

QUICKKLINGS

FORGOTTEN LORE ABOUT
THE DARK AND TWISTED



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QUICKKLINGS

5 POSSIBLE ORIGINS OF THE QUICK AND DEADLY

DISTORTED FEY

Quickklings are denegerated fey, reduced to their dark instincts. When the fey wandered the land to seek peace in the forests and groves of the realm, some of them were attracted by strange stones circles. Casting aside the warnings and sinister legends of their people, they chose to investigate them further. The magic of the stones has drawn them in a dark world, the *Between*. They soon forgot how to sing and read and began to prey on weaker creatures, becoming incredibly fast hunters.

MYSTERIOUS TRAVELLERS

Quickklings are but one more riddle of the fey realm we don't understand yet. They travel our world but they behave like they never fully cross the threshold. They're walkers between worlds, not now and then, but permanently changing and shifting, blurring and fading. Their delicate, fast and incredibly nimble, but their minds are ghastly and full of malevolence. They're eager to destroy, though they're not brave and will avoid a deadly fight if possible. Ambushing and sandbagging, that's the tactics they like.

THE LAST OF THEIR KIND

Deep in the woods where the sun never reaches the soil lies the territory of the last Vash'ee, as the quickklings call themselves. They're few and dying. Something in their genes can't cope with the world as it is. Withering and aging, the last tribes cling to existence in a last final battle. They're not evil, not really. But strongly distrustful of strangers. We don't know if it's true that they never talk. They never talk before they attack, that's for sure. Maybe if someone finds out their secret, they will confide in them. But until then, they tend to attack at first sight.



MUTAGENIC EXPERIMENTS

Environmental influences or mad experiments, we don't know. But there's surely weird blood in the veins of the quickklings. Their blueish skin tells the tale. They can move fast like nothing else but on the other hand, they're weak of body and mind. They're narcissistic and craving for validation. They feel certain that the best way to outclass others is by killing them.

AGENTS OF THE GREAT BEYOND

The creatures known as quickklings enter our world through primeval gates in wild forests. Sent out by their masters, to do their dirty work of stealing and murdering. They're agents of the *Great Beyond*, where gravity is so different that they can move incredibly fast when in our world. They kill for sport, for lust, for pleasure, but they're most loyal servants of their masters, pursuing their tasks untiringly.

QUICKLING RUNNER

A blueish shape rushes towards you with unnatural speed, leaving you baffled and puzzled. Wait, where is it now ...?

4th level troop [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +10

Stealthy short sword +11 vs. AC (2 attacks)

– 5 damage

Natural even hit: The quickling runner can pop free.

Natural 16+: The quickling runner can pop free and can make a free move action.

Fizzing blades +11 vs. AC – 4 damage

Natural even hit: The quickling pops free and can make a move action and another *fizzing blades* attack as a free action against a different enemy (every enemy can only be targeted once).

Natural 18 or 20: Enemies can now be targeted twice (but not consecutive).

Delicate runner: A quickling that becomes stuck, grabbed, stunned or otherwise slowed down also becomes weakened until the triggering condition ends.

Nastier Special

Lightning speed: Once per battle when the quickling is not engaged and becomes the target of an attack roll that targets a nearby creature, the quickling can choose to be far away instead.

AC 23
PD 13 **HP 37**
MD 16

QUICKLING STRIKER

This humanoid figure with light blue skin moves similar fast as its companions, but it looks like it's going to stop moving from time to time ... to aim at you with its bow.

3rd level wrecker [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +9

R: Darting arrow +10 vs. AC (one nearby or far away enemy) – 11 damage if the target has a lower Initiative, 7 if it hasn't.

Natural 16+: One ally engaged with the target can pop free from it.

Slashing blade +10 vs. AC – 13 damage if the target is engaged with an ally, 8 if it isn't.

