



MONTE COOK'S ARCANA UNEARTHED:

LEGACY OF THE DRAGONS



A BESTIARY BY MONTE COOK AND MIKE MEARLS





LEGACY OF THE DRAGONS

A d20 System Bestiary for Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed

BY MONTE COOK AND MIKE MEARLS

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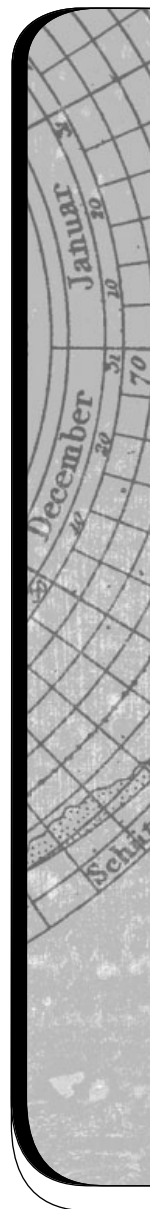
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Dragons of the Diamond Throne

“As true as the sun rules the day, these beasts before us were wrought by the demon-seeded dramojh, themselves the scions of the dragons that once ruled these fair lands. As true as the moon rules the night, then, these creatures that walk the earth, take wing in the sky or crawl the ground on snakelike bellies—they are all the legacy of the dragons.”

—Day’s Long Lament, Chapter XI, Colranith



The area now called the Lands of the Diamond Throne has known many names: the realm, Terrakal, and, earliest of all, the Land of the Dragons. In those ancient days, it is said, the dragons ruled supreme, and the sky was dark with their wings. These dragons were rivals of the giants across the sea to the east.

The dragons were of many species, each belonging to one of two categories. There were the chromatic dragons, known for their selfishness and cruelty, and there were the nobler metallic dragons. Despite their various natures, the dragons lived in relative harmony with each other. A conclave of the greatest and oldest dragons ruled over their brethren, settling disputes regarding territory and other matters. At the head of the conclave was the demigod Erixalimar, the greatest of the dragons. No dragon could think to disobey his rulings or edicts. No dragon would ever dare challenge him.

Centuries passed in this fashion. It seemed that the dragon age would never come to an end.

Then one fateful day, after decades of parleying with the giants, Erixalimar finally created a treaty that would keep giants to the east and dragons to the west forevermore. Afterward, the great dragon felt the need to get away, not only from giantish emissaries, but from his fellow dragons as well. He decided to fly farther west to discover what lay in that uncharted region.

The chromatic dragons saw Erixalimar’s absence as an opportunity to further their own agendas. They made a bid to take control of the dragon conclave. They failed, and what resulted was a cataclysmic war between the two dragon camps. The Land of the Dragons erupted in bitter conflict that threatened to destroy it. The conclave continued to attempt to sow peace, but it repeatedly failed.

Then a dragon named Nithogar rose to prominence and joined the conclave. Some records say Nithogar was a black dragon, while others claim a red. A few suggest that he might have even been a copper or gold, although as dragons are understood today, that is difficult to believe. In any event, Nithogar dipped his claws into other realms and worlds as easily as a man might dip his hands into different pools of water. He spent his days, his years, his centuries, plying otherworldly spaces to see what he could find. Although it is certain that he found many things, his most famous discovery was something called the tenebrian seeds. Most likely, the dragon encountered them hidden away in some hellish netherworld or locked within a prison plane or vault dimen-

sion. In any event, he brought the tenebrian seeds to this world to study them.

If only the dragons had not been embroiled in a civil war. If only Erixalimar had been there when Nithogar presented the tenebrian seeds to the conclave. But alas, they were, and he was not.

Nithogar interested some of his chromatic brethren in the tenebrian seeds, for any dragon could see they were objects of great potential power and magic. Dragon eyes are keen in that way—power is like a color or shape to them, as visible and tangible as anything else they might see.

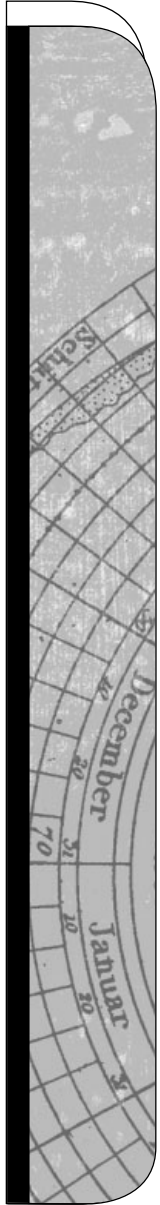
Nithogar and his fellows discovered that they could implant portions of their own draconic essence within the tenebrian seeds. Although many of the conclave advised against it, Nithogar and several others experimented with a few of the seeds, infusing them with their “dragon-ness.” Soon thereafter, something emerged from the seeds.

The dramojh were born.

Part dragon and part otherworldly creature, the dramojh—meaning “dragon scions”—fascinated the conclave. They found the dramojh, like dragons, to be quick studies with a real aptitude for magic. They taught their creations what they knew, and still the dramojh hungered for more. Moreover, the dragons sensed the dramojh’s thirst for battle and death-dealing, a thirst far beyond that of even the darkest-hearted dragon. These dramojh, they thought, would make excellent warriors. Without the metallics’ knowledge, the chromatics created more of the creatures. Soon there were thousands of these terrible demon-dragons.

The dramojh horde, wielding destructive and corrupt spells, washed over the already battle-weary metallic dragons. Though the dragons held out for years, it became clear that soon every last one of them would be dead.

But then Erixalimar returned. He found his homeland in flames, befouled dragon half-breeds slaying his folk. The great dragon brought peace to all dragonkind, but the dramojh would not be quelled. Knowing that the age of the dragon had ended, Erixalimar called upon nondraconic gods—the Lords of the Denotholan—to aid him in exterminating the dramojh. In return for their help, he promised them the dragons would leave their land and travel to the Unknown West, where Erixalimar had spent these last many years. An agreement was reached, and the cooperative efforts of the gods wiped the dramojh from the world. Erixalimar kept his word and led his people away. Only a few stragglers



About the Authors

Monte Cook started working professionally in the game industry in 1988. In the employ of Iron Crown Enterprises, he worked on the Rolemaster and Champions games as an editor, developer, and designer. In 1994 Monte came to TSR as a game designer. As a senior game designer with Wizards of the Coast, he codesigned the new edition of Dungeons & Dragons, authored the Dungeon Master's Guide, and designed the Book of Vile Darkness and the d20 version of Call of Cthulhu. For WizKids Games, he designed the HeroClix system of superhero combat. A graduate of the Clarion West writer's workshop, Monte also has published short stories and two novels. In his spare time he runs games, builds vast dioramas out of LEGO building bricks, paints miniatures, and reads a lot of comics.

Mike Mearls has worked as a freelance roleplaying game designer since 1999. The most prolific writer in the business, his ability to maintain a high volume of work without compromising on quality has won him a place on many gamers' lists of favorite designers. Buoyed by positive reaction to his first d20 works, he went on to produce a variety of material for the leading RPG publishers, including AEG, Atlas Games, Decipher, Fantasy Flight, Fiery Dragon, Goodman Games, Mongoose Publishing, Necromancer Games, and others. His work can be found in Dragon® Magazine on a regular basis.

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Malhavoc Press

Malhavoc Press is Monte's game imprint devoted to the publication of unusual magic, monsters, and evocative game elements that go beyond traditional fantasy. Malhavoc Press products exhibit the mastery of the 3rd Edition rules that only one of its original designers can offer. Coming soon from Malhavoc Press, look for Book of Hallowed Might II: Portents and Visions. Most current titles are available to purchase in either print or electronic (PDF) format at <www.montecook.com>.

remained, hidden away in caves, in distant palaces, or deep under the earth.

As they left, Erixalimar declared that, when the ancient treaties came to an end, he and his people would return to reclaim their lands.

Humans, litorians, verrik, and faen came to the realm and called it Terrakal. There, they prospered for centuries, but without warning, the dramojh returned. Not even the most learned sage or accustomed akashic knows how these crea-

tures survived the divine purge, but there was no denying that they were back. They conquered the lands and mastered them for a millennium. During this terrible age, they created many horrible creatures—most of them cross-breeds like themselves. These, the legacy of the dramojh, live on today, even though the dramojh were eliminated with the help of the giants over 300 years ago. Yet, as the dramojh were themselves created by the dragons, many people today refer to the monsters of the land as the Legacy of the Dragons.

And the dragons themselves? Well, they are so rare in the Lands of the Diamond Throne that few can claim to have ever seen one or even to know someone who has seen one. Those that remain have lived in seclusion for so long that each has become entirely a unique individual with its own special powers, spells, abilities, and appearance. Color no longer seems a meaningful category to describe their characteristics. It's no longer even a safe bet that color can predict the dragon's type of dangerous breath. One thing that is sure—there are very few metallics left. In fact, most people no longer even believe they ever existed.

USING THIS BOOK

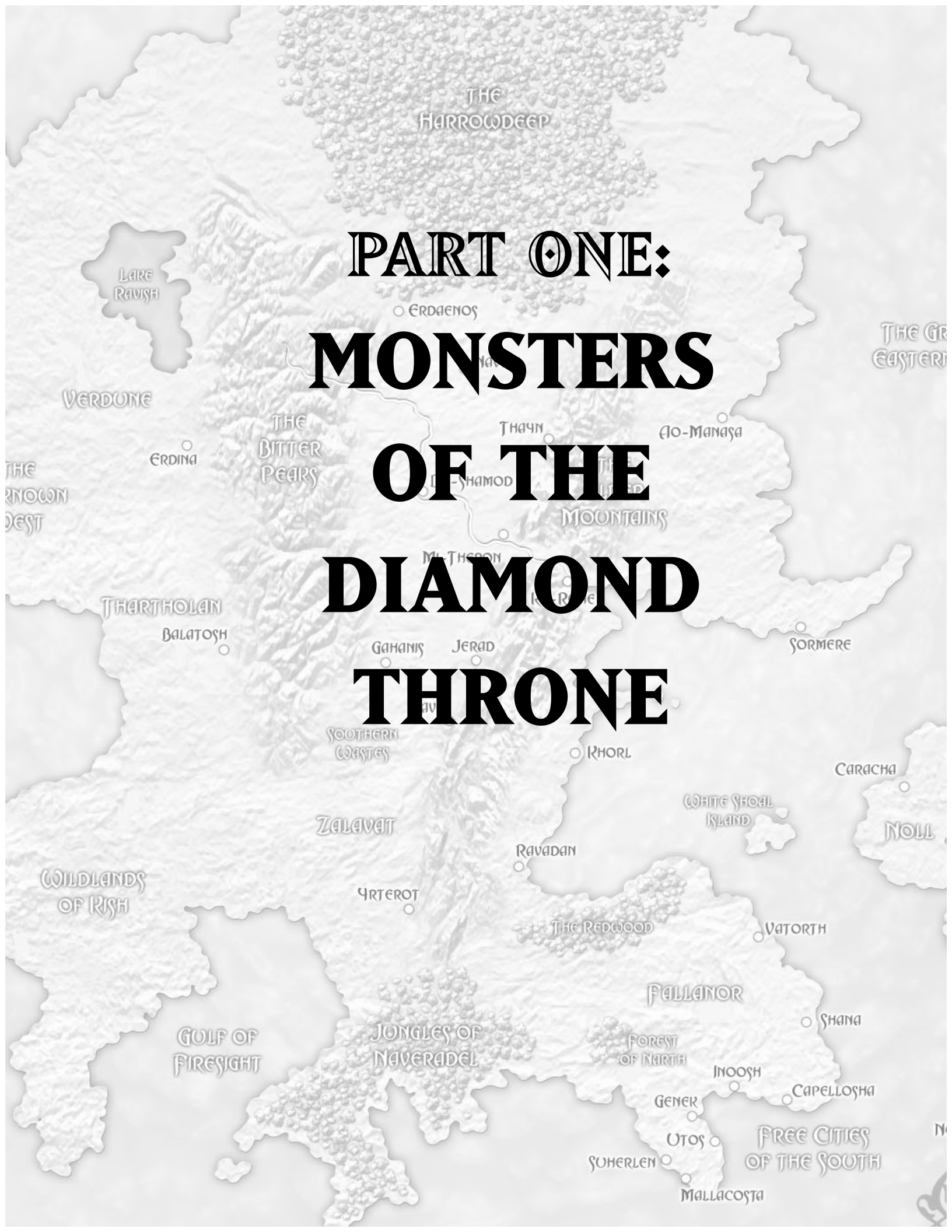
Legacy of the Dragons is a bestiary for use with Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed and all d20 System products. Part One features 50 new monsters and Part Two includes 15 new nonplayer characters (NPCs). These creatures and characters are tailored for the Diamond Throne setting, but special care was taken to ensure that each one would fill a niche in a traditional d20 fantasy setting as well. Damage reduction and space/reach stats are provided for both the 3.5 and 3.0 versions of the game. The Appendix offers conversion assistance for those who do not own Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed, mostly offering feats and alternatives for spells not contained in the *Player's Handbook*.

Throughout this book, a dagger (†) indicates a feat, spell, or magic item introduced in this book. Otherwise, *Legacy of the Dragons* refers to spells, feats, and other rules presented in Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed and the three Core Rulebooks: the *Player's Handbook*, DMG, and MM.

Spell-Like Abilities: In many instances of spell-like abilities, creatures are described as casting spells as a magister, mage blade, or witch. This notation is only for purposes of determining the ability score modifier and the spells' save DC. Creatures do not need staves, athames, or witchbags to use spell-like abilities.

Bonus source material and ideas to augment the information in this book appear on Monte Cook's website. Find the links to these free web enhancements at the book's product page online at the following address: <www.arcanaunearthed.com>.

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PART ONE:
MONSTERS
OF THE
DIAMOND
THRONE

AKASHIC SEEKER

Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 6d10+12 (45 hp), dying/dead -3/-15

Initiative: +3

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 20 (-1 size, +3 Dexterity, +8 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 17

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+13

Attack: Claw +8 melee (1d6+3)

Full Attack: 2 claws +8 melee (1d6+3), bite +6 melee 1d8+1 plus memory damage)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/10 feet

(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/10 feet)

Special Attacks: Memory damage, improved grab, pounce, rake 1d6+3

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, akashic tracking

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +6

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 19

Skills: Listen +6, Search +14, Sneak +11, Spot +10

Feats: Iron Will, Light Sleeper, Multiattack*, Skill Focus (Spot)

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary or Pack (3–8)

Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 7–12 HD (Large); 13–18 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: +3

* Denotes a feat from the MM.

The akashic memory pervades the world and its people. Sometimes it seeps into certain areas in greater amounts, congealing into akashic nodes. Born of these nodes, the akashic seeker is a terrible catlike beast that feeds on memory and guards akashic nodes like another creature might watch over a favored watering hole. This quadruped might look like a huge wolf or dog from a distance, but up close its grotesquely large head and mouth betray its strange and dangerous nature.

