

THOKTOK FOESPRAYER

01

Orc Warlord, Neutral Evil

Personality

Crafty and confident, Thoktok likes to lead with an insult (funny or not). The reaction gauges insecurity, and how willing one is to look past impressions. He tests everyone around him constantly for loyalty, intelligence, and ability.

Strengths

- Expects to be underestimated; plays up the dumb bully.
- He is not easily provoked.
- He lures enemies into position, then uses terrain and surprise to his advantage.
- His warband holds him in awe and would die for him.

Quirks

- He likes artwork of eyes. The symbol of watchfulness is at the center of his own spirituality and balance.
- He collects carvings of eyes, and before meetings that require pageantry, or battle, he paints eyes on himself.
- His troops imitate him, but may not know why.

Distinguishing Features

- Tufts of red hair bristle from his head; when young, the bigger orcs said those were his thoughts escaping.
- He always was too thin to be a proper orc.

Background

There are whispers that Thoktok was the only survivor of a desert clan of orcs drained to death by a demonic wind. He never talks about his past; always looks forward.

"The eyes are crooked on yer potato head, yeh? Har har!"

Art: Claudio Casini

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NPCS PORTRAITS DECK: MONSTERS

00

Need a quick NPC?

Whether the PCs just captured a cowardly kobold, need to be tempted by a demoness, or your campaign needs a powerful lich, this deck is filled with imaginative NPCs. Of course you're also free to change a character's background to fit the adventure. Or use them as "face" cards and develop the NPC with your own background, personality & other details from scratch.

Generic/Simple Game Stats

The cards focus on each character's background and personality. The few stats used (class/profession, race, alignment) give you an idea of the NPC's abilities. You're free to develop the NPC's stats in the system you're using as needed.

Adventure Hooks Abound!

Each character has interesting details that can lead to adventures or side-quests:

- Who is the kobold witch behind the throne?
- Need a new side quest? Help Frenk Biles recover the Scrolls of Elm.
- Beyasash may be behind any complex plot.
- How can Borchog's curse be undone?
- Many consider Haven the most powerful Vampire. Why?
- Why do the villagers regularly recruit adventurers to raid the tomb of Golvus?

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GURN TRACKSETTER

03

Werebear Ranger, Lawful Good

Personality

Pessimistically convinced that no one could understand him or accept him for what he is, but he wants others to draw their own conclusions. He has longed to be free of his werebear curse for so long he has not re-examined why he wants to be cured. The cure has become a symbol for him, one that would fix everything that makes him unhappy.

Strengths

- He can shrug off most attacks that aren't silver.
- His keen senses make him a formidable tracker.

Quirks

- He is perversely proud that he never lies, and he refuses to acknowledge that he misleads people.
- Very superstitious.

Distinguishing Features

- Eyepatch that adapts to his human, hybrid, or bear form.

Background

Gurn grew up in an isolated mountain community that harbored a werebear bloodline. When he changed, he refused to make peace with it. He sought an oracle to ask about how to remove this curse, and he was told if he eats the heart of the clan elder, he will be free. So he hunts his grandfather, killing other bears along the way. He is lonely, not letting anyone get emotionally close. He lets people think he is a bear hunter, when in fact they are his friends, and help him in his search.

Art: Stom Cook

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ARVINCH

02

Orc Elite Commander, Chaotic Evil

Personality

The only force that keeps him steady is carnage. Only then can he think clearly. The rest of life is miserable.

Strengths

- When unleashed, his fighting style removes limbs, sunders torsos, and crushes bodies beyond repair.
- Always focused, difficult to surprise.

Quirks

- Arvinch has unswerving loyalty to the General, who found him as a child and protected him in civilized lands, making sure he had outlets for his unmanageable rage.
- Arvinch would die for the General, and the General makes careful and effective use of Arvinch.

Distinguishing Features

- An oily black topknot that helps the orc reign in his rage. (He fights with his hair down.)
- Wrapped in a net of scars from countless battles.

Possessions of Note

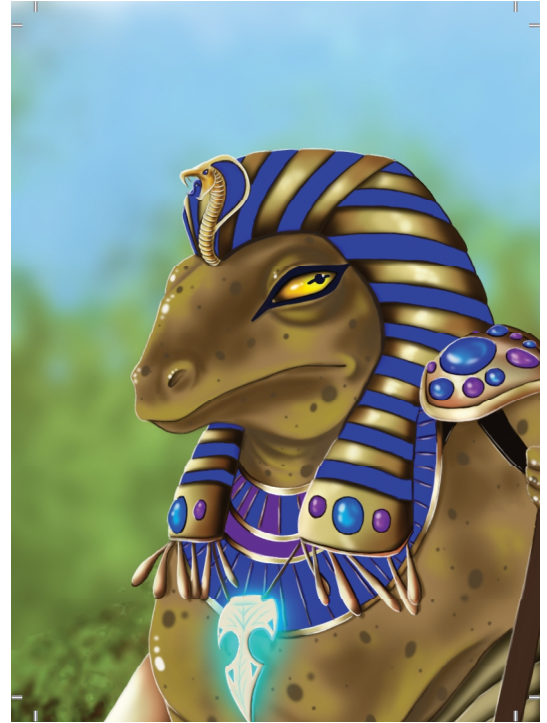
- His right arm and leg are armored with plates scavenged from an order of knights he dismembered singlehandedly.

Background

The General's forces tracked down a tribe of demon-worshipping orcs. The orcs were making a sacrifice, but the General slew the shaman in time to save the young orc who seemed possessed. Ever since, the General has treated Arvinch as a special, dangerous mastiff allowed out on missions of slaughter but otherwise penned up.

Art: Emmanuel Martinez Lema

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LALYLORILI THE RADIANT

05

Bullywug Priest, Lawful Evil

Personality

Narcissistic, paranoid, sadistic, and completely invested in manic delusions of grandeur. She will be the ruler of this entire region, from a swamp palace built by slaves. All will love her or face immediate destruction.

Strengths

- She does have inexplicable spellcasting ability granted to her by some powerful being. Using that and her natural cunning and brutality she has gathered a tough, vicious tribe of bullywugs to secure her corner of the world.

Quirks

- Once she uses "radiant" and "brightness" and "shininess" she's low on metaphors, so she immediately likes anyone who offers her synonyms for her brilliance.

Distinguishing Features

- Has made it illegal for all but her to wear eye makeup.

Possessions of Note

- The Crown of the Ancients, adapted for her head. It may be how she receives cosmic energy she channels.
- She also has a fist knife that glows when she goes to the Sacred Grove; some have speculated it is a key.

Background

She was a young slave when she heard the Voice Beneath in what became the Sacred Grove. It promised her power and greatness if she would serve it and erect a stone monument on the site. She has gained power and the crown. Now she is gathering slaves and stone...

Art: Sade

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BORCHOG THE CURSED

04

Unknown Beast, Lawful Neutral

Personality

Wracked with grief and self-loathing, unable to make up for his sins and unable to seek the release of death.

Strengths

- Incredible physical power and resilience.
- Desperate disregard for personal safety in battle.

Quirks

- Flesh is weirdly distorted, only half-real in shadows.

Distinguishing Features

- Horrifying horned monster.
- Able to press against most trees and subtly alter skin to look like bark.

Background

He dabbled in magic enough to summon a Power to make a deal; he summoned an arch-fey. Borchog demanded eternal health, and the fey demanded his child in exchange. Borchog was transformed into a monster—eternally healthy, but horrible to look upon. Unhinged, he slew everyone in his household and staggered off into the night. Now he searches the world as best he can, trying to find his child. If his child forgives him for his selfish deal, maybe the curse will be broken. It is his only hope.

"Once, I was as you are, before my hubris overcame me and delivered me into the machinations of an eldritch prince's corrupted bargain. Now years have passed, and the child I seek must have grown. Has it been 20 years?"

Art: Sade

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GRENGRRAY

07

Catfolk Ranger, Chaotic Neutral

Personality

She balks at obeying orders, preferring to do what she wants when she wants to do it. Routine is fine if it is her idea, but she resists anyone else's schedule or expectations. She deliberately misbehaves because that's how she understands independence.

Strengths

- Strong, fast, and cunning, she has a racial gift for camouflage and concealment. She has been striking to kill from concealment since the month she was born.

Quirks

- When she talks, she mixes in cat noises in speech and mannerisms in social interaction.

Distinguishing Features

- Unusual blue-tinge compared to her earth-toned kin.

Possessions of Note

- A black wig/headress which she believes helps her better interact with other races.

Background

Grengrray was always curious to a fault. Her people live on an island, isolationist, but she snuck aboard a visiting scout ship and revealed the existence of her people to the wider world. Her punishment from her people is a choice; she can represent them to the outsiders, or stay on the island and be shamed for her rash action. She reluctantly serves as a diplomat and enjoys some status in the city as an exotic party guest, as well as an acrobatic performer.