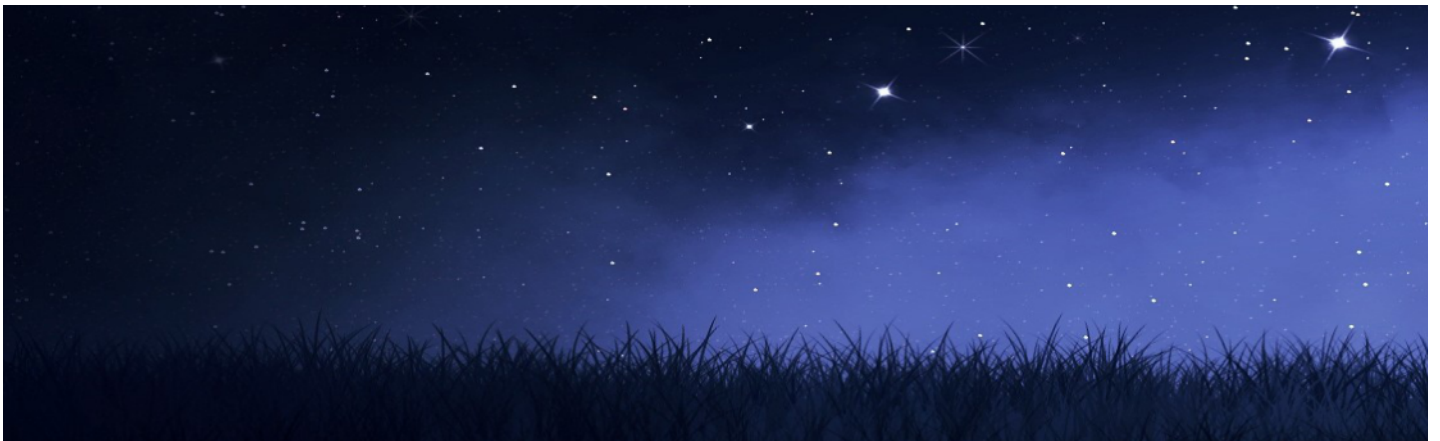
Natural 18+: All nearby quickling runners can use the escalation die on their *fizzing blades* attack until the end of their next turn.

Delicate runner: A quickling that becomes stuck, grabbed, stunned or otherwise slowed down also becomes weakened until the triggering condition ends.

Nastier Special

Lightning speed: Once per battle when the quickling is not engaged and becomes the target of an attack roll that targets a nearby creature, the quickling can choose to be far away instead.

AC 22
PD 14 **HP 38**
MD 16



QUICKLING WITHERER

This one looks like it's alive for ages. Wrinkled and tired but nonetheless tough and relentless. It's a gruesome sight.

5th level caster [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +7

Withering touch +8 vs. PD – 13 negative energy damage

Crit: The target loses a recovery.

C: Song of infinite blight +8 vs. MD (1d3 nearby enemies) – 7 psychic damage as the target views images of the end of all existence

Natural odd bit: The crit range of all quickling witherers in the battle expands by 1 (cumulative, max 16+).

Crit: Decrease the escalation die by 1.

C: Hex of despair +8 vs. MD (all engaged enemies) – 8 psychic damage

Natural 16+: The target pops free and is stunned until the end of its next turn.

Limited use: When the escalation die is 3+.

Fear aura: While engaged with this creature, enemies that have 25 hp or fewer are dazed (-4 attack) and do not add the escalation die to their attacks.

Nastier Special

Watch me wither: As a quick action, the quickling witherer can willingly lose 5 hp and in exchange increase its fear threshold by 10.

AC 21
PD 14 HP 75
MD 18

Quickling Witherers are old and near the threshold of death. They are of a tough and long living race, though, making the process of dying a matter of decades not weeks or months. The witherers turn more grey from year to year but every single day they find out more about their accursed lives, learning not to cure their sickness but to use it against enemies. Their curses and hexes inflict terrible dehydration, bleakness and black despair upon

their foes. Or what they believe their foes to be, what includes more and more, if not all, creatures with each day of their doomed existence.

QUICKLING SURVIVOR

This must not be, it's just not right.

3rd level mook [HUMANOID]

Initiative: +2

Cold hands +8 vs. AC – 5 cold damage

Natural even bit: If the target chooses not to attack the quickling survivor on its next turn, it is dazed until the quickling survivor is dead.

