to study the unfamiliar machinery.

Hooks

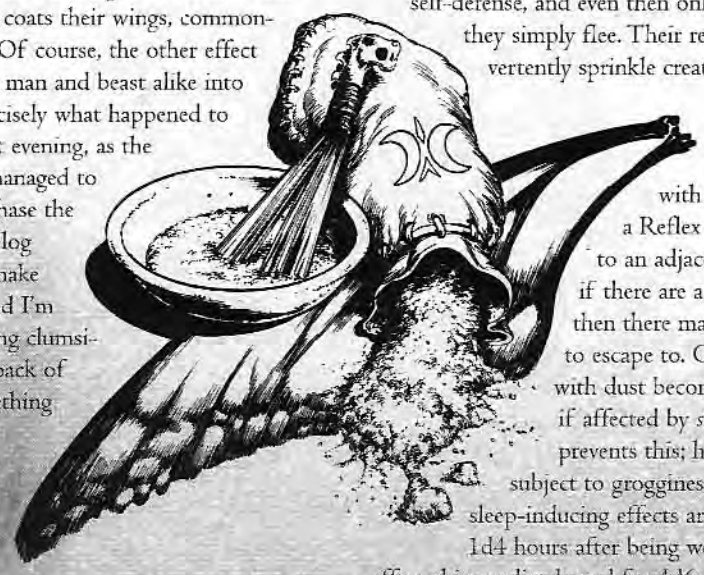
Characters exploring the Scharde Islands may happen upon the hidden lab where the mechanithralls are created. The mechanithralls' creator is said to be an undead mechanik of immense power and knowledge. The thralls' creator will spare no expense in killing the invaders or driving them from his island.

Moonwing

Small Vermin		*Abilities:*	*Str 7, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 1, Wis 10, Cha 2*
Hit Dice:	*1d8+1 (5 hp)*	*Skills:*	*Listen +8*, Spot +11**
Initiative:	*+1 (+1 Dex)*	*Feats:*	*Ability Focus (moon dust)*
Speed:	*10 ft., fly 20 ft. (poor)*		
AC:	*18 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +4 natural)*	*Climate/Terrain:*	*Any warm or temperate land*
		Organization:	*Brood (5–10) or swarm (11–24)*
Attacks:	*Bite -1 melee*	*Challenge Rating:*	*1*
Damage:	*Bite 1d4-2*	*Alignment:*	*Always neutral*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*	*Advancement:*	*2–4 HD (Small)*
Special Attacks:	*Moon dust*		
Special Qualities:	*Vermin*		
Saves:	*Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +0*		

I've witnessed many a strange beast in my travels of this world, but there are few that I'd venture to call beautiful or even pleasant to look upon. Most of the denizens of the Iron Kingdoms are fierce, with an appearance to match. However, there is one I'd have to call an exception to that, and it would be the fluttering moonwing. I remember one fine evening while camping in the Scarsfell Forest, our campsite was graced by a brood of these creatures.

As they flocked to our campfire their white bodies lit up with a gentle luminescence that was a sight to behold. This effect is due to the dust that coats their wings, commonly referred to as moon dust. Of course, the other effect of this moon dust is putting man and beast alike into a deep slumber, which is precisely what happened to most of my companions that evening, as the moths flittered overhead. I managed to roll out of harm's way and chase the creatures off with a burning log from the fire. The dust did make me quite groggy, however, and I'm sure the sight of me stumbling clumsily in the dark swinging at a pack of fleeing moonwings was something to behold as well.



Although they measure a full meter across at the wings, these creatures are little more than overgrown moths, and like all moths they are attracted to light. They are nocturnal, and most travelers encounter them as they flock towards a torch or campfire. They are peaceful creatures; however, when they flutter overhead, their dust sprinkles down, putting to sleep most who fail to scare them off. This in and of itself isn't a danger, but being knocked out in the wilds of the Iron Kingdoms can be deadly.

Combat

Moonwings are capable of biting, but they only bite in self-defense, and even then only rarely. Most of the time they simply flee. Their real danger is when they inadvertently sprinkle creatures with their moon dust.

Moon Dust (Su): Any creature that has a moth fly over its space is sprinkled with moon dust unless they make a Reflex save (DC 14) to hop safely to an adjacent space; however, note that if there are a large number of moths, then there may not be an adjacent square to escape to. Creatures that are sprinkled with dust become groggy and fall asleep, as if affected by *sleep*. A Will save (DC 12) prevents this; however all creatures are still subject to grogginess. Those affected by the sleep-inducing effects are subject to grogginess for 1d4 hours after being woken; those who save are affected immediately and for 4d6 minutes thereafter. This induces a -2 circumstance penalty to all attacks, saves, and skill

checks for the duration. Creatures unaffected by *sleep* are also unaffected by this ability.

Skills: *Moonwings gain a +4 racial bonus to Listen and Spot checks.

Treasure

The moonwing's potent moon dust is quite a valuable commodity, although it is difficult to collect effectively. To do so, one must first capture a moonwing and then take care of it. If the wings are damaged in the capture, then most moonwings fail to continue producing dust. Furthermore, they are very fragile creatures and die suddenly and easily in captivity. A successful Handle Animal check (DC 18) must be made each week to keep a moth healthy; two consecutive failures results in death. Moonwings survive better in broods (groups of at least five or more) as well as open spaces (such as a cave, as opposed to a cage); either of these circumstances adds a +2 bonus to the die roll. Additionally, they only feed on grubs that are exotic to most areas, and food costs can run as much as 100 gp a month. If they are properly maintained, however, then collecting the dust is simple, as it falls naturally from the wings (and can be swept up).

Moon dust collected in this manner has the same properties as above, except that the save DC rises to 18. Because of its potency, a typical batch (containing 2 doses) sells for anywhere from 100 to 150 gp. A single moth can produce one dose every other day. A healthy captured moonwing can sell for anywhere from 500 to 1000 gp. They do not breed in captivity, and they seldom live beyond a year.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Moonwings are large moths that flock to open lights, and they can put people to sleep with dust from their wings.

UNCOMMON: This moon dust is extremely potent and is guaranteed to at least make a subject groggy if it doesn't knock him out.

RARE: Moonwings are only attracted to natural fires; light produced by magical or similar means (that does not replicate a natural light) won't attract them.

OBSCURE: Moonwings can be knocked out instantly if they catch a whiff of alcohol fumes, although one must get it right up to their face to affect them.

Hooks

A rather eccentric alchemist in the city of Ceryl has taken up the mission of stalking down a ring of thieves who use moon dust to knock their marks out. He believes he can create a smelling salts-type of antidote to counteract it, although he suspects it might only be effective versus regional species of the moth. He is willing to pay those who can collect specimens from the surrounding area for his inspection.



Seasonal color variation also seems tied to potency of moon dust. I suspect a dietary link. Must send Lynus to gather more samples.

Nyss



Medium-size Humanoid (Elf)	
Hit Dice:	*1d8 (4 hp)*
Initiative:	*+1 (+1 Dex)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*14 (+1 Dex, +3 studded leather)*
Attacks:	*Nyss claymore +2 melee; or short sword +0 melee; or longbow +1 ranged*
Damage:	*Nyss claymore 2d6; or short sword 1d6; or longbow 1d8*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Qualities:	*Nyss traits*
Saves:	*Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +1*
Abilities:	*Str 11, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10*
Skills:	*Hide +4, Listen +2, Ride +2, Spot +2, Wilderness Lore +2*
Feats:	*Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Nyss claymore), Weapon Finesse (Nyss claymore)**
Climate/Terrain:	*Cold mountains*
Organization:	*Patrol (2–8), hunt (9–16), war band (12–60), shard (80–200), or tribe (200–800)*
Challenge Rating:	*½*
Alignment:	*Usually chaotic neutral*
Advancement:	*By character class*

In the mountains north of Khador, amid the crags and crevices of the barren ice and glacial drifts, there are monolithic formations called winter stones. They stand as a foreboding warning to travelers, marking the territory of the guardians of the north, the winter elves, properly known as the Nyss.

Knowing of their willingness to slay intruders on sight, I felt trepidation when I undertook an expedition alone past those stones. I had been instructed in dealing with this race by a well-traveled Khadoran trader, who advised covering my weapons and bringing a gift to show my intentions.

I eventually made peaceful contact and was brought blindfolded to one of their villages. The Nyss are never completely at ease with outsiders, and I was watched at all times. Hospitality has almost religious significance with them; while they will slay any who intrude uninvited in their territory, once they have welcomed a visitor they are liberal with food, wine, and company.

The Nyss have prospered in their barren frozen wasteland and have virtually no contact with the elves of Ios. There is no mistaking the two races for each other; the Nyss are very tall, most males well over 6 feet in height, and their skin is pale as bone. Their hair is either black or nearly white, and their eyes ice-blue or sometimes violet.

They resent questions about their religion, but I was able to learn a few things. They take their name from their patron god, Nyssor, the god of winter. Nyssor is also respected among the elves of Ios, but as a lesser seasonal deity. I have found enigmatic reference of a sleep from which he cannot wake, but do not know the significance of this.

The major Nyss tribes number approximately a dozen, each composed of four or five "shards," the core unit of society. Shards are settled near glacial lakes and valleys, and groups of hunters travel between them looking for game and enemies. Traditionally, every few decades a shard will pack all its belongings and travel among neighbors, sharing news and forming alliances and marriages.

The Nyss contend for territory and resources with various tribes of fierce mountain bogrin gobbers, ogrun conclaves, and have occasional skirmishes with human barbarians and the dwarves of Rhul.

Combat

Nyss prefer to use misdirection and trickery to guide foes into ambushes or traps and will always attack from concealment if possible, first with arrows and then closing for melee.

The Nyss weapon of choice is a great two-handed claymore. These blades are always of masterwork quality, and some are enchanted. When fighting in cramped quarters, Nyss use short swords.

Weapon Finesse (Claymore): This feat usually requires one-handed weapons. However, the Nyss train from youth with their claymores, and the weapons are so light (weighing 8 pounds instead of the 15 of a typical greatsword) and well-balanced that this restriction does not apply.

Nyss Traits (Ex): All Nyss benefit from a number of shared traits. Nyss are sufficiently different from regular elves that they do not receive normal elven traits.

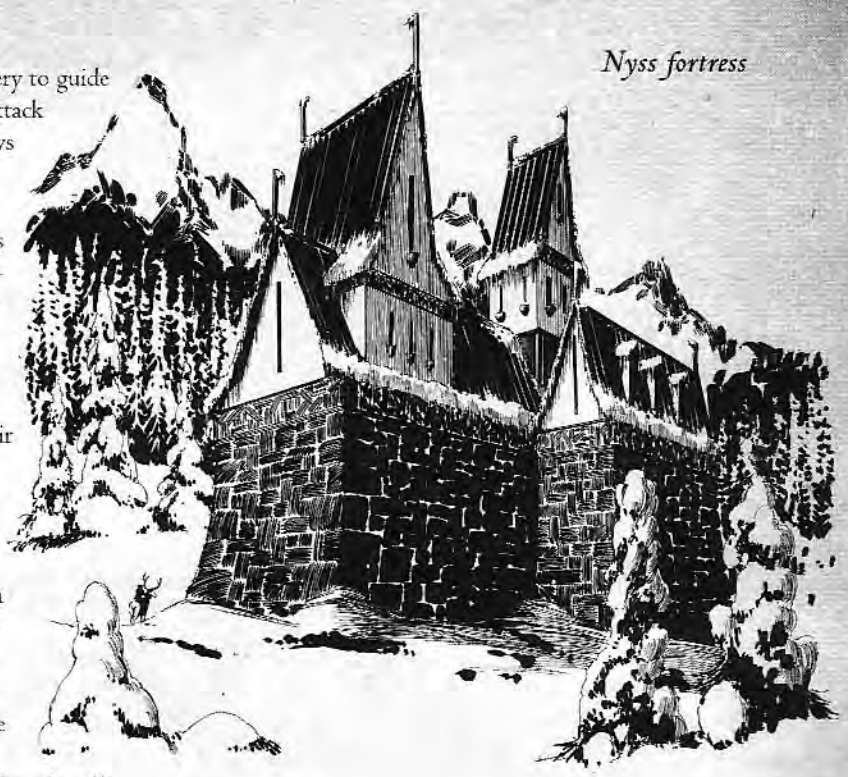
+2 racial bonus to Listen, Spot, and Hide skill checks.

+4 racial saving throw bonus versus cold-based spell attacks.

Nyss are resistant to the effects of cold weather and do not suffer penalties from cold conditions until 40°F lower than normal. For example, they experience cold conditions at 0°F and extreme cold at temperatures of –40°F and below.

-2 racial saving throw penalty versus fire or heat-based attacks.

Nyss are particularly vulnerable to hot weather when wearing any armor greater than studded leather (or equivalent), suffering as if enduring hot or extreme heat conditions at 20°F lower than others. For example, they experience hot conditions in temperatures greater than 70°F (instead of 90°F) and extreme heat in temperatures greater than 90°F (instead of 110°F).



Nyss fortress

Legends & Lore

COMMON: None.

UNCOMMON: The Nyss are highly territorial, prone to attacking invaders in their territory without revealing their presence.

RARE: For peaceful contact, one must bind weapons tightly in cloth, and offer an adequate gift. Once given hospitality, visitors are completely safe so long as they do not threaten or steal from members of a shard.

OBSCURE: Attus Kroane, a Khadoran explorer, once told of a winter stone that sat in the heights of a glacier. Attus made camp there and dreamt of a massive shape under the ice that slept but did not sleep. He went mad months later, claiming that this shape watched him in his dreams.

Treasure

Given their rarity, Nyss crafted items are of value to collectors, particularly if inscribed with Aeric runes. The most valued are the great runed claymores, which are rumored to never lose their edge nor suffer the ravages of time. All claymores are masterworks and can fetch upwards of 1,000 gp or more depending on ornamentation. Nyss claymores require Exotic Weapon Proficiency to use, having an entirely different balance from regular greatswords.

Nyss Characters

For information on Nyss as player characters, consult the playable race appendix (pp. 236).

Oasis Ooze



Large Ooze	
Hit Dice:	*6d10+27 (60 hp)*
Initiative:	*-5 (-5 Dex)*
Speed:	*10 ft., swim 10 ft.*
AC:	*4 (-1 size, -5 Dex)*
Attacks:	*Slam +8 melee*
Damage:	*Slam 2d4+5 and 1d6 acid*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Improved grab, acid, constrict 2d4+5, acid 1d6*
Special Qualities:	*Blindsight, ooze, suspended animation, transparent*
Saves:	*Fort +4, Ref -3, Will -3*
Abilities:	*Str 20, Dex 1, Con 15, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any desert*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*7*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*7–10 HD (Large); 11–20 HD (Huge)*

Oasis oozes make their home in the scattered oases of the Bloodstone Marches. Even a trained eye can hardly see these creatures lurking just below the water's surface.

From wandering travelers to sand beasts, the oasis ooze fearlessly attacks those who dare to drink from its waters. Although not always successful, the oasis ooze is more than able to defend itself and its territory, as I was able to see first-hand upon my first trip to the Bloodstone Marches.

The appearance of an oasis ooze can best be described as an amorphous organism with transparent skin and entrails. It usually waits until its victim has taken a drink of water from the oasis before attacking. The creature surges from the water, envelops its prey, and drags it into the oasis where it is simultaneously strangled and digested.

Organic material (including bone) that is digested by the oasis ooze is dissolved by acidic juices leaving little evidence to reveal its presence. There may however be some non-organic materials that are not digested and instead are expelled from the oasis ooze's body. Spotting some of these materials within an oasis or around the water's edge may be an indicator that an oasis ooze is lurking somewhere in the waters.

Oases come and go in the Bloodstone Marches, and the oasis ooze has adapted to these conditions. It is not uncommon to find an oasis ooze in suspended animation, withdrawn into a rocky depression waiting for the next rainfall. As Quimut warned me it is unwise to handle them while in this state. The mere touch of water or organic material is enough to revive the oasis ooze from its hibernation. However, one can usually handle the oasis ooze in this state with gauntlets or tongs.



Combat

The oasis ooze strikes its intended victims with a pseudopod, attempting to drag them into the water to be crushed and drowned.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability the oasis ooze must hit with its slam attack. If it gets a hold it can constrict.

Acid (Ex): Oasis oozes secrete a digestive acid that dissolves organic material. Any melee hit deals acid damage (1d6). The acid does not harm metal or stone.

Constrict (Ex): Oasis oozes deal automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check.

Blindsight (Ex): An oasis ooze's entire body is a primitive sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent and vibration within 60 feet.



Sadly, we never heard from Professor Staroscik again after his trip out east...

Suspended Animation (Ex): If the oasis ooze has no access to water for a day or food for a month it begins to enter suspended animation in order to conserve energy. For each week that passes the oasis ooze loses 1/10th of its original size (to a minimum of 1/10th) and one temporary Strength point. While in suspended animation the oasis ooze retreats into a crystalline shell, however as soon as water or any organic material comes into contact with the shell, the oasis ooze emerges. Thereafter, the ooze gains 1/10th of its original size and one Strength point back each round until returning to full size. While returning to full size the oasis ooze may only make partial actions.

Transparent (Ex): It takes a successful Spot check (DC 15) to notice a submerged oasis ooze.

Treasure

All manner of adventuring gear might be found inside an oasis ooze or along the edges of its pool. These items will always be restricted to non-organic materials, however.

Oasis oozes are worth quite a bit on the Iron Kingdoms industrial markets. Their worth ranges from 200 gp (for the smallest specimens) to 2,000 gp (for the largest and most dangerous specimens). The oasis oozes if hooked up to the proper devices can be milked for their digestive acids. The milking process is a constant procedure of introducing food into the creature and then draining the digestive juices produced to breakdown the material. The smaller specimens produce up to two flasks of acid each day, while the largest specimens have been known to produce about ten flasks of acid a day. The acid produced in this fashion sells for about 8 gp per flask and has many uses in industries such as printing, manufacturing, and alchemy.