“Creatures born to evil,” the akashic Neverad Nosk terms them, but his opinion seems biased. Akashics have a particular hatred of these beasts, for obvious reasons. Seekers drain memories by tapping into another creature’s link with the akashic memory. They also make exploring nodes extremely hazardous. They favor remote and forgotten nodes, such as those in the Vnaxian ruins in the Southern Wastes of Zalavat. Tales of their attacks against explorers looking for a node are grisly and meant to terrify would-be adventurers. Nevertheless, the tales speak the truth. A pack of akashic seekers can end an expedition into a ruined city very quickly.

Akashic seekers can see the akashic memory in a way that only the most learned akashic could begin to understand. They use this sight to find akashic nodes and to track specif-

ic creatures as they pass through the world and into akashic memory. Because of the way this ability works, they can track only a creature who is being perceived (and thus entering the akashic memory). This does not include a creature’s perception of itself—the seeker tracks a subject using only the memories of others. This ability leads some powerful individuals to desire the seekers as allies. The belligerent creatures rarely show any desire to work with others, though, and cannot be bribed with food or treasure. A few successfully petition an akashic seeker with promises of a plentiful supply of its desired prey: akashics of any race.

Akashic seekers despise dream hunters (see Chapter Four in *The Diamond Throne*) and attack them on sight. Even though they are most known for haunting the ruins in Zalavat, they have been encountered in almost every clime and terrain—but almost always in or near an akashic node. Seekers make their lairs in caves, gullies, or ruins. Seekers with lairs attract mates—a pair usually has a litter of three to six cubs, which mature in about a year. Aggressive and cantankerous, akashic seekers often fight among themselves. Only a strong pack leader can keep a pack in line.

Akashic seekers measure 6 feet high at the shoulder and about 8 feet long. Their tough hides bear a strange mixture of dark blue scales and white fur, and their eyes are a piercing reddish brown. The creature’s broad mouth is filled with curved, hooklike teeth meant more for holding prey than for killing. An akashic seeker does not digest slain foes, so its lair may well contain decaying corpses of varying ages (and whatever equipment they carried).

Akashic seekers are always Unbound.

COMBAT

These creatures are always in a bad mood, ever spoiling for a fight. The akashic seeker pounces on foes when it can, usually from surprise. It often does not attack to kill, however—or at least, not kill quickly. The longer its prey lives, the more memories it can drain. Its ideal attack involves grabbing its wounded prey in its jaws, where it dies a slow death.

Memory Damage (Su): Foes bitten by the akashic seeker must make a Will saving throw (DC 18) or lose a small part of their memories. Characters drained of memories suffer a -1 competence penalty on all skill checks, as well as 1 point of temporary Intelligence damage as they forget what they once knew. They also lose one prepared spell (if they prepare spells), starting with the highest-level spell prepared. Each time they suffer memory damage, they take another point of Intelligence damage, suffer an additional -1 penalty on skill checks (the penalties stack), and lose another spell. Once a character suffers damage from this attack equal to half his Intelligence score, he loses use of all his feats (where applicable).



The skill check penalty diminishes as the victim regains Intelligence points. The save DC is Charisma based.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, an akashic seeker must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can inflict automatic bite damage and memory damage on subsequent rounds. Due to its hooked teeth, the seeker gains a +2 competence bonus to offensive grapple checks.

Pounce (Ex): If an akashic seeker charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +8 melee, damage 1d6+3

Akashic Tracking (Su): With a successful Charisma check (DC 15), a seeker can tap into the akashic memory and learn the location of any creature of which it is aware. This ability allows the seeker to track invisible or even ethereal foes if it is aware of them, as long as their location is known to someone. Akashic tracking also helps the creature find hiding foes, a hated enemy, or prey that has fled.

AKASHIC SEEKER ENCOUNTER (EL 8)

Three akashic seekers hunt in a pack near the site of a long-forgotten city. All remnants of the city have vanished, but an akashic node remains there, and thus the seekers do as well.

Two of the pack members are a mated pair with a litter of young hidden in their lair, a small cave near a river. The pack used to be larger, but some adventurers recently came to the site looking for the node and slew four of them. The pack finished off the adventurers, however, and draped their corpses across a large rock in the center of the node.

Enter the player characters. Passing through the area on their way somewhere else, they find the grisly remains of the dead explorers. Whether they investigate or simply loot the bodies, it doesn't matter. It's a trap. While the PCs are distracted, the akashic seekers move in to attack. They've developed a real hatred for humanoid adventurers, due to their recent experiences and cantankerous nature, and are looking to kill more. If either of the mated pair suffers more than half its hit points in damage, however, both retreat to their lair; the third belligerently fights to the death. If the PCs follow them, they fight to the death protecting their cubs. If the characters do not follow the seekers, the creatures wait and heal their wounds—perhaps even a few months—and then track down at least one of the PCs. The pair brings along two to four of the newly matured young (all of whom suffer a –1 hit point penalty per Hit Die and a –1 penalty to attack and damage rolls due to their age, but otherwise they act as fully grown individuals).

ARACHTAR

Medium Aberration

Hit Dice: 8d8+16 (52 hp), dying/dead -3/-15

Initiative: +7

Speed: 40 feet, climb 30 feet

AC: 19 (+3 Dexterity, +6 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+8

Attack: Bite +8 melee (1d8+2 plus poison) or web +9 ranged (as net)

Full Attack: Bite +8 melee (1d8+2 plus poison) and 6 claws +6 (1d6+1); or web +9/+4 ranged (as net)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet

(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Animate webs, grasping tendrils, poison, web

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, paralyzing fear, pleasing visage, voice of calm, web sense

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +7

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 14

Skills: Bluff +9, Climb* +16, Concentration +9, Disguise +9, Spot +8, Tumble +11

Feats: Defensive Move, Improved Initiative, Multiattack**, Opportunist

Environment: Temperate forest or any urban

Organization: Solitary, pair, or pack (3–8)

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +3

** Denotes a feat from the MM.

The cunning, murderous arachtar are a bizarre fusion of humans and spiders. They use a variety of illusions to hide within settlements, spying on their potential victims before closing in for the kill.

Arachtar have the forequarters of a humanoid and the rear body of a bloated spider. Eight slender, nimble legs radiate from their rear bodies, while six clawed arms extend from their humanoid torsos. Arachtar have deep blue skin, wide, red eyes, and vicious, fanged mouths. Chitinous plates cover their torsos and lower bodies, while their underbellies are dotted with tiny spinnerets.

Their cunning intellect and spiteful hatred of all humanoid life combine to make arachtar feared opponents. They use their psionic talents to hide within cities and towns, usually selecting an isolated, abandoned building, a dry well, or a section of the sewers as a lair. Their illusions allow them to mask their true nature while luring victims into their clutches. Even when their deception is sundered, they remain fearsome opponents. They share a psychic bond with their webbing, allowing them to control its motion and command it to struggle against intruders.

The arachtar share a loose bond, and these creatures sometimes work together to terrorize larger settlements. For all their psionic abilities and cunning, arachtar are at their core paranoid. The racial hatred they harbor toward humanoids is rooted in an irrational fear of such creatures. An arachtar concealed within a city may take joy in the hunt, but when not actively stalking prey it spends hours in a constant state of fear. The prospect of discovery and death haunts these creatures, pushing them to prepare for either eventuality. They form informal networks for safety and support, allowing a hard-pressed arachtar to flee its current lair and seek temporary shelter with its kind. They take care to establish hidden supply caches, bolt-holes, and other resources that could prove useful after a defeat.

Arachtar speak Common and have a secret sign language of their own that consists of elaborate hand and leg motions.

COMBAT

Arachtar loathe combat, for if they must resort to physical violence their deceptions have failed them. They prefer to flee if intruders have compromised their lair, but when cornered they can put up a fierce resistance. They usually try to lure opponents into their webs, using their psionic gifts to trap and smother their foes. Most arachtar spin webs embedded with rocks and dirt on the roofs and walls of their domains. Many who venture into an arachtar lair fail to notice these hidden webs until it is too late.

* **Skills (Ex):** Arachtar gain a +8 racial bonus to all Climb checks.

Animate Webs (Su): An arachtar enjoys a psychic bond with the webs it spins, causing them to animate and attack its foes. As a standard action, an arachtar can animate a section of webbing that is at least 5 feet by 5 feet and cause it to attack. The webbing fights with the arachtar's unmodified base attack bonus, which is +6 for a standard arachtar, and deals 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage with a bash attack. The webbing has a reach of 5 feet, and it attacks once per round. It has a speed of 10 feet and can climb through webbing at a speed of 10 feet. An arachtar can animate up to four blobs of webbing at once. Once given motion, a section of webbing fights until it takes 14 points of damage. The web has an AC of 10. It lacks an Intelligence score, and its other ability scores are 10. The webbing can see and hear as normal, but it lacks the intelligence to do anything other than attack.

Grasping Tendrils (Su): This variation on the arachtar's animate webs ability allows it to fling sticky tentacles from its web sheets at foes. As a standard action, an arachtar can cause a 5-foot-by-5-foot sheet of webbing that it has spun to burst into a horde of tentacles. This ability functions as an arachtar's ranged web attack, but the target loses his



Dexterity bonus to Armor Class, as the webbing strikes from an unexpected direction.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 14, initial damage 1d4 Dexterity, secondary damage 1d4 Dexterity

Web (Ex): A single strand of arachtar webbing is strong enough to support the arachtar and one creature of up to Large size. An arachtar can throw a web eight times per day. This attack is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against targets of up to one size category larger than the arachtar. An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 17) or burst it

with a Strength check (DC 21). Both are standard actions. The check DCs are Constitution based. Both Difficulty Classes are increased by 4 because of the creature's animate webs ability, as its sticky tendrils grasp and pull at characters. The Strength check DC includes a further 4-point increase as a racial bonus.

An arachtar can create sheets of sticky webbing from 5 to 60 feet square, depending on the size and layout of its lair. Approaching creatures must succeed at a Spot check (DC 20) to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if

the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-foot section has 14 hit points, and sheet webs have damage reduction 5/—.

Any creature trapped within an arachtar's web takes 1d6 points of damage per round as the webbing crushes and squeezes it. This damage continues for as long as the arachtar lives. Any creature hit by the arachtar's ranged web attack or caught within its sheets takes this damage.

An arachtar can move across its own web at its climb speed.

Paralyzing Fear (Ex): Arachtar are notoriously paranoid and fearful of humanoids unless they have such creatures at a disadvantage. If an armed humanoid or giant who is free of the monster's webs makes an Intimidate check (DC 20) against an arachtar, the beast suffers a –1 morale penalty to attack rolls and saves for the remainder of the encounter. An arachtar's opponent can attempt one Intimidate check against it per encounter. If the first attempt fails to unnerve it, it maintains its composure.

Pleasing Visage (Su): Arachtar have the inherent ability to cloak themselves in illusions. This counts as *spellcraft* cast by a 12th-level magister with the psionic template. Arachtar can use this ability at will.

Voice of Calm (Su): When cloaked in their magical disguises, arachtar draw upon their psionic abilities to cloak their natural fear and apprehension when dealing with humanoids. They can cast *glamour* as a 12th-level magister with the psionic template. Arachtar can use this ability at will.

Web Sense (Su): An arachtar's psionic link to its webs allows it to project its senses into them. As long as an arachtar takes no other actions, it can observe everything a single 5-foot patch of its webbing could see and hear as if it possessed the arachtar's senses. This ability extends up to a mile from the arachtar.

ARACHTAR SOCIETY

Arachtar are too few in number to form a true society, but they do display a variety of standard behavior among themselves and toward their prey. The fear and hatred they harbor toward other creatures serve to fuel their practices and beliefs.

Arachtar create informal networks of support. Many of them know the locations of isolated meeting grounds of their kind, though they only rarely know of other arachtar lairs. Their paranoia pushes them to avoid revealing such sensitive information except under the direst of circumstances. Usually, arachtar meet on neutral ground to forge treaties for mutual aid, mate via elaborate ceremonies, and exchange information. As creatures bred for infiltration and

spying, they have an inherent drive to share the secrets they have learned about the people and places they haunt in search of victims. In rare cases, arachtar ally with other creatures. In return for protection or enchanted items that can keep their lairs secure, they act as spies and assassins.

Over time, an arachtar's webs imprint the memories and emotions that the monster experiences. The psychic attachment between them works in both directions. Investigators sometimes wrap themselves in a defeated arachtar's webs. When they sleep in this gruesome cocoon, their dreams give them insight into the monster's past, its actions, and some of the more important knowledge it learned.

ARACHTAR CHARACTERS

Arachtar with the ambition to gain class levels tend toward becoming akashics and magisters. Some of them seek to master skills and talents that aid in their spying, while others see magical power as a useful weapon to ensure their security.

ARACHTAR ENCOUNTER (EL 8)

While staying at an inn for the night, one of the characters has vague dreams of a great treasure hoard hidden within a nearby cave. The dream includes images of important landmarks on the pathway to the cave. In truth, a mated pair of arachtar who use their magical abilities to disguise themselves as the innkeeper and her husband run the place. The arachtar hide scraps of their webbing within the pillows they leave for guests, allowing them to spy on the guests. The arachtar consciously meditate on treasures and the pathway to their hidden lair when weaving these scraps, luring victims to their doom.

In addition to the threat posed by the monsters, the characters face two other complications. The path to the lair is rife with traps and other hazards, making the trip there difficult. Even worse, the local folk are wholly ignorant of this deception. Because the arachtar are generous with the food and drink they serve to the villagers, they have earned the friendship of the local folk. Any violence or accusations against the innkeeper and her husband may incite an angry mob to attack the characters.

ARATHAD

Colossal Ooze

Hit Dice: 30d10+270 (435 hp), dying/dead -10/-28

Initiative: -3

Speed: 20 feet

AC: 21 (-4 size, -3 Dexterity, +18 natural), touch 3, flat-footed 21

Base Attack/Grapple: +22/+48

Attack: Tentacle +28 melee (3d6+10)

Full Attack: 8 tentacles +28 melee (3d6+10)

Space/Reach: 20 feet/15 feet

(Face/Reach: 20 feet by 20 feet/15 feet)

Special Attacks: Combat adaptations, trail of destruction

Special Qualities: Blindsight 400 feet, DR 10/good (or 25/+3), immunity to acid and fire, ooze traits, SR 30

Saves: Fort +19, Ref +7, Will +11

Abilities: Str 30, Dex 4, Con 28, Int —, Wis 12, Cha 7

Skills: —

Feats: —

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 18

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 31–50 HD (Colossal)

Level Adjustment: +6

An arathad, also known as a dramojh battle ooze, looks like a large, bluish-white blob. It has a tough outer membrane that is as hard as stone to the touch yet flexible enough to contain its liquid interior. These creatures leave in their wake a trail of devastation that forms a path as wide as they can reach. Though few exist, their great size and mighty combat abilities have allowed them to overcome most opponents.

Rightly feared as perhaps the deadliest creatures spawned by the dramojh, these machines of pure destruction creep across the land seeking to fulfill commands given to them in the final days of their masters' reign. In battle, an arathad displays its true abilities. Driven by powerful magic, its inner core can produce and deploy a bewildering array of attacks. By drawing on the abilities of creatures it has absorbed, an arathad can belch gouts of fire from draconic heads suspended on long tentacles, spurt acid from pores it opens on its body, spray an area with a horde of grasping feelers to grab prey and drag it into its interior, and so forth.