Ice-cold grabs: An enemy engaged with 3 or more quickling survivors is stuck.

On the threshold: Although not really dead nor yet undead, the quickling survivor is half way between those things. It is still a humanoid but counts also as undead for effects that target it.

AC 18
PD 16 HP 11 (mook)
MD 11

Mook: Kill one quickling survivor mook for every 11 damage you deal to the mob.

Quickling survivors are the parts of quickling society that should have perished by now but, for unknown reasons, haven't. Something keeps them here, forces them to exist, although they're far from enjoying it. They're a slow and creepy lot, shuffling around the area, mostly ignored by other quicklings. They're quick to engage strangers, but it's more like a fascinating touch with their unnatural cold hands, than a real attack. When they grab you by your wrists, it's like their eyes scream at you: *help us, kill us.*

A QUICK NOTE ON QUICKNESS

A good attack bonus, several attacks and high AC plus the ability to pop free and make additional move actions should be enough to represent the creatures' quickness.

The *Delicate runner* Special is meant to balance this, if the conditions for speed are not met. Feel free to rule this as appropriate, it's also up to the creativity of the players when and how a quickling is affected by a "slow" effect. Maybe it's a ritual from the wizard or a terrain effect from the ranger and maybe they combine so well that the quicklings are also vulnerable or hampered (making only basic attacks will hinder them effectively of popping free all the time).

However, if you want to go a bit further with the quicklings being fast, go with the following Special I discarded for simplicity's sake:

Fast and elusive: The quickling gets a +2 bonus on AC against opportunity attacks, ranged attacks and disengage checks as long as it is not stuck, stunned or hampered.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Late Revenge—Strange creatures are attacking the magic academy lately. The magicians call them "quicklings" because all they now of them is that they are moving quite fast. Turns out they're older than it seems and many years ago the academy *did* now more about them. A group of wizards (in search of a potion for speed) is in fact responsible for the piti- and hateful creatures existing in the first place. As the experiment went awry, they dropped the bodies in the woods – not knowing the creatures survived ... and found out what happened.

The Curse of Eternal Life—Deep in the wild woods, where the trees meet the mountains at the sea, lives the folk of the Vash'ee, cursed with eternal life. An unknown might forces them to live on. It's a cruel life, full of

ennui and cadaverous suffering. A life not worth living. The Vash'ee keep to themselves, attacking strangers with hate and disgust, not knowing anything but loathing for those cherishing life. Lately, those creature have heard of a powerful artifact that might end the suffering of their people, freeing their minds and lead them to eternal peace. Unfortunately the artifact is dear to the Bone Lord ... and has just fallen into the hands of the PCs.

A Town in Trouble—The village of Ember is told to have problems. Things went missing only to reappear in different locations. It started funny but it soon got dirty when villagers attacked fellow people, calling them thieves. Then, a child fell into the well and almost died, dogs ended up in chimneys and food was poisoned with strange substances causing the people to turn green and laugh all the time.

Nobody has a clue what happened, but with the PCs investigating it becomes clearer and clearer that a quickling is behind all this, tormenting the village with its pranks. But as the PCs find more and more clues, an even darker secret arises: the village elder once sold his soul to the Queen of *The Great Beyond* and now it is time for him to pay the price for his unnaturally long life. He refused and now it's a choice for the PCs to make: give the major to the Queen's agents like he once promised or defend the village against them.

Dying Forest—The once so green forest is changing. Stone circles are vibrating with strange energy which even the local fey can't understand. Fear arises that the forest is in danger of a so-called *breach*, a wound in the fabric of nature that might eventually lead to sprawling portals spilling creatures of the *Great Beyond* all over the woods: dark spirits, shadow trolls and – most feared of all – the quicklings, the enforcers of the *Dark Queen*.

QUICKLINGS AND THE ICONS

The Fey Queen has certainly a complicated relationship with the quicklings, especially when you go with the Distorted Fey origin option. In any case, here agents are supposed to fight the quicklings where they can find them - a favor they gratefully return.