Hooks

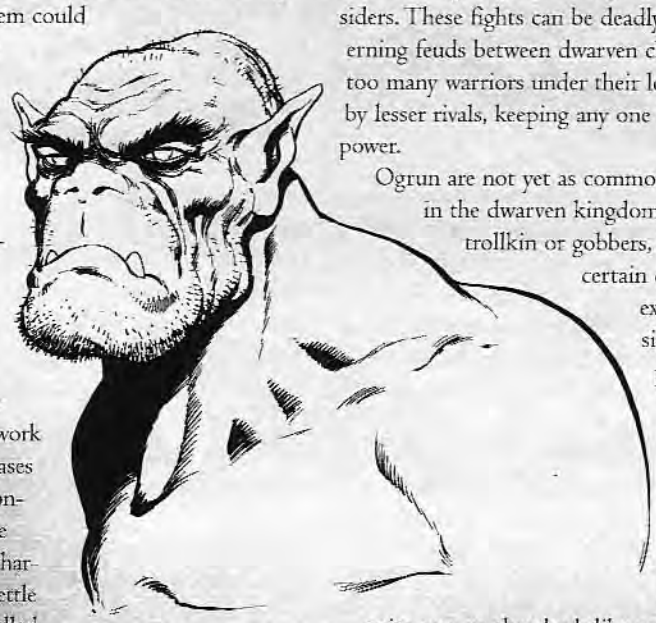
A collector of oddities desires an oasis ooze for his collection and is willing to pay well for it. If the PCs accept the collector's offer, they begin the trip with the collector, his wife, his daughters, his sons, and a few selected guests. Alternatively, a factory owner may wish to recover his own beast so as to avoid the steep fees he is currently paying for industrial acids on the open market.

Ogrun



Large Giant (Ogrun)	
Hit Dice:	*2d8 (9 hp)*
Initiative:	*+4 (+4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*40 ft.*
AC:	*11 (-1 size, +2 natural); or by armor type*
Attacks:	*Halberd +1 melee; or heavy crossbow -1 ranged*
Damage:	*Halberd 1d10+2; or heavy crossbow 1d10*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.*
Saves:	*Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1*
Abilities:	*Str 15, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 10*
Skills:	*Intimidate +5, Jump +5*
Feats:	*Improved Initiative*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any mountains*
Organization:	*Korune gang (2–12), extended family (5–30), conclave (10–100), town (200–1,000)*
Challenge Rating:	*1*
Alignment:	*Usually chaotic good or chaotic evil*
Advancement:	*By character class*

Ever since my cruel enslavement in the mines of the so-called "black ogrun" I have wondered how any species related to them could be so trusted by the dwarves of Rhul. It also puzzled me that there are ogrun in the service of Lord Toruk, dragon tyrant of Cryx; it is hard to imagine two more dissimilar cultures. This was a mystery I felt driven to solve.



There are several ogrun towns in Rhul with well-traveled roads connecting to the dwarven cities and outposts. The ogrun are not as skilled in stonework as their neighbors, but in some cases have bartered for construction contracts. To my eyes their homes are well-built, each extended family sharing a single sizeable keep. They settle in groups of multiple families, called conclaves, with towns numbering a thousand ogrun at most. Patrol duties are divided up among the various korune (a word which translates loosely as "lord" in the Molgur-Og dialect they speak), which preside over the warriors of the community. Becoming a korune is purely a matter of fighting prowess and having earned the loyalty of other ogrun. Once even a single ogrun has sworn fealty to another, that ogrun becomes a korune.

Fights between warriors loyal to different korune are common and arguably more frequent than bloodshed with outsiders. These fights can be deadly and lack the strict rules governing feuds between dwarven clans. Those korune who amass too many warriors under their leadership are often set upon by lesser rivals, keeping any one leader from gaining too much power.

Ogrun are not yet as common in human society as they are in the dwarven kingdom; they are a far rarer sight than trollkin or gobbers, but have gained acceptance in certain communities. Ogrun make excellent laborers due to their size and strength, but also face prejudices by those who view them as primitive and dangerous. They are more likely to be found in Khador and Cygnar than the other kingdoms, generally settling in mountain communities.

Recognizing an ogrun is quite easy, as they look like no other civilized species, standing at least 8 feet in height, sometimes 9, with long arms, strong hands, and muscular bodies always ready for a fight. Ogrun live reasonably long life-spans, almost as long as humans on average, with most living at least to their mid 70s and some rare few as long as 90 years.

Most ogrun worship the same primitive mother-goddess as many trollkin and gobbers—an entity named Dhunia—and

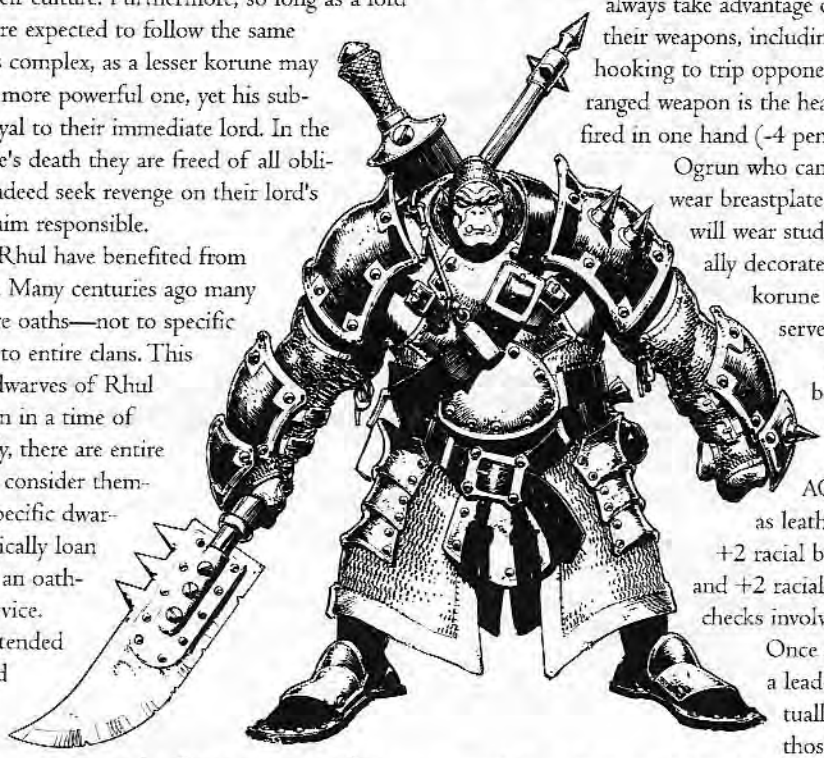
believe their souls are reborn when they die. The ogrun have taken the concept of reincarnation to another level; they believe honor (or lack thereof) in one life influences the next, and their ancestors pay the consequences. To an ogrun the greatest possible dishonor is breaking a sworn allegiance to their korune. However, ogrun are individually highly independent, and it is rare for more than a few dozen to unite under a single lord.

Once ogrun have sworn oaths to a korune, they serve with absolute devotion, and their unwavering loyalty is the most striking aspect of their culture. Furthermore, so long as a lord lives, their progeny are expected to follow the same leader. The system is complex, as a lesser korune may be sworn to an even more powerful one, yet his subordinates are only loyal to their immediate lord. In the event of their korune's death they are freed of all obligations. They may indeed seek revenge on their lord's lord if they believe him responsible.

The dwarves of Rhul have benefited from this ancestral loyalty. Many centuries ago many tribes of ogrun swore oaths—not to specific dwarven lords—but to entire clans. This was done when the dwarves of Rhul saved countless ogrun in a time of famine. Consequently, there are entire tribes of ogrun who consider themselves beholden to specific dwarven clans and periodically loan able warriors (called an oath-tithe) to dwarven service.

This has been extended to amicable trade and mutual protection between the two species. Some ogrun in other kingdoms resent this relationship, but the situation appears to have worked to the benefit of both ogrun and dwarves in Rhul. Ogrun have proven more than able warriors as they have worked side by side with dwarven engineers on constructing tracks and steam engines for rail travel as well as having a knack for fabricating exceptionally precise cannons. In time their reputation as smiths may exceed even that of the dwarves themselves.

I have not investigated the ogrun of Cryx, but I presume they are bound to Lord Toruk by similar ancient promises—Lord Toruk is not only their korune, but also their god. These ogrun have become as vicious and bloodthirsty as their master, and are by all accounts evil to the core. Yet they too demonstrate the same intense loyalty and devotion. The words for betrayal and death are nearly identical in the dialect of these proud people.



Combat

Ogrun are surprisingly fast and nimble despite their size, a fact they use to their advantage. They are known for split second decisions and quick reflexes. Each ogrun fights individually, yet they work together reasonably well when facing adversaries.

They are fond of halberds and other polearms, which they can wield in one hand due to their size, sometimes equipping a large shield in the other. Being well-honed warriors, they will always take advantage of the special qualities of their weapons, including setting for a charge, hooking to trip opponents, etc. Their favored ranged weapon is the heavy crossbow, sometimes fired in one hand (-4 penalty to hit).

Ogrun who can afford the expense will wear breastplate or chainmail, while others will wear studded leather. Armor is usually decorated with the sigil of the korune or dwarven clan they serve.

Ogrun Traits: All ogrun benefit from a number of shared racial traits.

+2 natural bonus to AC, as their skin is as tough as leather.

+2 racial bonus to Intimidate checks and +2 racial bonus to any Craft checks involving working metal.

Once an ogrun swears fealty to a leader or a cause, they are virtually incapable of betraying those oaths (with similar penalties as *lesser geas* if they do). They can choose to disobey specific orders but in all other ways must act in the best interest of the sworn leader or cause.

Treasure

Ogrun are exceptional smiths and are known for high quality weapons as well as armor. Their armor will be too large for even the largest humans to utilize, but their polearms are sometimes masterwork quality. Although they prefer barter and do not mint their own coin, ogrun often keep coinage of the kingdom they call home, either dwarven or human.

Ogrun Characters

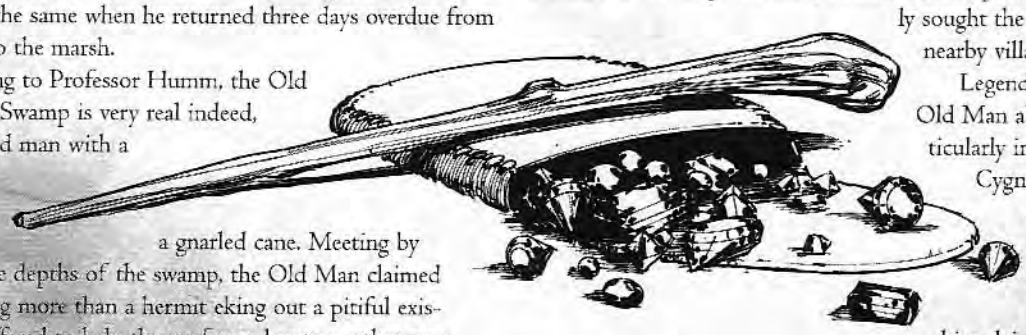
For more on ogrun player characters, consult the playable races appendix (pp. 236).

Old Man of the Swamp

Medium-size Fey (Grymkin)	
Hit Dice:	*5d6+10 (31 hp)*
Initiative:	*+7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural)*
Attacks:	*Touch +2 melee; or cudgel +4 melee*
Damage:	*Touch 1d8; cudgel 1d6+2*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Draining touch, spell-like abilities*
Special Qualities:	*Damage reduction 10/+2, SR 15, swamp magnetism, rejuvenation*
Saves:	*Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +7*
Abilities:	*Str 10, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 19*
Skills:	*Bluff +14, Diplomacy +12, Hide +13, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Spot +11*
Feats:	*Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Hide)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any marsh*
Organization:	*Unique*
Challenge Rating:	*5*
Alignment:	*Chaotic evil*
Advancement:	—

Simeon Slimewort, the Mud King, Old Gray Dick—whatever you call the Old Man of the Swamp, just hope you never cross his path. My colleague, the renowned entomologist Professor Golliber Humm, is the only person I know to claim an encounter with the wicked old geezer of children's stories and survive to tell the tale. Whether or not he imagined it, I must admit poor Humm was never quite the same when he returned three days overdue from that trip into the marsh.

According to Professor Humm, the Old Man of the Swamp is very real indeed, a stooped old man with a kindly face leaning on a gnarled cane. Meeting by chance in the depths of the swamp, the Old Man claimed to be nothing more than a hermit eking out a pitiful existence. He offered to help the professor locate a rather rare specimen of the lesser triple-winged lantern moth, "just a ways into the swamp."



When they reached the location, there was no triple-winged lantern moth to be seen. That is, until the Old Man reached with uncanny quickness into a nearby bush, producing a specimen perfect in all respects. Humm, overjoyed, reached for the creature, and the Old Man nonchalantly brushed hands with him. An odd sensation of weakness passed over him (he attributed it to sheer delight at finding his moth), but he was too overcome with his rare find to give it much thought.

The Old Man offered his hand in congratulation, which the scholar shook with great delight. It was only then he felt a shooting pain run up his arm. Yelping, he summoned his nearby man-at-arms, who charged the Old Man with drawn sword. The Old Man spat a curse at Humm and vanished into the mists of the swamp. Terrified, Humm and his protector quickly sought the safety of a nearby village.

Legends about the Old Man abound, particularly in northern Cygnar. There are even those who claim to have seen him slain; nevertheless, the sightings continue to this day.

Combat

The Old Man of the Swamp attempts to bluff unsuspecting individuals into receiving through trade or any other means an object of value, often a worthless handful of gravel upon which he casts *silent image*. He then attempts a touch attack. The victim does not notice unless a successful Will save (DC 14) is

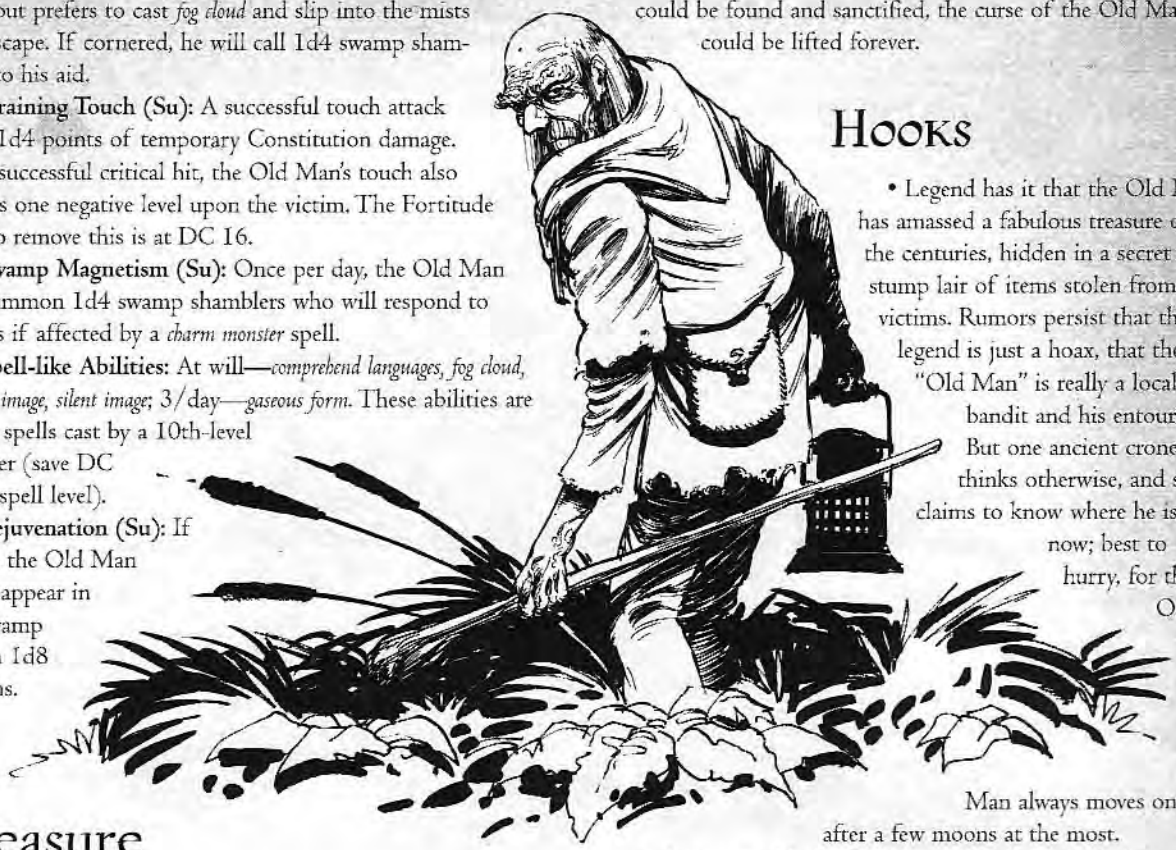
made. He is also capable of attacking with his cudgel (a +2 *club*), but prefers to cast *fog cloud* and slip into the mists and escape. If cornered, he will call 1d4 swamp shamblers to his aid.

Draining Touch (Su): A successful touch attack deals 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage. On a successful critical hit, the Old Man's touch also inflicts one negative level upon the victim. The Fortitude save to remove this is at DC 16.

Swamp Magnetism (Su): Once per day, the Old Man can summon 1d4 swamp shamblers who will respond to him as if affected by a *charm monster* spell.

Spell-like Abilities: At will—*comprehend languages, fog cloud, mirror image, silent image*; 3/day—*gaseous form*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 10th-level sorcerer (save DC 14 + spell level).