Battle oozes are mindless creatures that lack the capacity to do anything more than devour and destroy whatever stumbles into their path. They were forged in the hellish

workshops of the dramojh empire in the final days of the dragon scions' war with the giants. They were designed to spearhead a last, decisive push to break the giants' momentum and turn the tide of the war against them. This plan failed when a band of heroes penetrated the dramojh spawning pools and destroyed most of these creatures before they could be unleashed. The few that did emerge to spread horror across the land are a testament to the apocalyptic level of destruction that the dramojh were on the verge of loosing upon the world.

COMBAT

Arathads never employ complex tactics or other plans in battle. Instead, they merely march forward in search of new victims and fresh targets for their destructive urges. With their daunting array of abilities and powerful attacks, they have no need for subtle methods or clever stratagems.

Combat Adaptations (Su): A dramojh battle ooze can duplicate almost any attack that a creature it has devoured could utilize. It gains spellcasting ability by drawing on magical energy, and it learns to duplicate organs, both mundane and arcane, that grant it a variety of extraordinary, spell-like, and supernatural abilities. This adaptability means that no two of these creatures are alike. When using one as part of an adventure, you need to determine which talents the creature can currently employ. The table below lists a variety of effects and abilities that a battle ooze might obtain. Roll three times to identify the talents that a specific ooze possesses, rerolling any duplicate results. Alternatively, you can simply pick three abilities that suit your needs.

d20 Ability

1–4 **Improved Grab (Ex):** A battle ooze with this ability can transform its tentacles into a horrid, squirming mass of smaller but equally strong, grasping limbs. This cluster of tentacles allows a battle ooze to make a free grapple check that does not provoke an attack of opportunity when it hits an opponent with a melee attack. This transformation takes place as the battle ooze strikes its foe.

5–6 **Breath Weapon (Su):** A battle ooze with this ability can duplicate the head and the breath weapon of a creature that it defeated and consumed. A battle ooze's breath weapon is a 60-foot cone that deals 15d6 points of damage, with a Reflex save for half damage (DC 10 + half ooze's HD + ooze's Dexterity modifier, or 22 for a standard battle ooze). Determine its energy type by rolling 1d8 each time it uses this ability, referring to the various breath

- weapons described below. Creatures that fail to save against the breath weapon suffer the additional effects noted below for each energy type.
- 1 **Acid:** A searing stream of caustic liquid causes a –2 competence penalty to attack rolls, checks, and saves on its next action due to the intense pain it causes.
 - 2 **Cold:** Deep cold echoes through a victim's body, slowing his muscles and nerves. On the creature's next action, it suffers a –4 penalty to Dexterity.
 - 3 **Electricity:** The electrical shock overwhelms the victim's nervous system, stunning him for 1 round.
 - 4 **Fire:** Intense heat ignites affected creatures. Each must make a Reflex save (DC 15) after its turn each round or take 1d6 points of fire damage. If a character uses a standard action to beat at the flames, he gains a +4 bonus to this save.
 - 5 **Negative Energy:** This breath weapon takes the form of a deep, black wave of energy. Creatures that fail their saves against it suffer one negative level. The DC of the Fortitude save to remove the negative level is equal to the breath weapon's save Difficulty Class.
 - 6 **Positive Energy:** This breath weapon manifests as a searing blast of light. Creatures that fail their saves are blinded for 1d10 rounds.
 - 7 **Sonic:** Concussive waves of sound energy batter creatures within the breath weapon's area. Creatures that fail their saves are deafened for 1d10 rounds.
 - 8 **Roll twice, ignoring this result:** The arathad's breath weapon has two energy types and gains the effect of each one, though the damage dealt by the breath weapon is not doubled.
 - 7–10 **Spell-Like Ability (Sp):** A battle ooze with this talent can cast one spell of 5th, 6th, or 7th level three times per day as an 18th-level magister. The ooze uses its Wisdom modifier to determine the spell's save DC.
 - 11 **Ability Score Damage (Su):** Each time an ooze with this ability strikes an opponent with a tentacle, its target must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half ooze's HD, or 25 for a standard battle ooze) or take 2 points of temporary damage to a randomly chosen ability score. You can roll 1d6 a single time to determine the affected ability and use that result for all of the ooze's attacks, or you can roll 1d6 each time it strikes a foe (1 = Strength, 2 = Dexterity, and so on).
 - 12–15 **Constrict (Ex):** If an ooze with this ability grapples an opponent, it can crush the foe within the grip of its powerful tentacles. The ooze deals 3d6+10 points of bludgeoning damage after making a successful grapple check. If it also has the improved grab ability, it deals constriction damage in addition to damage dealt by the tentacle as part of its normal melee attack.
 - 16 **Energy Drain (Su):** An ooze with this ability inflicts one negative level on any opponent it strikes with a tentacle attack. The Fortitude save DC to remove this negative level equals 10 + half ooze's HD + ooze's Charisma modifier, or 23 for a standard battle ooze.
 - 17 **Fast Healing (Ex):** A battle ooze with this ability rapidly heals damage, allowing it to quickly recover from even the most grievous wounds. It gains fast healing 5.
 - 18 **Paralysis (Su):** An arathad with this ability can paralyze its opponents on a successful hit with its tentacles. The Fortitude save DC to avoid this paralysis effect equals 10 + half ooze's HD + ooze's Charisma modifier, or 23 for a standard battle ooze.
 - 19 **Poison (Ex):** Each of the tentacles of an ooze with this ability is covered with a foul, rancid poison that affects any creature it hits. The Fortitude save DC to avoid this Touch poison equals 10 + half ooze's HD, or 25 for a standard battle ooze. The poison's initial damage is 1d6 points of temporary Strength damage, and its secondary effect is 1d4 points of temporary Strength damage.
 - 20 **Trample (Ex):** As a full-round action, an ooze with this ability can move up to twice its speed and literally run over any opponents at least one size category smaller than itself. The ooze merely has to move over the opponents in its path. Any creature whose space is completely covered by the ooze is subject to the trample attack. If a target's space is larger than 5 feet, it is only considered trampled if the ooze moves over all the squares it occupies. Should the ooze move over only some of a target's space, the target can make an attack of opportunity against the ooze at a –4 penalty. This trample attack deals 3d6+15 points of damage.

Trampled opponents can attempt attacks of opportunity, but these attacks suffer a –4 penalty. If they do not make attacks of opportunity, trampled opponents can attempt Reflex saves (DC 35) to take half damage.



Trail of Destruction (Ex): Battle oozes create a pool of horrific, acidic slime around their bodies, allowing them to cut a swath of destruction across the land merely by moving from one location to the next. The area in a 30-foot radius around a battle ooze is always soaked with a caustic, slippery slime. Creatures must make Fortitude saves (DC 20) when they enter this area and when they begin their actions within it. Creatures that fail this save take 2d8 points of damage and can move at only half their normal speed. Creatures that succeed take half damage and can move as normal.

In addition to the area directly around an ooze, this effect persists in areas that it visits as the ooze moves around. The acid lasts for 1d4 hours before it loses its caustic properties. Plants and other creatures that cannot move from an affected area continue to take damage each round. During an encounter, track the area that the ooze covers with this ability.

ARATHAD ENCOUNTER (EL 18)

The appearance of a battle ooze in a region heralds a state of panic and desperate planning to destroy the beast, or at least divert it into an uninhabited area. These creatures are mindless automatons. Their only goal is to kill as many creatures as possible and destroy any settlements they encounter. They tear trees from the ground, despoil farmland, and foul bodies of water they encounter. Even ruins

and other remnants of civilization face their rage, since these monsters are too simple to discern a viable settlement from an empty one.

Arathads rarely remain in the same place for long. Their insatiable appetite for chaos and destruction pushes them to constantly migrate across the world. When one of these beasts appears, most folk organize a defense and work to destroy it. Petty disagreements and other differences fade into the background for the duration of the emergency. Entire armies might march into battle against one of these menaces, often fighting to buy time for spellcasters and other heroes who need to ready a final defense against the creature.

Characters of any level could participate in such an effort. Low-level heroes may be asked to shadow an ooze from horseback, watching it from a distance and reporting on its course and actions. Mid-level PCs may lead forays against the monster, quick strikes designed to slowly wear down its strength in preparation for the final showdown. High-level characters can expect to stand against it during the final confrontation, with the future of an entire city or even a kingdom resting on their shoulders.

ARBOREAL CORRUPTER

Huge Aberration

Hit Dice: 16d8+96 (168 hp), dying/dead -7/-22

Initiative: -2

Speed: 10 feet

AC: 20 (-2 size, -2 Dexterity, +14 natural), touch 6, flat-footed 20

Base Attack/Grapple: +12/+27

Attack: Tendril +18 melee (1d6+7 plus poison)

Full Attack: 8 tendrils +18 melee (1d6+7 plus poison)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/15 feet

(Face/Reach: 10 feet by 10 feet/15 feet)

Special Attacks: Poison, wrath of trees

Special Qualities: Corrupt trees, immunity to cold and fire, immunity to mind-affecting effects, network of eyes, DR 10/good (or 15/+2), spells, SR 22

Saves: Fort +16, Ref +3, Will +11

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 6, Con 22, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 15

Skills: Concentration +17, Disguise* +21, Listen +20, Spellcraft +18, Spot +19

Feats: Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Psion, Skill Focus (Listen), Stomp, Weapon Focus (tendrils)

Environment: Any forest

Organization: Solitary, pair, or grove (3-8)

Challenge Rating: 12

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 17-28 HD (Huge); 29-40 HD (Colossal)

Level Adjustment: +5

Even on close inspection, this horrid monster appears to be little more than a mundane tree. It adopts the guise of the plants that grow around it, slowly altering its outer skin to resemble bark and its many limbs to mimic leafy branches. An arboreal corrupter slowly converts the forest around it to creatures under its control, creating a hidden threat that strikes at travelers before they are aware of the menace that surrounds them.

This twisted, malevolent tree has its genesis in the fiendish workshops of the dramojh. A corrupter spreads its roots throughout an area, allowing it to infest and control normal trees. It uses these puppets to attack travelers. Usually, victims who survive an attack never realize that the animated tree was under the control of a malevolent intelligence. Arboreal corrupters communicate with each other across great distances using their roots, allowing them to coordinate large-scale campaigns.

While corrupters look like plants, they are actually more like animals in function. They have fleshy interiors with strange, pulsing internal organs. Their roots resemble tentacles rather than woody growths, and their branches are actually pulpy tendrils that sprout growths that look like leaves, pine needles, and smaller branches. They feed by churning the ground around them, dragging dead or decaying animal mat-

ter into their root network. Experienced travelers learn to identify corrupters by the thick, loamy soil around their bases, a telltale sign of their churning roots.

A forest infested with one or more of these monsters becomes a dark, foreboding place. Forest settlements suffer devastating attacks by corrupted trees, while many of the animals and plants that provide food for the region come under continual assault. Corrupters wage a highly coordinated campaign of terror, using their ability to communicate at great distance to launch simultaneous attacks or strike a single target from many directions. Some primitive or destructive beasts, particularly chlotheks (see page 30), worship these twisted beings as deities. These worshippers toss sacrificial victims into the root field that surrounds a corrupter, allowing it to drag the morsel into its root network.

Corrupters can speak Common in wheezing, gasping tones. They are ambitious and vain. Sometimes they negotiate alliances with promising contacts their thralls bring to them, offering them mercy in return for mutual aid. A corrupter might destroy a greedy warlord's enemies in return for protection against its enemies. Many of them fancy themselves the true lords of the forest. If a greenbond moves into a region claimed by a corrupter, a showdown is almost inevitable. While some greenbonds with violent or hateful tendencies might work with these monsters, most of them recognize corrupters as foul mockeries of the natural order.

COMBAT

Arboreal corrupters prefer to allow their thralls to do their fighting for them, since their primary defense is to remain unnoticed by the world at large. Their slow speed makes it difficult for them to disengage from a battle. While they have many magical abilities, patient foes can simply use fire and ranged attacks to slowly whittle down their strength. Corrupters remain motionless even in the face of a determined enemy. Sometimes they take no actions until the last possible moment. An opponent might have to land the first blow before a corrupter moves to defend itself.

Due to the intimate connection these creatures share with each other, they remember enemies who have slain their kin and make aggressive moves to destroy them. A hunter who defeats a corrupter may find his friends and family harassed by attacks launched by other corrupters, while these monsters' followers dog his every step in the forest.

* **Skills (Ex):** Arboreal corrupters gain a +10 racial bonus to all Disguise checks made to conceal themselves as mundane trees. They can attempt to disguise themselves as trees merely by remaining still. They do not need more than a standard action to make this check.

Poison (Ex): An arboreal corrupter's leafy tendrils are covered in a sticky, caustic sap that causes convulsions and the loss of motor control in creatures it injures. This poison has a Fortitude save DC of 20. It deals 1d4+1 points of temporary



Dexterity damage initially and 3d4 points of temporary Dexterity damage as its secondary effect.

Wrath of Trees (Ex): In battle as a free action, a corrupter can flex and shift its vast network of tendrils and roots to toss and churn the ground around it. Creatures that stand within 60 feet of a corrupter must make Balance checks (DC 15) each round before they take any actions or fall prone. Four-legged creatures gain a +4 competence bonus to this check. Creatures that are already prone must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or take 2d6 points of damage as the tendrils and roots rip and tear at them.

Corrupt Trees (Su): A corrupter can extend its poison tendrils into a nearby tree, animating it with its fell malevolence. A corrupted tree (see statistics at right) obeys all of the corrupter's commands to the best of its abilities. It gladly throws its life away to defend its master, since it lacks a true free will of its own. A corrupter can control up to three trees at once. These servants can travel up to five miles from the corrupter's location, and it can see and experience everything these thralls observe. It takes a corrupter one day to work its tendrils into a tree and transform it into a servant. If a corrupter dies, its thralls immediately perish as well.

Network of Eyes (Su): Corrupters create an intricate network of tendrils and roots among themselves that allow them to remain in contact over great distances. These creatures communicate via telepathy, exchanging gossip and news of the events they have observed. There is no theoretical limit to this ability's range, but most corrupters maintain links with their fellows within 25 miles of their current loca-

tion. In total, the corrupters form a vast network that some sages believe extends across the entire continent.

Spells (Sp): Corrupters have a natural affinity for magic. Though they share little, if anything, in attitude and behavior with greenbonds, they practice a similar type of magic. Corrupters prepare and cast spells as 9th-level greenbonds.

CORRUPTED TREE

These twisted mockeries of wholesome plants look like trees bent and twisted into vaguely humanoid shapes. Ponderous and slow, they rely on brute strength to pummel opponents into submission. They usually drag defeated enemies to their arboreal corrupter master so the master can feast on the flesh and bones.

Corrupted trees live solitary existences in any forest environment. They have standard treasure and advance as follows: 8–16 HD (Huge); 17–21 HD (Gargantuan).

Corrupted tree: CR 5; Huge plant; HD 7d8+28; hp 59; Dying/Dead –5/–18; Init –3; Speed 20 feet; AC 18 (–2 size, –3 Dexterity, +13 natural), touch 5, flat-footed 18; Space/Reach 10 feet/15 feet (Face/Reach 10 feet by 10 feet/15 feet); BAB +5; Grapple +18; Attack Slam +8 melee (2d6+5); Full Attack 2 slams +8 melee (2d6+5); SQ Plant traits, vulnerability to fire; SV Fort +9, Ref –1, Will +7; Str 21, Dex 4, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 12

Skills and Feats: —

Vulnerability to Fire: A corrupted tree suffers half again as much (+50 percent) damage as normal from fire.

