Weekly Wonders





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Introduction

The eldritch, the strange, and the weird are often relegated to the domains of villains and NPCs in fantasy, with the good guys being the ones who stand in the way of the dark things that remain just beyond our perception, which we can never truly understand. But sometimes, it can be fun to take on the mantle of the otherworldly, and to embrace the alien terrors of the cosmos. Each installment of *Weekly Wonders: Eldritch Archetypes* contains five archetypes for eldritch characters those that are weird, alien, and otherworldly, who don't fit in with normal society—as well as a cleric domain devoted to a specific mythos entity or race.

This particular installment focuses on Nyarlathotep, a dark deity that recurs repeatedly throughout the works of H.P. Lovecraft and many other authors. A creature capable of appearing in any of a seemingly endless parade of avatars and forms, each more horrifying than the last, the only common thread that seems to tie all aspects of Nyarlathotep together is its underlying malevolence towards mankind. Whether or not they mention Nyarlathotep by name, each archetype in this book is directly inspired by him in one or more of his many aspects, from a horrible beast with a three-lobed eye that is confined to the darkness, to a skinless giant that grants knowledge of powerful flesh magic, to a charismatic and dark-skinned pharaoh, and more.

New Archetypes

The following archetypes are presented in alphabetical order.

Dark Pharaoh (Mesmerist)

One of Nyarlathotep's most well-known forms is that of the black pharaoh, a charismatic and swarthy man who effortlessly attracts throngs to follow in his wake. Those who seek to emulate this aspect of Nyarlathotep study him closely, hoping to glean his secrets, and many pattern themselves off of his image, calling themselves dark pharaohs.

Eldritch Grace (Ex): A dark pharaoh moves with an unnatural and unconventional grace, which lesser mortals can't help but admire. He adds 1/2 his mesmerist level (minimum 1) as a bonus on Diplomacy checks. In addition, the dark pharaoh can use his Charisma score, instead of his Dexterity score, to meet the prerequisites of feats that require a minimum Dexterity score.

This ability replaces the consummate liar class feature.

Pharaoh's Curse (Su): At 3rd level, the dark pharaoh can inflict mental and physical anguish with a touch. Using this ability is a standard action, and requires a successful melee touch attack. He can impose one condition to the target each time he uses this ability. The target is entitled to a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 the dark pharaoh's mesmerist level + the dark pharaoh's Charisma modifier) to resist the effect.

At 3rd level, he can inflict a single condition on the minor conditions list, with a duration of 2d6 rounds. At 6th level, he can instead choose to inflict any condition on the moderate conditions list, with a duration of 1d6 rounds. At 10th level, he can instead choose to inflict any condition on the greater conditions list, with duration of 1d4 rounds.

Minor Conditions: Fascinated, fatigued, deafened, shaken, sickened.

Moderate Conditions: Confused, blinded, exhausted, nauseated.

Greater Conditions: Frightened, stunned.

At 14th level, the dark pharaoh can instead expend two uses of this ability to have it function as *bestow curse*, with a caster level equal to his mesmerist level (the dark pharaoh must still touch the target).

The dark pharaoh can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier.

This ability replaces the touch treatment class feature.

Inscrutable (Su): At 11th level, the dark pharaoh becomes so mysterious as to confound many forms of investigation. All Sense Motive checks made against him, as well as all Perception checks made to see through his disguises, notice his sleight of hand, or otherwise interact with him beyond simply noticing his presence, suffer a -5 penalty. Additionally, he is immune to all divination effects whose spell level is less than 1/3 his mesmerist level (rounded down).

This ability replaces the glib lie class feature.

Natural Ruler (Ex): At 20th level, the dark pharaoh learns to stretch the limits of mental domination. The total number of Hit Dice worth of creatures he can affect with any enchantment or illusion spell he casts increases by 20, and the Hit Dice limit of such spells increases by 5. Further, for enchantment and illusion spells he casts that target a number of creatures greater than one, the number of creatures affected increases by 10, and he ignores any restrictions about how close such creatures must be to one another (although they must all still be within the spell's range). These increases do not stack with mental potency.