Rejuvenation (Su): If killed, the Old Man will reappear in the swamp within 1d8 months.



Treasure

The Old Man's cudgel is a +2 *club*. It will begin to dry-rot once removed from his possession, becoming useless in 1d4 days unless *remove curse* is cast upon it. After the club disintegrates it will reappear in his possession—or another like it, if it is preserved. He will also have on his person 1d6 gems worth between 200 gp and 500 gp each. In his hoard (located in a rotting tree stump) will be found 2d10 gems valued between 200 gp and 1,000 gp He will never venture farther away than one mile from the stump, though he will choose a new location for his hoard every few weeks or months. Over the years he has visited a great deal of the Iron Kingdoms.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: The Old Man of the Swamp is some kind of supernatural being with a deadly touch and a huge stash of treasure.

UNCOMMON: Swamp shamblers seem drawn to the Old Man, and he can control them.

RARE: The Old Man can be defeated, though his body will vanish, and he will reappear in the swamp within the year.

OBSCURE: The Old Man is the spirit of a miserly old baron who once taxed his subjects into starvation. If his resting place could be found and sanctified, the curse of the Old Man could be lifted forever.

Hooks

- Legend has it that the Old Man has amassed a fabulous treasure over the centuries, hidden in a secret tree stump lair of items stolen from his victims. Rumors persist that the legend is just a hoax, that the "Old Man" is really a local bandit and his entourage. But one ancient crone thinks otherwise, and she claims to know where he is now; best to hurry, for the Old Man always moves on after a few moons at the most.
- A teenage girl, the daughter of Watchman Mitchel Filkins is missing; the city watch is convinced she was kidnapped by the Old Man while gathering berries in the forest. A reward for her return is offered.

Note that some grymkin can pass for human.

"In the woods, beware the curse
Or Old Gray Dick will
snatch your purse!"
— Khaelese nursery rhyme

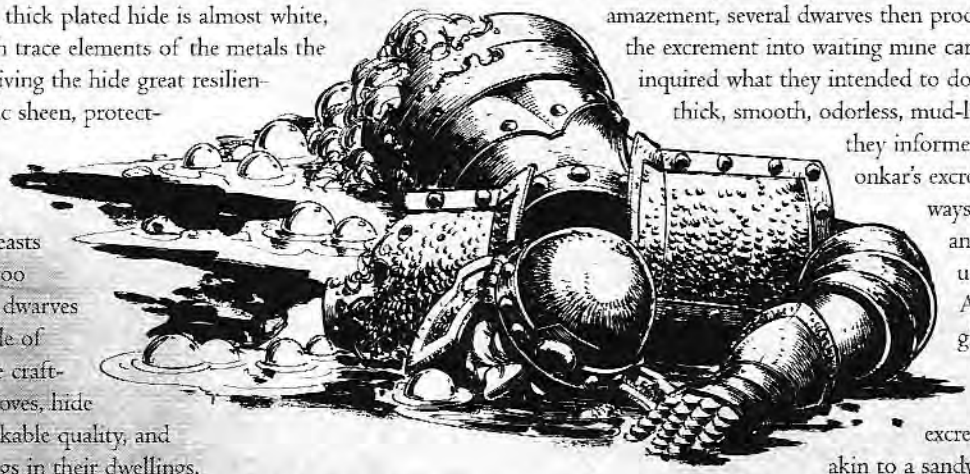
Onkar



Medium-size Aberration	
Hit Dice:	*2d8+5 (14 hp)*
Initiative:	*-1 (-1 Dex)*
Speed:	*20 ft., burrow 10 ft.*
AC:	*17 (-1 Dex, +8 natural)*
Attacks:	*Bite +4 melee*
Damage:	*Bite 2d6+4*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Qualities:	*Blindsight, ore eater, ore seeker, scent*
Saves:	*Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +3*
Abilities:	*Str 16, Dex 8, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 6*
Skills:	*Intuit Direction +4*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any underground*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*2*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*3–4 HD (Medium-size)*

It was during my visit to Rhul that I happened to bear witness to one of Caen's truly beneficial domestic creatures, the peculiar onkar. A beast of singularly ugly aspect, the onkar is a squat biped standing little shorter than most men, but notably broader. My initial observations, reinforced by numerous accounts from my dwarven hosts, also suggests that the rotund creature is little more than a mobile mouth and stomach, albeit ideally suited to burrowing and devouring metals.

The onkar's thick plated hide is almost white, but is laced with trace elements of the metals the onkar ingests, giving the hide great resiliency and a metallic sheen, protecting the creature from tunneling abrasion. Although the beasts are considered too valuable to kill, dwarves do favor the hide of the onkar in the crafting of boots, gloves, hide armor of remarkable quality, and as decorative rugs in their dwellings.



However, what makes the onkar so valuable to the dwarves of Rhul, is its uncanny ability to detect metals of all varieties, particularly large quantities of ore that the dwarves themselves can exploit. Wild onkars subsist on trace elements of metal in soil and the veins of ores they encounter, while domesticated onkars subsist on the metal waste and slag of dwarven productivity, as well as "treats" in the form of the odd metal coin.

Escorted to a mining operation, I proceeded to learn more about this strange beast, watching as it waddled up to the tunnel wall and unhinged its already cavernous maw to take truly staggering bites out of rock and soil. Its small clawed forelimbs moved surprisingly quickly to pass excess soil and stone along its sides. Within moments, the onkar had tunneled a full 6 feet into the rocky soil wall of the tunnel, eating all the while, as dwarven miners worked quickly behind it to shovel out what can only be described as the creature's excrement, produced from the soil ingested only moments earlier. To my amazement, several dwarves then proceeded to load the excrement into waiting mine carts. When I inquired what they intended to do with the thick, smooth, odorless, mud-like substance, they informed me that the onkar's excrement is in all ways like fine clay, and therefore is used as such. Apparently, given a more rocky diet, the onkar's excrement is more akin to a sandy cement and proves very useful in construction work.

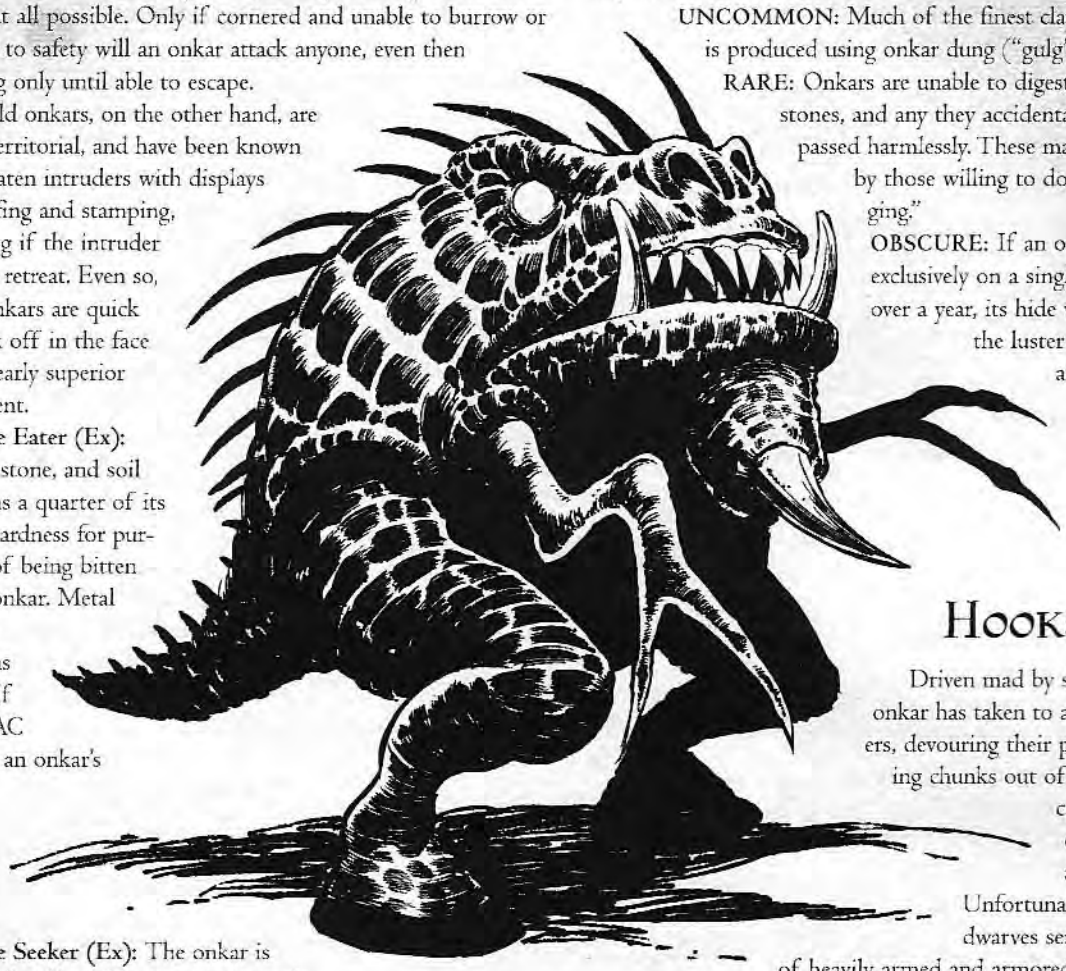
Making my way along the onkar's tunnel, I noticed that the creature started to become excited, drooling large puddles of saliva onto the floor, while hopping from foot to foot. Its handler smiled and gave the onkar two handfuls of mixed coins from a pouch at her belt; the creature had uncovered a vein of iron, hence its sudden hunger and excitement, always a sure sign that significant quantities of metal are nearby.

Combat

Despite their exceptional armor and fearsome bite, dwarf-bred onkars are not willing combatants, preferring to flee danger if at all possible. Only if cornered and unable to burrow or waddle to safety will an onkar attack anyone, even then fighting only until able to escape.

Wild onkars, on the other hand, are more territorial, and have been known to threaten intruders with displays of huffing and stamping, charging if the intruder fails to retreat. Even so, wild onkars are quick to back off in the face of a clearly superior opponent.

Ore Eater (Ex): Metal, stone, and soil only has a quarter of its usual hardness for purposes of being bitten by an onkar. Metal armor only has one half of its AC against an onkar's bite.



Ore Seeker (Ex): The onkar is able to "sniff out" large quantities of metal within the air or soil within a number of feet equal to 50 times its Wisdom score.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Onkars eat metals, and the dwarves train them to help locate ores and create tunnels.

UNCOMMON: Much of the finest claywork in Rhul is produced using onkar dung ("gulg" in Rhulic).

RARE: Onkars are unable to digest precious stones, and any they accidentally ingest are passed harmlessly. These may be recovered by those willing to do a little "digging."

OBSCURE: If an onkar were fed exclusively on a single metal for over a year, its hide would take on the luster and appearance of that metal, while remaining as easy to work as normal animal hide.

Hooks

Driven mad by sickness, a wild onkar has taken to attacking miners, devouring their pick heads, biting chunks out of metal minecarts, and otherwise causing a nuisance. Unfortunately, the dwarves sent in a squad of heavily armed and armored warriors to deal with the beast, and none have returned. All that metal plate and weaponry…

Treasure

A trained onkar, being so useful for ore location, tunneling, clay and cement production, or metal waste disposal, is obviously a valuable commodity. Such creatures sell for upwards of 450 gp or more.

The hide of an onkar typically fetches 100 gp, and can be used as a fine rug, in the creation of sturdy, attractive boots and gloves, or for masterwork hide armor.

Onkar clay sells for 1 sp per pound, and onkar cement sells for 5 cp per pound.

I don't care what the dwarves say... I'm not eating off onkar-clay plates.
VP

Pistol Wraith

Medium-size Undead (Incorporeal)	
Hit Dice:	*7d12 (84 hp)*
Initiative:	*+10* (+6 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*20 (+6 Dex, +4 deflection)*
Attacks:	*Pistol +17/+12 ranged*
Damage:	*Pistol 2d6+5*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Bullets of the grave, energy drain, lightning draw/reload*
Special Qualities:	*Incorporeal, +7 turn resistance, undead*
Saves:	*Fort +2, Ref +11, Will +2*
Abilities:	*Str 16, Dex 22, Con —, Int 14, Wis 7, Cha 18*
Skills:	*Bluff +7, Craft (small arms) +16, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (firearms) +12, Listen +6, Sense Motive +7, Spot +7*
Feats:	*Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (small arms), Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Weapon Focus (small arms), Weapon Specialization (small arms)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*9*
Alignment:	*Always lawful evil*
Advancement:	*8–15 HD (Medium-size)*

There are many tales across the Iron Kingdoms of restless spirits, however, one of the most compelling is the tale of Lach Bradig. Bradig was a regular in the Cygnaran military, and because of his exceptional skill he had been assigned to a corps of riflemen. Bradig's troops won many victories, although by circumstance these were all minor skirmishes. This didn't satisfy Bradig at all. He was a glory hound and, obsessed with his own marksmanship, had to prove his skill to the entire world. Eventually his surliness got out of hand, and he was dishonorably discharged from the service.

This only made things worse. Bradig lost himself to anger and plotted to avenge himself by methodically killing every member of his former troupe in a marksman's duel. And this is just what he did. Bradig, a Khadoran by ancestry, enacted a form of duel called "*kilbricht*." This was a ritualized form of archer's duel that was performed by a small number of isolated tribes in northern Khador in days of old. It was always performed close to midnight on the eve of a full moon in an isolated area. I don't know how Bradig enticed or (more likely) forced all of his former comrades into such a duel, but he shot down every one of them.



Eventually an unknown gunman killed Bradig, but that wasn't the end for him. He arose from the grave, a spectral shadow of his former self. He now stalks all of the Iron Kingdoms challenging well-known marksmen to *kilbricht* duels. Those that accept never make it back alive; those that refuse are gunned down as cowards.

What's worse is that it seems that some of Bradig's victims have arisen as undead pistol wraiths as well. They too are now stalking the Iron Kingdoms, bringing death to pistoleers and sometimes even other innocents across the land. I'm only glad that my skills with a pistol were never much to speak of, as I'd surely hate to face a mad spirit such as this one.

Combat

Pistol wraiths will always seek opponents out and challenge them to a *kilbricht*-style duel. Those that accept participate in a fairly traditional duel, despite the unusual setting. The wraiths will attempt to use their lightning draw ability to shoot their opponent down quickly. If they miss they will keep reloading as per lightning reload until they shoot them dead. Those who refuse to duel are typically gunned down in a public place. Do note that on rare occasions pistol wraiths have been known to target other seemingly innocent victims as well, though the reasons are unknown; regardless, all are still challenged to enter a duel.

Bullets of the Grave (Su): Although incorporeal entities, the bullets that pistol wraiths fire become real once discharged (though magical with a +3 bonus). Additionally, the weapon that fires these bullets is considered to be a *+3 military pistol of wounding*. The powder and ammunition supply is endless, though the wraith must still load the pistol regularly. These items are a part of the pistol wraith's being and may not be removed from him by any means.

Energy Drain (Su): Living beings struck by one of a pistol wraith's bullets suffer one negative level. A Fortitude save (DC 17) removes this. Those who are killed by this attack while fleeing rise as pistol wraiths themselves; those killed while standing their ground and following through with the duel are spared the peace of a quick death.

Lightning Draw/Reload (Ex): *A pistol wraith is so skilled in the art of the duel that he may draw and fire his pistol as if he had taken a refocus initiative action without spending the preceding round assessing the combat situation, as is normally required (thus his initiative is effectively 30). Furthermore, it only takes one a move-equivalent action to reload.



Are ya feelin lucky, punk?

Treasure

A pistol wraith carries no treasure. However, any bullet fired by a wraith remains in perfect condition and may be reused by another marksman as a normal bullet (powder and such still required). The bullets bear a +3 enchantment to damage; they also add one extra damage die and increase the critical multiplier by one. Ammunition with that power would be quite valuable, although most marksmen wouldn't dare tempt fate by using such a potentially cursed object.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Those who fancy themselves to be deadly pistoleers may be sought out by a restless spirit. A number of them stalk the land, challenging skilled marksmen to ill-fated duels.

UNCOMMON: There are a number of restless pistol wraiths, but the original was a gunman named Lach Bradig. Some of those he slays become spirits themselves, though Bradig is the most powerful of his kind.

RARE: Those who accept these duels seldom live, yet those who refuse are gunned down as well. What's more, those who die fleeing are cursed to rise up as a pistol wraith as well.

OBSCURE: The man who shot Bradig down was none other than Corvis's Julian Helstrom, and Bradig is intensely afraid of him. Those aware of this speculate that only a bullet from Helstrom's pistol will put Bradig to rest for good. What happens to the rest of the pistol wraiths after Bradig dies is anyone's guess.