The Trickster has a great interest in quicklings. They stand for a lot of things precious to him: fast, elusive with a talent for backstabbing and – given appropriate reward – ready to kill without question and moral. Finding this reward turns out to be the hardest part, but the Trickster is not above blackmailing the creatures into doing his dirty work.

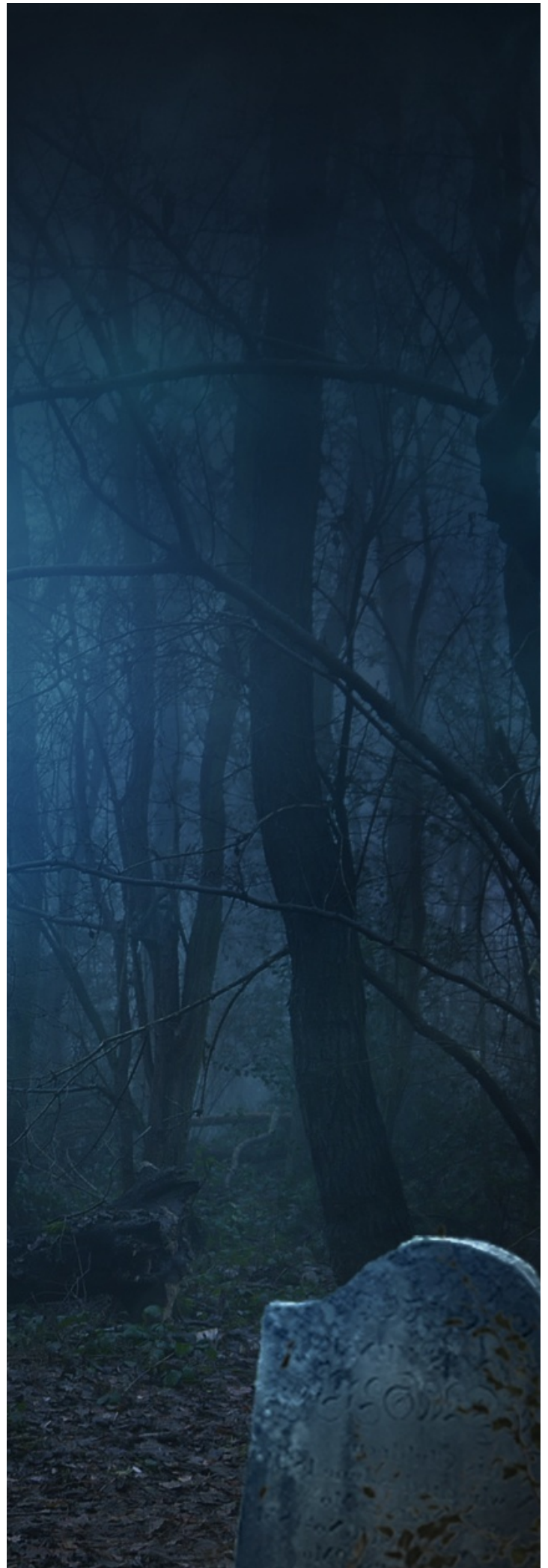
The Magician may have uncomfortable truths about quicklings, at least when you consider the Mutagenic Experiments origin to be true (see also the Late Revenge hook to the left). If nothing of this is true in your campaign, the mystery of the quicklings should be quite attracting to a wizard anyway.

The Bone Lord is not happy about creatures roaming the threshold of life and death and a world beyond. That's his domain after all. See also the Last of Their Kind origin and the hook about The Curse of Eternal Life to envision an even more furious Bone King.

To **The Wild Lady** the quicklings are a threat to equilibrium. They're not natural, mocking the roots of the world, the foundation of all that is sacred.

The Black Knight hates portals and all that crawls through them. He is eager to send his troops to besiege and neutralize them. If there's a way to bring war to the other side of those things – so be it.

But, maybe, in another time, another universe, the Black Knight himself is an agent of the *Great Beyond* where his dark god resides and waits for the day when the world is cleaned of demons and devils - his archfiends - waiting to cross the threshold and seize power in the realm.



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