Art: Sade

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STIKKIT

06

Goblin Shaman, Neutral Evil

Personality

Cannot tell a straight truth to save his life. Everything is distorted and misleading, with as many facts woven in as the lie will hold. He gains dark joy from manipulation.

Strengths

- Has more human looks and vocal tone, making it easier for him to deal with people as a person not a monster.
- Fast wits, instinct for lies, grasp of the big picture.

Quirks

- His favorite manipulation technique is, if questioned, to go overboard cursing himself and wailing about everything that's wrong with him and how stupid he is compared to these wise people who know more better? He lures them with false flattery and half-truths.

Distinguishing Features

- He has uncanny resemblance to humans and with makeup and a cloak he can pass for one.

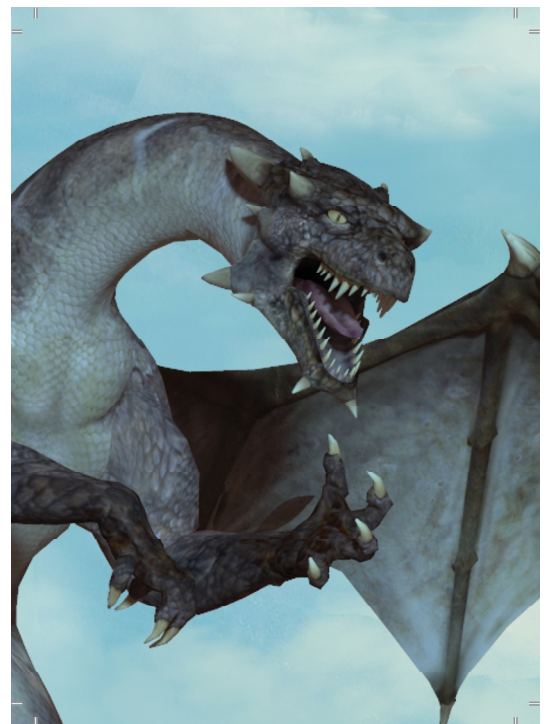
Background

As a young thing he triggered a family feud that destroyed his people. He knows how to flatter, and get the ear of powerful monsters or smug and self-righteous civilized leaders. His advice steers them into conflict, he profits at the margins, and vanishes when things get hot. His usual tactic to exit is to hang the whole mess on nearby adventuring parties as easy scapegoats before vanishing.

"Of course you are right, you have such wisdom!"

Art: Emmanuel Martinez Lema

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FELLSWORTH

09

Dogman Fighter, Neutral Evil

Personality

He fawns over his wizard master (and if this one dies he'll find another evil wizard to serve.) He also has a cruel streak. Abusive to peers, he is savage to those he sees as beneath him. However, he is a bully, and if confronted he slinks away. He is stupid.

Strengths

- His senses are keen, his shaggy coat is perfect for stealth, and his jaws are brutally dangerous.
- He is also willing to commit any act, no matter how heinous, for his wizard master.

Quirks

- His feeble brain is not up to speed with filtering all the interesting things his senses tell him. He seldom makes it through a sentence without losing his train of thought because of a new smell, sound, or sight. (The exception is when eating, or when raply attending to his wizard.)

Background

Fellsworth was a peasant nobody who was rounded up and sent off to war. By happy accident he ended up serving as bodyguard to a wizard. Eventually their detachment went rogue. The wizard was given a single wish by a cruel fey prince they met in their travels, and the wizard wisely demurred, but gave the wish to Fellsworth. He wished to be strong and keen to better serve his master. The fey obliged, turning him into this dogman. Fellsworth didn't care; better than being a peasant.

Art: Sade

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TOLOKOVAR

08

Devil Aristocrat, Lawful Evil

Personality

He is exhausting for prolonged conversation because he never stops selling. Whether he's talking about a contract to exchange your soul for your deepest wish, or talking about a place he's been that you should really try out next time you take a vacation, he can't shut it off.

Strengths

- Tolokovar has an intuitive sense of the deepest desires of anyone he meets. This makes him very persuasive by establishing common ground.

Quirks

- He loves stage magic. He can't stop pulling quills out of thin air, coins out of ears, scarves out of pockets, etc.
- If annoyed, he can retaliate by pulling roaches out of ears instead, revealing a dying rat on someone's plate, etc.

Distinguishing Features

- He can take on many forms that please or terrify his audience, but he is always red.

Background

Tolokovar serves in the worst pyramid scheme ever. The only way he advances is through signing on others who contribute their souls for cheap supernatural services. If drunk on bloody absinthe with a twist of sulfur, he will brag about how he was just a footsoldier who got smart, started with the contracts, and now is on Prime working his deals; he has his eye on bigger things. He might get a promotion in a few short centuries.

Art: Sade

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ZORTHANC

11

Transmogrified Dragon, Neutral Good

Personality

When he was human, he was a clown who was always making people laugh. Now as a huge dragon, he still has a sharp sense of humor, but with a dose of madness. He tends to divide people up into two groups: those who "can take a joke" and those who "want to kill me."

Quirks

- He likes using his strength and shape to startle and unsettle others. He buries himself so only part of his head sticks out, or he clings to the roof of a cavern, or he flops his head upside-down at the end of his long neck.
- He often observes that becoming a dragon changes one's point of view.

Background

Once a wily fighter in an adventuring company, he got a share of a dragon hoard. It was cursed, and the greed and lust turned all those who had some of the hoard into dragonish creatures, and they fought. He killed all the others and got the whole hoard, and the whole transformation. Out of his mind with grief and lust, he barged into a temple and begged the gods for relief; they sent a prophet who told him he could break the curse if he threw his hoard into the ocean. He did it, and the curse of treasure lust was gone—but he was still a dragon. He is content to live out his long days finding allies who will treat him with respect and friendship, in exchange for using his violent gifts against evil.

Art: Sade

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RUPERT DELSURIAN

10

Vampire Aristocrat, Neutral Evil

Personality

All his life, others have cared for his needs and flattered his opinions. He has no empathy or sense that there is suffering greater than his own. He is the center of his world, thoroughly spoiled, with no use for those who disagree with him or stand in his way.

Quirks

- If a conversation does not revolve around him, or displeases him, he will loudly say "Boring," or "Wrong," or "Enough," then offer a mischievous grin and change the subject. He thinks this is charming.

Distinguishing Features

- As part of the vampiric transformation, his fingernails turned into talons. He is sensitive about their coarse and ugly appearance, and tries to keep them hidden.

Background

There was only one person he found fascinating, capable of humbling him. She turned out to be a vampire, who added the handsome noble to her stable of vampires—and immediately regretted it. She returned him to his home, where he murdered enough nobles to rule a ragged corner of the kingdom. The locals are past ready to hire someone to stab him the rest of the way to death.

"I stand before you a scion of the night, prince of twilight and inheritor of the moon's grace. When you regain your wits, tell me what you consider my finest feature."

Art: Publisher's Choice Quality Stock Art © Rick Hershey / Fat Goblin Games

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STILES

13

Flesh Golem, Neutral Evil

Personality

Dreadfully, painfully dull. He is profoundly self-centered, all he knows or wants to talk about is himself. He is mournfully sure that people hate and fear him because of his horrible patchwork visage. It is more accurate that no one can stand to listen to him for five minutes. He mourns people who won't listen.

Quirks

- Any time he has an idle moment he pulls out black waxed string and starts re-doing a seam.

Distinguishing Features

- He is proud of an oval patch on his face, he claims it was from Dangma, a mighty cleric of the region's dominant god. He shows it off as his best side.

Background

In what seemed a great betrayal, the king did not support the village that stood at the ford to stop the incoming enemy. Everyone in the village died, even the famed cleric Dangma. The king's rival cut up the remains and turned the village of Stiles into a flesh golem, which was sent to successfully assassinate the king. Retaliation left the golem masterless, and Stiles is now free to sulk in dank places, indulging self-pity thinly disguised as philosophy.

"At all times I am numb, but in agony. My entire existence can be examined as shades and hues of pain, lived out on this patchwork canvas of corpsesified victims."

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LIS MACHUUL

12

Drow Warrior, Lawful Evil

Personality

All the fun has been sucked out of life. He obeys because that is the path of least resistance. He indulges the drow women who torment him with shows of pain, but he is almost dead inside and he cares less and less what happens to him in the end.

Quirks

- He likes to open and close combat with a sardonic bow, and he's strong and flexible so he can roll out of it, or flip, or kneel, or throw a knife.
- He calls all drow women "my queen" except his consort, who he calls "mistress."

Possessions of Note

- He has a dwarven hammer he took from a dwarven champion three centuries ago. He had it reworked to be lighter and magically attract drawn weapons to itself on command, possibly disarming a foe. He calls it Edger.

Background

In his youth he burned with a protective passion, caring about his brothers in a world of sadistic women. A series of owners have deliberately provoked this protective nature only to crush those he cared about, to torment him endlessly. Two hundred years ago he ran out of boys to protect, and he doesn't think he can ever feel that attachment again. He may be wrong, and that feeling of connection may be more important to him than fear of his master's wrath, or the sunlit lands above.