Hooks

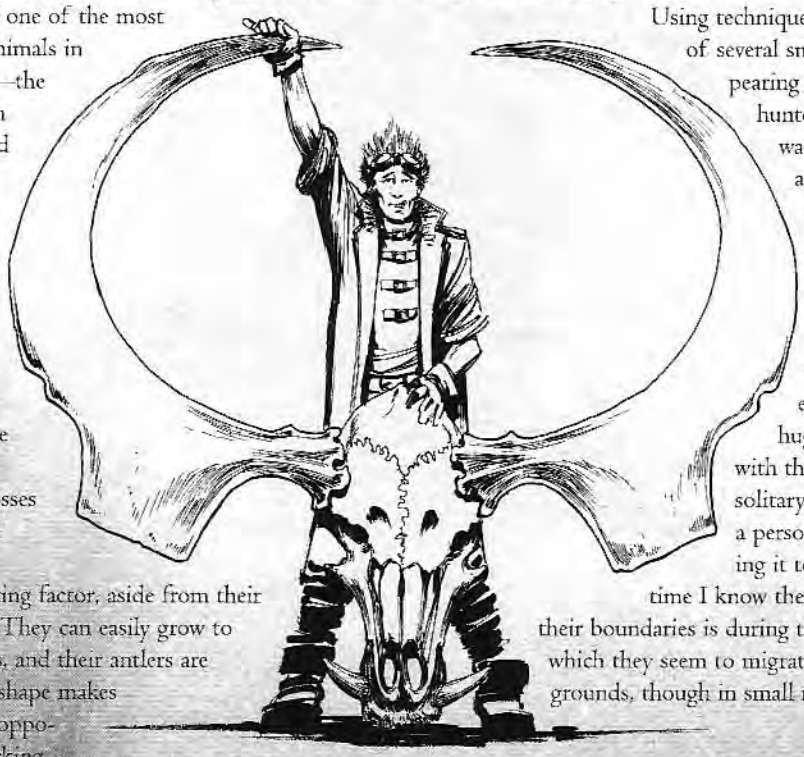
A young promising regular in the Cygnaran military has just received his third award for excellent marksmanship . . . and Lach Bradig has also just challenged him to a duel. The regular believes that if he can obtain a charm that will protect him from the walking dead and wear it until the next full moon, Bradig will leave him alone. Unfortunately, he needs some help finding such a charm.

Raevhan Buffalo



Huge Animal	
Hit Dice:	*9d8+45 (86 hp)*
Initiative:	*+1 (+1 Dex)*
Speed:	*40 ft.*
AC:	*15 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +6 natural)*
Attacks:	*Butt +10 melee; or 2 stomps +10 melee*
Damage:	*Butt 2d6+6; or stomp 1d6+6*
Face/Reach:	*15 ft. by 15 ft./10 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Rage, trample*
Special Qualities:	*Scent, stealth*
Saves:	*Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +0*
Abilities:	*Str 23, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 4*
Skills:	*Move Silently +12, Listen +5, Hide +4**
Climate/Terrain:	*Forests and temperate plains*
Organization:	*Solitary*
Challenge Rating:	*6*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*9–12 HD (Huge)*

On the occasional junk hauls my father dragged me on as a boy across the forests and plains of Khador, I learned of one of the most aggressive animals in all the Iron Kingdoms—the temperamental Raevhan buffalo. They are named for a lake that is a central migratory area during their mating season, but those placid waters don't reflect the nature of these beasts at all. Under normal circumstances these buffalo are docile and rather calm. However, when one crosses into their area they will defend it relentlessly.



The most intimidating factor, aside from their fury, is their sheer size. They can easily grow to 20 feet at the shoulders, and their antlers are enormous; their broad shape makes them great for butting opponents, digging, and marking trees. In build they are massive and rather boxy. Despite this size, however, they can be amazingly stealthy and will stalk trespassers before charging them. They are more common in forests, but they have made territories for themselves on the Khadoran plains too (where, thankfully, they can't put their stealth to much use).

Using techniques of the Andulhar, one of several small and quickly disappearing native Khadoran hunter-gatherer families, I was able to mask my scent and venture into one of these creature's territories to observe it. Despite their fury they are grazing and foraging animals, and they seem to greatly enjoy dust baths in the huge burrows they dig with their antlers. They are solitary creatures, marking off a personal territory and keeping it to themselves. The only time I know them to venture beyond their boundaries is during the mating season, in which they seem to migrate to seasonal mating grounds, though in small numbers.

Combat

Raevhan buffalo are usually rather docile creatures, but they are extremely territorial. When any creature enters its territory,

it becomes enraged and chases after the trespasser violently until they are killed or run off, although it quite frequently continues pursuing opponents well beyond its domain. It is known to stalk trespassers and then ambush them, although once it rages all stealth is forsaken. It will usually open with a charge attack.

Rage (Ex): Any creature that attacks a Raevhan buffalo while inside its territorial area causes it to go into a berserk rage that ends in the death of one or the other; additionally, however, there is a 50% chance that the buffalo will rage at even the mere sight/scent of an intruder in its domain. There is a 75% chance a raging buffalo will continue to pursue opponents well beyond its territory. The buffalo gains +4 Str, +4 Con, and -2 AC during the rage.

Stealth (Ex): The Raevhan buffalo can be surprisingly quiet for its size; they receive a +6 racial bonus to Move Silently checks. Additionally, they gain a +6 circumstance bonus to Hide checks in dense forest.

Trample (Ex): The Raevhan buffalo can trample Medium-size or smaller opponents for 2d8+9 points of damage. Victims who fail to make an attack of opportunity may make a Reflex save (DC 21) for half damage.



Treasure

The Raevhan buffalo keeps no treasure of its own. Although they are difficult to hunt, the rare and disappearing Khadoran plains people have made a science of it, and the bounty the beast provides can feed a family for weeks. Their antlers make excellent material for tools and weapons. It has a hardness of 6 with 12 hp per inch of thickness, and it grants a +2 circumstance bonus to all Craft checks made to work it. A raw antler would sell for as much as 100–200 gp, while materials crafted of it might sell for 10–15% greater than market value; the more artistically crafted items of the native peoples can sell for much more.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Raevhan buffalo are extremely territorial and temperamental creatures that attack anything that enters their area.

UNCOMMON: They mark off their areas by digging ruts into trees with their antlers, rubbing their musk all over them in the process. These trees are a surefire way of knowing a buffalo is nearby.

RARE: These buffalo are actually inactive during the mid part of the day, and one has a good chance of sneaking by their territory during that time.

OBSCURE: Raevhan buffalo are unusually tolerant of the Khadoran burrow rat (not a true rat, mind you), and one may disguise their scent with the musk of these creatures to pass through a buffalo's territory unharmed.

Hooks

Usha Makara, the eldest of the waning Andulhar plains family is entering into her last days, and she must make her pilgrimage to the family's ancestral gravesite. This trip must be made on a stretcher made of the antler and hide of a Raevhan buffalo. Unfortunately, most of the family's warriors are lame or old and cannot bring one down. They are looking for someone who can help them take down one of these creatures so that Usha can make her trip.

Do you see how it lifts its nose towards the rising sun? That is because they can smell the coming sunlight. The day that the Raevhan fail to look towards the rising sun will be the first day of the Ravaging, as prophesied in ancient times. For my people, I think that day is coming soon, my friend.

— Asad Makara, the last of the Andulhar warriors

Must research this "Ravaging." Sounds bad.
-VP

Rusalka



Medium-size Fey (Grymkin)	
Hit Dice:	*1d6+3 (6 hp)*
Initiative:	*+1 (+1 Dex)*
Speed:	*30 ft., swim 20 ft.*
AC:	*11 (+1 Dex)*
Attacks:	*Dagger +0 melee*
Damage:	*Dagger 1d4+1 and poison*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Unearthly laughter*
Special Qualities:	*Spell-like abilities*
Saves:	*Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +3*
Abilities:	*Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 15*
Skills:	*Bluff +6, Disguise +6, Escape Artist +5, Intuit Direction +5, Hide +5, Knowledge (nature) +4, Listen +7, Move Silently +5, Spot +7, Wilderness Lore +5*
Feats:	*Alertness, Toughness*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any marsh*
Organization:	*Solitary or covey (2–3)*
Challenge Rating:	*3*
Alignment:	*Always chaotic evil*
Advancement:	*2–4 HD (Medium-size)*

Known as rusalka, or occasionally as "bog nymphs," these malicious creatures make the marshes of the Iron Kingdoms (especially those of Khador) their home. They are said to be the spirits of young women or girls who have succumbed to the hazards of the swamps. I, however, have found them to be less lost souls and more maligned spirits.

The rusalka's natural appearance is quite grotesque—a warped and cruel visage sitting atop the shapely body of a woman. They rarely appear in their natural state, however, and often take upon themselves the guise of a beautiful lass, using glamours to appear as a member of whatever race suits their purpose.

Able to change the very appearance of a landscape, the rusalka weaves her powerful illusions like a spider spins her webs. She can make a road look like a wetland and a wetland look like a road. She can make a pool of quicksand appear as a peaceful glade to stay the night in (a glamour that once cost me a driver and an entire chest of priceless Orgoth texts).

Not a few have perished by this pitiless creature's deceptions, but a rusalka has more than just her glamours to kill you with. Her dagger, for one, drips poison, and her unsettling laughter can stagger even the sturdiest of men.

While traveling the bogs and marshes of the Iron Kingdoms, be wary of anything that seems out of sorts, lest you find yourself at the mercy of a rusalka.



Combat

Rusalkas avoid combat whenever possible, only entering into it to protect themselves or their dens. They use their unearthly laughter to stun opponents—either to gain time to get away, strike with their dagger, or both.

Unearthly Laughter (Su): Once per day, the rusalka can emit an unearthly laughter that causes all who are within 30 feet to make a Will save (DC 12) or be stunned for 1d4+2 rounds. Note that the subject must be able to hear the unearthly laughter in order to be affected by it.

Spell-like Abilities: At will—*change self*; 1/day—*hallucinatory terrain*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 10th-level sorcerer (save DC 12 + spell level).

Treasure

Rusalka Blade: A *rusalka blade* is an enchanted *+1 dagger* that drips with magically produced venom. Each blade is bond-

ed to a particular rusalka (storing her soul if she is slain) and will not work for anyone else, instead acting and appearing as an ordinary dagger, though a *detect magic* spell will indicate that it is magical in nature. Any female humanoid touching the dagger must make a Will save (DC 17, 19 for those who have been possessed before) or be affected by a *magic jar* spell as cast by a 10th-level sorcerer; the dagger is the receptacle for this spell. If the attack succeeds, then the soul of the rusalka takes over the victim's body and the dagger regains its magical properties until such time as the victim regains control or is slain, whereupon the rusalka's soul returns to its place inside the blade. A female humanoid that successfully saves is immune to the attacks of the *rusalka blade* for a year and a day.

In order to return to her true form the creature must return to the place where she was "born" (which may or may not be where the rusalka was slain) and drown the victim. Once dead, the woman's body splits open and the rusalka is reborn. Destroying the blade before the rusalka is reborn restores the woman's soul to her body and destroys the creature's.

The dagger is usually made out of antler or bone and its poison deals 1d6 initial and secondary temporary Constitution damage. Each instance of damage can be negated by a successful Fortitude save (DC 12). This ability is limited to 3 times per day.

A *rusalka blade* is a rarity in the open market due to its malicious nature and the limitations of its magical power. A collector of oddities however, may be willing to purchase one for as much as 7,000 gp.

Hooks

A gentleman's daughter has gone missing, and the PCs are requested to help in the search for her. They are asked to return with her or at the least with news of her. Of course what the PCs don't know is that the lady in question has been taken over by the soul of a rusalka and is heading toward her "birthplace." Can the PCs save the gentlemen's daughter from the fate that awaits her? Are they already too late?



Saqu



Large Animal			*Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6*
Hit Dice:	*5d8+15 (37 hp)*	***Skills:***	*Listen +9, Spot +9*
Initiative:	*+1 (Dex)*	***Feats:***	*Multiattack*
Speed:	*30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)*		
AC:	*14 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural)*	***Climate/Terrain:***	*Temperate mountains, hill, and plains*
Attacks:	*Bite +6 melee, 2 claws +4 melee*	***Organization:***	*Solitary or pair*
Damage:	*Bite 2d6+4, claw 2d8+2*	***Challenge Rating:***	*4*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.*	***Alignment:***	*Always neutral*
Special Attacks:	*Ravage*	***Advancement:***	*6–8 HD (Large); 9–15 HD (Huge)*
Saves:	*Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +3*		
Abilities:	*Str 18, Dex 13, Con 16,*		

Although I've not yet had the opportunity to study one in great detail, I believe the saqu to be a rather large member of the raptor family of birds. Standing some fifteen feet tall, these semi-flightless avians eat anything smaller than them that they can catch. Usually this is limited to wild hoofed animals if the birds are ranging in the plains or large rock lizards if they are ranging in mountainous areas. If a saqu should chance upon some delectable humanoids wandering in its territory, then it will certainly take the opportunity to add some variety to its diet.

Saqu stand roughly three times taller than a man and are bilateral in their coloration. Their dorsal side is dark gray in color, and the ventral is a whitish-tan. The light-colored underside is no doubt an adaptation that helps to confuse their prey, as it allows the bird to blend in with the skies overhead as it swoops down upon its quarry. The bird's head is topped by a crest of feathers that stand erect when the bird is in a state of excitement, be it courting a mate or hunting an over-inquisitive scholar who wants nothing more than to study the magnificent beast.

The saqu probably mate for life as many birds do. Though I've never seen a juvenile saqu, much less a nest, I believe they nest on high rock ledges or similarly well-hidden locales. They probably lay clutches of 2–3 eggs in a large nest composed of feathers and branches.



Combat

Saqu are not taken to soaring as many birds of prey do; they instead perch on high cliff faces or hide amongst tall foliage while looking for prey. They then swoop down upon their prey, pinning it to the ground while they snap at it with their powerful beak. Often this will stun or kill the prey immediately. They will also dash their stunned prey against large rocks or fling it several yards to further injure it.

Ravage (Ex): A saqu that hits with a claw attack against a creature of Medium-size or less may attempt a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of oppor-

tunity as though it had the improved grab ability. Once it achieves a hold, it may fly off with the prey and automatically make a bite attack each round in lieu of a claw attack. It also gets this automatic bite attack if it chooses to stay grounded, as the prey is now pinned under one (or both) of its massive claws.

The saqu can drop a grabbed creature as a free action or toss it as a standard action. Flung creatures travel 20 feet and take 2d6 points of damage. The saqu will often leap upon the unfortunate creature again if it still moves.



Legends & Lore

COMMON: Saqu are essentially enormous, semi-flightless hawks.
UNCOMMON: Saqu are not necessarily man-eaters; they're just not very particular.
RARE: Saqu are sometimes drawn to shiny objects.
OBSCURE: A significant part of the saqu mating ritual is the presentation of impressive food by the male to the female. This coupled with their fondness for shiny objects spells bad news for adventurers in metal armor. Time to cover up that chainmail!

Treasure

There are many parts of the saqu that may fetch a fair price in the market. Their tail feathers, while not fanciful, are enormous in size and can be made into great fans or dyed and fashioned into all manner or decorations. Their sharp talons can be made into a crude spear if lashed to a pole. As many carnivorous birds do, saqu regurgitate indigestible portions of their food in the form of compact, oblong pellets. These pellets often contain small items of interest if the saqu has partaken of any humans in their diet. Anyone lucky enough to locate a saqu nest—particularly from a pair that has taken to eating humans—is in for a real find. There will undoubtedly be discovered all manner of small, human-wrought objects which have fallen deep into the large branches that make up the nest.

Hooks

- The PCs are part of a caravan traveling though some grasslands bordered by an imposing mountain range. As they pass particularly close to the range, a male saqu swoops down and snatches a member of the caravan, possibly a PC. It's a race against time now, as the PCs must hurry to their comrade's aid before the saqu's mate or hatchlings devour him.
- A rich but eccentric Llaelese merchant is in the market for living saqu eggs. He's paying well, but no one is sure just what he's up to. In reality, the mad merchant plans on raising saqu on farms to harvest their meat and featheres. The entrepreneur will meet an untimely (and somewhat amusing) demise a few months later while trying to ride a "tame" saqu, and the PCs may be called on to help deal with a farm full of angry giant birds.

Satyxis



Medium-size Humanoid (Satyxis)	
Hit Dice:	*1d8+1 (5 hp)*
Initiative:	*+2 (+2 Dex)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*15 (+2 Dex, +3 studded leather)*
Attacks:	*Longsword +1 melee*
Damage:	*Longsword 1d8+1*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Headbutt*
Special Qualities:	*Darkvision 30 ft., beguile*
Saves:	*Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +0*
Abilities:	*Str 13, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14*
Skills:	*Bluff +3, Gather Information +4, Innuendo +1, Intimidate +3, Jump +2*
Feats:	*Power Attack*
Climate/Terrain:	*Warm land or warm seas*
Organization:	*Solitary (Chosen of Toruk 10th-level+), cohort (1d6 human pirates and one 2nd-level Satyxis), raid (2 cohorts and one 4th-level Satyxis), crew (3 raids and one 8th-level Satyxis)*
Challenge Rating:	*1*
Alignment:	*Usually neutral evil*
Advancement:	*By character class*

Whistling blades, pistol shots, and the booming of cannons rang around my ears the first time I engaged a Satyxis battle-witch. pirates had boarded our ship, and a fierce woman of unearthly beauty was leading the raid. Despite the thunder and racket, her presence was stunning. Her stance was that of a master, her blade moving with lightning speed. Her lithe form and perfect beauty were marred only by the horns that protruded from her brow.

As she kicked a Cygnaran marine off the length of her sword, our eyes met. In that moment, amongst the smell of spent gun charges and coppery blood, I felt absolutely lost in her gaze. She seemed to ignore the battle around her and came at me, her weapon poised to end my life. I defended myself with all of my skill, though I could not take my eyes off her.

Luckily, a steam frigate from Mercir interrupted the raid with a blast of grapeshot. The last I saw of the Satyxis was her raven hair flowing behind her as she leapt to the deck of her own ship. I still remember her face as clearly as if the battle happened yesterday. I have never seen anything more beautiful and terrifying.



The Satyxis are an ancient warrior race. Once famous for their honorable traditions and prowess in battle, they led a life of conflict and heroism. As it happens, a fight between Toruk and the dragon Shazkz devastated the homeland of the Satyxis centuries ago. Dragon fire and spilled dragon blood tainted the land and ultimately the Satyxis bloodline as well. The women survived somehow, but the men were rendered monstrous and deformed. Over the ages this dragon-blight has crept further into their blood, making the women strong and the men now non-existent.