This ability replaces the rule minds class feature.



Lurker in Darkness (Rogue)

Many rogues find that darkness and concealment are their friends, but none more so than the lurkers in darkness. The first lurkers in darkness were cultists of the Hunter of the Dark, one of the many aspects of the malevolent entity known as Nyarlathotep, whose horror is held at bay only by light. It bestowed upon them some of the powers that it gains from the darkness. While the secrets of the lurkers in darkness have escaped beyond the confines of this cult, it is whispered that the Hunter of the Dark maintains some eldritch connection with all lurkers in darkness, whether they serve it or not.

Dark Spy (Ex): A lurker in darkness adds 1/2 her level to all Perception and Stealth skill checks she makes as long as she (and anything she is perceiving, in the case of Perception checks) is in an area of dim light, darkness, or supernatural darkness. A lurker in darkness can use Disable Device to disarm magic traps, but only if those traps are in an area of dim light, darkness, or supernatural darkness.

This ability replaces the trapfinding class feature.

Strike From the Shadows (Ex): As long as both the lurker in darkness and the creature she is attacking are in an area of dim light, darkness, or supernatural darkness, the lurker in darkness gains a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls, and adds her rogue level on damage rolls. At 5th level, and every four levels thereafter, the morale bonus on attack rolls increases by +1 (to a maximum of +5 at 17th level). The additional damage is precision-based damage, and is not multiplied in the event of a critical hit.

This ability replaces the sneak attack class feature.

Dark Lurker's Sight (Su): Beginning at 2nd level, a lurker in darkness's irises change to become a bright, unnatural orange color. She gains darkvision to a range of 60 feet, or, if she already had darkvision, her existing darkvision's range extends an additional 60 feet. Additionally, she can distinguish color normally while using darkvision (it is not black and white). However, she also gains light sensitivity, suffering a –1 penalty on attack rolls and sight-based Perception checks in areas of bright light. If she already had light sensitivity, the penalties increase to –2.

This ability replaces the rogue talent gained at 2nd level.

Shroud of Darkness (Su): At 3rd level, a lurker in darkness learns how to draw the dark around herself like a protective shield. Any miss chance she gains due to being in dim light or darkness increases by 5% (typically, this means she has a 25% miss chance in dim light, and a 55% miss chance in darkness or supernatural darkness). This does not have any effect against attacks to which miss chance does not apply (including attacks made by creatures with darkvision, or who can otherwise see her clearly in the darkness). At 6th level, and every three levels thereafter, this bonus increases by a further 5% (to a maximum increase of 30% at 18th level).

This ability replaces the trap sense class feature.

Dark Hunter's Sight (Su): At 6th level, the lurker in darkness's eyes adjust still further to the darkness. Her irises change shape, changing from circles to three-pointed stars with long, narrow arms. She can cause her eyes to glow faintly with an eldritch light, not providing any illumination, but allowing her location to be identified (any miss chance still applies). She gains a +4 bonus on Intimidate checks made against creatures that can only see her eyes. She can suppress

or resume her eye glow as a swift action. If she is in an area of magical darkness that suppresses mundane light sources, her eye glow is similarly suppressed.

This eye mutation has another side effect, allowing her to see perfectly in darkness of all kinds, including supernatural darkness. This functions as the see in darkness universal monster ability. She also gains light blindness, and is blinded for 1 round if exposed to bright light. If she already had light blindness, she is instead blinded for 1d4 rounds if exposed to bright light.

This ability replaces the rogue talent gained at 6th level.