Art: Sade

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BAKURIS

15

Goblin Coward, Chaotic Evil

Personality

Only one thing matters—not dying. He will say or do anything to keep himself alive. He is always evaluating people and their things. What can he use for protection? Who will stand between him and danger? Who is a threat? What would they do to get their bauble back?

Strengths

- He is fast on his feet—faster than most goblins.
- He is also a skilled liar; because he believes his lies.

Quirks

- If he feels strongly about making a point, he will sing the words, shaking his head back and forth, in an oddly hypnotic way. It puts people off balance, and sometimes they agree before they realize they were tricked.

Background

He was the runt of the litter, and was almost eaten many times before his cunning gave him the edge. Many times he has attached himself to a powerful patron, but even when he was in situations where he could have lived out his days safely, his instinct for betrayal and manipulation ruined safe havens one way or another. Those who have known him long enough to expect his betrayal call any plan that sacrifices people a "Bakuris plan."

"What, them? I was their prisoner! You liberated me! And I know many secrets, yes, many secrets about the town we just came from. I could help you. I could serve you."

Art: Sade

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GNARMICK

14

Gnoll Ranger, Neutral Evil

Personality

He is a murderous stalker. He lives for the hunt, and if something flees, his instinct is to pounce. He only parleys reluctantly. All of life is establishing dominance.

Strengths

- Many allies, both gnoll and human.
- Incredible stealth matched with startling ferocity.

Quirks

- In conversation he is restless and wary, likely to repeat himself and ask others to repeat themselves.
- He pays attention to blood and motion; words aren't real.

Possessions of Note

- He wears an elven cloak given to him as a gift from an adventurer he escorted through dangerous territory.
- Pair of short staves that can join together.

Background

In any other area, Gnarmick would be a chaotic reaver hunting civilized people. However, this area is infested with deadly predators (mostly trolls.) Gnarmick's tribe was wiped out by them, and a few survivors were nursed back to health by people in a fortified village. They formed an uneasy truce, with the gnolls lairing further back in the valley, and the humans protecting the valley entrance. The gnolls express their hunting and fighting needs by serving as scouts and escorts for supply runs. So far, a desire to grow a strong people has outweighed the urge to wipe out the protective humans.

Art: Claudio Cassini

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TRUTHKEEPER**17**

Lionman Warrior, Lawful Good

Personality

No sense of humor, no interest in fiction, stern disapproval of sarcasm; words are important. Say what you mean. Speak your heart. Do not act foolish or deceitful. Where there is only truth, there will he find friends.

Strengths

- Boundless patience, and magically enhanced muscles.

Quirks

- He doesn't like to talk to a person unless he is looking that person in the eye so he may gauge reactions.

Background

His stretch of highlands is covered with tall grass and low hills. There was once a wizard tower there, long crumbled to rubble. The wizard who lived there wanted to "uplift" the animals, and success with the hyenas made gnolls that ruined it for everyone. These "leftover lions" form a small pride that protects the area, filling their days and nights with simple pleasures and a nomadic hunting lifestyle. However, they now face a threat that could change everything, and Truthkeeper knows that the pride does not have the strength to stand against it. He is open to help, even if he is reluctant to accept it. He refuses to work with liars unless they apologize and stop lying.

"The wind! The grass breathes. The sun! Gods are with us. The scent of prey! And we run, for we are made of running and strength. Yes! And yes!"

Art: Sade

NPC Portraits Deck: Monsters © 2017 Inkwell Ideas

GRIMPINI**16**

Lizardling Warrior, Neutral Good

Personality

The desert has taught him that strengths are weaknesses, and weaknesses are strengths, and humility is the only sane approach to life. He cannot take arrogant people seriously, and he expects to depend on the most downtrodden at some point. He is quietly respectful to everyone until they are rude to him, then he indulges in amused sarcasm until they apologize.

Strengths

- Can stay motionless for days; needs almost no water.
- Lightning-fast and able to run along walls and rafters.

Quirks

- His nickname for anyone who does not have scales is "leaky." Friends can upgrade to "slick."

Distinguishing Features

- He has a scar near his eye from a poison blade. The eye was magically healed, but the skin wasn't.

Background

Adventurers found his half-buried desert city. Instead of slaying the locals and plundering, the leader patiently negotiated with the ruler and opened trade relations. Grimpini has served as a guard and ambassador of the city for years, but he's bored and looking for a more interesting way to explore the wider world.

"Yip yip, right past the dunes and a curve to the stream. Let's go, leaky. Sun's up soon."

Art: DRB Jr.

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GOLVUS THE MERCIFUL**19**

Mummy Aristocrat, Chaotic Evil

Personality

Hateful, self-absorbed, in an agony of boredom. She demands submission, and if she gets it, she kills—that's boring. Only those who resist her, who will provide some kind of challenge, get to live in her pavilion for a time.

Strengths

- She is trapped in her elaborate, complex tomb and she knows every inch of it.
- Meticulous—has all the time in the world.

Possessions of Note

- She was buried with the Gem of Memory, and it torments her by seeping into her waking nightmare and projecting memories of life; the loss hurts her afresh each time. The gem chamber is the one place she won't go. (But whoever does go in there must face their memories.)

Background

Golvus was the most brutal ruler in the desert nation's history, and the people rejoiced when one of her handmaidens finally poisoned her. They put her in the tomb and sealed it up. The tradition of desert kings is long over, but when the boredom is too painful, Golvus screams and screams as she claws at the walls closest to the city. Knowing she may one day get out, that's when the locals get creative about enticing people to go down into the tomb, for whatever reason, and amuse Golvus. They buy time with blood. No one can even speculate what the insane monster would do if she escaped.

Art: Publisher's Choice Quality Stock Art © Rick Hershey / Fat Goblin Games

NPC Portraits Deck: Monsters © 2017 Inkwell Ideas

SELECASSIUS REX**18**

Lich Aristocrat, Lawful Evil

Personality

He loves to debate, and will interrogate someone with questions from all sides of an issue without revealing his own stance, just to clarify theirs. He acts out of boredom and greed for power. He's enjoying the thrill of pretending to be benevolent as a ruler.

Strengths

- An army mixing the living and the dead that is seasoned in battle, loyal, and well trained.
- Seductive rhetoric about the advantages of his rule.

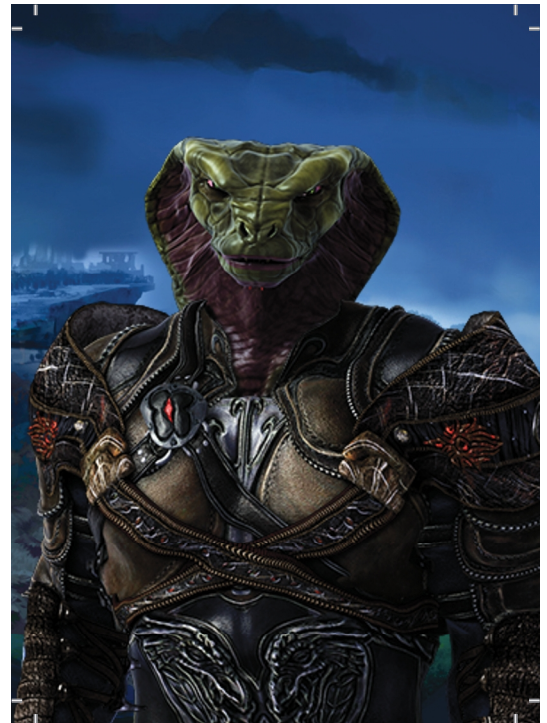
Background

He has worn many faces over his rotten core. Now he plays at being a benevolent protector. He expresses concern for the health and safety of the humans under his rule, and he maintains diplomats he can send to independent communities to negotiate terms for them coming under his protection. He offers safety in a scary world, in exchange for some taxes and the loss of a few freedoms. His temporarily concealed power lust reveals as he spreads influence without military conquest. He rules from his necropolis, offering harsh law to protect his people from each other and outsiders.

"My warriors are deathless in your protection. Those that threaten you threaten me. My needs are simple here in the palace, and my taxes are light. Of course, you can remain on the border, raided mercilessly. Your choice."

Art: Claudio Casini

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KRULIAN THE MESSENGER

21

Revenant Warning, Neutral

Personality

Rarely speaks, serious, staring eyes. He occasionally says creepy things, and sometimes starts laughing or crying for no clear reason.

Strengths

- Deception is central to Krulian. The horse is Krulian, and the undead mounted atop him is the Messenger Krulian animates as a spokesman and decoy.
- Krulian knows a variety of useful magical effects, such as teleportation and limited invisibility.

Possessions of Note

- The Messenger always wears a broad-brimmed hat as a key part of the disguise that conceals its undead nature.

Background

Krulian is a messenger demon who will escort a messenger or take a message. He can be summoned in a ritual, and the Powers of Hell guarantee delivery of the message. In addition to the costs of the ritual, which are steep per use, Krulian can conduct one errand while in the world for every message he is to deliver. He can be sent to collect a sold soul whose contract comes due, or to take a message from a demon to a witch or ally, or to assassinate an enemy of Hell. Fortunately the only ones who know the ritual to summon Krulian are in the line of court wizards for a local kingdom.