ARBOREAL CORRUPTER ENCOUNTER (EL 15)

An ambitious and corrupt noble near the party's hometown claims to have uncovered a magic item that can animate trees, turning them into guardians for a nearby wilderness area. Within a few weeks, these newfound "soldiers" have driven several bandit gangs out of the area and delivered many notorious outlaws to justice. Actually, the noble is working with several arboreal corrupters in an attempt to destabilize the region. In reaction to the trees' success in guarding the area, he pushes to cut funding to the town guard and uses his growing influence to have mercenary warriors dismissed from the army.

Blinded by his own ambition, the noble fails to consider that the corrupters might have their own plans. In fact, the corrupters intend to rally a horde of bandits and monsters to conquer the area as soon as its defenses become weak enough. Already, several animated trees have been positioned in town to serve as lookouts. With their thralls in place, the corrupters can observe the town and refine their plans to attack and destroy it.

BALTHROK

Medium Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 2d8+4 (13 hp), dying/dead -3/-15

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 16 (+6 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+5

Attack: Claw +6 melee (1d8+3)

Full Attack: 2 claws +6 melee (1d8+3)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, digging claws, tremorsense 60 feet

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +2

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 6

Skills: Climb +6, Swim +5

Feats: Sense the Unseen, Weapon Focus (claws)

Environment: Any temperate

Organization: Solitary, pair, pack (3–8 plus one 3rd-level elder), war party (4–20 plus one 6th-level elder), or colony (20–500 plus 1d6 10th-level elders)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +1

Combining the qualities of a bear, mole, and human, a balthrok resembles a massive, hairless beast with overly long arms. Its wide, powerfully built hands end in thick, jagged claws that can tear through armor and tunnel through dirt. Driven to aggressive acts because of overpopulation, balthroks slowly infiltrate and assault towns and villages from below.

Balthroks burrow through the ground, lying in wait beneath the surface to ambush prey. They sometimes wield crude weapons, usually taken from their enemies. Balthroks hate all humanoid life, and sometimes groups of them gather to destroy a village or town. They burrow beneath walls and homes, coordinating their actions to cause several important structures within a town to collapse at the same time. In the confusion that follows, they erupt from the ground and attack the townsfolk.

The dramojh created and bred balthroks to serve as siege troops. Their ability to tunnel through earth and stone makes them invaluable in such operations, since they can undermine fortifications or create paths into the heart of a fortress's defenses. With their masters long defeated, they retreated to the dark corners of the world. In isolated hills, forests, and mountain ranges, they have dug extensive towns and cities far from prying eyes where they live in peace.

Over time, their population grew too large for their burrows. Recalling the earlier war that spawned them, balthrok leaders spread propaganda painting the giants and their allies as murderers and usurpers of their rightful lands. War parties of balthrok scouts now probe the borders of civilized realms, using

their digging talent to create hidden passages beneath cities. In some areas, sewers are rife with these creatures. Balthroks like to launch raids on isolated buildings and delight in slaying giants.

COMBAT

Strong and tough, balthroks rarely flee from battle. They prefer to stand and die, seeing defeat as a stain that only blood can purge. The elders' propaganda has fanned the flames of fanaticism in many balthrok scouts and warriors, making them liable to win battles through sheer force of will. And since they refuse to surrender, they cause heavier casualties than other marauders.

Balthroks prefer to fight at a place and time of their choosing. If possible, they sow an area with hidden pits and other hazards that disrupt their enemies' plans and give them the advantage of surprise. One of their favorite tactics is digging a hole and hiding in it beneath a loose cover of earth, then leaping out to fall upon an opponent's flank or rear.

Digging Claws (Ex): A balthrok's thick, jagged claws allow it to tunnel through dirt and rock with relative ease. It does not work fast enough to have a burrow speed, but it can construct tunnels more quickly than even the stoutest miners. A single balthrok can dig a 10-foot tunnel usable by Medium or smaller creatures after 10 minutes of work. It takes an additional 10 minutes to enlarge such a passage to be usable by Huge or Large creatures. Teams of balthroks usually work together to create elaborate mazes and intricate subterranean strongholds.

A balthrok's claws are tough and durable, owing partially to their magical nature. Skilled balthrok smiths can improve them with mundane and magical weapon enhancements. Use the standard rules for enchanting an item, except that the claws have a base cost of 0 gp. They must be upgraded to masterwork quality as normal before they can receive magical abilities.

Tremorsense (Ex): A balthrok automatically detects the presence and location of any creature or object that stands on the ground within 60 feet of it.

BALTHROK SOCIETY

Balthrok society is built around the veneration of and obedience to the elders who rule. As a balthrok ages, its claws gradually take on a gleaming, gemlike appearance. This feature allows a balthrok to easily display its social rank. Even the fiercest warrior becomes a passive underling in the presence of an elder. Balthroks rarely fight among themselves for leadership, since combat and natural causes kill most of them before they grow old enough to claim the mantle of rulership. The elders rule as an oligarchy, forging a consensus by popular vote among themselves to set policy and make decisions. Common balthroks have no say in their government.

Some sages believe balthroks were bred for maximum pliability and obedience. The dramojh designed them to blindly follow whomever they identified as a leader. In the absence of a strict military structure, the balthroks now give their obedience to the next closest thing—the elders among them.



Unfortunately, these elders typically have few characteristics of a good leader. Many seek only to satisfy their own desires, putting their subjects to work as litter bearers, servants, miners, and raiders to provide them with a comfortable existence. The elders encourage an aggressive stance toward other creatures because this is the easiest way to avoid overpopulation and food shortfalls.

BALTHROK ELDERS

Balthrok elders develop several psionic abilities that set them apart from their mundane kin. Most balthroks die in battle or of natural causes long before they are old enough to exhibit these talents. The dramojh most likely created this disparity among the balthroks to foster a natural ruling class among the creatures and to ensure that in the aftermath of the war they would not be burdened with a large population of them.

The elders are the heart and soul of a balthrok community. Their idiosyncrasies, obsessions, and desires filter down through the ranks to the youngest balthrok. Should a settlement lose its elders, its members plunge into a state of uneasy fear. The balthroks do their best to harvest food and sustain their holdings, but they otherwise fall into a paranoid, defensive state. They may collapse tunnels leading out of their warrens, preferring to risk subsisting on fungus and water drawn from wells within their lairs rather than attempt to venture into the outer world without leadership. Until a new elder appears, the colony remains paralyzed with fear.

Balthrok elders have long, thick claws speckled with shards of gold, crystals, silver, and other valuable materials. Their heads are slightly larger than normal, betraying the enhanced mental abilities that they have developed. All balthrok elders gain the following abilities.

Dominant Personality (Su): All balthroks have an inbred, intuitive tendency to obey an elder's wishes. All balthroks obey an elder's verbal commands without question, and even ones under magical compulsion refuse to attack an elder. Other elders are immune to this effect.

Rousing Leader (Su): When a balthrok elder leads his followers into battle, he grants them fierce determination and an unshakable spirit. All balthroks within 60 feet of an elder, except for other elders, gain a +2 morale bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, and saves.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): A balthrok elder can cast the following spells as a 5th-level magister: 1/day—*slow, suggestion*; 3/day—*charm*. The save DC against these spells is DC 12 + spell level.

Ability Scores: An elder gains a +6 bonus to Intelligence, +4 bonus to Wisdom, and a +6 bonus to Charisma.

Challenge Rating: Elders have a base CR of 3.

BALTHROK CHARACTERS

Most balthrok characters are warriors. They disdain weapons, preferring to use their sharp claws in battle. Balthroks can enchant their claws or grant them the same upgrades and abilities, such as masterwork quality or the dire special ability, that weaponsmiths can build into weapons. Their claws have a natural affinity for magic and exhibit the supernatural ability to “remember” any modifications and enchantments placed on them. As a balthrok's claws grow, they retain any changes made to their overall shape. Most researchers believe that the dramojh granted the balthroks this ability with their foul magic, and some unscrupulous smiths pay rich bounties for samples of these claws.

BALTHROK ENCOUNTER (EL 5)

Under the leadership of a cunning balthrok elder, a small colony of these creatures plans to unleash a terrible disaster on a city near their lair. The balthroks have crafted many passages beneath a main market square. During the upcoming harvest, suicide teams of balthrok diggers will destroy the supports that keep those passages intact, turning the crowded square into a massive sinkhole. Hundreds of townsfolk may die in the disaster, while the balthrok elders hope that the resulting chaos will leave the city ripe for the picking.

While the characters are adventuring in the wilderness near the city, they may come across large piles of earth next to mysterious tunnels dug into hillsides, as well as increased numbers of balthrok patrols. If they piece together the evidence, they come to realize that they must invade the tunnels, drive away the balthroks, and prevent the creatures from retaking and collapsing the passages.

BLADE BREAKER

Medium Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 6d8+6 (33 hp), dying/dead -2/-12

Initiative: -2

Speed: 20 feet

AC: 22 (-2 Dexterity, +14 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 22

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+12

Attack: Fist +12 melee (2d6+6)

Full Attack: 2 fists +12 melee (2d6+6)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet

(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Blade catching, metal affinity

Special Qualities: DR 10/adamantine (or 10/+1), SR 16

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +5

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 6, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 11, Cha 7

Skills: Climb +11, Wilderness Survival +4

Feats: Cleave, Power Attack, Slippery Mind, Sunder

Environment: Cold mountains and subterranean

Organization: Solitary, pair, or gang (3-8)

Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 7-12 HD (Medium); 13-18 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: +2

Blade breakers were created by the *dramojh* either by mixing apes and humans with the magical essence of captive earth elementals or by using spells to corrupt and pervert captive rock apes (see page 72). These beasts resemble hairless, hunched simians with stone-grey skin. With supernatural strength and endurance, these beasts can catch their enemies' weapons in their hands and snap them in half. Their elemental nature allows them to easily sunder iron and steel.

These creatures were originally crafted to serve as bodyguards for generals, commanders, and other important figures who might have to participate in battle. They were charged with fending off opponents and preventing injuries to their masters. Though they have the strength and toughness to operate as shock troops, they rarely fought in large formations during the war against the giants. Few of them lived through the struggle, and most died attempting to shield their masters from harm. In the aftermath of the giants' victory over the *dramojh*, the few surviving blade breakers fled to isolated areas to escape the conquering armies.

Blade breakers have no innate drive to conquer or destroy others. They are happy to subsist on a diet of dense stones, crystals, and the odd metallic item. However, the *dramojh* instilled within them a natural tendency to seek out powerful figures to serve and revere. In the absence of such inspiring leaders, they are quiet and docile. While

blade breakers rarely pose a threat on their own, many outlaws and warlike folk hunt them down, capture them, and force them to serve in their old roles. The pliable blade breakers easily fall back into the positions they were created to fill. However, forcing a blade breaker into service is a crime in most civilized areas, punishable by a 10,000 gp fine and up to five years of hard labor or imprisonment. Characters also suffer a -4 penalty to all Charisma-related checks while they have a blade breaker in tow, and most taverns, inns, and shops refuse them service.

Blade breakers can understand Common, but they cannot speak it. They have difficulty grasping complex commands and concepts but can manage most simple orders and requests.

COMBAT

In battle, blade breakers are passive and watchful. They remain near their designated leader or the person they are assigned to protect, looking out for potential threats and never straying far unless ordered to do so. Blade breakers can ignore most physical pain and discomfort, and in some ways they have no real appreciation of the concept of death and injury. In their minds, they are as eternal and invulnerable as the earth beneath their feet. For this reason, they readily sacrifice themselves to save their masters and never flee unless their charge turns tail and runs.

Blade Catching (Ex): Blade breakers have an inherent talent for deflecting and catching blows with their hands. After readying an action to do so, a blade breaker can catch an armed melee attack made with a metal weapon. The attack may be made against the creature itself or against any creature within the area the blade breaker's fist attacks threaten. The blade breaker does not have to designate a specific opponent to watch or a specific attack to catch. When a blade breaker uses this ability, it makes a normal attack roll immediately after an enemy has scored a hit on the blade breaker or a nearby creature. If its result (roll plus modifiers, including the +4 bonus from the Sunder feat) is greater than or equal to its target's result, the blade breaker prevents the enemy's attack from fully striking its intended target. Instead, the blade breaker or nearby creature takes half damage from the attack, and the blade breaker immediately makes a damage roll as if it were attempting to destroy the weapon (dealing double damage, as specified in the Sunder feat).

Metal Affinity (Su): Owing to their supernatural heritage, blade breakers have a special talent for damaging and destroying items crafted from metal. They can sense the slightest cracks and imperfections that mar even the finest swords, shields, and armor, allowing them to strike at a critical weak point in a metal item's structure. A blade breaker ignores the hardness of any metal items that it strikes.



BLADE BREAKER SERVANTS

Gaining the services of a blade breaker is often a morally questionable act, since these creatures usually cannot help but fall into service when introduced to a charismatic or powerful figure. Walking into town with a blade breaker in tow is a good way to attract attention from the town guard, since anyone opportunistic enough to gain a blade breaker and aggressive enough to need one is likely to cause trouble. These creatures have lost their free will through no fault of their own, and many folk consider exploiting or using them a repugnant act at best. The blade breakers' close association with the dramojh casts anyone who employs one in a sinister light.

Luring a blade breaker into service requires a successful Charisma check (DC 25), with a +2 competence bonus for each breaker a potential master slays in the presence of its fellows. In bygone days, the dramojh killed a few of these poor creatures to motivate the others into submitting to servitude. Blade breakers' imperfect understanding of death causes them to see such actions as merely an attempt to establish dominance and respect rather than a foul deed.

An NPC can have one blade breaker in his service for every five character levels. These creatures obey orders without question and gladly give their lives for their master's benefit. If left unattended, they do their best to protect their master but lack the initiative and intelligence to do anything that requires active planning or foresight. A blade breaker might stand over its unconscious master in a burning building, swatting away flaming timbers that fall toward him, but never thinking to pick him up and escape the inferno.

BLADE BREAKER ENCOUNTER (EL 8)

The characters come across four blade breakers that have been cornered by a group of ruffians. The bandits tried unsuccessfully to compel the creatures to serve and now plan to kill them out of anger and frustration. If the characters intervene, the creatures ally with them and try to protect them from harm.

The bandits work as scouts and hunters for a powerful criminal who, angered by the PCs' interference with his plans, eventually dispatches war parties and assassins to deal with them. The characters encounter anger and resentment from people who see that they consort with blade breakers, perhaps prompting them to find a safe, secure place where the blade breakers can dwell in peace. All the while, the attacks against them continue until they finally deal with the villain. Perhaps after the PCs find a safe haven for the breakers, the crime lord kidnaps these creatures and forces them into his service for his final showdown with the characters.

