



# malicious mischief

## *Monstrous Pages for Shadow of the Demon Lord*

Scholars point those curious about the faeries and their ilk to old tomes whose parchment pages hold ancient stories and legends, but the best source of knowledge is the folklore hiding in plain sight. The weary midwife who mops away the tears after losing another beautiful babe to the Goblin King, the portly farmer who scratches his head in wonder over his singing swine, and the stable-boy who keeps an iron nail over his heart lest the pooka get him again—such commoners brim with tales, gossip, and first-hand accounts of the Fair Folk, for they're the most likely to run across such beings in their day-to-day lives. As outlandish and strange as their customs might be, a traveler would always do well to listen and learn, for the faeries are a tricky breed, filled with malicious mischief.

Three new darkly humorous faeries join the ranks of the fey folk in this installment of *Monstrous Pages*. Inside, you'll find everything you need to know to introduce welterkin, menhyads, and perookas into your games. Read on, if you dare!

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# WELTERKIN

*Wenlings, Pox Farmers, Blemish-Men*

*Ring-a-ring of poxes, for beggars and their doxies,  
Buboes! Buboes! a-growing on your nose!  
Here come the wenlings while you are a-bed,  
Dancing and leaping all over your head,  
Boil, spot, boil, spot till you are dead!*

Welterkin are spiteful faeries that often feature in rural tales of jealousy, revenge, and witchcraft. These tiny winged humanoids visit sleeping homes, sowing crops of boils on whosoever they find there. After waiting a few days for the sores to fully ripen, they return to feast on the pustules' milky harvest.

Roughly rat-sized, with black eyes and clawed hands, welterkin are twisted mockeries of the nectar-sipping flower faeries from which they are descended. Young welterkin are graceful creatures with iridescent butterfly wings, tan skin, and flowing blonde locks. In time their true nature emerges, wings dulling to moth-silver, hair shedding, and skin reddening to a deep crimson.

Welterkin speak Elvish.

Welterkin are nocturnal, usually found traveling in flocks of six to ten individuals. They nest near villages in tall trees or the thatch of abandoned buildings—though occasionally their matriarch might move them to more urban settings if pickings grow too thin. Welterkin range over large territories, seeking to avoid discovery by “farming” one settlement for a few weeks before moving onto another.

Welterkin carefully scout a building before paying a visit. They can use minor magic to pry open windows, or cut small holes in walls, but they prefer easy access through cracks and crannies. Thus, poorer buildings in a village are likely to receive their attentions first. Though they prefer human targets (with teenagers being a great delicacy), the welterkin happily plant their pox in the flesh of orcs, dwarfs, and even livestock. For this reason, some farmers tether a sow outside their door if they fear a visit from the blemish men. Those who cannot afford a pig leave milk in a bright red dish, in the hope the faeries will confuse the saucer for a huge boil.

Having found a slumbering victim, the flock first fans soporific wing dust over the sleeper. This usually keeps their target unconscious while the faeries take turns laying pox-causing charms over choice locations on the face or back, often arguing over the “juiciest” places to plant a wen. Once this is done the pox farmers return to their nest to sport, play, and anticipate the feast to come.

## WELTERKIN

DIFFICULTY 5

Size 1/4 frightening faerie

**Perception** 13 (+3); shadowsight

**Defense** 12; **Health** 8; **Insanity** 2; **Corruption** 3

**Strength** 8 (–2), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 9 (–1)

**Speed** 10; flier

**Immune** damage from disease; charmed, diseased

**Spell Defense** A welterkin takes half damage from spells. When a creature attacks the welterkin with a spell, the welterkin imposes 1 bane on the attack roll and makes the challenge roll to resist the spell with 1 boon.

**Iron Vulnerability** A welterkin is impaired while it is in contact with iron.

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Poisoned Spear** (melee or short range) +2 with 1 boon (1d3 plus Poison)

**Poison** If the target is a creature, it must get a success on a Strength challenge roll or take 1d6 damage and become poisoned for 1 minute. If the target is already poisoned, it instead takes 1d6 extra damage.