Skintaker (Slayer)

Of Nyarlathotep's many horrible shapes and guises, perhaps none is more intimately terrifying than the Skinned Stalker, a horrible giant of a man whose body is completely devoid of skin, with muscles and sinew exposed for all to see. A terrible cult has risen up in service of this dark entity, referring to themselves as the Fraternity of the Flesh, and they specialize in horrific practices involving the taking and perversion of human body parts, especially the skin. One branch of the organization are the skintakers, terrible enforcers who kill their victims and claim their skins. The secrets of the cult eventually escaped, and independent skintakers now roam the world pursuing their own twisted ends.

Skin Artist (Ex): A skintaker adds 1/2 his slayer level (minimum 1) on all Disguise checks made to appear as any kind of humanoid creature, as well as on all Craft (leather) checks.

This ability replaces the track class feature.

Harvest Skin (Su): Beginning at 4th level, a skintaker is able to ritually harvest the skins of humanoid creatures, which he can use in a variety of ways. Taking a creature's skin in this way requires 10 minutes and access to a dagger or similar light weapon capable of dealing slashing damage. The skintaker must succeed on a DC 20 Craft (leather) check, or the skin is ruined. The skinned creature must not have been dead for more than 1 hour per slayer level the skintaker possesses, or the attempt automatically fails. If the creature is alive, it must be either helpless or willing, and skinning it in this way inflicts 3d6 points of Constitution damage to the skinned creature, as well as 1d10 points of bleed damage, but grants the skintaker a +5 bonus on the Craft (leather) check.

A skin harvested in this way can be worn by the skintaker as a suit, granting him a +5 bonus on Disguise checks made to appear as the person whose skin he is wearing. This also supernaturally grants him the ability to mimic that creature's voice, but does not automatically cause him to mimic the creature's mannerisms.

Unless preserved through some means, a skin harvested in this fashion is usable for 1 week before it becomes too rotten and decomposed to be usable in this way.

This ability replaces the slayer talent gained at 4th level.

Create Skin Servant (Su): At 8th level, a skintaker learns how to animate a skin that he has procured through his harvest skin class feature, transforming it into a hungry flesh (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 4*). Animating a skin in this way takes 1 hour, and he can only animate one skin per day. The animated skin obeys his commands, in a fashion similar to the way a spellcaster can control undead created with *animate dead*. At 8th level, the skintaker can control up to one hungry flesh in this way at a time. At 1oth level, and every five levels thereafter, he can control one additional hungry flesh at any given time (to a maximum of four hungry fleshes at 20th level).

This ability replaces the slayer talent gained at 8th level.

Preserve Flesh (Sp): At 11th level, the skintaker learns to preserve the flesh with which he works. He can cast *gentle repose* as a spell-like ability three times per day. His caster level for this ability is equal to his slayer level.

This ability replaces the swift tracker class feature.

Warp Flesh (Su): Beginning at 12th level, a skintaker can touch a living creature in order to cause their skin to literally begin to crawl on their body, twisting and warping in unnatural ways. The creature is entitled to a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 the skintaker's slayer level + the skintaker's Intelligence modifier) to resist this effect. If the creature fails its saving throw, choose one of the following five effects to impose upon the target.

Bulk Limb: Choose a single one of the creature's natural attacks. That natural attack deals damage as though it were one size category larger, and its critical multiplier increases by 1.

Harden Skin: The creature's natural armor bonus to AC increases by +4, but its Dexterity score is reduced by 4.

Soften Skin: The creature's natural armor bonus is decreased by -4, to a minimum bonus of +0. If this would otherwise reduce the creature's natural armor bonus to -2 or less, the creature also gains vulnerability to piercing and slashing damage (suffering half again as much damage from such attacks as they otherwise would).

Twist Limbs: Each of the creature's movement speeds is halved, rounded down.

Wither Limb: Each of the creature's natural attacks suffer a -2 penalty on attack and damage rolls.

Regardless of which effect is chosen, the benefits or penalties last for one hour. This ability can affect undead and constructs, provided that they have flesh, but amorphous creatures and those without flesh are immune (including elementals, oozes, plants, gaseous or incorporeal creatures, and skeletons). The skintaker can use this ability three times per day.

