



LPJ9659

RACES OF NEOEXODUS: TIEFLING



OGL
3.5 SYSTEM COMPATIBLE

OVERVIEW

Unknown and invisible, the Tieflings are shadows in the desert. Their blood is tainted by the influence of an ancient, devouring force, the full nature of which is mysterious even to them. The dark secrets of their people have led to a hidden society that blends cruelty and loyalty, freedom and slavery, and life and death into a single whole.

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

All Tieflings have clear human heritage, but their bodies were altered by the proximity of the Gevet and now seem exotic and strange. Most Tieflings have a significantly slimmer frame than a human. Their limbs are longer and thinner, and while a Tiefling can stand several inches taller than a human, they aren't any heavier. The Tieflings are more agile than their near kin, and the entire race moves with alien fluidity.

A Tiefling's face is flattened and smooth. The nose is nearly flush to the face, and the lips are not pronounced. Their cheekbones are quite wide and sharp, giving the face an angular appearance. A Tiefling's eyes are perhaps their most alien feature – mottled sclera, a thin golden iris, and a five-lobed pupil. Both male and female Tieflings sport small, triangular black horns curving down from the front of the forehead. Tieflings have hair, often in blacks and reds, that is generally arrow straight. Their skin tends to be faintly gold tinted through to bone-pale.

RACIAL ADJUSTMENTS

- **+2 Intelligence, +2 Dexterity, -2 Charisma:** Their slender bodies and quick minds are the gifts of the Gevet. Due to the nature of their society, however, most Tieflings are either reticent, secretive, or paranoid and lack personal appeal.
- **Darkvision:** Tieflings are gifted with the ability to see in the darkness up to 60 feet, thanks to their otherworldly bond.
- **Precise (Ex):** The Tiefling's advanced capacities don't stop at a simple intelligence bonus. When a Tiefling flanks or catches an enemy flatfooted, they gain a +1 racial bonus to damage. This stacks with precision damage effects such as sneak attack.
- Tieflings gain a +2 racial bonus to all healing checks, as they can dimly perceive the movement of life force in the body. Tieflings always have heal as a class skill.

- **Bloodbond (Ex):** Tieflings are bloodbonded to the Gevet. Although being away from the Gevet doesn't directly pain them, being far from their home does weaken their bodies and minds. When away from their lands, Tieflings suffer a -1 racial penalty on all saving throws.

Starting Languages: Common, Tiefling, Dominion tongue

Bonus Languages: Infernal, Abyssal, Terran.

Alignment: NPC Tieflings tend towards neutral. Most (40%) are chaotic neutral, with roughly 20% being true neutral. The remainder are split amongst neutral evil (15%), chaotic evil (15%), and chaotic good (10%). Few Tieflings are lawful alignments of any type, and none are lawful good. Player character Tieflings may be any alignment except lawful good.

Favored Class: Rogue or Wizard

Level Adjustment: +0.

TIEFLING PARAGON

Hit Die: D6

Precision Attack (Ex): At levels 1 and 3, the Tiefling Paragon gains extra dice of any precision-based damage, such as sneak attack. The precision damage matches that of any single class feature that the Tiefling chooses – if a Tiefling Paragon has no precision-based attacks from any previous class, he may select one precision-based damage feature.

Supernatural Precision (Su): This class feature goes far beyond having a keen eye. A Tiefling Paragon, at 2nd level, can now deal precision damage to creatures without discernable anatomies.

HISTORY

To speak of Tiefling history is to speak of the strange temple they call the Gevet. No Tiefling claims that they built this structure, and yet it is the center of their world. The true nature of the Gevet and its effect on the Tieflings is a well kept secret that any of their people will take to their deaths rather than speak of in the open.

The tale of the Tieflings begins with a simple human tribe, eking out an existence in the Burning Lands. This would all change one day, when the nomadic tribesmen took their evening rest at a strange rock formation – a place they called 'the Gevet' (*meaning*

TIEFLING PARAGON

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spellcasting
1	+0	+0	+2	+2	precision attack +1d6	-
2	+1	+0	+3	+3	Supernatural precision	+1 of existing spellcasting class
3	+2	+1	+3	+3	precision attack +2d6	+1 of existing spellcasting class

'large shelter'). It seemed a fine place to rest for an evening, an old ruined temple that had stood in place for as far back as tribal history recorded. But the Gevet was not any mere temple, no, it was an ancient seat of power and prophecy.