### SPECIAL ATTACKS

**Accursed Pox** To use this special attack, at least five other welterkin must have chosen this welterkin to be the target of their Lend Essence special action. The welterkin lays a curse upon one target living creature of flesh and blood that it can see within short range. The target must make a Strength challenge roll. On a success, the target becomes immune to this welterkin's Accursed Pox until it completes a rest. On a failure, the target becomes cursed for 1d3 days. At the end of this time, 1d6 + 1 disgusting wens appear on the target's body that remain for 1d6 days before disappearing.

**Feed on Filth** The welterkin attempts to suck the filth from a wen created by Accursed Pox on a target creature it can reach. The welterkin makes an Agility attack roll against the target's Agility. On a success, the welterkin sucks the wen dry and the target takes 1d3 damage and gains 1 Insanity. Reduce the number of wens that appear on the target's body by one.

**Wing Dust** The welterkin fans its wings at one target creature within 1 yard of it, sprinkling the target with dust. The target must get a success on a Will challenge roll or fall prone and become asleep for 1 hour. A creature that can reach the target can use an action to shake, kick, or slap the target awake and replace the asleep affliction with the fatigued affliction, which lasts for the remaining duration. Once the welterkin has used Wing Dust, it must wait 1 minute before it can use that special attack again.

### SPECIAL ACTIONS

**Lend Essence** The welterkin commits its essence to one other target welterkin within short range for 1 round.

**Unlock** The welterkin chooses one target object it can see within short range that can be locked. If the target is locked, it becomes unlocked.

### MAGIC

**Power** 1

**Illusion** *clamor* (2), *figment* (1)



## WELTERKIN MATRIARCH

DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1/4 frightening faerie

**Perception** 15 (+5); shadowsight

**Defense** 14; **Health** 32; **Insanity** 2; **Corruption** 4

**Strength** 8 (-2), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 10 (+0)

**Speed** 10; flier

**Immune** damage from disease; charmed, diseased

**Enhancing Presence** Each welterkin friendly to the matriarch and within short range of her makes attack rolls and challenge rolls with 1 boon.

**Spell Defense** A welterkin matriarch takes half damage from spells. When a creature attacks the welterkin matriarch with a spell, the welterkin matriarch imposes 1 bane on the attack roll and makes the challenge roll to resist the spell with 1 boon.

**Iron Vulnerability** A welterkin matriarch is impaired while she is in contact with iron.

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Confounding Touch** (melee) +4 with 1 boon against Agility (1 Insanity)

### SPECIAL ATTACKS

**Spawn Welterkin** The matriarch bestows a curse on one target creature she can see within medium range that is suffering a curse bestowed by the welterkin's Accursed Pox. If the target is not unconscious, it can make a Strength challenge roll and resists the curse on a success. Otherwise, the wens pimpling the target's body become imbued with welterkin young. While cursed in this way, the target is fatigued, impaired, and slowed. After 1d3 days, a young welterkin (noncombatant) pulls free from each wen on the target's body, each dealing 1d6 damage to the target. Once a matriarch uses Spawn Welterkin, she must wait 1 year and 1 day before she can do so again.

Any magic capable of ending a rank 3 or lower spell can remove this curse from a target.

**Wing Dust** The welterkin matriarch fans her wings at one target creature within 1 yard of her, sprinkling the target with dust. The target must get a success on a Will challenge roll or fall prone and become asleep for 1 hour. A creature that can reach the target can use an action to shake, kick, or slap the target awake and replace the asleep affliction with the fatigued affliction, which lasts for the remaining duration. Once the welterkin matriarch has used Wing Dust, she must wait 1 minute before she can use that special attack again.

### MAGIC

**Power** 3

**Curse** *pox* (4), *frighten* (2), *vulnerability* (1), *dread* (1)

**Fey** (see *Terrible Beauty*) *misdirect* (4), *fade* (2), *slumber* (1), *bewilder* (1)

**Illusion** *clamor* (2), *figment* (2), *glamer* (1), *phantasm* (1)

On waking, the victim might notice small red marks on the skin, silvery grime on the pillow, or even tiny dusty footprints scattered across the bed sheets. Impoverished living conditions being what they are, however, it is all too easy for these details to be missed. Over the next two days the marks swell into pus-filled sores. The welterkin can smell these

distinctive swellings at a great distance, allowing them to track their target.