This ability replaces the slayer talent gained at 12th level.

Flesh Shape (Sp): At 16th level, a skintaker learns to shape and control flesh in all its forms. By touching one or more masses of flesh, (including corpses and parts from corpses, but nothing that has been processed, such as cooked meat or leather) he can transmute them into any shape he desires, as though with the *fabricate* spell, except that only flesh can be affected. His caster level for the purposes of this ability is equal to his slayer level. The affected flesh can include living humanoid creatures, provided they are helpless or willing, but such creatures are entitled to a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 the skintaker's slayer level + the skintaker's Intelligence modifier) to resist the effect.

If a living creature is incorporated into the shaped flesh in this way, depending on the shape created, the creature may die as a result, may be helpless but able to survive indefinitely (provided it is fed, and any other needs are attended to), may be largely able to function but impaired in some way (such as penalties to its movement speeds, penalties to its ability scores, loss of certain natural attacks, special attacks, and special qualities, or anything else that the GM determines is appropriate), or may be purely cosmetic, with no mechanical effect on the creature. This ability cannot impart any benefits on a living creature. If a living creature is incorporated in the created object, then as long as that creature remains alive, the created object does not decay (even if the living creature is only a small portion of the total object).

The skintaker can use this ability three times per day.

This ability replaces the slayer talent gained at 16th level.

Summon the Skinned Stalker (Sp): At 20th level, the skintaker learns to summon the skinned stalker, an avatar of Nyarlathotep which appears as a giant man whose skin has been removed, leaving muscles and organs exposed. Doing so is a full-round action, and inflicts 2d6 points of Wisdom damage to the skintaker. When summoned in this way, the skinned stalker has game statistics identical to an advanced ecorche (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3). The skinned stalker is entitled to a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 the skintaker's slaver level + the skintaker's Intelligence modifier). Success indicates that the skinned stalker is free to act as it pleases, which often involves attacking the skintaker and his allies. Failure indicates that the skinned stalker obeys the skintaker's commands for 5 minutes, after which it returns whence it came. In all other respects, this functions as the spell summon monster IX. The skintaker can use this ability three times per day.

This ability replaces the master slayer class feature.

Disciple of the Black Book (Witch)

Many witches speak in hushed whispers of a dark-skinned man who bargains with those who dabble in the occult, promising them great power if they only sign their name in a book he carries with him, bound in a strange black skin. What many don't know is that this is yet another avatar of Nyarlathotep, and that those who sign the book gain some measure of his deceptive cunning, although the price they pay is said to be dear indeed.

Bonus Spells: At 2nd level, and every two levels thereafter, a disciple of the black book adds the listed spell to her list of spells known, automatically adding them to the list of spells stored by her familiar. The spells she gains are as follows: *charm person* (2nd), *skinsend*^{UM} (4th), *deeper darkness* (6th), *eyes of the void*^{ACG} (8th), *polymorph* (1oth), *symbol of persuasion* (12th), *insanity* (14th), *mind blank* (16th), *canopic conversion*^{PC.OLoP} (18th).

This ability replaces the patron spells class feature.

Ruse Master (Su): At 4th level, a disciple of the black book gains Stylized Spell^{UI} as a bonus feat. Additionally, a number of times per day equal to her Intelligence modifier, she can apply the feat to a spell as she casts it without increasing the spell's casting time or causing it to take up a higher level spell slot. Alternatively, she can expend one use of this ability to ignore the requirement that the spell must appear to be a spell of the same school, subschool, and descriptors, instead causing it to appear as any spell she desires (she can do both by expending two uses of the class feature as she casts the spell).

This ability replaces the hex gained at 4th level.