"Today I ride for you. Tomorrow... maybe you ride for me."

Art: Claudio Casini

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BONESTORM

20

Lich Conqueror, Lawful Evil

Personality

He cannot bear the living, but also cannot bear death. So he dresses up skeletons like people, and forces them to manage musical instruments and dances and small talk, and struts among them like nobility. Temper on a hair trigger, however, so any dropped notes or interruptions tend to provoke violence. When finished with the charade, he discards the dead as casually as he does the living.

Quirks

- He collects coins. He'll make a more favorable deal if it includes rare coins.
- Stains his bones with wine, sipping it through his jaws.

Possessions of Note

- The Orb of Recall is an artifact that rouses the dead and infuses them with enough energy to keep them active for centuries. It can only be used near concentrations of the living and the dead, as it drains the living to fuel the dead.

Background

His name is lost to history, but he was once a wizard ruler who ascended to lichdom. He was deposed, and swore that would never happen again; he slaughtered his people and sold their animated remains to other necromantic customers for steep prices. Since then he has been an arms dealer for those purchasing undead military units.

"Enough with your tiresome breathing. Slope off or join my dancers forever."

Art: Peter Szabo Gabor

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SLITHISSK

23

Snakeman Warlord, Chaotic Evil

Personality

Paranoid that others are always trying to take things away from him. Whether it be mates, prestige, territory, possessions, or reputation, he is sure others are after what's his. He is brash and commanding until given a reason to be suspicious. Then he gets silky and curious.

Strengths

- His top half is humanoid except for a snake head, and his bottom half is a giant serpent. He can move quickly even on loose sand, and he is well adapted to not lose water in hot desert conditions.

- Commands a warband of desert raiders of various races.

Quirks

- He was struck by a mummy years ago, and he still has some rashes and sores from the rot that never healed. These give off a smell of a rotting snake corpse.

Background

Water. No settlement in the desert can last without some access to water. Slithissk wants to control the desert, so he focuses his attention on controlling the water. His tongue can taste water on the wind from miles away. If anyone builds a well or brings in significant water, he's drawn there. Upon arriving, he sacks the settlement and fouls the water, then moves on. His nomadic group maintains control on the move, not settling down where a counter-strike could easily locate them. He dreams of a better spy network so he can grow his territory.

Art: Sade

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GORCHARGER

22

Orc/Minotaur, Neutral Evil

Personality

His demeanor shifts instinctively to mirror the expectations of those he meets. If they expect strength, he snarls and pounds his chest. If they see him as a wise man, he is serene and cryptic. Underneath, he is self-confident and focused on a life goal of leading his people to safety.

Strengths

- His name carries weight with all the savages in his area as a prophet and leader.

Possessions of Note

- He constructed a staff out of wood from a haunted grove and bits of bone from various defeated opponents all wound together with sinew from a still-living wyvern. He named the staff Probus. When he uses it he can see and hear spirits; he is not a spell-casting shaman, but he claims to be open to the supernatural expanses beyond.

Background

Gorcharger is a legend among his people, for he was the result of a successful mating of a slave-pit gladiator minotaur and the great war leader who subdued him. He was the champion of his people, leading them to glory and conquest. In later years, he claimed he had dreams that directed the tribe to avoid combat with some enemies, and focus on others. The successes were great based on this advice, and he continues picking the clan's battles carefully. Whether it is insight or otherworldly advice, the orc tribes trust him.

Art: Claudio Casini

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RAYDION THE BLIGHT

25

Fallen Angel, Chaotic Evil

Personality

Exasperated, vaguely desperate, someone who can feel a clock ticking down while everybody else is acting like there's no emergency. He has no use for social niceties.

Quirks

- When angry he tears off a horn in frustration. Although painful the horn grows back in minutes.
- Either slays captives or sets them free depending on his mood and if tracking them may be useful.

Background

Elsewhere in the cosmos, there was a battle where the angels were hard pressed and losing. Raydion deserted and fled to this world, where a demon had been locked away endless millennia ago. He freed the demon from its sturdy cage, knowing it had a personal stake in whatever mysterious battle was unfolding so far away. After the battle, Raydion's peers judged him, and found him guilty of breaking the cage. His body had to serve as the cage, since the original was broken beyond repair, and he was banished to the world where the demon had been sealed away. He is furious at that betrayal, and constantly at war with the demon inside him that wants to wipe the world out altogether. His research suggests there is a cosmic sword somewhere on this world that will free him; he is not sure if that means he will escape the world, or the demon in him will be slain, or he will be slain, but he doesn't care anymore. He just wants out.

Art: Sade

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THIRIAK, THE CURSE OF THE

24

Demon Curse Guardian, Lawful Evil

Personality

Dramatic, to the point of bad overacting, to make sure the point of the curse gets across. When not on duty, relaxed and pleasant, grateful for some peace and quiet and maybe the occasional stimulating conversation.

Strengths

- Immortal, imbued with supernatural strength & durability.
- Elemental snow control powers.

Quirks

- Interested in intricacies of etiquette and manners; such fussy things are alien to him, but fun.

Distinguishing Features

- His tusks are prehensile. He uses them to stroke his fur, cover his mouth if surprised, and gesture while talking.

Background

Snow elves intruded on the tombs of the bird-people rulers of the mountains. To retaliate, the last of the bird people cursed the snow elves, summoning a monster that would haunt their mountains and drive them out. They bound Thiriak to the mountain to protect their tombs and keep the elves away. His contract is for a thousand years and it is less than half up. He likes the peace and quiet here more than some of his other more horrible postings. He makes sure to keep the elves chased off, but he is fine with a pleasant chat with anyone else. He looks forward to more time on the mountain. He does have gold, and might pay a brave soul to buy him more books from time to time.

Art: Claudio Casini

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SARTORUM GRABBLE

27

Werewolf Tax Collector, Chaotic Evil

Personality

Arrogant and domineering over little people, fawning and agreeable to his betters. Suspicious of peers. Focused on getting money and respect. Anything that threatens those objectives is met with a strong response. He flaunts his curse as a symbol of his dark overlord's approval.

Strengths

- He has the backing of the evil government.
- Methodical. Always has escape routes ready.

Quirks

- When he transforms, he grooms himself before business.

Background

The dark overlord's tax collectors kept dying mysteriously. Not Grabble! The dark overlord had him infected with lycanthropy, so he became vigorous and death-resistant. Grabble was delighted with the change. He set up his brother, Morul, with the only shop in town that changed silver to gold or copper. Then he refused to accept silver in taxes. The people had to get their money changed, which cost a fee that Morul and Grabble split. Grabble is exceptionally hated. However, he has a mansion, with undead servants and dangerous hounds. He isn't interested in love; he just wants to be paid.

"No taxes today? Well, I'll be sure to drop in on my way back. If you don't have anything then, I'll be by much later tonight. For some token payment. Something you'll miss."

Art: Publisher's Choice Quality Stock Art © Rick Hershey / Fat Goblin Games

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HAVEN

26

Vampire Fixer, Lawful Evil

Personality

Languid and sensual, she has no ambition to shape the world. She's a calculating flirt and protector of her turf.

Strengths

- Her considerable undead power rarely comes into play, because she is a fixer who connects powerful creatures with things they need in exchange for things they don't.
- She commands store rooms of magic items, zoos of monsters, and elite darkside bodyguards.

Quirks

- When conducting business, she takes off her pinkie ring and puts it in her ear. It is a magical lie detector.

Distinguishing Features

- Her back is a breathtaking tattoo of intricate knotwork and symbols. There is a symbol for each vampire she's slain. She only explains them to those she trusts.

Background

Her mentor taught her to be the right kind of dangerous; too useful to lose, and too connected to cross. He likened it to fording a river: choose your ties and footing carefully. She networks by releasing enchanted rings keyed to her otherworldly castle; using them at prepared doorways allows entry into her space, the Wraith Tower. There, all manner of undead and cursed things and scholars meet socially and make bargains or trades. Anyone who misbehaves is tossed back into the world, unless they upset Haven—they get tossed to the Astral Plane.

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SHARPER GRASSLE

29

Tigerwoman Ranger, Neutral Good

Personality

She expects people to want favors from her related to her job, so she doesn't trust anyone with less access than herself. She tries not to meet anyone except at the border Treaty Stone where outsiders are supposed to stop before entering the high country she guards. She is not sophisticated, and believes all civilized people are liars.

Strengths

- She commands a task force of about sixty lethal tiger-people who stalk the grassy borders of the Ghostlands.
- She is also an accomplished sniper.

Distinguishing Features

- Pale, rather than the more robust orange of her peers.

Possessions of Note

- She earned the Blood Drop, a gem on her forehead that is a symbol of her status as protector of the Ghostlands. The creatures of that place defer to her because of it.