The tribesmen were troubled with identical dreams as they slept. A voice promised them power, so long as they agreed to return the temple to its former glory and protect it. When the tribesmen awoke, they were disturbed by their experience. Suddenly, the temple was viewed as a sinister place, not a safe haven at all. The tribe broke their fast and left, not to return again for several years.

A generation came and went. The Tieflings found their fortunes waning – the summer was exceptionally hot and the grazing lands were failing. Neighboring tribes continued to encroach on Tiefling land, land that the nomadic people needed to raise their live-stock. Several devastating tribal wars followed, and soon the Tieflings were almost destroyed. Their towns were ruined and there were no other fortified places within their tribal lands, so they made their final stand at the Gevet even though it had a negative reputation. The night before the great battle prompted more dreams with a promise of power. This time, however, the warriors awoke and discussed their dreams. Should they accept this offer? Their people would surely perish if they didn't, perhaps they had to take a chance, even if consorting with the spirits of the Gevet was forbidden.

Three families accepted the Gevet's offer, and three declined. The three who accepted performed the ceremonies as their dreams directed and hoped that some sign would reveal their blessing, if any. The three that rejected the Gevet accepted their fate and prepared for what they believed would be their final battle. As the forces of the foreign tribes arrayed themselves before the Gevet, those families who completed the rituals were given a strange sort of extra sense – they could perceive the flow of life through their foes, they could

see the veins and arteries beneath the surface to judge where to land a killing blow. They felt their bodies respond more quickly; their blades became more deadly.

The battle went predictably. Force of arms combined with supernatural insight to win the day and save the tribe – but now only three families remained. The three who failed to accept the ceremony were killed in battle to a man, and the women and children mysteriously sickened and died within days. This was the first inkling of the Gevet's curse, a strange force that has shaped Tiefling society since day one.

WHAT IS THE GEVET?

The Gevet isn't so much a temple as it is a locus for a variety of forces. It's one of the places where life energy gathers on Exodus, but there's something unnatural about it. The vicinity of the Gevet collects more energy than it should, leaving the surrounding area barren and reduced to desert – some say that the Burning Lands owe much of their character to the Gevet itself. The temple was built on the spot ages ago when local tribes realized how much power coursed through the area. Since then, the temple itself has taken on a life and consciousness of its own – the sheer amount of life essence around it has, in effect, granted it a will to live and a mind. While being a creature of life, the Gevet is a hungry entity, always seeking more. Life feeds on life, and the Gevet embodies this devouring principle.

THE GEVET AND THE TIEFLINGS

The Gevet cannot defend itself or even move. It requires active agents to prepare 'food' for it, protect it, and maintain it. To this aim, it propositioned the Tieflings, and altered them with its own life energy. In return for their service, the Tieflings gained a profound insight into the flow of life force and how to both preserve it and disrupt it. The Gevet also subtly alters the minds of those who live around

it – rendering them more callous and unempathic, viewpoints in line with an entity that sees the lives of others as a resource to consume.

TIEFLING OUTLOOK

Tieflings seem cool and distant compared to most other races. This is a result of several influences on them – first and foremost is the Tiefling attitude towards death. The Tieflings lived in a terrible environment for generations and came to be a fairly morbid and fatalistic people. The influence of the Gevet on their minds has amplified this to a great extent. As a result, Tieflings think little of death and destruction if they deem it necessary. This doesn't mean they're psychotic. Most Tieflings aren't explicitly violent and don't fight when they don't need to, only attacking when they plan to kill. For them, a swift, fatal attack is simple conservation of resources, and has nothing at all to do with rage or anger.

Another reason that Tieflings keep their distance from other races on a personal and emotional level has to do with the nature of their people, and the nature of the Gevet. Tieflings are all at least partially aware of how their society works and the various necessary evils it undertakes to survive. They are also aware that outsiders, if they knew, could find Tiefling practices barbaric and subsequently pose a threat. Tieflings have no intention of inviting attack on their people, and as such tend to be guarded about cultural or even personal details. Other peoples, quite rightly, perceive the Tieflings as a closed, secretive and clan-nish society. In fact they act this way self-consciously to protect themselves, and not out of any racism or dislike of other peoples.