Spell Feint (Ex): At 8th level, a disciple of the black book learns to use deception to lend power to her spells by making her opponents open themselves up accidentally to her influence. As a move action, the disciple of the black book can make a Bluff check, opposed by the Sense Motive check of a single creature within 60 feet. The GM should note the result of the opposed check in secret. If the disciple of the black book wins the opposed check, then the next spell that offers a saving throw not denoted as harmless which she casts on that creature before the end of the round has its caster level increased by +1. For every 5 points by which her Bluff check exceeded the target's Sense Motive check, the spell's caster level increases by an additional +1, to a maximum increase of +5. The disciple of the black book can use this ability at will, but may not use it on the same creature more than once in a 24-hour period.

This ability replaces the hex gained at 8th level.

Puppetmaster's Strings (Su): At 12th level, a disciple of the black book learns how to forge a connection between herself and another creature by manipulating that creature into taking an action she predetermines. Using this ability is a standard action, and she must touch the target and mentally visualize the action she wishes him to take. Based on how unlikely the creature is to perform the specified action, the GM assigns a bonus of between +0 and +3, with +0 representing actions that the creature was already reasonably likely to take on its own, and +3 representing actions that the

creature would almost never take, under any circumstances. If the creature performs the specified action at any point in the next hour, the connection is forged, and the DCs of any spells or hexes that the disciple of the black book uses on the creature in question are increased by the amount the GM determined. This effect lasts for one hour. The disciple of the black book can't use this ability on the same creature more than once in a 24-hour period.

This ability replaces the hex gained at 12th level.

Master of Many Faces (Wizard)

Nyarlathotep is known for his wide array of avatars, appearing in numerous different forms, each different and terrible to behold in one way or another, but each with their own distinct purpose, as though each face were merely another tool in Nyarlathotep's ever-shifting arsenal. There are those who seek to emulate this trait, casting aside some portion of their identities in order to become masters of shape change.

Disguise Specialist: At 1st level, a master of many faces gains his choice of either Deceitful or Skill Focus (Disguise) as a bonus feat.

This ability replaces the scribe scroll class feature.

Subtle Shifter (Ex): Beginning at 5th level, a master of many faces can change his shape with discretion. Whenever he casts a spell of the polymorph subschool which affects only himself, he may choose to apply the Silent Spell and Still Spell feats to that spell, without increasing its casting time or causing it to use up a higher-level spell slot. He can do so even if he does not have one or both of those metamagic feats.

This ability replaces the bonus feat gained at 5th level.

A Thousand Faces (Sp): Beginning at 10th level, a master of many faces can cast *alter self* at will. The effect lasts indefinitely until dispelled, or until the master of many faces chooses to end it.

This ability replaces the bonus feat gained at 10th level.

Natural Caster (Ex): Beginning at 15th level, a master of many faces is able to complete the verbal and somatic components of spells while polymorphed, even if the shape he is polymorphed into would not normally be able to do so. He can also use any material components or focuses he possesses, even if such items are melded within his current form. He can use these abilities only to cast spells that are at least three spell levels lower than the highest-level spells he is capable of casting. Finally, no matter what form he takes, he always retains the ability to speak, and can do so in any language he knows.

This ability replaces the bonus feat gained at 15th level.

Inscrutable Guise (Su): At 20th level, as long as a master of many faces is under the effects of a polymorph spell or effect, he gains the benefits of a *nondetection* spell. Additionally, Knowledge checks made to identify him while he is affected

by a polymorph spell or effect do not reveal information about his true identity, unless the creature making the Knowledge check already knows his true identity. Similarly, attempts to scry or otherwise locate the master of many faces work only if the master of many faces is currently in the shape that the scrying creature is looking for, or the scrying creature is aware that the master of many faces is capable of magically changing shape (for example, searching for "that gorilla that attacked me" will work only if the master of many faces is still in the form of a gorilla, but searching for "that wizard who attacked me while polymorphed into a gorilla" would work regardless of the master of many faces' current shape). Otherwise, the scrying attempt has no effect, revealing nothing but darkness, as if the target were invalid or did not exist.