Background

At her birth, a shaman prophesied she would betray the Ghostlands. Several years later, that shaman was revealed to be an agent of a dark invading power. Her whole life, Sharper has lived under the shadow of a prophecy that may or may not be true. Now she has seen some things that lead her to wonder if there is another agent of the dark invading power among her peers. Will she betray her people by seeking outside help, or by turning a blind eye? She is deeply troubled.

Art: Sade

NPC Portraits Deck: Monsters © 2017 Inkwell Ideas

ZARALASIA

28

Guardian Angel, Lawful Good

Personality

Smug and superior, she has figured out how to win at life in a way that none before her could. She has her orders to provide inspiration to those on quests, but she knows better. If they face supernatural opposition she will announce herself boldly and counter it. She sees her questers as stupid and weak children under her guidance and care. However, no one may insult them if she is around! (She doesn't even realize how patronizing she is.)

Possessions of Note

- She bears the Avenger Blade Citysunder, which has been used to cut entire cities in half.
- She gives her questers one feather each to summon her by holding it and whispering her name.

Background

She got the idea to get directly involved from an old pilgrim visiting the same shrine as her charge. Zaralasia was invisible, bored, and observing, when the old man suggested she take a more direct interest. She liked the idea, but actually for every intervention she stages the forces of Hell get an intervention of their own. It's all about balance. Her questers may be more likely to succeed, but untold damage may be inflicted by the other side.

"Fear not! For I have come to deliver thee from darkness and woeful incompetence into the light of victory!"

Art: Aaron Lee

NPC Portraits Deck: Monsters © 2017 Inkwell Ideas

SPOILS

31

Gnoll Child, Chaotic Neutral

Personality

Intensely greedy and self-interested. Only given pause by the possibility of punishment or pain. Sadistic and gleeful. Only quiet when she's trying to kill something or hide.

Quirks

- Her language skills aren't very good. She says "candy" when she means "meat." She will refer to people as "candydandy" and "candylady."
- If she feels an idea is not getting across she will repeat it over and over with variations, like working a combination lock over and over and hoping it will open.

Distinguishing Features

- Her endearing overbite makes her a bit goofy, but when she lolls on her back for a belly rub she's irresistible.

Background

Her parents are so proud she's old enough to kill her own meat. At the whopping age of four, she's a hunter training to be a scout. Her parents are extra fond of her because she was born on the battlefield where the tribe took out a rival gang of orc raiders; a good battle, and she's some of the spoils.

"Gimmie candyfinger? Candyfinger? Nyum nyum? See see! Candyfinger! Nyum?"

Art: Lawrence Van Der Merwe

NPC Portraits Deck: Monsters © 2017 Inkwell Ideas

THE SPEAKER OF OXEN GLADE

30

Centaur Druid, Neutral Good

Personality

He is even-tempered and balanced, always aware of context and multiple points of view. He is slow to reveal an opinion, and quick to ask clarifying questions about what others are thinking or proposing. He has a decent sense of humor, though it is usually somewhat subdued. His compassion extends to all those who are wounded—and he sees how everyone is wounded.

Strengths

- Very emotionally, physically, and mentally stable.
- He is a sage when it comes to plants, monsters, history, legends, the stars, and more.

Quirks

- He likes to give new friends a nut, leaf, or bone; something natural. He tells them it is important, then waits for their own insight. Usually they solve their problem based on the wisdom of his gift.

Distinguishing Features

- His nose was branded with the white Speaker's stripe.

Background

Once a firebrand, insisting all evil things be slain. After long service to the Glade as a warrior and scholar, he had the opportunity to slay a monster. Something stayed his hand, and instead he nursed it back to health. When he learned that the moment has more to teach than the lifetime, and one thing carried more weight than all things, he learned the balance to be the Glade's Speaker.

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CHOMP THE BITER KING

33

Dinoman Gladiator, Chaotic Neutral

Personality

If he wins people like him. If he loses they say mean things. He likes to win. He likes people liking him and giving him things like big pieces of meat. It is fun to eat and people have fun watching. It is important to hurt the people in the ring but not the people in the prep rooms. It is okay to bite in the ring but not in the prep rooms. But sometimes not okay to bite. It is confusing sometimes.

Strengths

- Inhuman vitality and monster power.
- Also, popular in his hometown.

Quirks

- He struggles with past and future tense. Everything is more or less in the now if he's thinking about it or experiencing something. "That fight is fun. I get a hurt."
- If he can't think of anything to say, his fallback is "Now we eat?" (He has no useful lips, so "b" and "w" and "f" and "m" become "y" when he's talking: "Now ye eat?")

Background

In the ruins of the wizard towers, adventurers found an egg. They hoped it would be a dragon, but it hatched to be Chomp. They sold it to the gladiators, who raised it as a ring fighter. He survived the last decade, and now the owners are looking to sell him because they can't keep up with the cost of his meat. If they can't find a buyer soon, they'll pay someone to take him far away to be somewhere else's problem.

Art: Dean Spencer

NPC Portraits Deck: Monsters © 2017 Inkwell Ideas

SIR LAERT MISCALIA

32

Deathknight, Lawful Good

Personality

He is grimly petulant that his curse seems to be greater than his faith; he expected his god to shield him from becoming undead. He is angry, sure of himself, and contemptuous of his former order. Rage consumes him to the point that his situation is relevant to any conversation, and he devolves into ranting with little or any warning.

Background

Sir Miscalia served as a devout paladin. He fell in love with a woman and bedded her (which his order allowed) in a happy but brief affair. She ended the relationship, and he was devastated. He investigated her and found out that she had a minor spellcasting talent of dubious origin. He researched her tradition and found it was condemned by scripture. After a night of soul-searching, he resolved to kill her. She was warned by one of his friends, and she escaped to her village. He followed, resolute, and discovered there was a deep-seated tradition forbidden by scripture there. He put the whole village to the sword before succumbing to the wounds they inflicted on him in self-defense. He believes their forbidden magic cursed him to stay here, surrounded by the hollow-eyed silent ghosts of those he slew. In fact it was his god, who saw into his heart and knew he used scripture as an excuse to murder his lover and her town. Until he can honestly see that, admit it, and repent, he must live among the ashes of his sour pride.

Art: Peter Szabo Gabor

NPC Portraits Deck: Monsters © 2017 Inkwell Ideas

MINISTER OF SLITHERS

35

Dragon Imp Pet, Chaotic Neutral

Personality

Impish, flirty, and utterly sensational. He thrills to be rubbed and fussed over, but only when he's in the mood. He takes perverse joy in provoking ever-heightening levels of frustration from people who try to make him do things.

Strengths

- He can knot his snake-like body and create a hole in timespace, slithering out of where he is and re-entering the dimension somewhere within a hundred feet or so.
- He can also breathe flickers of bone-chilling ice, which is dangerous to unprotected flesh.
- He is a symbol of the royal house, so if anyone mistreats or harms him, they draw the ire of a kingdom's rulers.

Background

The ruler of the kingdom sometimes "auditions" worthy groups of renowned adventurers by tasking them with transporting the Minister of Slithers from the Summer Palace to the Winter Palace, a two day journey. If they manage to outwit and befriend the dragon imp, then the king feels they are trustworthy and strong enough to reign in their frustrations and focus on the task at hand, mature enough to win the respect and friendship of a difficult foe. If the Minister escapes and saunters back in his own good time, then the king will not hire the escorts.

Art: Sade

NPC Portraits Deck: Monsters © 2017 Inkwell Ideas

FAARIK

34

Drow Commander, Lawful Evil

Personality

Frustrated! He had ambitions on gaining status in the cutthroat political games deep below, but he overstepped and got assigned to his insane wizard mistress. Her experiments require endless supplies of human test subjects, and he's responsible for getting them. He wants her gone, so he can get back to work down below.

Strengths

- Cunning and devious, also skilled in combat and magic.
- He commands a strike team of raiders and slavers, most of them are also drow (with a few trusted slaves).

Distinguishing Features

- He has "trusted" marks seared into his face for two houses that have a claim to the throne. He wants to take advantage of them before those who owe him favors are replaced in the high-turnover games below.

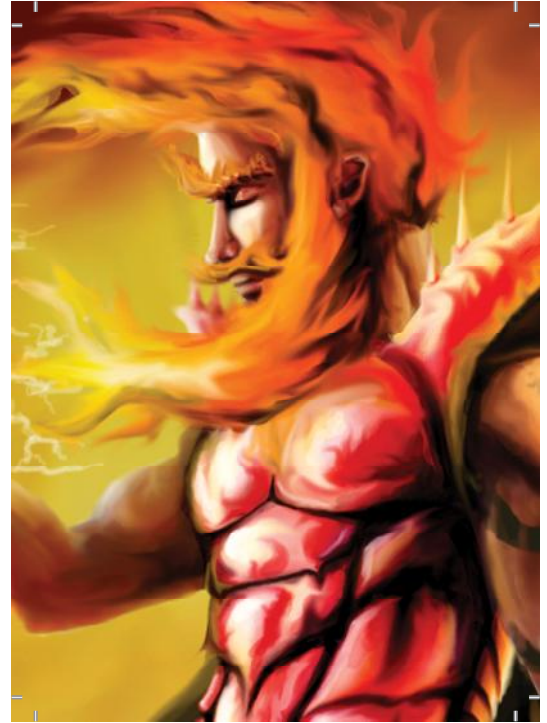
Background

High-born with expectations that in spite of his gender he'd achieve some prestige in the matriarchy. A damaging romance here and a betrayal there, suddenly he works for this unhinged witch and her ridiculous monster-refining agenda. Now he keeps a sharp eye out for patsies who could infiltrate his security with a little help, kill his boss, and be conveniently wiped out in the chaos.