THE TIEFLING CURSE

The Gevet exerts a more subtle, terrible influence on the Tieflings which the tribe was unaware of at first. The gifts of the Gevet come at a painful cost. Unless the Gevet's influence is allowed to finish its work while a child is coming to term, any baby born of a Tiefling parent cannot survive away for long. Even if the Tiefling has taken a member of another race as a lover (Tiefling and human pairings are not at all uncommon, see below), any children they have will die upon birth, if not before, with a similarly dire risk to the mother. These deaths can be avoided, however, if the mother remains near the Gevet while she carries the child to term. The Gevet's influence continues to alter the child while it develops such that any child

born of a Tiefling parent will be born as a full-blooded Tiefling.

The Tieflings are profoundly aware of this curse, and out of all of their burdens, it weighs most heavily upon them. Tieflings take great pains not to become pregnant away from their homelands; many are completely celibate for years while they travel. This has given them something of an ascetic reputation where they are known at all. If by some chance a Tiefling or one of their conquests does become pregnant, they are quickly spirited back to the Tiefling homeland. Tieflings are often willing to kidnap women who refuse to come back to their lands.

Note that Tieflings are freedom-loving creatures who once lived a nomadic life, so being strongly tied to one area is somewhat abhorrent to them; keeping people captive is also outside their original nature. The Tiefling desire for freedom opposed against their desire to continue their lines is one of the major tensions of their entire society.

TIEFLING FEATS

DEADLY CRITICAL - TIEFLING

An intimate understanding of life flow is all you need to strike devastating blows when given the opportunity.

Prerequisite: Tiefling race, Eyes of the Lifeblood, character level 9th

Benefits: Whenever you score a critical hit, you may add your precision damage to whatever the regular critical damage would be. The precision-based damage is not multiplied. If you are already dealing precision-based damage with the attack that criti-called, this feat has no effect.

EYE OF THE LIFE BLOOD - TIEFLING

The vision granted to you by contact with the Gevet allows you to perceive the flow of life through all you gaze upon.

Prerequisites: Tiefling race, wisdom 13+

Benefits: You can tell how many hit points any living target has remaining simply by looking at them. Additionally, you gain a +2 circumstance modifier to heal checks. Undead targets appear to be dead.

LIFE BINDING - TIEFLING

You've honed your skill with manipulating life force into a tool for healing, as opposed to destruction.

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Prerequisites: Tiefling race, 4 ranks in Heal

Benefits: You may heal a number of hit points equal to your final heal skill modifier each day. This healing is a touch attack that does not provoke attacks of opportunity and may affect any target. The hit points may be divided up as you see fit. The healing caused by Life Binding counts as magical healing.

LIFE SIPHON - TIEFLING

Your long service in the name of the Gevet has bestowed some of its qualities upon you.

Prerequisites: Tiefling race, at least 2 levels in the Tiefling Paragon class

Benefits: Whenever you deal lethal damage with a physical melee attack, you recover 2 hit points. This counts as magical healing for all abilities and features influenced by or influencing magical healing effects, and is considered a supernatural ability.

STEP OF THE SAND AND WIND - TIEFLING, DUAL RESERVE

You are as silent as the desert sands and as quick as the sirocco wind.

Prerequisite: Tiefling race, ability to cast cat's grace and haste

Benefits: As long as you have a cat's grace spell prepared, you gain a +2 arcane bonus to move silently checks. As long as you have a haste spell prepared, you gain a +10 bonus to movement. If you have both cat's grace and haste spells prepared, you automatically deal your precision-based damage (*if any*) on a charge.

STEP OF THE MISTS AND DARKNESS - TIEFLING, DUAL RESERVE

You are as inscrutable as oasis mists and as invisible as a shadow beneath a new moon.

Prerequisite: Tiefling race, ability to cast obscuring mist and deeper darkness

Benefits: As long as you have an obscuring mist spell prepared, you gain a +2 arcane bonus to bluff checks. As long as you have a deeper darkness spell prepared, you gain a +2 arcane bonus to hide checks. If you have both obscuring mist and deeper darkness spells prepared, you automatically become invisible (*as if cast by a sorcerer with a caster level equal to your character level*) when performing a full withdrawal action. As long as an assassin has these spells on his

spell list and available for casting, he may gain the effects of this feat.

UNEARTHLY PRECISION - TIEFLING

Your knowledge of the body allows you to disrupt life with well-placed attacks.

Prerequisites: Tiefling race, ability to deal precision damage

Benefits: As opposed to gaining your regular +1 bonus on precision-based damage, you gain a bonus equal to your intelligence modifier.