This ability replaces the bonus feat gained at 20th level.

New Cleric Domain

The following domain is available to any character that chooses to devote herself to Nyarlathotep. Such characters can choose Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Madness, or Void as their other domain. Nyarlathotep's favored weapon is the sickle.

Nyarlathotep

Nyarlathotep is unusual amongst mythos entities in that he both possesses the power of a true deity, being counted amongst the outer gods, and also shows an interest in humanity. That said, while the Crawling Chaos is more than capable of attracting throngs of followers when he manifests as the Black Pharaoh, his overall worship is not very widespread. Because he has so many different forms, many of which inspire their own separate cult followings, when all of these separate cults are taken together, there are a surprisingly large number of Nyarlathotep worshippers, even if none of them could recognize the god the others worship.

Granted Powers: Like Nyarlathotep, you have many faces, and are most at home in the gentle embrace of the darkness.

Many Masks (Sp): You can cast disguise self as a spell-like ability a number of times per day equal to your Wisdom modifier. Additionally, while affected by disguise self, you gain a competence bonus equal to your Wisdom modifier on Bluff and Diplomacy checks.

Eyes of Darkness (Su): At 8th level, your vision is not impaired by lighting conditions, even in absolute darkness and magical darkness. You can use this ability for a number of rounds per day equal to 1/2 your cleric level. These rounds do not need to be consecutive.

Domain Spells: 1st—charm person, 2nd—skinsend^{UM}, 3rd deeper darkness, 4th—aura of doom^{UM}, 5th—polymorph, 6th—symbol of persuasion, 7th—insanity, 8th—mind blank, 9th—canopic conversion^{PC:OLOP}. Permission to copy, modify and distribute the files collectively known as the System Reference Document ("SRD") is granted solely through the use of the Open Gaming License, Version 1.0a.

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An Evil With Many Faces!

The eldritch, the strange, and the weird are often relegated to the domains of villains and NDCs in fantasy, with the good guys being the ones who stand in the way of the dark things that remain just beyond our perception, which we can never truly understand. But sometimes, it can be fun to take on the mantle of the otherworldly, and to embrace the alien terrors of the cosmos. Each installment of Weekly Wonders: Eldritch Archetypes contains five archetypes for eldritch characters—those that are weird, alien, and otherworldly, who don't fit in with normal society—as well as a cleric domain devoted to a specific mythos entity or race.

This particular installment focuses on the various avatars and incarnations of the mysterious entity known as Nyarlathotep. Described in numerous different, and sometimes contradictory, fashions by a variety of authors, the only constant that seems to apply to Nyarlathotep is its malevolent interest in mortal affairs. Each of the archetypes in this book is patterned off of one of Nyarlathotep's many avatars, aspects, or forms. This book contains the following archetypes:

• The dark pharaoh, an mesmerist archetype that can deliver pharaonic curses to his foes, an excels at controlling large crowds.

• The lurker in darkness, a rogue archetype who gains a variety of supernatural powers from darkness, including increased combat capabilities and a defensive shroud of shadows.

• The skintaker, a slayer archetype that can wear the skins of its foes to create supernatural disguises, animate severed skins into servitor minions, and much more.

• The disciple of the black book a witch archetype focused on deceiving her foes through disguising her spells and manipulating enemies into doing her bidding unknowingly.

• The master of many faces, a wizard archetype specializing in polymorph spells, allow= ing them to adopt as many personas as Nyarlathotep itself.

• A bonus cleric domain devoted to those who worship Nyarlathotep.

Whether you're about to embark on a campaign of eldritch horror (such as the official Daizo adventure path dealing with strange and alien entities), or you just want an excuse to play a servant of the unknowable and uncaring cosmic entities of the Cthulhu mythos, this book has lots of tantalizing options to offer. Even GMs can get in on the fun, as several of the archetypes here are perfect for insane cultist NPCs as well, and can make for exciting and memorable encounters.



Necromancers of the Northwest