This also helps them determine the perfect moment to come back, sedate their victim with more wing dust, and suckle on the pustules.

When the matriarch wishes to create new welterkin, the flock lures people into the wilderness with illusion and glamour. The wenlings try to cause a fall or other injury that immobilizes but does not kill the victim. Failing that, they attack with wing dust, poisoned spears, or magic. Once their target is unconscious, the flock lays multiple pox charms, chanting for several hours to cause massive cysts that are enchanted by the matriarch. A few days later, welterkin young emerge, dancing on glittering wings as their quivering host bleeds out in the dirt.



## USING WELTERKIN

You can use the following concepts as inspiration to create scenes and adventures featuring welterkin.

- The group gets a suspiciously good deal on a room at the inn. Little do they know that welterkin are in the thatch. Will the characters wake up before boils are planted or will they discover the truth a few days later?
- All of the maidens in the village suddenly break out in boils . . . except for one. Will her secret deal with the welterkin matriarch become public? Or will she be the belle of the harvest festival after all?
- The group discovers beautiful dancing faeries flittering around the flowers! Then a corpse is found. It's not long before the adult welterkin arrive to drag their curious younglings away. Where did those horrid red things take the flower faeries? Who is the dead person? Why am I sleepy all of a sudden?





# MENHYAD

*Stone Dryads, Gray Ladies, Skulltakers*

*Johanne saw a menhyad a-dancing on the stones,  
Said Johanne, you can be called! with brandy and  
with bones!*

*The menhyad looked at Johanne, and winked her  
diamond eye,*

*"You must be bold when seeking gold, and now  
you'll find out why!"*

Usually found in the wild hills where memories of the Old Faith are strong, the menhyads are a secretive breed of faerie women said to inhabit standing stones. Legend has it that the Gray Ladies can lead those who please them to great treasure. Naturally, these same legends are full of rude fools who angered the menhyads and had their heads turned to skull trophies for their discourtesy.

Menhyads have two forms that they can shift between at will. Commonly they hide in their rock form, where they appear indistinguishable from standing stones. Lichen-pocked and scrawled with swirling spirals, they are often mistaken for remnants of the great menhirs used by the druids of old. Menhyads age and perceive time very slowly while wearing this

## MENHYAD

DIFFICULTY 50

*Size 1 faerie*

**Perception** 13 (+3); shadowsight

**Defense** 18; **Health** 50; **Insanity** 2; **Corruption** 1

**Strength** 14 (+4), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 12 (+2)

**Speed** 8

**Immune** damage from disease, poison; charmed, diseased, poisoned

**Sense Precious Stones and Metals** A menhyad knows the exact location of any copper, silver, gold, or similar metal, as well as gemstones, within long range.

**Spell Defense** A menhyad takes half damage from spells. When a creature attacks the menhyad with a spell, the menhyad imposes 1 bane on the attack roll and makes the challenge roll to resist the spell with 1 boon.

**Earthbound** A menhyad ignores the effects of difficult terrain when moving across natural earth, sand, or stone, but treats worked earth, sand, and stone as difficult terrain. A menhyad cannot willingly move across surfaces other than earth, sand, or stone.

**Slow Form** A menhyad in her slow form is indistinguishable from a menhir. The only action she can take is to use Shift Forms. She's capable of movement in this form, but moves about 1 inch per hour. In this form, the menhyad also makes all Perception rolls with 3 banes.

**Earth Dependent** If a menhyad is removed from physical contact with earth, sand, or stone, she begins to suffocate (*Shadow*, page 202).

**Iron Vulnerability** A menhyad is impaired while she is in contact with iron.

### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Fist** (melee) +4 with 1 boon (3d6)

### SPECIAL ACTIONS

**Shift Forms** A menhyad can use an action, or a triggered action on her turn, to assume her Slow Form or resume her humanoid form.

**Flow Stone** When a creature gets a failure on an attack roll made against the menhyad, she can use a triggered action to move half her Speed without triggering free attacks. Until the end of the next round, she makes attack rolls against the triggering creature with 1 boon.