BLADE TROLL

Large Giant

Hit Dice: 6d8+48 (75 hp), dying/dead -9/-26

Initiative: +6

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 23 (-1 size, +2 Dexterity, +12 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 21

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+14

Attack: Arm blade +9 melee (1d8+6)

Full Attack: 2 arm blades +9 melee (1d8+6) and bite +4 melee (1d8+3)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/10 feet
(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/10 feet)

Special Attacks: Grappling hooks

Special Qualities: Darkvision 90 feet, embedded plates, low-light vision, regeneration 5, scent

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +4, Will +2

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 14, Con 26, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills: Climb +10, Jump +10, Spot +6, Swim +10

Feats: Elemental Resistance (fire), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Power Charge

Environment: Any subterranean

Organization: Solitary, pair, or band (3-12)

Challenge Rating: 7

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +5

This massive, grey-skinned beast resembles a typical troll except for the steel barbs and hooks that project from its long, lanky arms. Also, the creature's skin appears somewhat distended, as if it conceals solid, bulky plates of armor inside its body. In fact, blade trolls are skilled artisans who create weapons and armor that meld with their forms, leaving tell-tale signs of their artifice within their bodies.

More intelligent and cunning than normal trolls, blade trolls have learned to use their regeneration ability in a way that gives them an additional advantage. They embed hooks, blades, metal plates, and other "improvements" in their bodies, using their rapid healing ability to seal such features in place. They serve as mercenaries in the underworld, frequently allying with the Vallorians (see page 112) and other warlike folk of the world's depths.

Blade trolls have stony skin covered with warts, scars, thick calluses, and other deformities. Unlike other kinds of trolls, these creatures frequently heal in such a manner that their wounds leave behind scars, pockmarks, and other legacies. For instance, a blade troll that suffers a sword wound may easily heal the damage from the injury, but the wound leaves behind a clear indentation in the creature's chest and a thick, oblong scar. In some ways, blade trolls seem to adapt to the damage they sustain. Scholars believe this ability helps them

survive in their underground environment. A troll that frequently scrapes or bumps its head against a low cavern ceiling may slowly grow shorter and more stooped, while one that sustains arm injuries in battle might develop a thick coat of natural protection along its arms to better protect itself.

Smarter and more industrious than other trolls, blade trolls long ago learned the secrets of metalcraft and began forging weapons, armor, and other tools. Blade trolls insert the armored plates and weapons they create into their bodies, relying on their regeneration ability to grow skin, muscle, and sinew around these modifications and improvements. A troll might embed three long, barbed hooks in its palm before battle. Its body adapts and grows around these weapons, allowing the creature to utilize them just like any other part of its body. Troll warriors stud their arms and hands with blades, hooks, pincers, and bludgeons. They partially skin their own torsos, peeling back their flesh to slide metal plates and, in some cases, flat stones into their bodies. By pulling the flesh back over their wounds, they allow their regeneration ability to knit their injuries and they adapt to the newly added protection.

The process of adding weapons and armor directly to a troll's body is no easy task. With their heightened intelligence, blade trolls have a clearer sense of their bodies and abilities than their kin possess. They have learned to mold armor and weapons to suit their forms and have developed surgical methods to optimize the placement and use of their gear. Other trolls reject such implants; their bodies expel the modifications as they heal.

COMBAT

Blade trolls are arrogant and vicious, leading them to sometimes underestimate their opponents in battle. Unless a blade troll has reason to suspect its opponent is skilled in the martial or magical arts, it is likely to rush headlong into battle. Arrogance, rather than stupidity, drives this tendency. When aware of a powerful enemy's talents, blade trolls utilize ambushes and other intelligent tactics. They place a premium on magical gear that can shield them from fire and acid, and most blade trolls are smart enough to target obvious spellcasters and others who can use energy attacks.

Grappling Hooks (Ex): Blade trolls embed a variety of blades and hooks into their forearms and hands. These varied weapons allow them to catch and hold their opponents. Their hooks and spikes entangle a victim's clothing, armor, and possibly flesh. If a troll strikes an opponent with both arm blade attacks, it may initiate a grapple against her as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. With a successful grapple check, a blade troll deals 2d8+12 points of damage against an opponent that it holds within its barbed hooks.

Note that, while these weapons are forged and added to a troll's body, they count as natural weapons.

Embedded Plates (Ex): A blade troll's armor becomes part of its body as its flesh grows through and around it. This

armor grants a +7 bonus to Armor Class, but it does not confer any of the standard penalties, such as reducing the troll's speed or limiting its Dexterity bonus to AC. The troll adapts to the plates, making them as much a part of its body as its arms or legs.

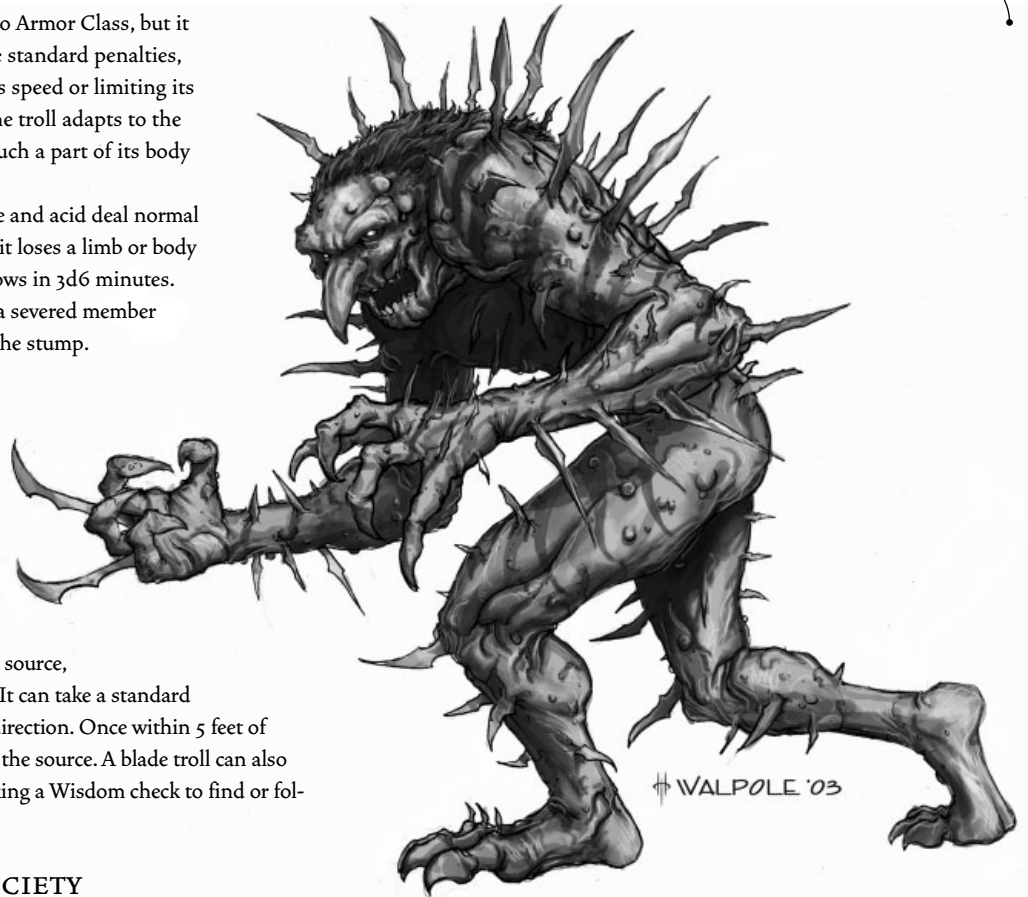
Regeneration (Ex): Fire and acid deal normal damage to a blade troll. If it loses a limb or body part, the lost portion regrows in 3d6 minutes. The creature can reattach a severed member instantly by holding it to the stump.

Scent (Ex): The blade troll can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. For upwind foes, the range increases to 60 feet; downwind, it drops to 15 feet. When detecting a scent, the blade troll doesn't determine its exact source, only its presence in range. It can take a standard action to note the scent's direction. Once within 5 feet of the source, it can pinpoint the source. A blade troll can also follow tracks by smell, making a Wisdom check to find or follow a track.

BLADE TROLL SOCIETY

Scattered in a number of small caverns throughout the underworld, blade trolls form groups known as bands. Each band takes on a specific purpose. A group of warriors forms a war band, while a small cabal of magisters creates a mage band. During the course of a troll's life, it may join a variety of bands as its interests change, though no troll claims membership in more than one band at once. A young, aggressive troll might join a war band to raid neighboring caverns or communities on the surface. As he ages, the troll might then join a mercenary band, trading his opportunity to rapidly gain experience for a safer, more lucrative job as the bodyguard of a qualleg (see page 68) or in the service of a Vallorian overlord. Blade trolls form bands specifically for the purpose of mating, with the males and females in the group working together to take care of the young. Blade troll artisans and crafters usually form bands that operate in isolated, easily defended caves and passages. These precautions are taken not to ward off marauding beasts or explorers, but to prevent blade troll war bands from seizing their goods.

Blade trolls see themselves as the perfect fusion of intellect and brute strength. They prefer to keep slaves to handle mundane tasks—usually ordinary trolls that are strong enough to handle many daunting tasks, yet are no match for a blade troll warrior. Humans and other creatures make useful workers and personal servants, and blade trolls engage in an active and aggressive slave trade. Many of their war bands profit



more from the captives they bring beneath the surface than from the treasure they gain in battle.

BLADE TROLL CHARACTERS

Unlike normal trolls, blade trolls are reasonably intelligent and capable of appreciating intricate concepts. They enter a wide variety of classes, though their violent nature pushes many toward the warrior class. These brutes form the bulk of the troll war bands and mercenary bands that wander from this race's underworld home. Many troll smiths gain levels in the expert class, while a few learn to incorporate magic into their craft. These rare blade trolls become magisters or runethanes.

BLADE TROLL BODY MODIFICATIONS

Blade trolls' ability to incorporate metal objects into their bodies opens up a variety of equipment options. The modifications below are usable only by blade trolls. They must pay the listed gold piece cost to purchase and use them.

All blade trolls can incorporate magic weapons and other enhancements into their bodies. They must purchase or create the equivalent of a magic longsword and absorb it into an arm over the course of one day. This process improves only one arm blade attack. If a troll wants to enhance both of its arms, it must create, purchase, or find two separate weapons.

A blade troll can also utilize magic armor by buying or crafting the equivalent of an enchanted suit of chain and plates (base market price 600 gp). This armor is available only from troll crafters; normal humanoid armor is unsuited for integration into a blade troll's form. Likewise, no creatures other than blade trolls can use this armor, because it consists of a set of specially crafted plates that do not link together as a normal suit of armor does.

The following modifications are mundane improvements to a blade troll's arsenal. They can be added to weapons or armor that is subsequently enchanted.

Defensive Weaponry: A skilled blade troll smith can fashion wide, thick arm blades that protect a warrior's arms from harm. Not only do these weapons scythe through the troll's opponents, they also serve as bucklers. This modification counts as a shield that confers a +2 bonus to AC. *Cost:* 100 gp.

Internal Plating: This intricately designed modification grants a troll virtual immunity to critical hits. By encasing a subject's heart, lungs, and brain in a fine weave of steel mail, a blade troll craftsman creates a second layer of protection against attacks. A blade troll with this modification gains a +8 bonus to AC when an opponent rolls to confirm a critical threat scored against it. *Cost:* 750 gp.

Lashing Chains: Some blade trolls add long, barbed chains to their arms, anchoring them on their shoulder blades and running them along their bones, until they emerge from holes crafted in their palms. This modification grants a blade troll an extra 5 feet of reach with its melee attacks. It also gains a +4 bonus to all opposed Strength checks made as part of its trip attack against an opponent. This bonus does not apply to trip attacks the blade troll defends against. *Cost:* 1,500 gp.

Sword Catcher Hooks: By adding hooks and barbs beneath its flesh, a blade troll can craft a surprise for opponents that fight with swords, axes, and similar weapons. Once per encounter as a free action, a troll with this modification can attempt to disarm an opponent using a melee weapon that deals slashing or piercing damage. The attacker snares her weapon on the hooks and barbs hidden within the troll's flesh, possibly allowing the beast to tear her weapon from her hands. After a blade troll uses this ability, the hooks and barbs dangle from its flesh and are unable to catch any more attacks. A troll cannot take this modification more than once. Repairing sword catcher hooks requires one hour of work. *Cost:* 1,200 gp.

Warding Spikes: Some blade trolls implant a variety of spikes and long, wicked barbs in their chests. These modifications are designed to prevent opponents from drawing too close to a troll. A blade troll with this modification suffers a 10-foot penalty to its base speed. Whenever an opponent moves adjacent to the troll, the troll gains a free attack against the foe using its base attack bonus (normally +4). This attack, if it hits, deals points of damage equal to the troll's Strength modifier (normally +6). This free attack is not an attack of opportuni-

ty. Instead, the troll's opponent must dodge and avoid the thick, jagged spikes that project from the monster's body.

A troll does not gain the benefit of this modification when it is flat footed, stunned, paralyzed, sleeping, or otherwise unable to take actions. *Cost:* 2,500 gp.

BLADE TROLL ENCOUNTER (EL 11)

A merchant who specializes in rare items and curios approaches the characters with a proposal. He tells them of an associate of his, a producer of high-quality weapons and armor, who needs help. After the characters agree to undergo a short ceremony of secrecy, the merchant brings them to a cave outside town where his friend, a blade troll named Braggi, is hiding. Braggi is a skilled smith who long ago underwent a rare blade troll ceremony whereby he vowed to give up all acts of violence in return for a supernatural insight into smithing. A band of four blade troll marauders attacked his subterranean workshop, driving him away and seizing his goods.