After the blight took hold, Satyxis women learned it was best to mate exclusively outside of their own bloodline. Myth and record show that they often choose to seduce their most capable opponents (traditionally known as chosen) into fathering their children. Once with child, the Satyxis mother leaves the chosen male and retreats to her homeland to give birth. Daughters are treated as

warriors with a birthright—the sons are brutally sacrificed.

Today, the Satyxis homeland is lost, though it is thought to be close to Cryx. In the modern day, the women the Orgoth called "reaver witches" are well known on that dark isle and the surrounding waters. Select daughters are chosen by Toruk to serve his will as assassins or worse. Pirate crews also value the Satyxis as elite officers—Axiara Wraithblade is perhaps the most infamous and reviled up and down the Broken Coast.



Combat

The Satyxis are imbued with an unnatural grace, and most are highly skilled in swordplay. If during a battle a Satyxis discovers her chosen, she engages him in a ritual battle. This sword dance tests the skill of the man, and should he have the mettle, she will beguile him with her charms and take him as loot.

Headbutt (Ex): A common trick used to deadly effect is to lull a man close enough to make him think he will receive a kiss. This cunning ploy lures a man into a painful reward. A satyxis headbutt that does maximum damage dazes the opponent. A Fortitude save (DC 12) is required or the subject is dazed and loses one round of actions.

Beguile (Su): The feminine beauty of the Satyxis can entrance male opponents. Once per day a Satyxis can affect a single man as if using *hypnotism*. The spell is maximized, as per the Maximize Spell feat, and is cast at the effective level of the Satyxis. Subjects with more than 8 hit dice cannot be affected by this ability. Females are immune.

Satyxis Characters

The Satyxis favored class is fighter. Satyxis leaders are typically fighter/sorcerers.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: The Satyxis are a race of warrior women found near the Shattered Coast between Cygnar and Cryx.

UNCOMMON: Beware what sailors call the "Satyxis' kiss." It is a savage headbutt.

RARE: The Satyxis dwell on a hidden isle in the waters between Cygnar and Cryx. This isle is a dangerous jungle, filled with treacherous creatures. In the center is the city of Satyx.

OBSCURE: Satyxis males are sacrificed to keep the bloodline strong. Should a chosen man father a Satyxis son, he must also be found and sacrificed. This is done in a rite to further strengthen the Satyxis bloodline.

Treasure

Satyxis that have mated with a chosen often leave valued trinkets or gold as a reward for the services of their chosen. There is a 10% per level (of the chosen) chance that the item left behind will be magical. These gifts are often carefully selected and usually pertinent to the class of the chosen.

Hooks

A man contacts the players claiming to know the location of the Isle of Satyx. The man does in fact know where the island is—he has spent a year trying to find the woman who beguiled him and left him heartbroken. He wishes to find her and their daughter. Of course, he doesn't have to let the party know that.

Screecher

Tiny Beast	
Hit Dice:	*1d10-1 (4 hp)*
Initiative:	*+4 (+4 Dex)*
Speed:	*40 ft.*
AC:	*18 (+2 size, +4 Dex, +2 natural)*
Attacks:	*Bite +1 melee, 2 claws -4 melee*
Damage:	*Bite 1d4-1, claw 1d2-1*
Face/Reach:	*2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Sonic shriek*
Saves:	*Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +0*
Abilities:	*Str 8, Dex 19, Con 8, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 4*
Skills:	*Hide +11, Move Silently +12*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any forest*
Organization:	*Pack (5–20)*
Challenge Rating:	*2*
Alignment:	*Always chaotic neutral*
Advancement:	*2 HD (Tiny); 3–4 HD (Small)*

Nothing could lead a more bizarre existence than the screecher, a small carnivorous quadruped inhabiting the forests of Cygnar and Khador. They can be recognized by their flatish, wedge-shaped heads, widely spaced eyes, two-clawed feet, and short stumpy tails, and there couldn't be a more irritating beastie to be found in the wilds.

Screechers spend their day tracking larger animals—not to mention unsuspecting explorers innocently going about their business—through the bush. The nasty little monsters are silent as the grave as they creep about behind their prey. They wait until the victim stops for a quiet moment, perhaps to sleep or graze (or to rest upon a log in a serene sunny spot to light one's pipe). Then the vicious little vermin, having crept close by their prey, emit such a furious shriek as to terrify the victim half out of his wits.

I have observed the horrid screechers stun much larger animals with the blast, then attack in a pack, tearing it to bits with their claws and fangs.

They may not sound much of a threat to a well-armed group, but I warn you that the effect of a fright in the woods can be devastating. My venerable friend and guide of many years, Tumalok (Morrow favor his soul), had slain many a daunting foe in his career. But poor Tumalok had stopped to, er, relieve himself in the woods—had his need not been so great and his bladder so old he might have paid heed to the pack on his trail. Alas, the old tracker's heart could not withstand the shock of being so rudely surprised.

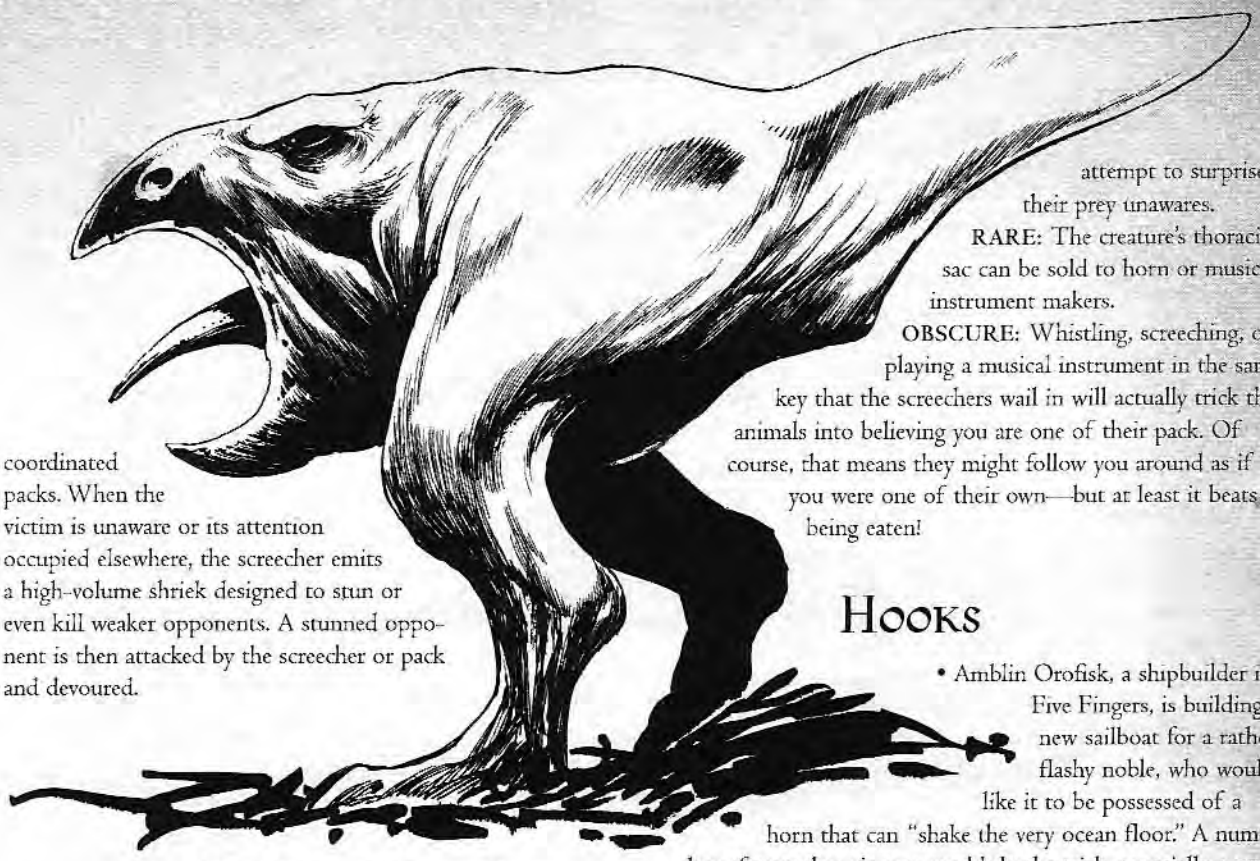


Ordic pipes: musical instrument or torture implement? Either way, thank the screecher.

The only thing of value that they possess is the lung-like organ they use to produce the harmful blast. The large sac found in the creature's thorax is prized for its use in creating Llaelese bagpipes and foghorns on great steamships (little difference there, I might add.) One in good condition can be sold to the right buyer, usually in a port town.

Combat

Screechers follow their prey through the forest, hiding in the thick undergrowth and moving silently, often hunting in



coordinated packs. When the victim is unaware or its attention occupied elsewhere, the screecher emits a high-volume shriek designed to stun or even kill weaker opponents. A stunned opponent is then attacked by the screecher or pack and devoured.

Sonic Shriek (Ex): The screecher can emit a sonic shriek twice per day loud enough to stun opponents who fail their Fortitude save (DC 12) for 1d4 rounds. Those with Constitution of 12 or less who fail a saving throw must save again at –4 (DC 16) or become unconscious for 1d4 rounds. Those with a Constitution of 6 or less must make a third saving throw at +4 (DC 8) or die instantly of heart failure. Opponents who are aware of the screecher receive a +8 bonus to each saving throw. Creatures with no living metabolism are immune to the effect.

Treasure

Screechers carry no treasure. The air sacs with which they generate a blast of air are worth between 25 and 100 gp—usually more if they are sold in a port town where boat horns or sirens are in higher demand. Killing a screecher with a piercing or slashing weapon will destroy the air sac 75% of the time.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Screechers are frustrating creatures that stun prey by screeching; they can be found in many forests.

UNCOMMON: Screechers travel in packs, and they will always attempt to surprise their prey unawares.

RARE: The creature's thoracic sac can be sold to horn or musical instrument makers.

OBSCURE: Whistling, screeching, or playing a musical instrument in the same key that the screechers wail in will actually trick the animals into believing you are one of their pack. Of course, that means they might follow you around as if you were one of their own—but at least it beats being eaten!

Hooks

- Amblin Orofisk, a shipbuilder in Five Fingers, is building a new sailboat for a rather flashy noble, who would like it to be possessed of a horn that can "shake the very ocean floor." A number of screecher air sacs would do the trick, especially a very big one, and there's a reward for bringing in two dozen of the things.
- Gymnoddy the master piper is opening a college. He needs three dozen air sacs from screechers, only that greedy shipwright Amblin Orofisk seems to be buying up all in a 100-mile radius. Bringing him as many as one can (no questions asked) will garner a rich reward.

I'm not sure, the screecher's shriek or the "musical" instruments produced from their air sacs. If I never hear Sidic pipes again it will be too soon.

VP

Sepulchral Lurker



Large Undead	
Hit Dice:	8d12+3 (55 hp)
Initiative:	+5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed:	40 ft., burrow 10 ft.
AC:	14 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural)
Attacks:	2 claws +8, bite +3 melee
Damage:	Claw 1d6+5, bite 1d8+2
Face/Reach:	5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Breath weapon, create spawn, frightful presence, improved grab, rend
Special Qualities:	Undead, damage reduction 5/+1, resistant to blows
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +7
Abilities:	Str 21, Dex 13, Con, —, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 14
Skills:	Hide +0*, Listen +12, Move Silently +12, Spot +12
Feats:	Improved Initiative, Toughness
Climate/Terrain:	Any desert and underground
Organization:	Solitary (plus 2–20 skeletons of various types under its control)
Challenge Rating:	9
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	9–16 HD (Large); 17–32 HD (Huge); 33–50 HD (Gargantuan)

Sepulchral lurkers were created to guard tombs, temples, and other places of import found in the Bloodstone Marches. Most sepulchral lurkers are linked to a particular place, although my guide Quimut has told me that some of these creatures roam the Bloodstone Marches freely.

Sepulchral lurkers are frightening creatures, the mere sight of which is enough to shake most men's resolve. They are hunch-backed beasts that stand 8 to 9 feet tall with clawed and powerful arms. Their skin (where there is any) is a dull reddish color, and their bones are dark ochre red. Where their monstrous heart should be a humanoid heart beats, pulsing with powerful necromantic magic.



Sepulchral lurkers are found where treasure, sand, and skeletons meet, and such was the case when a group of adventurers and myself ran into one in the remains of a ruined tomb. Quimut warned against our entering, but hungry for the knowledge we were seeking, we pressed him to go forward. After winding our way into the ruin, we came to a place where the sandstone floors gave way to the mingled sight of ancient sand and scattered skeletons. Quimut said he would go no further. I agreed, but two of our comrades, Gable Hornt and Figan Blaiy, wished to press on. After a heated discussion, the two decided to press forward while the rest of us set up camp a little farther back in the ruins.

We watched them start across the sand occasionally stopping to pick up something from the ground. When they had crossed about halfway, the sands and skeletons shook to life. A sepulchral lurker and half a dozen skeletons suddenly erupted from the ground around them, barring their way back to us. I started towards our doomed comrades, but Quimut took out his war-fan and barred my way.

The fight (if you can call two men fleeing for their lives such) lasted less than a minute, and within seconds of their death, the flesh of the two bodies dissolved away, leaving

behind two perfectly polished skeletons. Its work finished, the sepulchral lurker and its skeletal cohorts (including our lost comrades) burrowed their way into the sand where they await the next set of adventurous souls to come along. I only hope that those who do will heed the warning I left on the tomb's archway.



Combat

The sepulchral lurker usually attacks from a hidden position, most often erupting from out of the earth. The skeletons under its command are used as distractions, while it weakens foes with its breath weapon and slays them with its vicious claws and bite.

Breath Weapon (Su): Cone of *weakness*, 30 feet long, once every 1d4 rounds; 1d6 temporary Strength damage to all living creature within the area of affect, Fortitude save (DC 14) negates.

Create Spawn (Su): A humanoid or monstrous humanoid slain by a sepulchral lurker rises as a skeleton under the sepulchral lurker's control in 1d4 rounds.

Frightful Presence (Ex): This ability takes effect automatically whenever the sepulchral lurker attacks or charges. All creatures within 30 feet must make a Will save (DC 16) or become shaken for 5d6 rounds.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability the sepulchral lurker must hit with a claw attack.

Rend (Ex): A sepulchral lurker that hits with both claws latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically does 2d6+7 points of damage.

Resistant to Blows (Ex): Due to its mummified body physical attacks deal only half damage to a sepulchral lurker.

Skills: *A sepulchral lurker, due to its coloration and affinity for burying itself in sand receives a +10 racial bonus to Hide checks when in its native environment.

Treasure

Sepulchral lurkers are often the wardens of very valuable treasures, which can run the gamut of one's imagination. There is also frequently treasure left behind by victims killed by the sepulchral lurker (and subsequently raised as skeletons).

If killed, the sepulchral lurker's heart turns into a porous rock. If powdered and ingested, the stone allows the person who consumed it to add +2 to the DC for all saving throws against spells from the school of Necromancy that they cast. This effect lasts for 10 hours. Each sepulchral lurker heart produces 10 doses, which sell for about 200 gp each.

A sepulchral lurker's claws can be made into masterwork daggers for the cost of a normal dagger. The claws have a hardness of 10 and 20 hp.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: None.

UNCOMMON: A huge undead beast may be found guarding treasures hidden in the Bloodstone Marches.

RARE: These sepulchral lurkers are often accompanied by the risen skeletons of those they have slain.

OBSCURE: A sepulchral lurker's heart is a potent necromantic ability booster.

Hooks

A necromancer in disguise approaches the PCs in the hopes of hiring them to hunt down a sepulchral lurker and return its heart to him. If the offer is accepted, the PCs will receive a map that leads them to a tomb in the Bloodstone Marches (perhaps even the one mentioned by Viktor Pendrake). There they find a sepulchral lurker, but—more importantly—they just might discover what it was guarding.

Shaft Wight



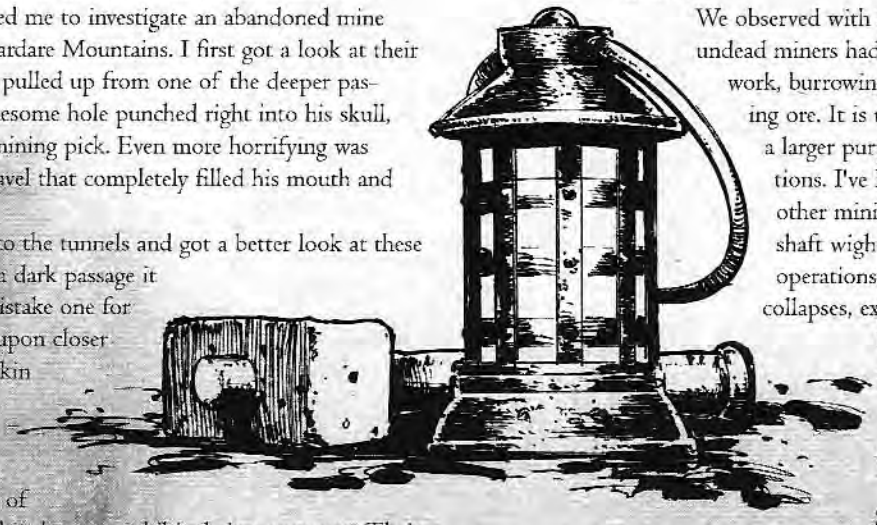
Medium-size Undead	
Hit Dice:	*5d12 (32 hp)*
Initiative:	*+2 (+2 Dex)*
Speed:	*30 ft., burrow 5 ft.*
AC:	*18 (+2 Dex, +2 natural, +4 chain shirt)*
Attacks:	*Mining picks +1/+1 melee; or 2 claws +5 melee*
Damage:	*Mining pick 1d6+3; or claw 1d4+3*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Constitution drain, gravel vomit*
Special Qualities:	*Undead, darkvision 60 ft., +2 turn resistance*
Saves:	*Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +5*
Abilities:	*Str 16, Dex 15, Con —, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 15*
Skills:	*Climb +6, Craft (blacksmith) +4, Hide +8, Jump +9, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Profession (miner) +9*
Feats:	*Ambidexterity, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting*
Climate/Terrain:	*Cold underground*
Organization:	*Solitary or small band (2–6)*
Challenge Rating:	*5*
Alignment:	*Usually chaotic evil*
Advancement:	*6–10 HD (Medium-size)*

Shaft wights are dangerous restless dead, jealous of all life and hateful towards those who walk the tunnels where they met their doom. They arise from miners who have been buried alive, trapped under the weight of stone, suffocating on gravel and sand.