### MAGIC

**Power** 2

**Earth** *earth spike* (3), *shape earth and stone* (3), *stone blades* (2), *avalanche* (1)

shape. They might be dimly aware of nearby life, or use of powerful magic, but take some time to react to events at fleshly speed. Glacially slow movement is possible in this form, which has given rise to tales of stone circles that dance under the light of certain moons.

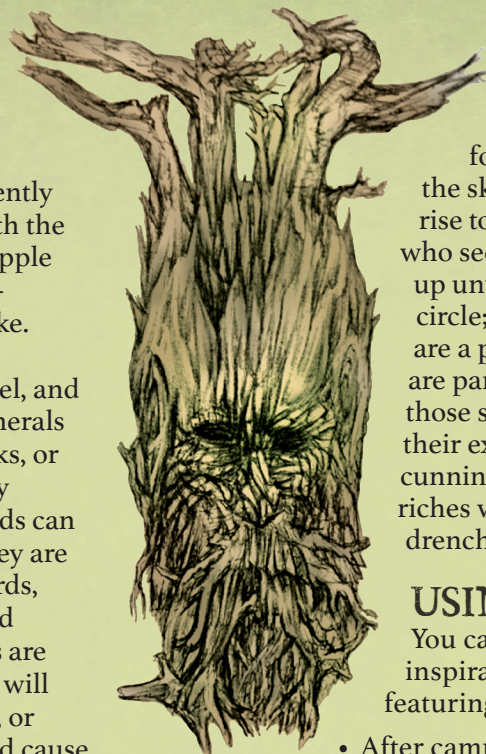
Those who manage to wake the menhyads from their rocky disguise might be disappointed. Folk tellers speak blithely of their naked sinuous walk, generous bosoms, and diamond eyes, but those descriptions of the Gray Ladies are . . . generous. In truth, menhyads appear as rough-hewn rocky humanoids, generally feminine in proportion, with glowing white crystal eyes and black flint teeth. Their skin, like their rock form, is moss-pocked and lichen-strewn; elder menhyad are often carved with spiral and rune patterns that mark their status. As the bards claim, they do disdain clothing, but only one very long at sea would find something alluring in their craggy forms.



No matter what shape menhyads take, they must maintain contact with the earth. In their feminine form, they glide smoothly over the ground with their feet permanently submerged a few inches beneath the surface. Soil, stone, and sand ripple and lap around their ankles, re-forming seamlessly in their wake. Menhyads can traverse natural surfaces such as turf, rock, gravel, and sand with ease, but worked minerals such as stone paving flags, bricks, or tiles slow them considerably. By sticking to the bottom, menhyads can cross streams and rivers, but they are highly loath to do so. Floorboards, wooden stairs, rope bridges, and other worked organic materials are impassable to menhyads. They will not voluntarily jump, fly, climb, or take any other action that would cause their feet to leave contact with the ground. Should they fall, be lifted or magically impelled to fly, or the like, menhyads begin to suffocate precisely like a human drowning in water.

One side effect of this limitation is the menhyads' famous attunement to treasures beneath the ground. Such is their connection to the earth that they can "listen" for mineral veins, buried gold, crystals, armor in graves, and the like. Most menhyads are intimately familiar with any hidden valuables on their territory, since worked metals, gems, and other crafted goods sound "off" to the Gray Ladies' finely tuned senses. By contrast, unspoiled natural formations have a fine symphonic quality that soothes and pleases them.

Tales of this ability have lured more than one mortal to seek out the stone dryads and beg for their knowledge of the deeps. Those seeking a menhyad's earthlore, though, must first find the elusive faerie. The Gray Ladies make their homes among stone circles, amid rock outcrops, and atop tomb-hills, making them difficult to distinguish from standing stones if they do not wish to be found. Groups of menhyads often conceal their numbers, forcing the weakest to appear as spokesperson until they can determine the might and intentions of any visitors. Once negotiations are opened, the most powerful menhyad reveals herself and claims all the glory of being sought out by mortals.



This innate vanity is key to convincing a menhyad to locate treasure. Flattery is essential, as are gifts. The Ladies are said to be fond of strong liquor, raw meat, and the skulls of powerful foes, which last gives rise to their other name: skulltakers. Some who seek them have had success offering up unusual stones to add to the menhyads' circle; rare specimens dragged from far away are a particular favorite. Elder menhyads are particularly interested in the status of those seeking aid, demanding to hear tales of their exploits, whether bloody battles or low cunning. Those who impress are guided to riches while those who offend are torn apart to drench the standing stones with their blood.