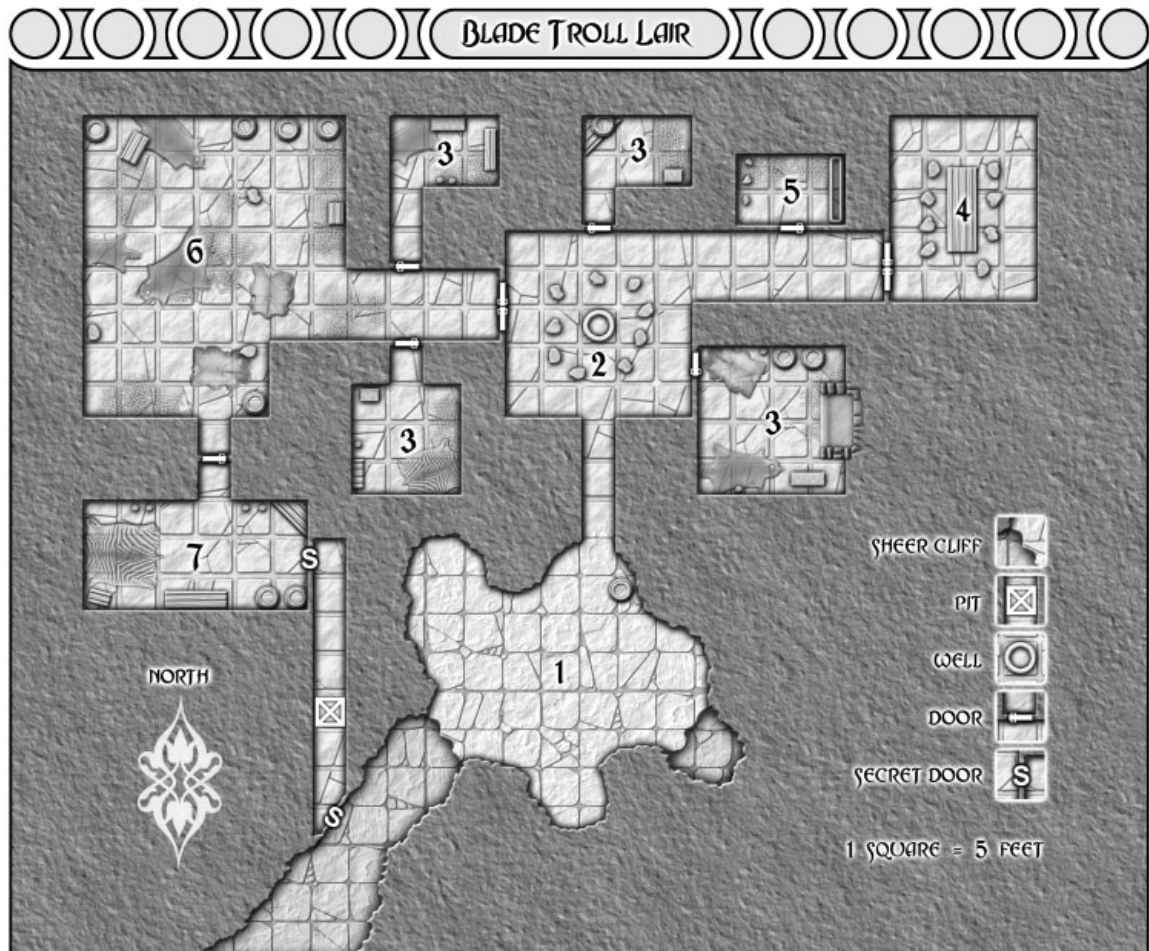
Braggi cannot commit violent acts himself, but if the characters agree to liberate his workshop, he can reward them well. If the characters take him up on his offer, Braggi leads them through the underworld to his workshop and forge. After the characters deal with the marauders, he can craft magic weapons and armor for them as a reward for avenging his loss.

BLADE TROLL LAIR

Blade troll bands tend to settle down in isolated spots, using their distance from well-traveled areas to shield them from intruders. War bands are largely nomadic, but they also keep lairs to store their pillaged treasure and as places to train and rest between incursions. The following description presents a typical blade troll lair and includes notes on how it may be used differently depending on the kind of band using it.

1. Entry Chamber: Most blade troll lairs feature a natural barrier, or a constructed obstacle that appears natural, to keep out wild animals and lone wanderers. In this case, the trolls discovered a passage that ends at a 10-foot-tall rock wall separating the entry passage from the rest of the lair. Such a site makes for an excellent lair, because the trolls can reach over the wall to attack intruders while remaining safe from counterattacks. In addition, any invaders would have to waste precious moments scaling the wall before invading the lair beyond. This area is kept bare except for ranged weapons and ammunition. Blade troll crafters or experienced war bands and mercenaries might keep ballistae, burning oil, and other weapons in the entry chamber, to ensure their readiness in case of attack. A pit at one end of this area serves as waste storage. The trolls occasionally burn their refuse to reduce the space it takes up.

2. Central Chamber: This area serves as a staging point or meeting ground. Large stone stools are placed surrounding a well; the older trolls may spend their free time here gossiping or making informal plans for new projects, such as raids on nearby areas (for war bands) or new weaponry (for



bands of smiths). Younger trolls may scamper here underfoot, since this space also serves as the primary social venue during most days. In the event of an attack, the trolls make their stand here, should the outer chamber fall.

3. Work Chambers/Quarters: These rooms serve as private chambers for trolls important or powerful enough to demand personal lodgings. They hold the tools, storage, bedding, and other personal possessions that the important or powerful trolls, their mates, and their offspring may have accumulated. These chambers tend to be filthy, because the trolls eat their meals within their private rooms and only rarely clean up after themselves. Trolls that focus on metalworking and smithing usually build personal forges in their chambers, working in private to protect the secrets of their art.

4. Meeting Chamber: This large, simple chamber serves as a meeting hall in times of trouble or when the community faces an important decision. The trolls that have the prestige and power necessary to claim a voice in the community meet here and argue over plans, such as potential trade partners to court or future targets for raids. When not in use for official business, it remains empty.

5. Slave Pens: Humans and other captives are kept here when they are not at work under the strict supervision of the

slave master. This room is rarely, if ever, cleaned. Its furnishings consist of moldy straw, a few battered stools, and a long, low trough carved into the floor that holds food and water.

6. Common Chamber: The trolls that lack the prestige to have their own chambers, those too young or too old to claim an important place in the lair, and the troll children live here in a single large chamber. Bedding is scattered across the floor. Small fire pits dot the room; most of the cooking for the entire population of the lair happens here. This place is cramped even at the best of times, with trolls squeezing together in its confines. Most of the important daily business of the lair takes place here. Even the powerful and influential trolls spend time in this chamber, the better to establish and maintain their dominant position in the social order.

7. Chieftain's Room: The troll chieftain dwells here with his mates and their children. This room is large and richly appointed by troll standards, with any treasures and other baubles that have caught the chief's eye kept here. The secret passage to the east serves as an escape route, and the trolls may also use it to outflank invaders. The doorways into the passage consist of large boulders cleverly placed so as to mask the passage behind them. Uncovering the doors requires a Search check (DC 20).

BOG SALAMANDER

Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 14d10+70 (147 hp), dying/dead -6/-20

Initiative: +0

Speed: 20 feet, swim 40 feet

AC: 19 (-1 size, +10 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 19

Base Attack/Grapple: +14/+25

Attack: Bite +20 melee (2d8+7)

Full Attack: Bite +20 melee (2d8+7) and 4 claws +15 melee (1d8+3)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/10 feet

(Face/Reach: 10 feet by 10 feet/10 feet)

Special Attacks: Force wave, murky vortex

Special Qualities: Bog lurker, darkvision 60 feet, low-light vision

Saves: Fort +14, Ref +9, Will +6

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 11, Con 20, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 6

Skills: Listen +12, Sneak +7

Feats: Cleave, Fast Healer, Improved Cleave, Power Attack, Stomp, Trample

Environment: Warm swamps

Organization: Solitary, pair, or clutch (3-5)

Challenge Rating: 10

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 15-20 HD (Large); 21-30 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: +6

Bog salamanders lurk in isolated swamps and fens. Strong and vicious, they are compact enough to hide in shallow water. When prey wanders by, they rear up from the murk to rip and tear the victim with their claws and fangs. They enjoy a magical bond with their swampy environment, allowing them to turn the terrain against their victims.

The black, scaled bog salamander resembles an eight-legged lizard with a large, fanged maw. Over 10 feet long, its powerful body barely reaches 5 feet off the ground. Even in the shallows, a bog salamander can slip beneath the water and hide, leaving only its eyes and nostrils above the surface.

These creatures' bodies are imbued with magical energy that forges a bond with the water and mud around them, allowing them to exercise a crude level of control over their environment. When a clutch of bog salamanders settles in a swampy area, the land slowly becomes wilder and more dangerous. Quicksand becomes more common, the fens' waters expand outward from their old borders, and the trees and undergrowth seem to grow thicker and more menacing.

The salamanders' magical attunement to plant life not only draws on the swamp's nature, but it also feeds back into the terrain and causes the land to flourish. While humans and giants

may consider a wild, overgrown swamp to be dangerous, many greenbonds would disagree with that assessment. They point to the bog salamanders as important children of the Green, predators that help maintain the balance between the wilds and the encroaching forces of civilization. Greenbonds who dwell within swamps rely on these creatures as guardians and allies. The spells of greenbonds allow them to forge relationships with these normally predatory, voracious beasts.

COMBAT

Salamanders prefer to remain in hiding for as long as possible. While vicious, they are also cautious and patient. A salamander would prefer to let a dozen potential targets wander just out of reach of its jaws before rising up to overwhelm that unlucky thirteenth traveler who stumbles into its hiding spot.

Salamanders usually pick shallow pools of water near pathways or similar areas that see frequent traffic. They remain below the surface until an obviously vulnerable opponent moves past them. If a salamander spots a wounded or apparently weak foe, it remains in hiding but uses its murky vortex ability to drag its meal to it.

Force Wave (Su): A bog salamander's affinity for its watery environment allows it to create sudden, powerful surges of water that batter its foes. As a standard action, a salamander can project a 60-foot cone of water in the form of a crashing wave. All creatures in this area must make Reflex saves (DC 17) or take 4d6 points of damage and be knocked prone. On a successful save, a creature takes half damage and remains on its feet. The save DC is Strength based. A salamander can only use this ability in water that is at least 2 feet deep.

Murky Vortex (Su): A bog salamander can form a powerful vortex around its body that drags opponents toward it. As a free action, a salamander causes a strong flow of water that forces any opponent within 60 feet who fails a Strength check (DC 15) to move 10 feet closer to it each round. A creature makes this check immediately after taking its actions for the round. This ability only operates in areas where the water is deep enough to reach mid-thigh on a potential victim. For example, a swampy area might be deep enough for a salamander's vortex to drag a human toward it, but too shallow for a giant to feel the effect of the vortex.

Creatures already adjacent to a salamander using this ability fall prone if they fail their Strength checks. A creature that becomes prone in shallow water may begin to drown.

Bog Lurker (Ex): Despite their great size, bog salamanders are adept at finding cover in swampy areas. A salamander can almost completely submerge in water as shallow as 4 feet. In such areas, it gains a +15 competence bonus on all Sneak checks to remain hidden from view.



BOG SALAMANDER ENCOUNTER (EL 10)

While traveling through a swamp, the characters come across obvious signs of bog salamander activity. They uncover the shredded remnants of armor and clothing along with discarded weapons, traveling gear, and camping supplies. Soon, they come across a mojh greenbond tending to a badly wounded bog salamander. The salamander has obviously attacked and killed many of the innocent travelers whose remains the PCs uncovered, but if they attack to halt the creature's depredations, the greenbond fights to defend it.

The mojh considers the beast an important part of the swamp. If the PCs attack, the greenbond holds them off for as long as possible before fleeing with the aid of spells. Enraged by the party's temerity, the mojh encourages the other salamanders of the swamp to lair closer to pathways. On the other hand, if the characters aid the mojh, this greenbond proves to be a valued ally. By winning its trust and putting the mojh in their debt, they can convince it to use its abilities to encourage the surviving salamanders to lair deeper in the swamp, far from paths used by travelers.

BONE VIPER

Small Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 3d10+3 (19 hp), dying/dead -2/-13

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 16 (+1 size, +2 Dexterity, +2 natural, +1 dodge), touch 14, flat-footed 13

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/-1

Attack: Bite +3 melee (1d6 plus poison)

Full Attack: Bite +3 melee (1d6 plus poison)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Eyes of the serpent, poison

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, low-light vision, spawn egg bearer

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 14

Skills: Hide +9, Wilderness Survival +4

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Defensive, Skill Focus (Sneak)

Environment: Warm plains and forests

Organization: Solitary, pair, or nest (4-16)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 4-6 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: +3

Nearly 3 feet long, this serpent has bright emerald scales and black eyes that gleam with a feral intelligence. Nestled beneath its forked tongue is a sharp, hollow, bony stinger that it uses to seize control of its victim's nervous system, allowing it to roost within its prey's body and incubate its spawn.

Bone vipers have an affinity for magic, particularly spells that control other creatures. A bone viper can drill its stinger into the brain of a captured or recently slain victim, turning it into a mindless slave. Bone vipers dwell within the throats of these captives and lay their eggs within their viscera. Using its control over the victim's nervous system, a bone viper can direct its slave to perform tasks such as gathering food or erecting a crude shelter. The viper-infested victim can even pass itself off as a living, free-willed individual, though usually only for a short time. After 2d4 weeks, the viper's eggs hatch. The newborn snakes devour the body and burst forth in search of more food, leading many bone vipers to gather stockpiles of food as their eggs draw near to hatching.

Bone vipers rarely target humanoids with their attacks, since such creatures are much more dangerous prey than wild animals. In dangerous, monster-infested regions, bone vipers tend to be more aggressive toward travelers. In those situations, the relative safety of a humanoid host compensates for the danger involved in claiming one.

While bone vipers have low Intelligence scores, they can speak Common in rasping, lisping tones. They can be reasoned with, and sometimes they may agree to leave a victim's

body if they are promised a different suitable creature to nest within. Unscrupulous folk sometimes keep these creatures as pets and guardians. They capture rivals and opponents, allow the viper to nest within them, and then work with the snake to meet their goals.

COMBAT

Bone vipers typically attack from ambush, using their small size to sneak up on a lone target before unleashing their gaze attack. They are clever enough to approach small groups or lone travelers, often striking at night to claim a guard while his companions sleep. After claiming a victim, the serpent usually directs its host to gather food and supplies before fleeing from contact with its former companions. While the serpent can hide its nature for a short time, its low intelligence and poor grasp of social norms eventually lead to its exposure.

Eyes of the Serpent (Su): Once per round as a free action, a bone viper can use a gaze attack to lull an opponent into a trancelike state. The victim of this attack must make a Will save (DC 12) or be stunned for 1d4 rounds. This is a mind-affecting effect. If a magical effect or a mirror is used to reflect the viper's gaze back at it, it must succeed on a save to resist its own attack. The save DC is Charisma based.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude save DC 13, initial damage paralysis for 1d4 minutes, secondary damage paralysis for 1d6 hours

Spawn Egg Bearer (Ex): A bone viper can crawl into a paralyzed victim if it can spend 10 undisturbed minutes with it. At the end of this period, the victim receives the bone viper egg bearer template (see below).

BONE VIPER EGG BEARER TEMPLATE

A creature that succumbs to a bone viper's attacks becomes the viper's puppet, an unwilling participant in its natural life cycle.

CREATING AN EGG BEARER

"Bone viper egg bearer" is an acquired template that one can add to any animal, giant, humanoid, or magical beast of Medium size or larger. The egg bearer uses the base creature's statistics except as noted below. A recently dead creature can also gain this template if the viper burrows into it within five minutes of the creature's death.

Speed: The bone viper has an imperfect control over its victim's motor skills, giving it a slightly jerky motion as it moves. Reduce the speed for all the creature's movement modes by 5 feet.

Special Attacks and Qualities: A bone viper can use its victim's natural abilities and many of its magical ones. The egg bearer uses its extraordinary (Ex) and supernatural (Su) abilities, but it loses all spell-like (Sp) abilities. In addition, it gains the following abilities.

Eyes of the Serpent (Su): The viper's connection with its host allows it to channel its magical ability through the



bearer's eyes. This ability works exactly as the viper's eyes of the serpent special attack.

Viper Carrier (Ex): All egg bearers have an adult bone viper lodged within them. This viper cannot be the target of attacks or spells unless the characters can somehow see through the bearer's body. Against area attacks and similar spells that could damage both the bearer and the viper inside it, the snake gains damage reduction 10/- due to the protective layers of flesh and bone around it. The viper can escape from its carrier as a standard action. It disengages its bony stinger from the carrier's brain and drops to its feet. The viper may choose to hide within a defeated egg bearer's body, allowing it to remain concealed unless its opponents cut open the creature's corpse.