"We never talked, understand, but I may know something of interest. For the right price."

Art: Sade

NPC Portraits Deck: Monsters © 2017 Inkwell Ideas



TYLARIUS FLICKERECHE**37**

Elementalist, Chaotic Good

Personality

He trusts instinct far more than precedent, and he values honesty more than policy. He demands those around him be true to the moment, rather than suppressing what they think is right or proper or reasonable because it doesn't fit established practice. He is not patient.

Strengths

- As leader of the Flame Order of Elementalists, he has prestige, wealth, and a number of wizards in his service.
- Unlike some wizards, Tylarius is physically strong.

Distinguishing Features

- His affinity with flame is such that his hair flickers and writhes like fire, and is hot to the touch (but doesn't burn.)

Background

His talent was identified when he was a toddler, and he grew up in the order with no idea who his family was. As he rose through the ranks he found out his family was wealthy, influential, and profoundly proud of him. He is a philosopher, and while his superiors thought that would temper him, instead it drives him to make the most of every opportunity and experience for human life is the wax encasing the candle's wick, draining into the flame with every passing moment. Tylarius likens compromise and politics to the ashes and soot far from the flame, and he wants to burn hot enough and bright enough to leave a clear legacy.

Art: Peter Szabo Gabor

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SISTER SALEENIA**36**

Fey Handmaiden, Neutral Good

Personality

Because of her half-fey blood, she has served for over two hundred years without losing her youthful appearance. She genuinely likes the frippery and costuming and parties and gossip of the role, but she is more emotionally steady than she appears. She is also prepared to die in service to the crown, smuggling messages between courts at events or by traveling lonely roads. Her dual nature allows her to slip effortlessly between hardened operative and feckless party girl.

Strengths

- She is highly skilled at fencing and acrobatics, as well as sneaking either in disguise or as a parkour expert.
- Has a large wardrobe and many accessories, so she can be dressed for any occasion; happy to loan items to gather favors.

Background

She was born to a fey spy languishing in the dungeon who died from childbirth. Raised by the state, she was used as a playmate for the crown princess, then the next crown princess, and the next. She aged slower than the others, but she fell in love with each generation of the royal family in a different way, and would gladly die for them. Still, she has no way to tell them of how it hurts her to see them grow old and die, their shared experience lost to her forever even as she falls in love with the children who follow.

Art: Sade

NPC Portraits Deck: Monsters © 2017 Inkwell Ideas

DREAMTWISTER, HAUNTER OF THE**39**

Demon Psyche, Chaotic Evil

Personality

It hungers for fear. That is what it eats, what fuels its chilly core. It smells the thoughts coming out of sentient minds, like the scent of good cooking. If it can get close enough, its presence triggers nightmares, and it can steal the print. Then, later, when the image donor is alone, the demon can take on that form and attack. A kill isn't necessary, the fear is delicious enough. A kill is more like dessert, and it's greedy to want that for every meal.

Strengths

- It can become incorporeal, and it is unburdened by philosophy or loyalties. It is a predator that feeds on fear.

Quirks

- Sometimes if it really likes a dream image it will insert the image into another sleeping target's mind for later use.

Distinguishing Features

- Its carapace forms an etched image permanently for every nightmare it projects.

Background

Some scholars say wizards created this thing as an art form, to showcase dreams, but it soured to only copy nightmares. Others suggest it was designed as a weapon on the battlefield, to harry and skirmish and drive fear and insanity through the ranks. Another theory is that it was a curse on a royal house, and when it ran out of royalty it went freelance. Experts agree that it can only suffer a killing blow from the one whose nightmare it is imitating.

Art: Tan Ho Sim

NPC Portraits Deck: Monsters © 2017 Inkwell Ideas

GOBBLESMACK**38**

Elderly Goblin, Chaotic Evil

Personality

Unless someone appears to be middle age or older, he talks to them with one syllable dismissive grunts like "bah" or "feh" or "hnh." If forced to talk more, he makes a big deal about it. For those who are older, he talks to them like children. He's only reasonable in talking to people who look elderly. Even then, while he knows a lot, he prefers to talk about aches and pains and kids these days and how he got all his scars. He's lonely, scared of being so old, scared of dying, scared of losing respect, and profoundly tired.

Quirks

- Ends talks with, "Eh, my head's too full to talk to you."
- His skin is almost leathery.

Possessions of Note

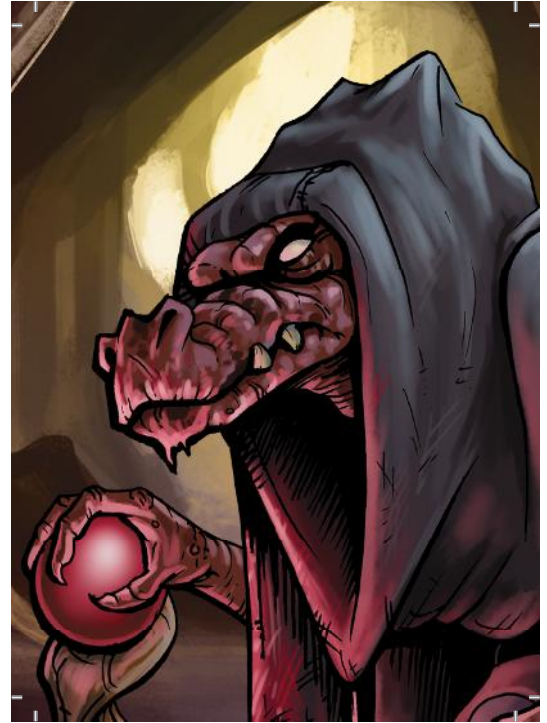
- Grinder is his hammer; he claims it is a cloud giant's tooth lashed to a haft to make a trophy weapon. He claims he harvested it himself, but he no longer truly remembers.

Background

Other goblins idly wonder if he's from another species of goblin, or if his parents were maybe not both goblins, or if there was a curse or something. Gobblesmack himself doesn't actually know. However, as usual, he pretends he knows but won't say. He actually has a lot of trouble remembering anything, but his age gives him a reputation for expertise, and he's terrified someone will expose him for his faulty memory.

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GIMBLE "THRONESHADOW"

41

Kobold Mastermind, Chaotic Evil

Personality

When things go wrong, people blame the leader. Well they should; the leader is just stuck right out there for everyone to blame. Safer to control the leader, and replace them as needed. Get the trust of the leader's key supporters, then install a leader you can manipulate.

Strengths

- She is ruthless, and keenly aware of body language and maneuvering of other contenders to influence the leader.
- She offers her followers what they need; praise for some, a strong hand for others, opportunity for the promising, wealth for the most stupid.

Distinguishing Features

- Her left eye is milky with cataracts, she is almost blind.

Background

She was born in a chaotic cave complex where many savage races vied for control. As the only survivor, spared because the adventurers couldn't bring themselves to kill a baby kobold, she was alone in the world. She quickly manipulated others to do her dirty work. At the height of her power twenty years ago, she managed to reign behind the scenes of an orc invasion, with a tribe of ogres and some wolf riders under her sway. But fortune comes and goes, and now she's back to running amateur hour with some local kobolds. She is wistful when she thinks of the power she had, and she's not above offering treasure to adventurers to try and make them into leaders.

Art: Gary Dupuis

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SPECKLESPINE

40

Demon Imp Familiar, Chaotic Evil

Personality

It was attracted to Master because of Master's evil, but then a bad encounter with a magically cursed device switched Master to crave goodness instead of blood and death. Master is pretty worthless now, all whiny about the suffering of others and earnest about making life better for weak people and it is INTOLERABLE. Master has to go.

Quirks

- When frustrated, the imp bangs its head on something hard nearby, at the rate of about one click or ping per second. It's kind of funny to watch.
- Poisons his current master's drink a little each day.

Background

This is the 82nd Master that Specklespine has served, across all the spheres, and it is the first one that turned to goodness. Ugh. "Go make that rival caster a corpse then, nest in his skull so you can surprise his friends when they get back" is a great order for an imp. "Go scout that location so I can surprise Suzie with this doll I made her" is cruel and unusual punishment. Yes, it looks and feels like death when the Master goes, but this will likely be another return to the Beyond to await a new Master. There has GOT to be a way to arrange an accident or assassination of this milksop! This must end.