TIEFLING SOCIETY AND OUTLOOK

Tieflings have a way of life that is clearly influenced by their nomadic ancestors. The three families of Tieflings now have numerous sub-families, all of which are a close-knit bunch as a whole. The shared burden of the Tieflings ties the people together in a way that most other races can't really understand; the spirit of camaraderie amongst their own is quite intense. If anything, their isolation from other peoples and need for secrecy amplifies these natural predilections.

Despite their seemingly callous nature, Tieflings connect very strongly amongst their own kind and have powerful protective and caring bonds towards their kinsmen. The high chance of death amongst children means that they are considered to be very precious in Tiefling society. To an outsider, a Tiefling who seems to be a callous killer yet has a gentle, kind streak when dealing with children seems to be an anomaly, but given their society this is really the norm.

Most Tieflings consider their extended family to be as close as a human's immediate family, and consider their immediate families almost as extensions of themselves. Tiefling families live in small collections of houses that eventually grow together into larger group compounds; these little collectives assist their neighbors and act as best they can as members of the community. There is no real established hierarchy within the community at large, save that the more competent individuals are more often deferred to. Leaders make decisions not entirely according to their own judgment, but through compromise with the community. As an additional factor in leadership, some rare members of the community experience prophetic dreams granted by the Gevet. The various

families come together as a group to discuss these visions and attempt to decipher their meaning.

As free-willed creatures, the Tieflings don't always listen to the visions of the Gevet, or even their own families. This level of rebellion is expected and considered to be a sign of a strong character. In the eyes of the Tieflings, a truly respectable authority figure should anticipate when his authority will be challenged or ignored and be able to appeal to dissenters or even outright control them. Thus, those Tieflings who have proven themselves as exceptionally competent are often in something of an adversarial relationship with many other individuals, all of whom want to do things their own way. The truly competent Tiefling leader is that person who is capable of uniting the group by appealing to each individual's desires. To this end, a major social event amongst the Tieflings is the feast. Feasts are held regularly as invitations to sit down, discuss decisions, and express points of view. The mixture of appeals and browbeating that occurs during such a feast is a thing to be seen. Most political choices occur in a feast environment.

TIEFLING CUSTOMS IN THE PARTY

A Tiefling working with outsiders will usually tend towards being quiet. Tieflings who wish to speak with people will usually do it over food, a tradition amongst their people. Most Tieflings who approach anybody to speak will offer some small bit of food or a sip of drink before beginning, this is considered polite amongst them. While at first many Tieflings seem calculating or callous, they can bond strongly with outsiders and at that point are extremely fierce allies.

Tieflings will often daub their foreheads with the blood of a fallen foe out of respect for the life they've taken. Foes that warrant no respect are generally burned if time allows or simply left out for the vultures, faces up to bake in the sun. Tieflings can perform their slicing mutilation ritual for a dead ally, which leaves the corpse a mess and is quite frowned upon by most other people. They bury their dead face-down if they can't bring them back to their homeland for a proper funeral.

Tieflings who have performed well in the past expect to be listened to, whereas multiple failures will be met with increasing meekness and silence. Most Tieflings, despite their personal track record, will not listen to a person they believe to be incompetent regardless of

that person's station. Individuals who've worked with outsiders before are less rigid about this unspoken pecking order and usually learn to respect authority, even if they think it's illegitimate.

TIEFLING PERSONALITY TRAITS

At first level, a Tiefling can opt to select a personality trait that grants them both a bonus and a penalty. These traits are unique to the Tieflings, and serve as roleplaying and background aids. All are geared with the flavor of Tiefling culture in mind.

CALLOUS

The lives of those you're not close to mean very little to you. Breaking a couple of eggs to make the occasional deadly omelet is not a big deal.

Advantage: It's much harder to appeal to you through enchantment magic. Frankly, you don't care enough about most people to be their friend, even if magically prompted. You gain a +6 racial bonus to saving throws against all charming, enslaving, and domination effects.

Disadvantage: Being callous isn't exactly the best way to win friends and influence people. You suffer a -2 penalty to diplomacy checks.

EXACTING

Like many of your race, you have a precise, clinical manner when you're doing your work.

Advantage: Choose 4 skills. You gain a +1 racial bonus to each of these skills.

Disadvantage: You're perhaps too precise sometimes, and take additional precautions that are somewhat unnecessary. When taking 20, you take 30 times as long as the skill check regularly requires.

FREE-SPIRITED

The blood of your nomadic ancestors runs thick in your veins, filling you with the desire for freedom.