Mind-affecting effects are the viper's one weakness when it is inside its carrier. Any such spells cast on the carrier affect the viper directly, due to the close mental connection it forges with its victim.

Viper Spawn (Ex): The viper's young burst from the bearer's torso with a sudden, sharp force. If the eggs within a bearer hatch during an encounter, all creatures within 30 feet of the host must make Reflex saves (DC 14) or take 1 point of damage per Hit Die of the host creature. A successful save cuts this damage in half. The newborn vipers are too small and weak to have any effect on combat, though the full-grown viper emerges from the bearer to attack as normal. The egg bearer must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) to survive this experience. The bearer becomes dying if it successfully saves; on a failed save, it dies.

Saves: The egg bearer uses its own Reflex and Fortitude save bonuses as normal, but it uses the viper's Will save bonus. The creature suffers most attacks as normal except for mind-affecting ones. Those attacks (as explained above) directly affect the bone viper.

Abilities: Since the viper has imperfect control over its victim's physical body, the egg bearer suffers a -2 penalty to Strength and a -4 penalty to Dexterity. The viper's Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores replace the victim's scores in those abilities.

Skills and Feats: Because the viper lacks its victim's knowledge, it cannot access its victim's learned abilities. The egg bearer loses the benefit of all its skills and feats, though the viper can still use its own skills and feats. The viper does not learn its victim's languages and gains no knowledge of its memories.

Challenge Rating: As the base creature's.

Level Adjustment: As the base creature's.

CURING AN EGG BEARER

Once a bone viper has claimed a victim, the unfortunate creature can survive for 2d4 weeks until the viper's eggs hatch. A variety of spells and treatments can remove the viper before that time.

A Heal check (DC 25) removes the viper and purges the eggs, though the viper is immediately free to attack. This procedure requires one hour of work, and the patient must be tied down or otherwise incapacitated.

Several spells can cure the victim. Any mind-affecting effect that compels, commands, or charms the viper can be used to force it out of the victim's body. *Remove disease* destroys the eggs and forces the viper to abandon its victim immediately. *Attack from within* and other spells that cause internal damage injure the viper and its host. Both must save against the spell as normal. Such spells automatically destroy any eggs within the victim.

If a victim was recently dead when a viper inhabited it, there is a chance that the victim may survive. The viper can inject its egg bearer with a powerful healing draught that mends mortal injuries and keeps the victim's brain in a deep coma. For purposes of spells used to revive the fallen, start counting time when the viper leaves the body to determine how long the victim has been dead.

BONE VIPER ENCOUNTER (EL 2)

While exploring some ancient ruins, the characters come across an elderly hermit who lurches and stumbles as he walks. The old man has long studied the ruins' secrets and the mysteries of the dungeons beneath them. Unfortunately for him, a bone viper crept up on him while he slept. If the PCs can lure the viper out of the hermit's body, they can learn several important legends of this place. The viper might evacuate the hermit if presented with a new, suitable host or if the PCs use magic to compel it.

BRIAR BEAST

Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 8d10+40 (84 hp), dying/dead -5/-19

Initiative: +0

Speed: 40 feet

AC: 23 (-1 size, +14 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 23

Base Attack/Grapple: +8/+18

Attack: Claw +13 melee (1d6+6) or briar whip +8 melee (1d8+6)

Full Attack: 2 claws +13 melee (1d6+6) and gore +11 melee (1d8+3), or 2 briar whips +8 melee (1d8+6)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/10 feet or 15 feet (briar whips)
(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/10 feet or 15 feet)

Special Attacks: Control briars

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, briars, immunities

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +5

Abilities: Str 23, Dex 11, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 9

Skills: Knowledge (nature) +4, Listen +4, Spot +3

Feats: Light Sleeper, Multiattack*, Opportunistic Attack†, Stunning Blow

Environment: Temperate forest or hills

Organization: Solitary or pair

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 9–12 HD (Large); 13–16 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: +3

*Denotes a feat from the MM.

A huge beast covered in briar tangles, this monstrosity roams the wilderness, capturing prey by mentally controlling the strands of briars wrapped around it. It can use them to grab foes, whip them, or spray them with barbs. It can even control briars found in patches nearby, causing them to grasp at foes or forming them into difficult barriers.

The briar beast is a predator, but normally it only goes after prey that does not fight back. Nevertheless, it can prove a threat to humanoids, because it defends its territory against all other perceived competition. It is an obstinate and easily irritated beast.

The briar beast usually roams alone, but occasionally two siblings (the beasts are always born in litters of two) or a mated pair hunt together. Unless part of such a pairing, briar beasts hate others of their kind more than anything.

Anytime a beast comes upon a briar patch, it renews the briar tangles that wrap around it. It often sleeps within briar patches but rarely keeps a permanent lair, unless it is caring for newborn young. For their first year, the parents watch over these young beasts closely.

Known for its extremely durable armored hide, the briar beast has a muscular physique. It normally walks on all

fours, with its back hunched. It can, for short periods, walk on only its rear legs, which—unlike the massive weapons on its front legs—bear only small claws. Its head looks a little like that of a boar, with two yellowish tusks on each side of its wide snout. Its hide is dark brown with tufts of long, wiry black hair. The briars covering the creature are light brown and dark green.

COMBAT

When hunting, a briar beast aggressively pursues its quarry by running it down and grasping with briars (or its claws). Against dangerous foes, it fights defensively, retracting into a tight mass of muscle, claws, and briars.

Briars (Ex): This beast is covered in barbs. Any creature that attempts to grapple it, becomes grappled by it, or strikes it with natural weapons (including unarmed strikes) suffers 1d3 points of damage per round from the barbs.

Control Briars (Su): The briar beast can psionically control all briars within 50 feet at will, making them move as if using *telekinesis*. This ability allows it to produce a number of effects, each requiring a standard action (except for wall of thorns, which requires a full round).

Whip: The simplest thing the briar beast can do is whip someone with a strand of briars. It can strike anyone within 15 feet of itself with a strand from its own body. It can also use a separate briar strand within 50 feet of it to attack a target within 15 feet of the briar. (A briar whip not wrapped around the beast strikes with an attack bonus of +8, inflicting 1d8 points of damage.) The briar beast can use one briar whip attack as a standard action or two as a full attack action.

Grapple: A creature struck by a briar whip is subject to an immediate grapple attack if the beast wishes it. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity. A briar attached to the beast may use the beast's size and grapple bonus. Otherwise, the briar's grapple bonus is +8, and it is treated as a Medium creature. An individual strand has a hardness of 2 and 5 hit points.

Spray Barbs: The briars wrapped around the beast flail about, launching their barbs in all directions. Everyone within 30 feet suffers 3d6 points of damage. A Reflex saving throw (DC 14) decreases the damage by half. The beast can spray barbs only from its own encircling briars. The saving throw DC is Dexterity based.

Wall of Thorns: This effect, which takes a full-round action to create, requires a particularly thick, briar-filled area beyond those briars attached to the beast itself. The beast creates an effect as described in the *wall of thorns* spell, as if cast by a 10th-level caster. The briar beast can use this ability once per day.



Entangle: This effect requires a thick, briar-filled area beyond those briars attached to the beast itself. Briars wrap, twist, and entwine about creatures within or entering an area 30 feet wide, holding them fast and causing them to become entangled unless they succeed at a Reflex saving throw (DC 13).

An entangled creature moves at half speed, cannot run or charge, and suffers a -2 penalty on attack rolls and a -4 penalty to its effective Dexterity score. An entangled character attempting to cast a spell must make a Concentration check (DC $15 + \text{spell level}$) or lose the spell. The creature can break free and move at half its normal speed by using a full-round action to make a Strength check (DC 20) or Escape Artist check (DC 20). A creature that succeeds at its Reflex save is not entangled but can still move at only half speed through the area. On the briar beast's turn each round, as a standard action, the beast can once again attempt to entangle all creatures in the area that have avoided or escaped entanglement. Otherwise, the briars do not grasp again at free creatures. Those entangled are held for $1d6+1$ rounds. The saving throw DC is Charisma based.

Immunities (Su): The briar beast cannot be harmed by briars, plant thorns, or similar damaging objects. This is true even of the physical attacks made by intelligent plants. Likewise, it remains immune to effects that cause plants to grasp or grab (like *bind with plants*).

BRIAR BEAST ENCOUNTER (EL 6)

Making their way through the wilderness, the PCs encounter a man who claims to have had a vision. He says he was once an evil financier, cheating widows out of their savings and taking the land from innocent farmers who had fallen on hard times. To redeem himself, the vision showed him, he must come into the wilderness and find a creature that would lash his sins away. As they speak, an angry briar beast crashes out of a nearby copse of trees. The man exclaims that the briar beast is the creature he saw in his vision. The PCs must decide what to do when the financier charges headlong toward the beast—and certain doom. Even if they let him go (a callous act, to be sure, considering the man seems sincerely repentant), after the briar beast has made short work of him, it comes after them as well.

CHLORTHEK

Medium Aberration

Hit Dice: 4d8+16 (34 hp), dying/dead -5/-19

Initiative: +4

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 14 (+4 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+10

Attack: Slam +6 melee (1d6+3 plus 1d8 acid)

Full Attack: Slam +6 melee (1d6+3 plus 1d8 acid)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Acidic touch, burst of rage

Special Qualities: Immunity to acid, low-light vision, regeneration 2

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +8

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 7

Skills: Climb +6, Listen +6

Feats: Improved Grapple^B, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Resistance to Magic

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary, pair, or mob (3–12)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class or 5–8 HD (Medium), 9–18 HD (Large), 19–30 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: +1

These miserable abominations resemble short humanoids with patches of melted, baggy skin hanging from their bodies. The dramojh created these twisted humanoids by subjecting captives to a horrific combination of acid baths, preserving salts, and magical rituals. Chlortheks are coated in acid, making their slightest touch deadly. This acid burns and warps their skin, but their regeneration ability allows them to heal these injuries before they become life-threatening. In battle, they draw strength from their state of endless pain.

Were chlortheks any less violent, they would perhaps find succor and pity from giants and men. Unfortunately, the dramojh cursed them to find relief only when they channel their agony into destructive acts. To a chlorthek, each blow it lands on its enemy drains away the pain it feels. These creatures leave a wide swath of devastation in their path, as they topple buildings, fell trees, and seek to slay or destroy anything they come across.

While chlortheks are potent enemies, their overly aggressive actions make it difficult for them to survive for long. Invariably, they push the folk of the areas they despoil to hunt them down. Years ago large bands of chlorthek marauders ravaged the countryside, but over time their numbers have dwindled. They persist in a few small, isolated groups. While these groups pose a lesser threat than in earlier times, they are still deadly enemies. Their depredations

may be less extensive, but their urge to slay and pillage remains intact.

Most chlortheks speak Common, though they rarely communicate even with their own kind. Most of the time, their speech is limited to low, agonized moans and shrieks of pain.

COMBAT

Chlortheks employ simple, direct tactics against their enemies. They prefer to charge forward in large numbers. They rarely use weapons and armor, since their acidic nature weakens or destroys such gear. Instead, they grapple opponents and allow their strength and acidic secretions to carry the day.

Chlortheks gain Improved Grapple as a bonus feat. Their squat, strong bodies and melted, viscous flesh make them adept at closing with an opponent and grabbing him in a powerful hold.

Chlortheks almost always fight to the death. If battle brings them a reprieve from their miserable condition, then the empty oblivion of death is the final reward they can hope to reap.

Acidic Touch (Ex): Due to the acidic film that covers their bodies, chlortheks smear caustic fluid on their opponents with a successful attack. They deal 1d8 points of acid damage with each attack. In addition, they automatically deal 1d8 points of acid damage each round they successfully initiate or maintain a grapple against an opponent.

Burst of Rage (Ex): The chlortheks' ceaseless pain drives them to seek release in battle and destruction, granting them temporary reprieve from their agony. In combat, this ability to channel their emotions allows them to fight on despite horrid injuries. When a chlorthek is reduced to fewer than 0 hit points, it gains a +2 bonus to Strength and continues to fight until it is slain. It does not fall unconscious while dying, though it suffers the other drawbacks as normal.

Regeneration (Ex): The chlortheks' ability to heal wounds swiftly is the only thing that prevents them from succumbing to their state of endless pain. They do not regenerate fire or electricity damage.

CHLORTHEK SOCIETY

Some sages believe that the curse laid upon the chlortheks can somehow be broken and these poor creatures returned to their true forms. While many warriors see such talk as evidence of a soft heart and cloudy vision, those who believe the chlortheks can be saved point to their crude culture as proof of their worthiness. When chlortheks gather in small numbers away from civilization, they tend to erect crude settlements that bear faint echoes of the architecture and governments used by humans, giants, and other creatures. Those who study chlortheks call this tendency evidence that these beasts retain some distant memory of their former states. Other, more militant observers believe that the dramojh simply preserved memories and impulses that could

prove useful for their slaves. No one has yet dared to venture into a chlorthek settlement to learn the truth, nor has any evidence of how to break this supposed curse come to light.

THE CHLORTHEK CURSE

The curse that afflicts all chlortheks is a legacy of the hated dramojh. In the research that led to the genesis of these creatures, the dramojh learned that the easiest way to produce willing, violent servitors was to horribly warp intelligent creatures' personalities and forms. The traumatic alteration produced sufficiently vicious servants that the dramojh could easily set against their foes without fear of revolt. Too often in the past, the dramojh had found their experiments too intelligent to accept servitude willingly.

All chlortheks suffer from a magical curse that places them in their current state. This condition extends to their descendants, though two chlortheks can have children only if they were originally from the same or compatible species. To prevent the easy defeat of their minions (the dramojh feared that a single powerful spellcaster could undo their work), they placed a specific, customized method of shattering the curse in the genetic makeup of each creature they altered. Breaking the curse frees an individual chlorthek, his ancestors, and his children and other descendants.

Unfortunately for the chlortheks as a race, the dramojh created a multitude of specific strains of this curse. One chlorthek bloodline may be cured by bathing one of its members in water anointed by a greenbond and collected at the peak of the world's tallest mountain. Other chlortheks may need to journey to the deepest point in the underworld and breathe the vapors of a specific volcanic rift. Of course, dragging a chlorthek along on this sort of quest can prove difficult, but the effort promises to remove a deadly menace permanently from the world. Furthermore, freed individuals retain their own memories plus recollections of their ancestors' lives. Forgotten lore, important knowledge of the dramojh era, and other secrets may linger on within the mind of a seemingly mad, vicious monster.

CHLORTHEK CHARACTERS

The strongest and toughest chlortheks become warmains, tempering their destructive urges with the intelligence and cunning needed to become highly trained combatants. Otherwise, some specimens gain levels in the warrior class. Chlortheks lack the intelligence and clarity of mind to master spellcasting or any complex talents, because their continual state of pain breaks their concentration and leaves them unable to perform any purely mental endeavor.

CHLORTHEK ENCOUNTER (EL 7)

While staying in town, the characters hear news of a small group of chlortheks lurking in a nearby forest. If they investi-



gate, they learn that a merchant and his bodyguards saw the monsters and fled before they could suffer an attack. Within a short time, the story spirals out of control. Now, rumors run rampant of a large band of these monsters bearing down on the town, while others speak of a mad, giant greenbond who has rallied the creatures under his leadership.