"Really? REALLY?! I—I can't even. Yes. I will carry this—flower. To the—sad girl."

Art: Peter Temesi

NPC Portraits Deck: Monsters © 2017 Inkwell Ideas

DAVIS "ROARING TORELL"

43

Minotaur Gladiator Guard, Lawful Neutral

Personality

Rules are rules and fair is fair. If you're in a pinch it's likely you put yourself there. Take responsibility for your actions. Still, sometimes life gives you a bad bounce and you need a second chance or a helping hand. He thinks of himself as tough but fair, a success story.

Strengths

- Popular like a sports star in the local area (even retired).

Quirks

- Still likes to gamble, and knows all the best spots.

Distinguishing Features

- His left forearm has the brand of the slave, and under it the tattoo of the gladiator, and beside those the brand of emancipation. He holds it up and flexes, when addressing rogues or youth, to show the story of his life.

Background

He was captured when his parents laired too close to the city and attracted bounty killers. Sold to the gladiatorial pits, he survived for twenty years. First he was the scrappy underdog, then a terrifying menace, then a top tier contender, and finally champion. He was popular with the crowds for his flashy moves like flinging foes into the stands. He eventually bought his freedom, and chose the name "Davis" to separate his new life from the blood of the arena. He works in a tough town that's glad to have him for backup, but he sometimes longs to retire away from people who remember him as a killing machine.

Art: Sade

NPC Portraits Deck: Monsters © 2017 Inkwell Ideas

WRISS

42

Lizardfolk Scout, Neutral Evil

Personality

Always the boldest in his family, the first to test for danger. Risk makes him angry, and he acts quickly when given a target. He values his family's safety above his own, and can't rest if he believes they are in danger.

Quirks

- He constantly licks the tip of his snout.

Distinguishing Features

- His eyes were infected with rootslop, a common malady among lizardfolk in the swamp. His eye sockets are darkened and menacing, with a white film over his eyes. Many go blind, but he insists his courage protected him.

Background

An earthquake revealed a dark temple in his home swamp. He led the exploration, and they found the weird pool at the bottom. He volunteered to go in and see where it led, and he came out of the enchanted pool in a dark, stony, wet area. He reported back, and his people decided to send a group through to claim it. He scouted once again, but was caught; the area was underneath a vast city, full of civilized people! They put him in a cage, and he could not go back and warn his people not to come. Now he is desperate that they will come through and face captivity, death, or worse in this horrible place where he is showed off as an exotic animal. Several scholarly types have taken too keen an interest in his anatomy and origin. Now he worries he'll never find the pool again.

Art: Sade

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BEYASASH OF MANY COLORS**45**

Rakshasa Mastermind, Chaotic Evil

Personality

Her emotional needs are complex and subtle, best satisfied by the fruition of long-term plans. She luxuriates in power, with wealth as a dim substitute. Ageless, she can scheme down bloodlines and across dynasties, noting ancient curses and maneuvering events around the affairs of gods and monsters. Still, she is not too involved in these profound schemes to enjoy a little display of power here and there locally. She also enjoys her luxurious lifestyle, surrounded by the finest things.

Strengths

- She has contingency plans, and plans behind those. If she is attacked directly or indirectly that triggers a cascade of consequences.

Quirks

- She loves to wear silk, and she also loves to destroy it slowly with her claws, feeling the strands part as she pulls at them.
- She always makes sure she has magical escape routes and even plans to come back from the dead.

Background

No one knows where she's from, but she's a demon from the dawn of time who has played out so many intrigues that the only ones that keep her interest in the long term are international and tied up in impossibly complex networks. She is considered a sage, just because her enterprises touch so many aspects of reality.

Art: Sade

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CAPTAIN HORNSWALL**44**

Minotaur Royal Guard, Lawful Good (Lawful Evil)

Personality

Disciplined, tough-minded, and physically imposing, he is a symbol of strength. He turned his talents towards upholding the royal family, and he is uncompromising in his service. Those who serve him are impressed by his example, and respect his distance; he does not fraternize. Twenty years of service in difficult conditions have earned him the trust and regard of the leadership and enlisted.

Quirks

- Every sundown, if possible, he faces the dying of the light and mutters a few lines from some old song or play; no one recognizes the language, and he doesn't even acknowledge questions about it.
- Won't fight a defenseless foe.

Distinguishing Features

- He has dark rings in his horns, unusual in minotaurs.

Background

Hornswall was a gift from an adventuring group to the royal family. It was impossible to trace his origin far enough back to find that he was reared to late childhood by a dark lord driven by hatred for the royal family. Every day Hornswall recites the charm that allows him to magically register as lawful good instead of evil. The charm is an ancient gift from the dark lord. Now that he is beyond suspicion, it is almost time for him to carry out the complex plot that will put the dark lord on the throne.

Art: Sade

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UTHUR OF CAMBRIA**47**

Snakeman Soldier, Neutral Evil

Personality

He never gets any good ideas of his own, but he knows good ideas are how you advance in the world. So, as soon as he sees a good idea he adopts it for his own. He knows that snake people are being disguised and sent into the civilized lands to gain positions of power, and he really wants to do that. He is stupid, but earnest.

Strengths

- Optimism! He believes he'll win out in the end, so he never stops trying.
- He has great natural camouflage and snake abilities.

Background

He tends to get picked last when leaders are filling out their teams, and he's tired of it. He doesn't stop to think about whether he can do the job, he just wants the prestige that comes with it; the few times leaders have taken a risk and pulled him on board they have regretted it. His current military commander figures he'll get himself killed by humans on one of these foolish excursions to try and impress everyone with his infiltration ability. If any humans do catch him, a team of snake soldiers will hit their property, kill everyone, burn it down, and recover the body so there is no evidence that might warn of an impending invasion.

"Watch thisss! Are you watching? Are you watching?"

Art: Sade

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FRENK BILES**46**

Wererat Fugitive, Chaotic Good

Personality

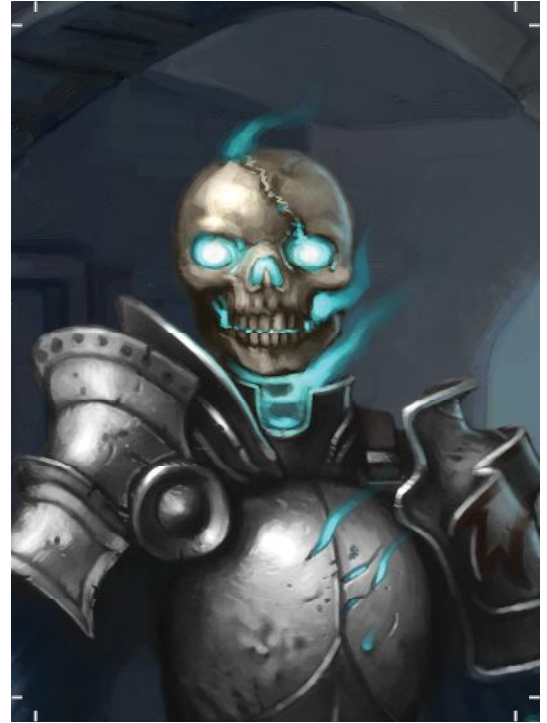
He followed the rules, and worshiped his god. But when he got bit by a wererat and underwent the change himself, his assumptions about his god and church were upended. They didn't try to help him, they hunted him. He was on his own, and he chose to seek a cure on his own and indulge compassion where he could, instead of falling to the temptations of bitterness and revenge. He struggles mightily between the rat instinct and what he thought his religion was about as he is driven to survive.

Background

He was an acolyte defending the Scrolls of the Elm. He startled a wererat thief, who bit him and escaped with the scrolls. He believes if he can return the scrolls to their rightful place, his god will cleanse him of the curse. There's no way he can otherwise make enough money to pay to have the curse removed, and he has made it a matter of religious conviction to get the scrolls back any way he can. Even if that means hiring some adventurers who can keep all the rest of the loot but the scrolls, when they break into the new owner's collection. Also, zealous monster hunters from his faith are only a few steps behind as he pursues his own goal.

"If your faith is lost when bad things happen to you, what does that mean? Is faith supposed to protect you from bad things? Or does it change your response to them?"

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POSKROMINOCH THE ILLUMINATED 49

Undead Knight Defender, Lawful Evil

Personality

Surly and taciturn, but also lonely and profoundly bored. He is forgetting who he used to be, and any decent conversation would revive him somewhat and give him something more recent to turn over in his memory as he stands his eternal vigil.

Strengths

- He is bound to the stones of the tower he guards, so no matter how many times he is struck down he will always reform and resume guard duty at some point.

Distinguishing Features

- His skeleton is made out of steel, an enchanted sword reshaped into a skeleton for him when he died.
- He can extend blades from his wrists.

Background

He was a questing knight who signed a contract consigning his eternal service to a necromancer's tower, in exchange for Severance, a profoundly powerful blade. When he eventually died, he was magically transported to this spot, the sword replaced his skeleton, and he was put on eternal guard duty. He was really hoping to wriggle out of the contract somehow before he died, and he didn't quite understand the "eternal" part. He has all the ennui of a mid-level bureaucrat with decades until retirement, but if anyone gives him a reason, he's happy to murder them to pass the time.