I had doubts of their existence until the Divided Peak Mining Guild invited me to investigate an abandoned mine shaft deep in the Cardare Mountains. I first got a look at their most recent victim, pulled up from one of the deeper passages. He had a gruesome hole punched right into his skull, apparently from a mining pick. Even more horrifying was seeing the sticky gravel that completely filled his mouth and throat.

We ventured into the tunnels and got a better look at these crafty creatures. In a dark passage it would be easy to mistake one for a living miner. But upon closer examination, their skin is unnaturally pale and emits a bitter chill. Their arms and legs show signs of broken bones, but this does not inhibit their movements. Their lidless eyes are pitch-black, like holes, and their mouths hang open, allowing sand to drool from their lips.

They wear tunics of crude metal links, shaped in undying patience from scraps. Those without picks attack with long, grimy, black-nailed fingers, and their touch saps the health of those they claw, making breathing labored. Worst of all is the ability to vomit a stream of gravel. I have no doubt that they use this to suffocate victims in a horrible parody of their own deaths.



We observed with interest that these undead miners had continued in their work, burrowing tunnels, and mining ore. It is uncertain if there is a larger purpose to such excavations. I've heard reports from other mining companies of shaft wights disrupting mining operations, provoking tunnel collapses, extinguishing lanterns, and ambushing miners.

Combat

Shaft wights are skilled at stealth, preferring to strike those who are alone. They frequently wield a pair of wicked mining picks (equal to heavy pick, critical 20/x4), but are just as dangerous with their claws.

Constitution Drain (Su): The claws of a shaft wight cause a temporary loss of 2 points of Constitution with each hit. Victims reduced to 0 Constitution die immediately.

Gravel Vomit/Create Spawn (Su): Twice per hour, a shaft wight can spray a foul mixture of gravel, sand, and brackish liquid from its mouth. This spray does not require an attack roll, has a range of 5 feet and deals 2d8 damage to a single target (Reflex save for half damage, DC 14).

If a shaft wight has a victim helpless or unconscious and then slays them by spraying this mixture into their mouth, the victim will arise as a shaft wight in twelve hours unless attended to by a cleric, who needs to wash out the gravel with holy water. This also applies to victims killed by Constitution drain who are subsequently sprayed with vomit.



Treasure

Shaft wights hoard valuables they take from their victims and also keep ore and precious metals from their mining. Use standard treasure values, 80% of which will be in the form of raw ore or ingots instead of coin. They show some crude ability to shape metal, sometimes crafting armor or bracelets and rings, repairing their mining picks, and so on. These crafted items may be sold to someone with peculiar tastes.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Shaft wights are undead spawned rarely when miners suffocate to death after tunnels collapse upon them. It is rumored they can be heard mining deep in abandoned shafts and will attack anyone who ventures close.

UNCOMMON: Shaft wights can vomit gravel on a person, causing injury and trying to suffocate their victims. They also have a touch that drains health.

RARE: Those who die with their mouths filled with gravel from a shaft wight will arise as one themselves within approximately 12 hours unless attended to by a cleric with holy water.

OBSCURE: Shaft wights are working toward some common goal, perhaps attempting to unify their tunnels and create their own unliving society beneath the earth. The more shaft wights who gather in one place, the more organized and cunning they become.

Hooks

The threat of shaft wights could compel a concerned mining guild to seek out PCs to investigate. A good start is the discovery of a body slain in their traditional fashion. These undead are rare enough that they are not well known, and the corpse might suddenly go "missing" when it rises to join its brethren.

Alternately, shaft wights expanding tunnels might eventually break into some other underground area or buried tomb that the PCs are currently exploring. This dungeon crawl just got a whole lot messier!

Skigg

Tiny Beast	
Hit Dice:	*1d8 (4 hp)*
Initiative:	*+1 (+1 Dex)*
Speed:	*40 ft.*
AC:	*13 (+2 size, +1 Dex)*
Attacks:	*2 claws +1 melee*
Damage:	*Claw 1d3-3*
Face/Reach:	*2 ½ ft. by 2 ½ ft./0 ft.*
Special Qualities:	*Explosion, darkvision 60 ft.*
Saves:	*Fort +0, Ref +3, Will -3*
Abilities:	*Str 4, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 5, Wis 5, Cha 10*
Skills:	*Hide +4, Move Silently +4, Swim +1*
Feats:	*Weapon Finesse (claw)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land*
Organization:	*Solitary or troop (3–8)*
Challenge Rating:	*1*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*2–4 HD (Tiny)*

Of the notorious skigg I tell a cautionary tale: it is a story of two proud wizards of ancient Caspia who met their untimely ends. Gunmen and alchemists are advised to remember this anecdote.

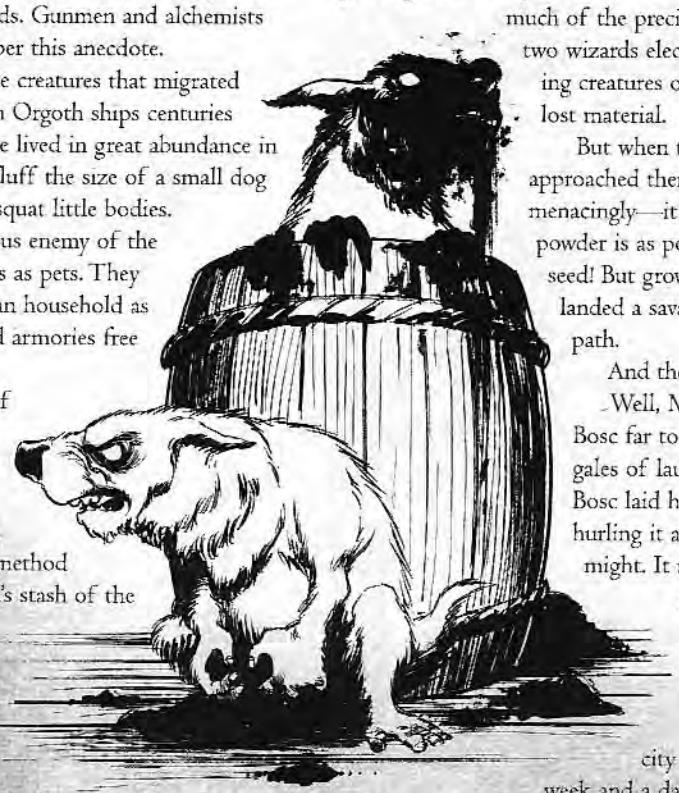
Skiggs are pleasant, furry little creatures that migrated to the Kingdoms as stowaways on Orgoth ships centuries ago. Treasured as pets, skiggs once lived in great abundance in the Kingdoms, balls of mottled fluff the size of a small dog with stumpy legs and somewhat squat little bodies.

Good-tempered and a ferocious enemy of the rat, many a household kept skiggs as pets. They were prized by the Royal Cygnaran household as well and kept the storehouses and armories free of pests.

Prized until, that is, the use of alchemical blasting powder became widespread.

Two Cygnaran mages, known only as Morgan and Bosc, were charged with finding a safe method of storage for the Caspian militia's stash of the volatile stuff. A clean dry warehouse seemed to fit the bill, and barrels of powder were laid in, rack after rack, red and black, floor to ceiling. Of course, skiggs were introduced to keep the storehouse rat-free.

Well, imagine Morgan and Bosc's surprise when they entered the cavernous room the next morning to find a dozen bloated skiggs lying in a groaning stupor beside two gnawed-open kegs! Furious (and not a little chagrined at having so much of the precious powder ruined), the two wizards elected to dissect the offending creatures on the spot to retrieve the lost material.



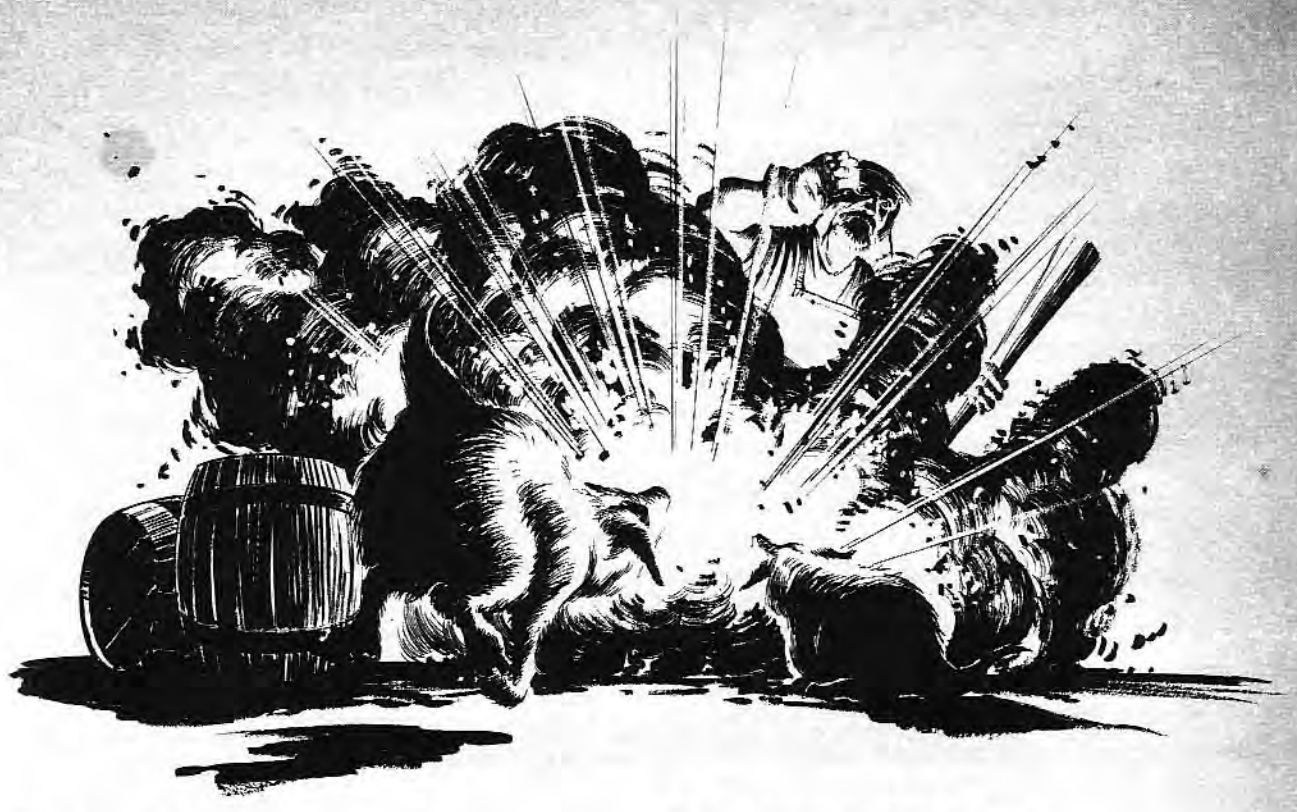
But when the hot-tempered Bosc approached them, the skiggs growled menacingly—it seemed that to a skigg, powder is as powerfully addictive as rage-seed! But growl or no, the angry mage landed a savage kick on the first in his path.

And the beast exploded.

Well, Morgan found the scorched Bosc far too amusing, collapsing in gales of laughter. Alas, in his rage, Bosc laid hold of an engorged skigg, hurling it at Morgan with all his might. It missed her by a wide margin. Had it only missed the rack of kegs above her head, the tale would be less tragic.

It is said that the entire city of Caspia was deaf for a week and a day, and sailors in the Gulf of Cygnar reported a rain of brick and mortar hitting the decks of their ships out at sea.

Needless to say, this is why we give an angry man "a skigg's berth" to this day.



Combat

Skiggs will avoid combat unless cornered or provoked; they are far more temperamental after having eaten blasting powder. They attack with their claws, though their tendency to explode when engorged can be far more deadly.

Explosion (Ex): Any full skigg (one that has consumed 2 pounds of powder) that is struck with a weapon or receives similar physical damage from a magical attack (*magic missile, fireball* etc.) has a 50% chance of immediately exploding. This does 5d6 points of fire damage to everything within a 10-foot radius. Anyone caught within the blast radius may make a Reflex save (DC 15) for half damage. Skiggs that consume a mixture of red and black powder will explode spontaneously for half damage.

Treasure

A bounty on skiggs is usually in effect wherever gunpowder is produced or stored. Skigg pelts can fetch as much as 20 gp each, depending on the area.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Though banned as pets by royal decree, many feral skiggs still inhabit the sewers, woods, and fields around towns.

UNCOMMON: Skiggs were banned because of continued (and often deadly) break-ins to blasting powder storage houses.

RARE: Striking a powder-fed skigg can have explosive consequences.

OBSCURE: Powder in a skigg's gut (up to 10 pounds) can be recovered within 1 hour of ingestion, though it needs to be washed in strong grain alcohol and thoroughly dried.

Hooks

• Bandits have hijacked a big caravan of powder destined for an army outpost. Unfortunately their lair is infested with skiggs, and a tense race is on to see whether the PCs, the bandits, or the skiggs get to the powder first—*without* blowing the place sky high.

• Someone has set a troop of skiggs free in the local armory! Now, why would they need to cook up such an obvious diversion…

Skorne



Medium-size Humanoid	
Hit Dice:	*2d8 (9 hp)*
Initiative:	*+0*
Speed:	*20 ft. (half-plate); base 30 ft.*
AC:	*19 (+7 half-plate, +2 large shield)*
Attacks:	*Longsword +4 melee*
Damage:	*Longsword 1d8+1*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Qualities:	*Prejudice penalties, Skorne traits*
Saves:	*Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +2*
Abilities:	*Str 12, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10*
Skills:	*Listen +3, Search +3, Spot +4*
Feats:	*Iron Will, Weapon Focus (one martial melee weapon of choice)*
Climate/Terrain:	*Warm desert*
Organization:	*Company (2–5, plus 1 3rd-level sergeant), squad (2–4 companies plus 2 3rd-level sergeants and 1 5th-level lieutenant), platoon (2–10 squads plus 5 5th-level lieutenants, and 3 8th-level captains)*
Challenge Rating:	*1*
Alignment:	*Usually neutral; invaders usually neutral evil*
Advancement:	*By character class*

The Iron Kingdoms only recently became aware of the threat known as the Skorne when Vinter Raelthorne IV came into Corvis accompanied by them in his recent assault. I, however, have been aware of them for some time. My faithful guide to the Bloodstone Marches, Quimut, has encountered them several times as has told me a bit about them; I also took the opportunity to interrogate a few prisoners among them after their recent invasion in my home city.

The Skorne are very similar to men, though there are legends that their ancient history is tied with that of the elves—mind you, it indicates not whether they are related. In general, the Skorne are stronger, taller, and slimmer than a typical Cygnaran, but differ little otherwise anatomically. In appearance, though, they are quite savage, sporting rugged features, tattoos, and bald heads. As a people, the Skorne are civilized, but torn by their ruling class's bloodthirsty nature. Quimut—who once narrowly escaped slavery by Skorne hands—tells me that they have a very stratified society with a small ruling caste. They are also sharply divided into several factions led by various warlords, and most of their time is occupied by civil infighting. I reckon this is one reason why we've never seen much of them in the Iron Kingdoms. They are also fairly technologically advanced, possessing their own form of alchemy and a seemingly unique and powerful understanding of the arcane, particularly of necromantic and offensive magics.



As a warlike nation, the Skorne are able warriors. Slavery is a popular thing in their culture, both among men and beasts. Anyone captured by a Skorne slaver or regiment can expect to be back on the field of battle in no time, this time sporting a collar and chain, and perhaps even some strange augmentations to boot. They will also have the pleasure of fighting alongside a number of vile Marches creatures enslaved and trained for combat.

Though the Skorne have yet to become recognized as a great threat, I can foresee this status changing soon. Raelthorne's involvement with them is an ill omen indeed. From the prisoners I interrogated I was able to glean only sparse details. They refer to him almost with mythical respect for his crossing of the Stormlands, a subregion of the Bloodstone Marches that may very well be the most deadly tract of land on Caen.

Qumut tells me that the Stormlands is one of the few things that has kept this vile civilization at bay. Raelthorne seems to have penetrated this inhospitable land and gained a great deal of respect because of it. If the Skorne continue to follow him, I fear we may soon find his dark, oppressive shadow arching all the way from the Marches to the distant Scharde Islands.

Combat

The Skorne are very capable in combat. As a civilized race, they have developed combat techniques and strategies similar to what is found among the other civilized races of the Iron Kingdoms. They possess firearms and similar armaments, though they differ in alchemical operation from those found in other regions; they are also slightly less advanced. War beasts and other manner of combat-trained creatures are somewhat common among them.

Skorne Traits (Ex):

-+2 Str; Skorne are slightly stronger than the typical human.

-Medium-size. Skorne are about a foot taller than average humans and typically much leaner.

-Bonus hit die: +1d8; the Skorne are a naturally rugged people.

-Base speed 30 feet.

-1 bonus feat at 1st level.

-4 extra skill points at first level and 1 extra point at each level thereafter. Skorne are just as versatile as humans.