## USING MENHYADS

You can use the following concepts as inspiration to create scenes and adventures featuring these stone dryads.

- After camping out by some crags, the group wakes to discover the nearby rocks have moved. Three menhyad sisters are dancing here in their stone forms. Will the characters wake the Gray Ladies with their investigations? A shove or a smash is all it takes!
- The group discovers a troop of filthy peasants dragging a huge bluestone across the wilderness. Their overseer refuses to admit the stone is a bribe for the Ladies of a nearby hill, but the exhausted peons soon blurt out the truth. After eighteen months hauling (and more than one death), they are literally crying out for freedom. Will the characters intervene or take the stone for their own?
- One night a free-spending and obviously syphilitic sailor treats the whole tavern to round after round of ale. He drunkenly boasts to the group of his new wealth that he got from "faerie wenches" on the nearby moor. In between soiling himself and drinking, he claims to have found a "buxom lass" dancing nude between some standing stones. After sharing a drink and "a shank of pork . . . if you know what I mean," this diamond eyed lady led him to a gold-filled tomb where "she let me get me hands all over her assets." The characters are able to discern a rough location for the stone circle before the drunk vomits himself into obliviousness. It's a fine tale, but will the characters take it at face value?





# PEROOKA

*Wig Folk, Hair Eaters, Snag-Wives*

*No Hair didn't care, No Hair was wild,  
No Hair stole a carpet roll  
From a Snag-Wife's hungry child,  
No Hair was made to care, No Hair was hung,  
Dangling loose from a braided noose  
For the wrong that he had done.*

Perookas are an obscure clan of faeries driven into near extinction by a high mortality rate among their infant males. Obsessive weavers and collectors of hair, perooka women create elaborately thatched nests to guard and feed their precious offspring. They are known to grub through battlefields and graveyards for corpse hair, kill travelers for their locks, and even kidnap children for their fine and delicate curls.

Standing just 4 feet tall, the Wig Folk can be mistaken for elderly halflings in poor light. Outside the shadows, their huge black saucer eyes and eight fingers betray their faerie nature. Most dress like widowed grandmothers, swathed in thick layers of shawls and heavily gloved to disguise their hairless and wrinkled appearance, but this grizzled frame

hides surprising strength and speed. Males are a little larger and are almost never seen outside of the family nest. Garbed in finely woven silks lovingly crafted by their many wives, male perookas are generally pale and somewhat obese. Most have been cosseted and spoiled since birth with little idea of the outside world. Families generally have six to twelve adult females, one adult male, and three to four children at any given time. Wig Folk have a strong horror of fire and often make their homes in damp caves or sewers and under bridges. Occasionally they keep a flock of humans in this underground complex, shearing them occasionally like sheep.

As their nicknames suggest, perookas survive by consuming hair. Human is preferred, though horse, hog, or hound hair will do in a pinch. Perooka teeth are covered in hooked surfaces to tear this fodder into felt-like cud that is then chewed for several hours. Legend has it that the perookas' unusual diet is the result of a curse laid on them by Titania, the Faerie Queen. Though what wrong they committed has long been forgotten, it is known that several perookas were weavers to the royal court. This ancestral trade remains a part of their existence today, for the Wig Folk constantly weave the hair they collect.

Snag-Wives are known to prize fine and long locks above all others. Just as a chef delicately prepares dainty morsels, they knot and tie infant hair into intricate mats to feed their boy-children. Different colors and textures of hair have different tastes, and the Wig Folk are obsessive about creating the perfect blend. The strongest leave their clan nest to hunt while the rest remain to weave and protect their families.