Advantage: You lose the racial penalty on saving throws when outside the Gevet's influence.

Disadvantage: You may not take levels in the Tiefling racial paragon class, or the defender of the Gevet racial option.

LOYAL

Tieflings tend to be tightly knit within their families, and now, your allies are your family.

Advantage: When in combat with people who you consider your allies, you gain a +1 racial bonus to all aid another checks, and a +1 morale bonus on hit and damage rolls against an opponent currently engaging one of your allies.

Disadvantage: Seeing an ally downed is a great blow to you, causing you to suffer a -2 penalty on skill checks and attack rolls until you've attempted to save them (*or found that you can't*).

RETICENT

Are you the strong, silent type, or do you have something to hide? With the Tieflings, it's often a little of both. You're used to keeping quiet.

Advantage: You gain a +2 racial bonus to move silently checks, because you never cry out or swear under your breath even if you stub your toe.

Disadvantage: Your silent nature has its problems in a social environment, you suffer a -2 penalty to gather information checks.

THE TIEFLING FAMILY

Tieflings are extremely tightly knit within their own family group. Unlike within the greater context of their society, there is usually a clear hierarchy within a Tiefling family. Specifically: Elder, Tiefling-born women are in charge. A great deal of value is placed in female children and mothers of full Tiefling blood. This is actually a reaction to the Tieflings' high death rate for mothers during labor. Surviving matrons are provided extensive prestige, as surviving one birth usually indicates that a mother can survive several and thus head a large family. The ability to head a large family is not only socially desirable, but also politically important - Tiefling communities are small and individualistic with many fractured blocs of influence, thus the input of a large family can often decide the direction of a decision.

Young girls occupy a place of favor in the family, and are carefully protected and shielded from harm. They are frequently taught arts, proper leadership, and diplomatic skills. The more beautiful girls are primed from a very young age for positions of family power, and it is an expected part of their duty that they marry into other families that will bring some prestige or benefit upon their own kin. The various surviving family matriarchs are generally responsible for arranging and establishing these marriages through a careful dance of political favors and appeals. Tiefling

girls, from a very young age, are highly competitive amongst one another, and the 'fiery, independent youth' archetype is considered the most noble character for them to possess.

Young boys, on the other hand, are groomed to serve as warriors and artisans and have a more rigid and lawful bent. The men are expected to protect Tiefling communities and the honor of their individual kin. Men also wield political power, but it's mercantile and military power as opposed to power within the family groups themselves. Often it is the men who have the appearance of leading the family, but the matrons who are credited with responsibility for many of the internal decisions being made. In actuality, it's a combination of both, with the matriarchs and patriarchs of any given clan working together to get everyone to act in the best interests of the group.

GENDER-BASED SKILL BONUSES

At first level, a male Tiefling may gain a +2 competence bonus to survival and craft checks, or may choose 1 exotic weapon proficiency as a bonus feat.

-A female Tiefling may gain a +2 competence bonus to diplomacy and sense motive checks, or may choose Iron Will as a bonus feat.

OUTSIDERS WITHIN THE TIEFLING FAMILY

The Tieflings require a steady stream of foreign women to help maintain family bloodlines. Because of this, most Tiefling families of any large size will contain several non-Tiefling mothers and girls who have their own special place in society. Due to their lack of true Tiefling blood, they aren't completely trusted and don't wield the power that actual Tiefling women do, but they are still considered very important. What results is a sort of "Goddess in captivity" situation - in fact, the Tiefling term for these women, "Radi Ma", literally translates into "Caged Jewel". This sums up the Tiefling opinion of and interaction with these women. Those who come willingly are afforded more freedom than those who were kidnapped or forced into their role, but still never enjoy the type of freedom that a full blooded Tiefling does.

The more beautiful women are quite sought after for marriage into powerful families. Many of these women were taken from poor families and enjoy a very high standard of living compared to what they could have expected otherwise, if they survive child-

birth. Some of the surviving women come to be naturalized and willing captives because of this, while others remain indignant and unhappy. It's worth noting that the less scrupulous Tieflings are not above utilizing enchantment magic to keep their captives happy and contained.

Many Tieflings are free-willed and dislike having to keep people captive in any capacity, but consider it a necessary evil. Others actively attempt to abolish these practices, which is at odds both with the more powerful Tiefling families and the contacts in the Dominion who take part in the exchange.