-Prejudice penalties (see below). As a foreign and hostile race, Skorne are hindered socially.

-Automatic language: Skorne. Cygnaran might be learned as a bonus language if gleaned from prisoners and the like.

-Favored class: Fighter or wizard. Skorne are not as adaptable in this regard as humans.

-Level adjustment +1; Skorne are slightly more powerful than most races.

Prejudice Penalties: When in human, elven, or dwarven lands, or when interacting with people from such places who lack extended exposure to Skorne, all Skorne suffer a -6 circumstance penalty to all Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, and similar social skill checks due to the racial prejudice that is extended them. At the DM's discretion, there may be situations where these penalties will be waived or halved.

Treasure

Skorne are known to keep just as wide a variety of treasure as any human culture, and they tend to value many of the same things. Members of the lower castes of their society, however, are far less likely to possess valuables than those of the upper caste. Slaves will bear no treasure at all (unless, of course, you're a slaver).

Legends & Lore

COMMON: None prior to the events of *The Witchfire Trilogy*. Afterwards, there is a mysterious, malicious humanoid race that has emerged from the Bloodstone Marches.

UNCOMMON: These people are very similar to humans, though taller and far more savage in appearance, many with tattoos and bald heads.

RARE: These people are called the Skorne, and they come from a very hostile society that if properly organized might pose the single greatest threat to the Iron Kingdoms.

OBSCURE: Vinter Raelthorne IV has allied himself with a strong Skorne faction, which he is using to reclaim his Cygnaran throne. Those who know Raelthorne can expect this to be just the beginning.

Hooks

A foolhardy Caspian noble who fancies himself an explorer recently decided to venture a journey into the Bloodstone Marches. He was quickly attacked and subdued by a band of Skorne soldiers. Luckily, one of his servants managed to escape and find his way back to Cygnar. His master has surely been sold into slavery, and the servant is desperately seeking help in rescuing him.

"No commander, those precautions won't be necessary. The Cygnarans won't be expecting us. They don't know the threat of the Skorne, but trust me . . . they soon will."—Vinter Raelthorne IV, to one of his Skorne lieutenants



Spine Ripper



Medium-size Monstrous Humanoid	
Hit Dice:	*6d8+18 (45 hp)*
Initiative:	*+2 (+2 Dex)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*20 (+2 Dex, +8 natural)*
Attacks:	*2 spines +11 melee, 1 claw +6 melee, 1 bite +6 melee*
Damage:	*Spine 1d6+5, claw 1d8+3 and poison, bite 1d4+3*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Poison, flanking attack, impaling rush*
Special Qualities:	*Scent*
Saves:	*Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +5*
Abilities:	*Str 20, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 4, Wis 10, Cha 9*
Skills:	*Hide +7, Jump +8, Move Silently +7, Spot +5*
Feats:	*Endurance, Alertness*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land*
Organization:	*Solitary or band (2–5)*
Challenge Rating:	*4*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*6–12 HD (Large)*

There are few creatures here in the Iron Kingdoms that roam far and wide enough to call the entire continent their home. The speckled widow bear is such a creature, as is the Ionian swooper, and it troubles me that I must add the aggressive spine ripper to that list as well. These beasts have been spotted as far north as Ohk, as far wide as the Scharde Islands, and my assistant Edrea tells me that they are even known in the forests of Ios. The spine ripper looks somewhat like a very top-heavy and muscle-bound bear with a huge maw and massive claws. Yet it's named for the many spines that bristle across its body, and for all its ferocity, it's a simple creature that lives only to hunt, forage, and feast on just about anything. While they seem like little more than beasts, they are in truth more advanced; I've even witnessed primitive signs of evolution—tool use, simple communication, and even teamwork.

Its wicked spines, I have noted, are built for far more than just intimidation. The spines jutting from its body serve the creature both defensively and offensively. Enemies that try to attack it find it difficult to strike the spine ripper without being hurt, and the beast is quite adept at maneuvering those spikes so that opponents are unable to successfully flank it. But what one should be far more concerned about is the spine ripper's ability to turn those spines around and use them as lethal weapons—especially if it's making a diving leap at you!

Another, even more deadly, type of barb is found on the thumb of the claw, and it bears a mild, but effective poison. Any struck by it will immediately find their coordination and strength sapped from their muscles. Unfortunately, this is usually enough for the spine ripper to overcome most prey.



Combat

In combat the spine ripper prefers to stalk solitary or obviously weaker prey. It will attempt stealth until within about 100 feet or so, when it will charge. It will rely primarily upon the use of its claws and spines. Although not particularly intelligent, the creature is somewhat cunning and will use a mild amount of strategy.

Poison (Ex): Claw, Fortitude save (DC 16); initial damage of 1d4 temporary Dexterity and secondary damage of 1d4 temporary Strength.

Flanking Attack (Ex): The creature is able to attack flanking opponents with its spines at no penalty. Its reach effectively extends in a 360° arc about its body. It does not need to change its facing to attack any opponent about it with a spine attack. Furthermore, opponents flanking the creature do not gain any flanking bonus because they must remain on the defensive (rogues may still use their sneak attack).

Impaling Rush (Ex): One of its favorite attack modes is a leaping charge, which ends with the spine ripper tackling its prey and impaling it. This is treated as a charge and a bull rush, which does 3d8+7 damage regardless of whether or not it pushes the opponent back. If the target is successfully pushed back, he is also pinned. Poisoning does not occur, but may on subsequent attacks. Victims may make a reflex save (DC 15) to roll with the blow for half damage.

Treasure

Spine rippers are not known to hoard anything of value, however their spines find many uses, from dart shafts, to sewing needles, to harpoon heads. They can fetch anywhere from 5 cp to 5 gp depending on the type of barb and the local market. Their venom likewise is valuable, although difficult to extract. It fetches as much as 15–25 gp per effective dose.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Spine rippers can be found in just about any land and any climate.

UNCOMMON: Spine rippers hunt largely predawn and in the morning, and they are usually quite groggy in late evening.

RARE: Biannually, spine rippers migrate to one of two dozen ancestral mating grounds, where groups numbering into the hundreds can be witnessed in howling revelry.

OBSCURE: Spine rippers are strongly attracted to the scent of the uncommon food spice vetlum, which can be easily used to throw them off of one's trail… or on to someone else's.

Hooks

Llael seems to be having a far worse spine ripper problem lately than most other kingdoms, and Prime Minister Deyar Glabryn IX has recently placed a bounty on their hides of 20 gold crowns per scalp. As of yet, few adventurers have stepped forward to collect, but entrepreneurial individuals could collect quite a bundle under the right circumstances.



Steamling

Tiny Elemental (Fire)	
Hit Dice:	*1d8+3 (7 hp)*
Initiative:	*+5 (+5 Dex)*
Speed:	*Fly 60 ft. (good)*
AC:	*17 (+2 size, +5 Dex)*
Attacks:	*Bite +2 melee*
Damage:	*Bite 1d3*
Face/Reach:	*2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Scalding bite*
Special Qualities:	*Elemental (fire), boiling frenzy*
Saves:	*Fort +3, Ref +7, Will –1*
Abilities:	*Str 10, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10*
Skills:	*Disable Device +4, Hide +9, Move Silently +9, Spot +3*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any locale near machinery*
Organization:	*Solitary, gang (4–8), swarm (10–16)*
Challenge Rating:	*2*
Alignment:	*Always chaotic neutral*
Advancement:	*2–3 HD (Small)*

Not a lot of folks know about wizard's coal, a rare, nasty-smelling alchemical reagent. Alchemists use it in potions, and wizards use it in flame-based spells; hence the name. When I was a youth, my father had this theory that it could be put to use as a fuel for steam engines.

He and my brothers had cobbled together a steamjack, a smaller model made from scavenged parts. The thing was a heap of junk, but the engine my father put in it had been lifted from a union caravan in the dead of the night—it was top notch quality and ready to go.

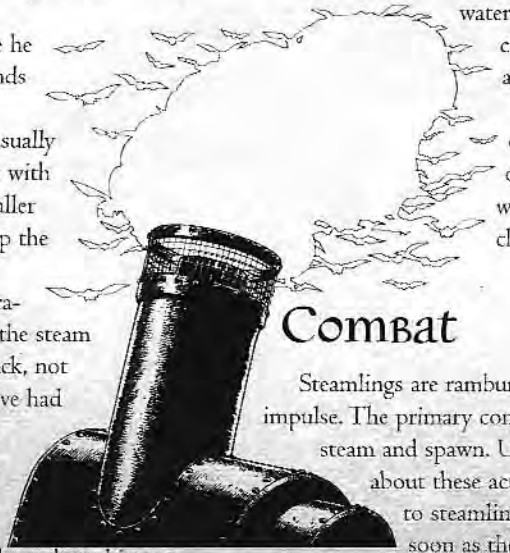
With the help of a shady mage type he knew, Father bought about twenty pounds of wizard's coal. This batch had been alchemically treated to burn slowly (it usually goes up in a burst). His theory was that with an infusion of wizard's coal a much smaller amount of fuel would be needed to keep the jack running longer and cleaner.

Once the firebox came up to temperature there was some sort of reaction in the steam plant. (Of course, we had stood well back, not sure what would happen. Father may have had some cock-eyed schemes, but he was a stickler for safety.) As we watched the primary boiler started to bulge, and *boom!* Clouds of stinking steam shot everywhere. Amazingly, the steam rapidly coalesced into a swarm of little winged translucent beasts with broad jaws.

The creatures poured into and out of the engine for a full hour. Once the wizard's coal burnt low they flew off into the night, howling and dancing. Thereafter you couldn't run a steam engine in the area without the things showing up and boiling over the whole works. Finally we had to move out and find a new place to set up shop.

Only during my studies many years later did I discover what had happened. Father had inadvertently awoken a nest of steamlings. Steamlings are elemental spirits that sometimes lay dormant in wizard's coal. If tainted wizard's coal is heated slowly to combustion temperatures, the steamling awakens. The things eat steam, and they also have an innate ability to heat water. If there are enough of them, they can boil a steam engine over and disable it, or worse cause it to explode.

Steamlings can be found in nature on rare occasion, near hot springs or other places where wizard's coal, water, and intense heat can be found in close proximity.



Combat

Steamlings are rambunctious, chaotic, and driven by impulse. The primary concern of a steamling is to feed on steam and spawn. Unless attacked, a steamling will go about these activities. Steam engines are open feasts to steamlings. They will infest a steam engine as soon as they hear it, often ruining it or causing it to burst.

Scalding Bite (Ex): Steamling bites are nasty and hard to heal. If a steamling bites unprotected skin it can leave a blister-



ing mark that takes twice as long to heal naturally. Steamling bites will not affect creatures immune to or protected from fire-based attacks.

Boiling Frenzy (Ex): Steamlings will infest a steam engine if possible. This can disable a steam engine temporarily, or at worst cause a catastrophic explosion. Make a Disable Device roll, adding a +10 circumstance bonus for the steamling's frenzied thrashing and feeding. A +5 synergy bonus is added if there are 5 HD or more of steamlings involved. If the result of the Disable Device roll is 20 or better, the engine is ruined, and can no longer function without being repaired with an appropriate Craft roll (DC 25).

If the Disable Device roll is 30 or better, the steam engine explodes within 2d4 rounds of being infested. This does not harm the steamlings at all, but causes 5d6 damage to anyone within a 30-foot radius of the steam engine (Reflex save for half damage, DC 16).

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Steamlings are nasty little bastards that can ruin a steam engine.

UNCOMMON: Steamlings come from tainted wizard's coal, which is sometimes accidentally mixed in with the regular coal used to fuel steam engines. If an engine starts to boil over it might be due to steamlings coming awake—best to shut it down.

RARE: A steamling can be killed if you throw a bucket of cold water on it (this does 2d6 points of damage to it; Reflex save for half damage, DC 15).

OBSCURE: Tainted wizard's coal is highly valuable to some wizards and alchemists. Steamlings leave a faint dweomer of magic on the coal they sleep in. Detection spells can reveal them.

Treasure

Steamlings don't have lairs or treasure. However, a chunk of wizard's coal that is tainted with a dormant steamling can be used as a component in fire-based spells. Using the coal as a component consumes the creature's life force along with the wizard's coal. This imbues the spell with the effects of the Maximize Spell feat. A single chunk of tainted wizard coal is about the same size and weight as a small rock and is worth about 700 gp.

Normal wizard's coal is regularly about 10–15 gp per pound and is typically only of value to alchemists and some spell-casters.

Hooks

An enterprising wizard is cultivating steamlings and has a moderately sized swarm. He has found a way to train and feed them, and has been buying all the wizard's coal he can to use in a get-rich-quick scheme. Sadly he has not been able to control the steamling appetite for steam. A few steam engines at use in the area have been ruined in highly suspicious accidents.

Tatzylwurm

Large Magical Beast (Reptilian)	
Hit Dice:	*10d10+60 (115 hp)*
Initiative:	*+5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*40 ft., burrow 10 ft.*
AC:	*30 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +20 natural)*
Attacks:	*Bite +20 melee*
Damage:	*2d8+15 and paralysis*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.*
Special Attacks:	*Breath weapon, frightful presence, paralysis*
Special Qualities:	*Damage reduction 10/+1, immunities, resistance to blows*
Saves:	*Fort +13, Ref +8, Will +3*
Abilities:	*Str 31, Dex 13, Con 23, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 10*
Skills:	*Hide +0*, Jump +30*, Listen +4, Move Silently +3*, Spot +4*
Feats:	*Alertness, Improved Initiative, Power Attack*
Climate/Terrain:	*Any land and underground*
Organization:	*Solitary, pair, or pack (3–6)*
Challenge Rating:	*12*
Alignment:	*Always neutral*
Advancement:	*11–15 HD (Large); 16–25 (Huge); 26–35 (Gargantuan)*

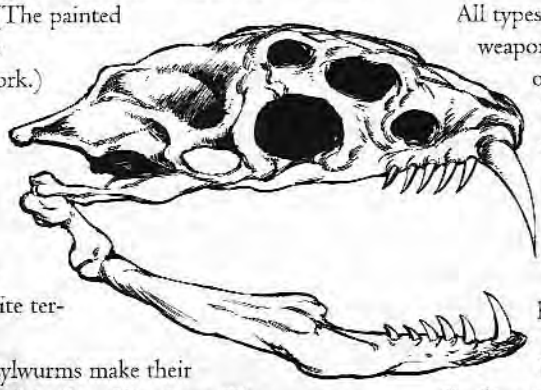
Tatzylwurms are a remarkable group of predators that roam the less tamed lands and waters of the Iron Kingdoms. There are two dominant varieties, "painted" and "pale." (The painted form, being less dangerous, will be described more fully in a future work.)

Painted tatzylwurms make their homes mostly along the remote rivers and shorelines of the Iron Kingdoms, but can also be found within bogs and mires. Though not as aggressive as their cousins, these creatures are still quite territorial.

The highly aggressive pale tatzylwurms make their homes in the most secluded areas of the Iron Kingdoms. They are fearless and unyielding creatures, attacking anything and everything that comes within their territory. Their scales are an indistinct grayish color, perfect for concealing themselves within the shadows.

Capable of leaping great distances, the pale tatzylwurm has been known to make leaps of up to 20 yards in order to catch its prey (this fact was discovered as the result of the research of a colleague of mine, Professor Coriandr Jagus, who spent the better part of six months studying tatzylwurms of all sorts).

According to Professor Jagus, pale tatzylwurms subsist upon a diet of "anything that moves." He even reports having witnessed a pack of them attack and eat, at least in part, a tree-clearing steamjack, though I doubt the iron settled well with them.



All types of tatzylwurms have a wide array of weapons at their disposal, most notably their organization when working in packs. They are adept at herding fish, animals, and even humanoids into "kill zones," as Professor Jagus puts it, where other tatzylwurms wait.

In combat pale tatzylwurms rely primarily upon their powerful jaws, paralytic poison, resilient hide, and strong bones. They use their acidic breath rarely, and only for defense. Professor Jagus believes this to be because their acidic breath spoils the meat, and I am inclined to believe his assessment.

Combat

Pale tatzylwurms rely upon their powerful jaws to weaken and kill their foes, while their nearly seamless scales and reinforced bones protect them from harm. They rarely use their breath weapon upon prey, preferring to save it for self-defense.

Breath Weapon (Su): The pale tatzylwurm's breath weapon sends forth a cone of acid, 30 feet long, once every

2d4 rounds; 6d4 damage to all within the area of affect, Fortitude save (DC 20) negates.

Frightful Presence (Ex): Whenever it attacks or charges, a pale tatzylwurm causes its foes to make a Will save (DC 15) or become shaken for 3d6 rounds.

Immunities: Pale tatzylwurms are immune to fear and fear-like effects. It is also immune to acid and paralysis attacks.

Paralysis: Upon a successful bite attack the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or be paralyzed for 1d4+3 rounds.

Resistant to Bludgeoning (Ex): Because of the pale tatzylwurm's resilient bones and hide, bludgeoning attacks deal only half damage to it.

Skills: *Pale tatzylwurms gain a +20 racial bonus to their Jump checks and have double the normal maximum jumping distance. They also gain +10 to their Hide and Move Silently checks while in natural settings.



Treasure

Weapon smiths can use pale tatzylwurm bones to make masterwork weapons for the cost of a normal weapon (see PH for more details on special and superior items). One pale tatzylwurm produces enough bone to make a single masterwork weapon of Large size, two masterwork weapons of Medium-size, four masterwork weapons of Small size, and eight masterwork weapons of Tiny size. Note that the bone may also be used to create non-weapon masterwork items as well. All items made from the bone are considered to have a hardness of 8, 15 hp/inch of thickness, and are resistant to blows as per the special quality of the pale tatzylwurm.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Tatzylwurms are reptilian predators renowned for their leaping ability.