In the wild, most perookas hunt at night in packs of four to eight. Working together rather like lionesses, they stalk prey carefully, lusting after the longest and finest locks but also ambushing weaker foes when they can. Snag-Wives use nets, nooses, whips, and knives in their attacks. If rushed, they sever heads and flee. If they manage to overwhelm their target easily, they relax and take their time, soothingly chatting to their victim as they carefully shave the precious tresses. Most babble inanities about color, length, and style. Only the youngest and least experienced Snag-Wives can be drawn into any form of negotiation or discussion. As befits a race of craftswomen, perookas are thorough and precise in their attentions. Even a victim's horse will be carefully harvested. Snag-Wives make a quick snack of knotted mane while keeping the precious human hair for their children and menfolk.

Urban perookas have adapted their traditions somewhat to take advantage of the unique opportunities the city provides. Sewer nests beneath



barber shops and slaughterhouses are becoming ever more common, while the Wig Folk have taken to dressing as lepers and acting as corpse collectors. Some perookas with new boy-children to feed might spread plague deliberately to ensure a glut of every type of hair. Some even trade fabulously handwoven silks and carpets for cartloads of shaggy hounds or long-tailed horses, the better to provide for their young princelings.

Wig Folk care little for gold, flattery, or personal appearance. Their main weaknesses are their dislike of fire, their obsession with weaving, and their devotion to their menfolk. Travelers might avoid a shearing by offering fine whetstones, razors, or scissors to their attackers. Likewise, unusual dyes and scented soaps also fascinate perookas, as they compete to weave food that might gain praise from their sons and husbands. An offer of toys, fertility charms, or men's finery is also a smart way to appease Snag-Wives.

In some places stagecoaches still carry a bag of old wigs to distract perooka packs while the driver makes a getaway. In past decades, certain mail routes were so frequently attacked that only bald men could find employment driving the coaches. These occurrences are much less frequent as perooka numbers have declined, but old peasants still mutter about long-haired travelers at inns the Empire over.



## USING PEROOKAS

You can use the following concepts as inspiration to create scenes and adventures featuring the Snag-Wives.

- The player characters are hired to find a missing child, last seen playing a dentist's drum to drown out the screams at the old barber-surgeon's place. Perhaps the old widow who sweeps up the hair has seen something of him?
- The group is ambushed by a perooka hunting party and hear the faeries arguing about the poor quality of the characters' hair: "Shoddy, dirty, split-ended stuff I wouldn't feed to a dog, let alone my one and only darling baby boy! If only there was somewhere I could get some good quality stuff!" Will the group betray the village of redheads they just passed through, or will they find another way to pacify the Snag-Wives?
- The characters are hired by a rug merchant to guard a shipment of goods. As they accompany the cart full of silky-haired gracehounds, they begin to think something is up. The bald-headed driver keeps trying to get them to wear hats, and the trade appears to be happening at midnight under an old bridge in the Slaughterhouse Quarter. When mad old women turn up with armfuls of rugs and demands for more dogs, will the characters notice the eight-fingered hands or will they be distracted by all the compliments about their hair?

### PEROOKA

DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1/2 faerie

**Perception** 11 (+1); shadowsight

**Defense** 12; **Health** 22; **Insanity** 1; **Corruption** 0

**Strength** 11 (+1), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 11 (+1)

**Speed** 12

**Immune** damage from disease; charmed, diseased

**Spell Defense** A perooka takes half damage from spells. When a creature attacks the perooka with a spell, the perooka imposes 1 bane on the attack roll and makes the challenge roll to resist the spell with 1 boon.

**Fear of Fire** When a perooka takes damage from fire, she becomes frightened for 1 round.

**Iron Vulnerability** A perooka is impaired while she is in contact with iron.

#### ATTACK OPTIONS

**Whip** (melee; reach +1) +2 with 1 boon (1d3)

**Knife or Scissors** (melee) +2 with 1 boon (1d3)

#### SPECIAL ATTACKS

**Snare** The perooka uses a net or noose to attack one target creature within short range, making an Agility attack roll with 1 boon against the target's Agility. On a success, the target becomes grabbed. The target can move toward the perooka but not away from her until it removes the grabbed affliction.

**Hold 'em Down** The perooka moves up to half her speed toward a grabbed creature and makes an Agility attack roll with 1 boon against the Agility of one target grabbed creature she can reach. On a success, the target falls prone and becomes defenseless for as long as the perooka concentrates, during which time the perooka shears away the target's hair (1d3 minutes). While defenseless, the target's Speed is 0.