TIEFLING NAMES

Tieflings usually have two names. The last name is their family name, derived from one of the three original Tiefling families (*Varel*, *Amne*, and *Doroz*). These three family names usually form the first part of the last name, with a suffix denoting something about the specific family that the Tiefling belongs to (for example, *Varelatan* would mean weavers of *Varel*). Tiefling first names can be just about anything, often-times Tieflings will change their first names several times over their lifespan. Tieflings are also notorious for using aliases.

THE ROLE OF THE GEVET AND RELIGION

The Gevet is perhaps the single most important influence on Tiefling society. Its true nature is uncertain, but it definitely possesses some type of intelligence, a sentience which seems malign to most living creatures. But how does the Gevet fit into Tiefling life? Basically, it functions as a ceremonial center and the focus for cultic practices.

Ceremonies pertaining to life and death often revolve around the Gevet. Women in labor are brought into its halls to give birth, as this substantially increases their survival rate. The ceremony involved is frightening and macabre. It's known that the blood of childbirth is never removed from the stone floors and tables where the birthing rites are completed, as blood is a sacred source of life in Tiefling myth.

The death ceremony is equally strange to outside eyes. The body of the dead is ritually mutilated, and family members paint symbols upon their foreheads in the

blood of the deceased that represent their bond to his lost life. This is the Tiefling version of wearing black at a funeral, and Tieflings are not permitted to wash it away lest they break the bond they shared with the deceased in life. The bodies of the dead are left in catacombs beneath the Gevet itself where they vanish overnight; this is referred to as 'the Noble Theft' (*Asra Tet*). The Gevet is believed to absorb the earthly energy trapped within the body directly, while leaving the spirit intact to travel to the underworld. All that remains after the *Asra Tet* are patterns of scorchmarks burned into the slabs where the bodies are left.

There are also a large number of harvest ceremonies. The Gevet is not particular about where it gets its energy from, and can subsist on harvest offerings. The Tieflings will bring a portion of their crops for consumption, placing those crops at the central dome at noon on Harvestide (*called Utan in the Tiefling tongue*). The Gevet absorbs the life energy of several tons of freshly harvested crops every year and leaves behind only thin white ash. The Gevet also occasionally demands animals up to and including intelligent species as sacrifices; its reasons aren't known.

The Gevet will sometimes communicate to individual Tieflings through dreams. This usually happens when the Gevet wants something done (*such as more crops brought to it, or even captives brought to it for feeding*). Prophetic warnings are sometimes given. A person who receives a vision from the Gevet becomes the center of attention, and all the Tiefling families gather and talk about potential meanings.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE GEVET

Tieflings have many different ideas and feelings about the Gevet. Some see it as a deity, others a necessity. Some, of course, see it as a curse or a gift. The dual nature of the Gevet – as a giver and taker of life – is well known to the Tieflings and figures prominently in their philosophy. These factors have contributed to the Tiefling conception of the cosmos, a strongly dualistic system that reveres the forces of life and death.

Tieflings also view the Gevet as a source of personal power, but at the price of bondage. This is a very common theme in Tiefling literature and music – to them the Gevet's gift is the very definition of a devil's deal.

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DEFENDER OF THE GEVET (OPTIONAL) RACIAL FEATURE

A Tiefling can choose to be more closely tied to the Gevet than the rest of his kind, serving as one of the guards/custodians of the structure itself.

If he chooses to take this option, he gains a smite attack as a paladin of his level for use against any foe that the Tiefling believes is working against the interests of his race or the interests of the Gevet. This is a judgment call and the smite will actually work on any target, but the defenders are expected to be discerning.

-The tradeoff is that his bond with the Gevet is much stronger than most, and he now suffers a -3 racial penalty to all saving throws when outside of his people's lands.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS - INVOLVEMENT WITH THE DOMINION

The Tieflings and the Dominion have a strange relationship. The Tieflings effectively live within Dominion land, and yet are not truly under Dominion authority. Not only this, but the Dominion regularly makes use of Tiefling wizards, doctors and assassins – so where is the connection? In truth, it's more sinister than it appears.

The Tieflings are permitted autonomy because they're necessary. Without their aid, the Dominion would have much more difficulty with internal power struggles – the Tieflings' remarkable insight and heightened intellect have made them irreplaceable to the Dominion's power elite. At the same time, Tieflings have their own dark secrets. They operate what amounts to a trade in wives.