UNCOMMON: Tatzylwurm hides are valuable to most any armorsmith. Their bones are similarly of worth to weaponsmiths.

RARE: There are dozens of different species of tatzylwurms in the Iron Kingdoms, each with its own unique abilities, but all can jump great distances.

OBSCURE: A tatzylwurm's kidney holds juices that can be used as a potent antitoxin.

Hooks

A pack of pale tatzylwurms has taken up residence in the local area and has killed quite a number of farmhands and livestock. The local authorities approach the PCs and request their help with the beasts. If the PCs refuse, then there is always the possibility that they run across the pack in the middle of an attack on a farmstead or that the tatzylwurms, having tasted hired hands, ambush the party.

In order to study the beasts, I had to become as a ghost, invisible and unheard. I suggest that those who wish to hunt them do the same, else they find themselves in the terrible jaws of a tatzylwurm.

—Professor Coriandr Jagus

Tharn



Medium-size Humanoid (Tharn)	
Hit Dice:	*6d8+18 (45 hp)*
Initiative:	*+6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)*
Speed:	*30 ft.*
AC:	*12 (+2 Dex)*
Attacks:	*Greatsword +8 melee; or greataxe +8 melee; or (while in chaos frenzy) 2 claws +8 melee and 1 bite +3 melee*
Damage:	*Greatsword 2d6+6; or greataxe 1d12+6; or (while in chaos frenzy) claw 1d4+6, bite 1d3+3*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.*
Special Qualities:	*Chaos frenzy*
Saves:	*Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +2*
Abilities:	*Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8*
Skills:	*Climb +5, Jump +6, Listen +2, Wilderness Lore +5*
Feats:	*Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Track*
Climate/Terrain:	*Temperate forest*
Organization:	*Family (2–5), pack (5–20), band (20–40)*
Challenge Rating:	*4*
Alignment:	*Usually chaotic evil*
Advancement:	*By character class*

Years ago, I was on a mission that took me inside the Thornwood. It was difficult raising men to accompany me, since traversing this boggy wood was largely considered suicide. More than once I've been asked: "Why not just put a pistol to your head and pull the bloody trigger, Pendrake?" That one never fails to make me chuckle, but it doesn't dissuade me much.

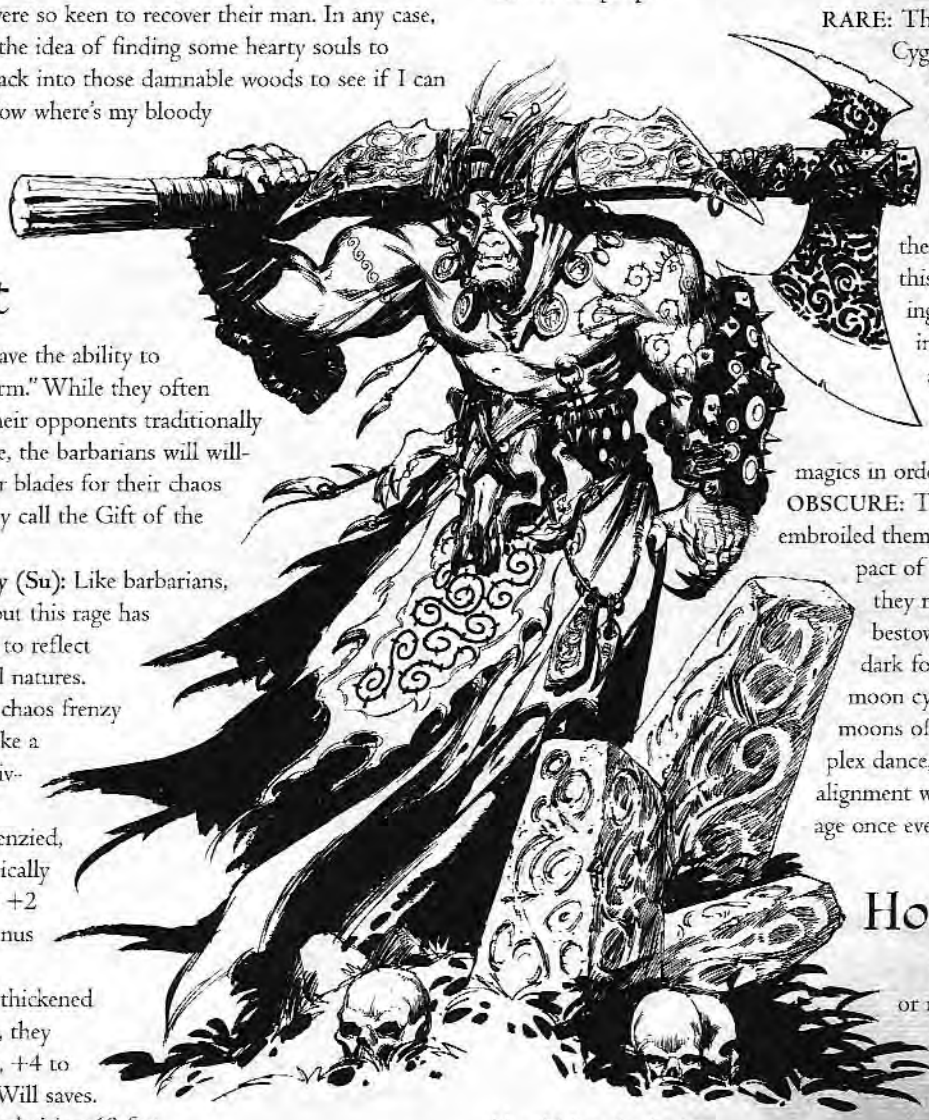


Ah, but the Thornwood, yes... I recall an observant scout announcing we were being followed. I put the camp on alert, instructing the scout and some of his companions to lay a trap. Later that evening, we'd snagged what appeared to be a barbarian. Snared in netting, suspended from a shadowbranch's bough, a huge man with painted skin strained at the thick ropes and cursed us in choppy Khardic. I scrutinized his tattoos, fascinated by the intricate sigils; many of them represented aspects of the Devourer. I began reciting what I knew about the ancient Tharn that once inhabited these woods in the thousands but who were presumed to have been destroyed.

Suddenly, the barbarian issued a thunderous bellow, and next I knew at least half a dozen of these savages bounded from the darkness. They were something more than just painted men. Bodies corded with thick muscles, they crossed distances in great leaps. One of them piled into a man next to me, and I was too late to save him from having his throat torn out by long black claws. The savage turned its head toward me, and yellow eyes reflected the campfire light as it displayed a slavering mouthful of wolf-like fangs. I raised my shield and braced for the attack that never came. Whether the bestial men conceded our much greater numbers or for whatever other reason, the slayer of my retainer bellowed a command, and two of them quickly pulled down their companion from our netting. The savage in front of me then threw the dead man over its powerfully built shoulders—as did a couple of the others I assumed, noticing afterward we were missing three men in all—and they loped off into the darkness. No one seemed eager to give chase, and I sure wasn't going after them alone

(admittedly I entertained the idea briefly… but I may as well have put a pistol to my head and pulled the bloody trigger!).

Had we just been waylaid by remnants of an ancient people known as the Tharn? I must admit I believe so. Barbarians of any kind are extremely rare in Immoren proper these days, and the Tharn must truly be on the verge of extinction. I surmise that's why they were so keen to recover their man. In any case, I'm entertaining the idea of finding some hearty souls to accompany me back into those damnable woods to see if I can uncover more. Now where's my bloody pistol?



Combat

The Tharn have the ability to "channel the Wurm." While they often tend to engage their opponents traditionally with sword or axe, the barbarians will willingly eschew their blades for their chaos frenzy, which they call the Gift of the Devourer.

Chaos Frenzy (Su): Like barbarians, the Tharn rage, but this rage has somehow altered to reflect their more bestial natures. They are able to chaos frenzy twice daily just like a barbarian of equivalent level is able to rage. While frenzied, their bodies physically change, gaining a +2 natural armor bonus due to a denser musculature and thickened hide. In addition, they receive +4 to Str, +4 to Con, and +5 to Will saves. They also gain darkvision 60 feet, the scent ability (MM), wolf-like fangs, and sharp black claws.

Treasure

The only treasure to be found among these depraved savages is the various weapons and other items that formerly belonged to their victims.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: The Tharn were once a barbarian tribe in the Thornwood region.

UNCOMMON: The barbaric Tharn are a cursed lot who are said to eat people.

RARE: The knights of Cygnar supposedly wiped the Tharn out ages ago, yet some of these Devourer-revering savages reside in the Thornwood to this day. After enduring the Ten Ills imposed by Morrow ages ago, they turned toward dark and savage magics in order to survive.

OBSCURE: The Tharn have embroiled themselves in a sinister pact of some sort, and they must ritually bestow one soul to the dark forces during certain moon cycles. (The three moons of Caen have a complex dance, but a correct alignment will occur on average once every three months.)

Hooks

Traveling through or near the Thornwood, the PCs are attacked by a band of bloodthirsty barbarians. Their apparent leader wields a peculiar greatsword that emits waves of power. Scrutiny reveals it to possibly be a long lost weapon of a great Cygnaran knight who had fallen in battle ages ago when the royal order fought tribes of barbarians called the Tharn somewhere within the Dragonspine Peaks. It is believed that the order would pay substantially to regain the blade.

Thornwood Mauler



Large Animal		*Special Qualities:*	*Burst of speed, improved scent*
Hit Dice:	*12d8+84 (138 hp)*	*Saves:*	*Fort +15, Ref +9, Will +2*
Initiative:	*+1 (+1 Dex)*	*Abilities:*	*Str 32, Dex 13, Con 24, Int 2, Wis 7, Cha 6*
Speed:	*40 ft.*	*Skills:*	*Listen +6, Spot +5*
AC:	*20 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +10 natural)*	*Climate/Terrain:*	*Any forest*
Attacks:	*2 claws +19 melee, bite +14 melee; or gore +19 melee*	*Organization:*	*Solitary*
Damage:	*Claw 2d6+11, bite 1d8+5; or gore 1d8+16*	*Challenge Rating:*	*9*
Face/Reach:	*5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.*	*Alignment:*	*Always neutral*
Special Attacks:	*Maul, throw*	*Advancement:*	*12–16 HD (Huge)*

The woods of the Iron Kingdoms are regions rife with predators and other dangers. (My assistant Edrea tells me of the great splendors of wooded Ios, but we in human lands know better than to tarry under that dark canopy.) One of the fiercest terrors to stalk the woods is the Thornwood mauler, a colossal beast that stands at 14 feet in height when on its hindquarters. It takes its name from the dreaded wood in northern Cygnar, although it is far more common in the Scarsfell Forest.

Unlike its smaller cousins, the Thornwood mauler has a very rough and rugged hide, and it has a most unusual snout. They are roving hunters and scavengers, and they've been known to wander absolutely incredible distances, even across terrains they wouldn't normally be found in. The renowned Cygnaran hunter Alten Ashley, a close friend of mine, once survived an encounter with one in his homeland, only to nearly be killed by the same beast (identifiable by the unmistakable scars he had given it) in a trip abroad in Khador. Another peculiar habit of the Thornwood mauler is that of it digging itself deep burrows to sleep in—a good mark to indicate you're on one's path.

It doesn't take much to arouse the fury of one of these beasts, and once you do it's usually the end of the line. They are incredibly strong, and they have a penchant for mauling their prey beyond all recognition. They also enjoy ramming their enemies and tossing them into the air before they are summarily pounced upon. Fortunately, these creatures are a little bit more foolish than most, and a clever person can outwit them and beat a hasty retreat.



Gobber tribes that lack metalworking ability make tools from flint or even the claws of beasts like the mauler.

Combat

Thornwood maulers attack to feed, but they are almost always hungry. They will often stalk prey for a short while, tracking them from a distance before charging into combat. They prefer to use their maul ability, killing opponents one by one until all are dead.

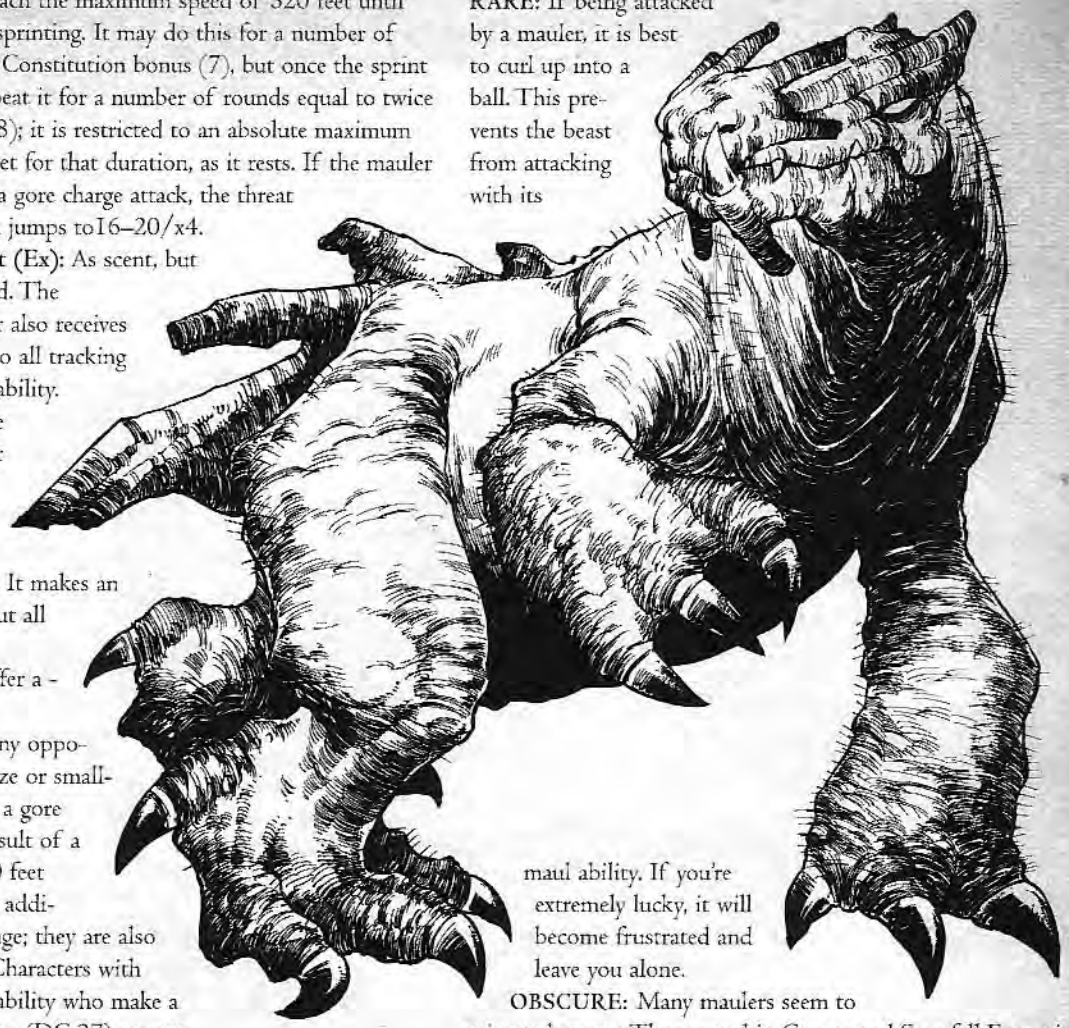
Burst of Speed (Ex): When running on all fours as a full-round action, the Thornwood mauler may double its speed (double speed run becomes 160 feet, and all-out run speed becomes 320

feet); it does not reach the maximum speed of 320 feet until the fifth round of sprinting. It may do this for a number of rounds equal to its Constitution bonus (7), but once the sprint ends it may not repeat it for a number of rounds equal to twice its Constitution (48); it is restricted to an absolute maximum movement of 10 feet for that duration, as it rests. If the mauler ends this run with a gore charge attack, the threat range for the attack jumps to16–20/x4.

Improved Scent (Ex): As scent, but all ranges are tripled. The Thornwood mauler also receives a +6 racial bonus to all tracking attempts with this ability.

Maul (Ex): The Thornwood mauler may maul an opponent with a flurry of blows as a full-round action. It makes an extra claw attack, but all attacks that round (including bite) suffer a -2 penalty.

Throw (Ex): Any opponent of Medium-size or smaller who is struck by a gore attack that is the result of a charge is thrown 10 feet back and suffers an additional 1d8+2 damage; they are also considered prone. Characters with the evasion special ability who make a successful Reflex save (DC 27) are not affected by this ability (though they may still suffer damage from the charge).



Treasure

The hide of the Thornwood mauler is prized by armorsmiths wishing to craft hide armor. A full hide might sell for around 200 gp. All hide armor constructed of a mauler's hide has an additional +2 AC bonus and sells for three to four times normal market value.

Legends & Lore

COMMON: Thornwood maulers are fierce and powerful predators that are usually found in wooded areas.

UNCOMMON: They have an incredible sense of smell, and if one is stalking you, it's best to get downwind of it quickly.

RARE: If being attacked by a mauler, it is best to curl up into a ball. This prevents the beast from attacking with its maul ability. If you're extremely lucky, it will become frustrated and leave you alone.

OBSCURE: Many maulers seem to migrate between Thornwood in Cygnar and Scarsfell Forest in Khador, although they only make this trek once every several years. Why exactly they do this remains a mystery.

Hooks

A vain and pompous Caspian socialite has gotten himself into some trouble claiming that he is a skilled enough hunter to track down and slay a Thornwood mauler, and he's been called on it and dared to follow through. The noble is looking for a band of established adventurers to tag along with him and "assist" in the hunt. The work is dangerous, but the pay is quite good.

"The trick to dealing with a Thornwood mauler is quite easy. Simply bend over and stick your head 'tween your buns; then thank Morrow for the ride and kiss 'em goodbye! Har, har!" — The gregarious master hunter Alten Ashley