Art: Lawrence Van Der Merwe

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BARCLAY ROOTINSPOTTIN 48

Treat Visionary, Neutral

Personality

He has the same sleepy fatalism that infuses all the animated trees, but he also has lots of human contact. Somehow, he was affected by some far-away magical event, and now he is deeply worried about what is coming for the world, but he doesn't know how to get the word out. He wants to tell people, but he needs them to be there for several hours so he can get the point across, and no one has the time these days. He feels a very slow but acute panic that's wrecking his health.

Quirks

- He has a minimal script of exchanged pleasantries that takes at least half an hour to navigate.

Distinguishing Features

- His forced march from a sleepy town to the capitol of the kingdom stripped him of so much energy that most of his leaves fell off, and he wonders if he's dying.

Background

He was once proud to preside over a picnic spot, where the occasional slow-moving person would have time for a few pleasantries over the course of several hours. Then he witnessed The Event, perhaps carried on the wind, visible from his cliff. The other trees didn't see or hear it, he is not sure who else might know. The world is at risk of losing everything, and he is terrified he is the only one who knows of the danger. He will do anything he can to warn people, but they just won't hold still and listen.

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LETHIA OF KENT 51

Succubus Dealmaker, Lawful Evil

Personality

Her peers see her as a very patient snob, but she prefers to think of herself as a chef. To secure a mortal soul, she is willing to put in some extra work to seal the deal. She likes putting on a mortal disguise and persona, working against the target's friends and family to isolate a target, or to make a target risk losing something more valuable than a soul. By the time she offers the deal, few of her targets have any will to resist left. She feels the extra effort is justified by the nuances of suffering that twist through the soul that will become hers in due time.

Quirks

- All of her mortal disguises are named after a flower; Rose, Daisy, Petunia, and so on.
- When possible, always takes the more careful option.

Background

Lethia was once as savage and starved as other newly crafted demons, but she provided a number of services to an arch-demon who took an interest in her future. He exposed her to his laboratory where he twisted and tormented souls to purify their flavors, or add peculiar complexities. She was utterly spoiled by what she experienced in his magnificent treasure chambers. She toys with the living to produce foundations of texture and flavor for souls that her patron cannot manage, since he only gets them once they've expired. His pleasure is worth more to her than any quick personal gratification.

Art: Sade

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PORTALOS 50

Transmogrified Gatekeeper, Neutral

Personality

The joke among the guardians of the interdimensional maze that the Guardian exported his humor module into the Gatekeeper. A joke, because Portalos seldom smiles, and when he does, it looks more like a wince. Portalos leads with a riddle or a demand for a password, but can be lured into conversation; if the conversation is insulting or mocking, Portalos returns to the password or riddle. Deep down, Portalos hates everyone and resents being unable to move.

Strengths

- Any attempt to force or bypass the door triggers high-level disintegration effects. He can center these on people, or fire warning shots on their clothing, gear, or surroundings.
- The door is cosmically impervious.

Quirks

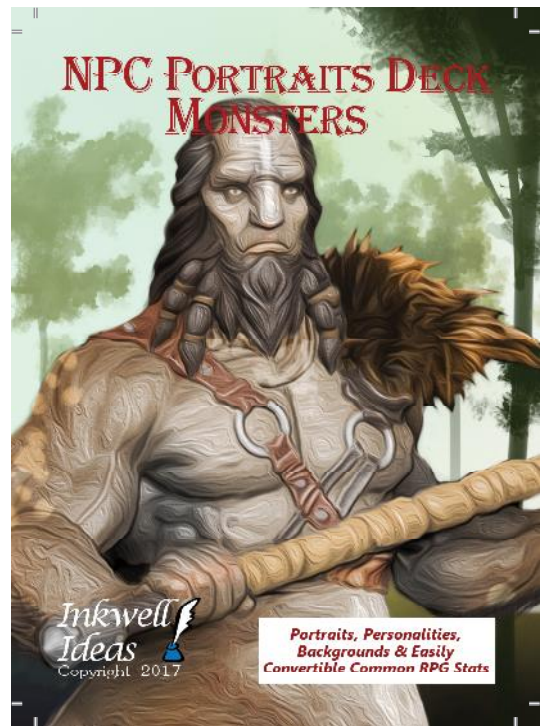
- Portalos may mention that if they guess his true name they get a lifetime pass through the door, either way, any time. He does not know his own name, but will recognize it when it works to grant that lifetime pass.

Background

Portalos controls the door that leads where the questioner needs to go. The door is more powerful than most magic defenses, so adventurers brave the interdimensional maze just to find Portalos and solve the riddle. Who made him? No one knows for sure.

Art: Sade

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SLUROON

53

Merman Emissary, Lawful Neutral

Personality

He is a bit dreamy and sun-dazzled, as his people say, unwholesome in his curiosity about the surface world. He talks about living in peace with all neighbors, which makes any sane and security conscious merfolk uncomfortable. The deeps and the shallows are already dangerous, but he still wants to take risks and reach out to enemies. He believes all creatures have a common ground.

Strengths

- He is kin to the mer-king, which offers him significant social and political protection.

Distinguishing Features

- He has the pink coloration in his tail that marks him as a member of the royal family.

Background

From a very young age he was a careful trainer, gathering animals and taming them. This was alarming to his family as he was bold in his choices, bringing dangerous animals into safe areas. Even as a young person he had a stubborn faithfulness to his own instincts, able to resist the commands of others with quiet self-assurance. As a young man, he is often in the shallows looking to form friendships with dangerous surface dwellers. Everything that lives in the sunlight is a cancer, that's accepted knowledge. If he continues to flirt with dangers from the surface, someone is going to stop him for good... Even if he is related to the king.

Art: Sade

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GONGBALLS

52

Goblin Trapper, Chaotic Evil

Personality

The world and everything in it are on one team that is trying to hurt him. His whole life is built around dodging attacks and striking back. He is vicious, and he lives in resistance to the ticking clock that brings the next set of threats closer. Those who work for him or ally with him are traitors to the rest of creation, and will die soon enough as reality takes its revenge. But in the meantime, he is determined he will die with his fist thrust in the air and a brutal trap injecting pain into his killer's victory.

Strengths

- Has a gift for repurposing anything, making it dangerous.
- He evaluates terrain and renders it treacherous.
- He employs a light touch in a delicate situation.

Quirks

- He lost an eye to a trap that triggered as he was setting it. Now he refuses to ever take his goggles off.

Background

Gongballs lost track of how many pet ferrets named Fred he has had through the years; they all come to bad ends. He grew up in a minotaur's maze, and the minotaur let his tribe live because they serviced the traps. His tribe died in batches, and eventually he was the only one left and he figured it was time to go. The rest of the world, outside the maze, was bland and straightforward. He quickly found his trapping ability was in high demand, first for producing food and later for defending various lairs.

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NPCS PORTRAITS DECK: MONSTERS 00

Need a quick NPC?

Whether the PCs just captured a cowardly kobold, need to be tempted by a demoness, or your campaign needs a powerful lich, this deck is filled with imaginative NPCs. Of course you're also free to change a character's background to fit the adventure. Or use them as "face" cards and develop the NPC with your own background, personality & other details from scratch.

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The cards focus on each character's background and personality. The few stats used (class/profession, race, alignment) give you an idea of the NPC's abilities. You're free to develop the NPC's stats in the system you're using as needed.

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- How can Borchog's curse be undone?
- Many consider Haven the most powerful Vampire. Why?
- Why do the villagers regularly recruit adventurers to raid the tomb of Golvus?

Writer: Andrew Shields

Editors: Joe Wetzel, Chad Mercer, Daniel Shaefer

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POKKABOK

54

Lizardman Borderguard, Chaotic Neutral

Personality

Life is struggle, and life is change. These laws are written in every detail of the world, but all creatures must learn these truths again and again. A quiet sentinel, he likes to stand guard motionless, absorbing the rhythms and contests in his context. He imagines he is the mountain overlooking his home swamp, as life and death plays out before him. He is peaceful, and sad at what is lost, but open to what will come.

Strengths

- His patience is legendary.
- He can confuse a raiding party by striking and fading, giving the impression that the raiders face a warband.

Distinguishing Features

- His tribe have yellow backfins. The lizard people that attack civilized outposts have red backfins.

Background

Pokkabok's tribe of lizard folk guard the sacred tomb pools of the Ancestors, the original lizard tribe in the area that split into the various factions that live here now. Other factions and predators left them alone, and they lived quietly. However, the Red Fins have been attacking human settlements, and retaliation has reached the Yellow Fins. They were driven from their ancestral home, and humans rooted around the tombs. Pokkabok's hatchmates were killed by human grave robbers. Now the tribe is forced into deeper, more dangerous swamplands.

Art: Lawrence Van Der Merwe

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