A fact of life as a Tiefling is that many of their women die in childbirth due to the Gevet's unique curse. There have been times in the past where the Tieflings were reduced to almost unsustainable numbers due to famines, harsh conditions, and the Gevet's dark influence. Yet the flip side of this curse is that any child with a Tiefling parent is born a full Tiefling - so long as a child is born the bloodline is guaranteed to continue. The Tieflings, out of sheer necessity, began depredations upon surrounding communities – they kidnapped women of marriageable age to serve as mothers in the dwindling clans. It was these raids that first brought the Tieflings face to face with the forming Dominion.

Tieflings were one of many tribes living in the burning lands, albeit the most secretive and remote. Their raiding tactics were unmatched and their warriors incredibly skilled, honed by the influence of the Gevet. The various khans feared the Tieflings and sought their destruction. It wasn't until the arrival of the Desert Shade – soon to become the Khagan – that any real contact between the Tieflings and the other tribes was made.

The Desert Shade was quite aware of the magical blood that coursed through the Tieflings' veins, and saw in them a unique purpose amongst the tribes – these were born assassins, they could slip from land to land and perform the necessary evils that were needed to unite a nation and later keep it united. He knew that he needed them as allies. He also knew that he needed to know more about them in order to be able to provide a deal that the Tiefling leaders could not refuse. This was the Desert Shade, after all – infiltrating the Tiefling cities was not difficult for him, and what he saw upon reaching their homeland shocked him. Many of the women were not Tieflings – they were the women missing from the other tribes, now mothers and family members amongst their captors. There were many more Tiefling men than true Tiefling women, and to the Desert Shade, the reason for the strange tribe's depredations became abundantly clear.

The solution to this conundrum seemed simple, a steady stream of marriageable women, (*likely extorted out of poor families, but such is fate*), would placate the Tieflings and surely win their favor. Or so the Desert Shade thought. In reality, the Tieflings needed more than just that, they needed something that it turns out was desirable to both parties. The Tieflings wanted invisibility – they needed secrecy so that none could discover their alien ways and their unique curse. The Desert Shade was happy to grant it, for an invisible tribe makes excellent assassins. A deal was reached, and the Tieflings went to work then vanished from the public record.

Currently, the Tieflings serve the Dominion in a highly secretive capacity as assassins and trouble-shooters. In return, the ruling echelons of the Dominion declared the Tiefling territories as no-mans land, and spread rumors of the dangers inherent in the area. A great deal of work has been done to keep the Tieflings' very existence a secret. Both the Tieflings and the Dominion's rulers have dirt on one another – the Tieflings have records of almost every shady dealing the Dominion has ever undertaken, and the Dominion is not only aware of the location of Tiefling

holdings, but also the nature of the Gevet. This careful web of secrets keeps the arrangement running smoothly for fear of reprisals from both sides.

THE TIEFLING HOMELAND

The Tieflings have never named their homeland. They have named the city that clusters around the Gevet, however – it's called Var Shaal – this means "Cloud Seat" in the Tiefling tongue, an archaic dialect of the current Dominion language. Var Shaal was named after the early habit of using the Gevet as an observatory for celestial signs; this practice has since fallen into disuse.

Several smaller towns cluster around Var Shaal, but overall the territory the Tieflings actively control is tiny. The range that Tiefling men roam over for purposes of trade or work with their Dominion contacts is much, much larger.

Tiefling cities aren't amazing to look at and their architecture is pragmatic. Ready access to red sandstone and mud means that most of their buildings are made of small, red rectangular bricks. The buildings have flat roofs and feature multiple floors stacked atop one another like a layer cake – similar in construction to a ziggurat but on a less grand scale. Inside a Tiefling house, you'll find woven white rugs, small slat windows, low ceilings, and thick walls painted in white and red designs. Tiefling doors are little more than hanging curtains, and the smells of aromatic oils fill their houses. The various families plant a variety of trees near their cities to stem wind erosion. Oftentimes, they'll create impressive sheltered gardens bounded on all sides by houses and fed by underground springs. The Tieflings are highly dependent upon a combination of deep wells and water-producing magic to irrigate their pastures and cities for crops and livestock.

TIEFLING FOOD

While the Tieflings were originally nomadic herdsman, their forced sedentary lifestyle combined with the demands of the Gevet have caused them to take up a more renewable agricultural strategy. Tieflings grow wheat, sorghum, pomegranate, figs, pistachios, peanuts, onions, a fruit called a Biesh, and a variety of herbs. Their diet is primarily vegetarian. Many Tieflings consider unnecessary slaughter and consumption of animals to be wasteful and decadent except for ceremonial purposes.

CACHI

A stuffed flatbread made of sorghum flour and flavored with onion powder. Cachi are usually folded over figs and fried, before dipping in a peanut sauce. Cachi are tangy and keep well in any environment.

Cost: 1 cp each

Effects: Cachi are not subject to food spoilage for up to 2 weeks.

BIESH WINE

The Biesh is a gourd-like fruit with a thick, green rind covered in tiny spines. Inside, the flesh is white, with a large hollow containing pure water in the center. The juice is a natural anesthetic. Biesh itself is very sweet and has a hint of cinnamon to it. Biesh wine has a similar flavor and contains a jaw-dropping amount of alcohol.

Cost: 5 sp for a wineskin

Effects: Drinking 1/3 of a wineskin causes body-wide anesthesia and slowed blood flow that results in a damage reduction of 1/- and a -1 penalty to all dexterity-based skill checks for 1 hour. Drinking more than this provokes a DC 14 fortitude save to prevent unconsciousness, but does not increase the effects of the drug.

TIEFLING CLOTHING

Tieflings live in the desert, and have to protect themselves from the harsh environment. Broad-brimmed cloth hats, usually in white and shaped like a rice hat, are commonly worn. The forehead is usually swaddled in loose cloth, and the lower face is wrapped in scarves to prevent sunburn, windburn, and choking on dust. If they're in traditional dress, all you can make out of an Tieflings' face is his eyes. The rest of their clothing is geared with swift foot travel in mind. They wear snug-fitting shirts and pants in white, with cuffs lined in red or yellow. Scarves are tied at the elbows and shins to prevent sand from getting into the clothing, and Tieflings sometimes sport billowing white cloaks to add an extra layer of insulation against the sun.

TIEFLING DESERT CLOAK

A loose, white cloak made of very light linen, the Tiefling desert cloak is perfect for travel in hot, arid environments. When worn, the cloak grants a +4 equipment bonus to constitution-based checks to prevent heat stroke and dehydration.

Cost: 5 gp

Construction: DC 19 craft: tailor check, raw materials cost 5 sp.

RACES OF NEOXODUS: TIEFLING

When indoors, Tieflings shed their cloaks and hats, and favor open vests and loose pants. Tieflings often go barefoot when hanging around the house. People of both genders adorn their cheeks with facepaint, usually in yellow stripes - yellow is a color associated with wealth as the dye can only be acquired through trade with the Dominion.

TIEFLING INDUSTRY

While the desert isn't exactly bountiful, it can provide for the Tieflings. As a people, they're self-sufficient in terms of food production and textiles (*through growing flax*), but they need to import metal for use in weaponsmithing and other small metal items. Metals are fairly precious to them. Tiefling craftwork is extremely intricate and meticulously made, and fetches good prices outside their lands. The Tieflings also trade the red sandstone unique to their region, linen, and of course their 'troubleshooting services'. Finally, Tieflings produce their own highly unique and extremely sought after form of weaponry.

EVERDEATH WEAPON

These are the weapons of choice carried by elite Tiefling assassins while they go about their dark work. An Everdeath weapon is constructed from a sliver of the stone of the Gevet, forged and formed into an instrument of death then magically strengthened. The weapons themselves look unremarkable – they appear to be very high quality items made of finely polished soapstone. They don't detect as magic, but they do detect very strongly as evil (*strong enough to be overpowering regardless of the detector's level*).

Being struck by an Everdeath weapon is an unpleasant experience. Hit point damage dealt by such a weapon is permanent. The wounds won't heal naturally, through fast healing, regeneration, or magical healing. In order to recover from wounds dealt by an Everdeath weapon, a restoration spell must be applied to the target. After this point all healing effects function normally. Being killed by an Everdeath weapon is another thing entirely. If an individual is killed and an Everdeath weapon dealt the final blow, they are gone for good. Their life energy is completely disrupted and drawn into the blade to eventually be brought back to the Gevet for feeding. This energy cannot be recovered. There is no known method to reverse this death, not even through divine intervention or miracle and wish spells.

Cost: As per a +4 enhancement bonus

Construction: Caster level 17th, Death Knell, Energy Drain, DC 40 craft: stonework. Raw materials cannot be acquired on the open market.

Written By Neal Bailey

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