In truth, the greenbond is seeking to unlock the curse that affects the chlortheks. The town's leaders, fearful that the giant may accidentally unleash the monsters and worried that her efforts could drive away trade, launched a subtle propaganda campaign to turn popular sentiment against her. The PCs might find themselves unwittingly recruited by fearful townsfolk to oppose a potentially beneficial act.

CRESTED SERPENT

Gargantuan Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 20d10+200 (310 hp), dying/dead -11/-30

Initiative: +1

Speed: 20 feet

AC: 30 (-4 size, +1 Dexterity, +23 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 29

Base Attack/Grapple: +20/+43

Attack: Bite +28 melee (4d8+13)

Full Attack: Bite +28 melee (4d8+13) and 2 claws +25 melee (1d10+5)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/10 feet

(Face/Reach: 10 feet by 10 feet/10 feet)

Special Attacks: Coiled charge

Special Qualities: DR 10/adamantine (or 20/+3), low-light vision, psychic bond, SR 30

Saves: Fort +22, Ref +13, Will +11

Abilities: Str 32, Dex 13, Con 30, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 13

Skills: Listen +11, Spot +11, Wilderness Survival +7

Feats: Cleave, Defensive Move, Mobility, Multiattack*, Power Attack, Power Charge, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Specialization (bite)

Environment: Any temperate or warm

Organization: Solitary or pair

Challenge Rating: 15

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 21-30 HD (Gargantuan); 31-50 HD (Colossal)

Level Adjustment: +5

* Denotes a feat from the MM.

This four-legged, serpentine beast has a long, beaked mouth and a towering, jagged spur that runs from the base of its neck to the crown of its tail. Its thick blue scales glitter in the sun. A crested serpent attacks its prey by crushing it beneath an overwhelming charge. These creatures attack humanoids only when their young are threatened or when mating season causes them to become temperamental and aggressive.

Crested serpents usually keep to isolated forest areas, but inevitably they overhunt their home territory and must range farther afield to track down suitable prey. Their strength and ferocity in battle lead most travelers to avoid areas where they are rumored to hunt. Crushed trees, the shattered bones of prey, and other such signs are the best indicators of their presence. Wherever one of these beasts settles down, it quickly establishes itself as the mightiest predator in the region.

Despite their reputation as terrible monsters, crested serpents only rarely hunt humanoid creatures. Usually they prefer to avoid such prey, since armored warriors and skilled mages are much more difficult to overcome than herd beasts. During their mating season, they become exceptionally aggressive and temperamental. They lash out at any perceived

invasion of their hunting grounds and may attempt to claim additional territory to help impress potential mates. If a crested serpent lairs near civilized lands, it may attack border towns, ambush travelers and caravans, and wreck farmlands. These beasts mate only once each decade, but in some cases that delay between rampages merely provides settlers enough time to repair the damage dealt by the previous attack.

Crested serpents pose a vexing problem to settlers and others who dwell near them. Attacking these creatures in their lairs might prevent their depredations, but crested serpents are daunting foes. A failed attack might prompt one to become more aggressive than normal. Magical solutions offer the best hope, and many greenbonds use their spells to lead crested serpents to deserted regions or other areas where they can exist in peace.

The only thing more aggressive than a crested serpent seeking to improve its status during mating season is one whose young are threatened. A serpent protecting its offspring flies into a rage at the slightest hint of interlopers and works tirelessly to defeat would-be kidnappers and scavengers. Crested serpent hide is a valued material for forging weapons and armor. Since adult specimens are such dangerous opponents, some hunters try to corner and kill young serpents while the parents are away hunting. Unfortunately for such opportunists, crested serpents have a strong emotional and psychic bond with their young. Many outposts and border settlements have been reduced to rubble by a rampaging crested serpent in search of its young or their remains.

COMBAT

In battle, a crested serpent folds its body over so that its beak latches onto a bony spur at its tail. It then rolls through its enemies, slicing them with its crest before unlocking its jaws to attack. If possible, it makes repeated passes with its coiled charge attack, sweeping in to strike before slipping away from an enemy's grasp.

Serpents usually employ direct, simple tactics. They continually roll through an area, hammering their opponents with their spines. Serpents rarely attack with their claws and bite unless cornered.

Coiled Charge (Ex): This fearsome attack is similar to a trample. A crested serpent throws itself at its enemies, crushing them with its tremendous bulk and gashing them with its sharp, bony plate. The serpent may use a full-round action to take its normal charge movement. It gains the benefits of any feats that modify its charge attack or distance as normal, though it can move through both enemies and allies that are Huge or smaller. Any creature's space that the serpent completely covers during the course of its movement is affected by the coiled charge attack. This attack deals 4d6+20 points of slashing and bludgeoning damage. A Reflex save (DC 27) cuts this damage in half.

Creatures affected by this attack can choose to suffer a -4 penalty to their Reflex saves in order to make attacks of opportunity against the serpent. A target can never take damage from this ability more than once from the same serpent in a single round, even if the serpent moves back and forth over the target.

Psychic Bond (Su): Crested serpents have a natural psychic bond with their young. Some theorists believe that this affinity forms due to the unique properties of the serpents' hides. In any case, a crested serpent can detect the location or the remains of its young (if they have died) as long as the young are within 100 miles of its current position.

ARMOR AND WEAPONS

A crested serpent's thick blue hide serves as an excellent material for weapons and armor. Though the hide is difficult to harvest (because doing so involves slaying the serpent), the price offered on the open market for serpent hide more than justifies the risk.

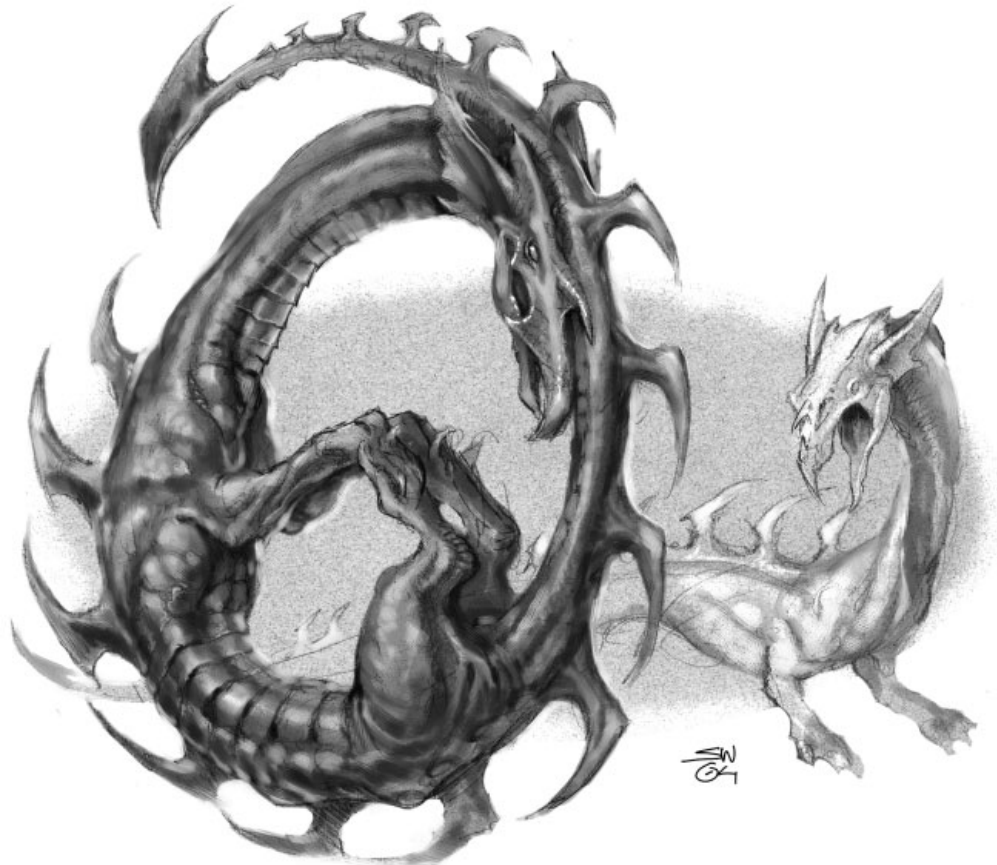
Serpent hide offers a variety of benefits when formed into armor and weapons. It has 8 hit points per inch of thickness and hardness 8. In addition, serpent armor is lighter and easier to wear than mundane armor of the same type. It increases the maximum Dexterity modifier to AC by $+2$, reduces the armor check penalty by 2, and is half the normal weight. Serpent armor counts as masterwork armor due to the skill required to forge it, though it gains the bonuses given above rather than the standard benefits of masterwork quality. A suit of serpent armor costs an additional 4,000 gp.

Weapons crafted from crested serpent hide are surprisingly effective. The hide holds an edge when properly treated. A weapon crafted from serpent hide costs an additional 50 gp and weighs half as much as a normal weapon.

CRESTED SERPENT ENCOUNTER (EL 10)

Reports filter into town of a rampaging crested serpent following a straight path toward the town where the characters are staying. A 10th-level magister, eager to acquire crested serpent hide for a powerful item he seeks to forge, uncovered a serpent's nest. He used his spells to approach it in secret, and cast *teleport* to escape with several of the serpent's eggs. The enraged beast has tracked him to the town. The characters must find the magister's workshop, reclaim the eggs, and return them to the serpent or move them to an unpopulated area before the monster descends upon the town. While the characters track the magister, the townsfolk descend into chaos as many people flee to the relative safety of the countryside and looters take advantage of the situation to rob and pillage as they wish.

The magister could be a well-respected member of the community. He deals in rare and powerful magic items and has used his wealth and charming manner to win support from many of the local elders. Even if the characters uncover his plans, they must convince others of the threat he has inadvertently brought upon the town. For his part, the magister is confident that the town's defenders can destroy the monster. He is too blinded by his greed to see the impending disaster he has set into motion.



DARVAL

Huge Aberration

Hit Dice: 16d8+96 (168 hp), dying/dead -7/-22

Initiative: +0

Speed: 40 feet

AC: 20 (-2 size, +12 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 20

Base Attack/Grapple: +12/+26

Attack: Bite +18 melee (2d6+6)

Full Attack: Bite +18 melee (2d6+6), slam +16/+11 melee (1d8+1 plus poison)

Space/Reach: 15 feet/15 feet

(Face/Reach: 10 feet by 10 feet/15 feet)

Special Attacks: Attraction, improved grab, swallow whole, poison

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, camouflage

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +10, Will +13

Abilities: Str 23, Dex 11, Con 22, Int 5, Wis 16, Cha 15

Skills: Climb +18, Sneak +15, Spot +13

Feats: Cleave, Fast Healer, First Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack*, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Sneak)

Environment: Underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 14

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 17–32 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: —

*Denotes a feat from the MM.

A terrible subterranean predator, the darval has earned the name “the living trap.” A few refer to it as “the joyous death.” The akashic Neverad Nosk once used his abilities to learn of the fate of the human explorer Maggerin Thyll at the “hands” of a darval:

“Maggerin made his way down the narrow, natural passage. Like a cleft in the earth, the tunnel’s floor angled toward the center, and the passage rose very high above him. His companion, the spryte Theea, hovered behind him a few steps. Ahead, the tunnel split. Normally, the two would take a moment to discuss the proper path, often with Theea flying ahead to scout down each option. This time, however, Maggerin kept moving forward and entered the left tunnel branch, ducking beneath a low rock formation jutting from the wall.

“Wait!” Theea called, but her companion did not stop.

“It lay just ahead! Maggerin thought excitedly. What he’d been seeking all his life. His heart raced as he quickened his pace. The tunnel was treacherous, sloping down roughly and filled with loose stones, but he thrust aside concerns for safety.

“Theea called again, but he did not answer. Had she only realized he had fallen victim to a magical compulsion, things may have ended differently.

“Maggerin stumbled into a high-ceilinged cave. Above him loomed a creature of nightmare—tall and slender, spiderlike legs

supporting a bulbous body that seemed to be almost all mouth. A broad tendril-like tail covered in spikes rose from the thing’s body, flailing about. Maggerin did not see the beast until he was actually underneath it. Rather than being afraid, however, he was delighted. This monstrosity was the most wonderful thing he had ever seen—it was what he had sought all his life. Even as the creature lowered its body toward him, even as the huge maw engulfed him, Maggerin felt joy. Theea flew into the cave and shrieked. She attempted to cast a spell, but the beast thrashed her with its tail, smashing her against the cavern wall.

“Maggerin disappeared down the creature’s throat, pulled along by muscles that crushed his bones as it swallowed. He slid down into its gut, happier than he had ever been.”

This carnivorous creature dwells deep underground—so deep, in fact, that most surface dwellers have never heard of it. The slassans (see Chapter Four in *The Diamond Throne*) and the Vallorians (see page 112) hate and fear the darvals and destroy them whenever they can find them. Sometimes, deep-delving chorrims use darvals to guard their own lairs (bribing them with food) or even to battle as tests of combat prowess and willpower. (In such tests, a powerful chorrin warrior is thrown into a darval’s lair and must come out alive.)

The darval does not burrow but lives in natural caves and underground structures constructed by others. Once every 10 years, females lay 11 to 20 eggs, but they abandon them immediately afterward. Most darval eggs in a clutch never hatch, but instead form into crystalline nodules worth 1d6 × 100 gp each. Darvals live at least a hundred years, sometimes going for almost a year without eating. During such periods, they become almost dormant, never moving until prey approaches. Darvals obtain all the water they need from the creatures they kill.

With their legs fully extended, these creatures stand almost 16 feet high. When at rest, however, they often crouch, their round bodies resting on the ground. Underground explorers can easily mistake their four spindly limbs for tall “soda straw” stalagmites or thin pillars. This sometimes allows the creatures to “hide in plain sight” right above an entrance to a cavern.

Darvals do not speak, but some learn to understand a few words in various languages. They are usually Unbound.

COMBAT

The darval relies on its attraction ability to draw prey to it and hold the prey nearby until it can bite and swallow it. While eating, it uses its barbed tail to strike at other foes. The poison on each barb weakens and incapacitates its targets, giving the creature victims for its next meal. The darval is content to wait for hours or even days, hidden in a cave, for prey to come along.

Attraction (Su): The darval can choose to emanate magical vibrations that attract living creatures within 100 feet and compel them to come toward it unless they succeed at a Will saving throw (DC 20). Affected creatures feel elated and pleased to be near the darval and desire to touch it. The compulsion to stay in the area or touch the darval is overpowering, and victims will fight to follow their urges. Those affected will neither harm the darval nor defend themselves against its attacks. If an unaffected character spends a full round shaking an affected one, the victim can attempt another saving throw. This can only be attempted once. A successful second save releases the creature from the enchantment, but it can be subject to the effect again as soon as 1d6 minutes later, even if it is no longer within the darval's range (unless the subject knows for certain the darval is dead). In such a case, the creature must make a third save. If this save fails, the affected creature attempts to return to the darval. The compulsion lasts up to an hour. The save DC is Charisma based.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a darval must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can inflict automatic bite damage, then swallow the foe on the subsequent round.

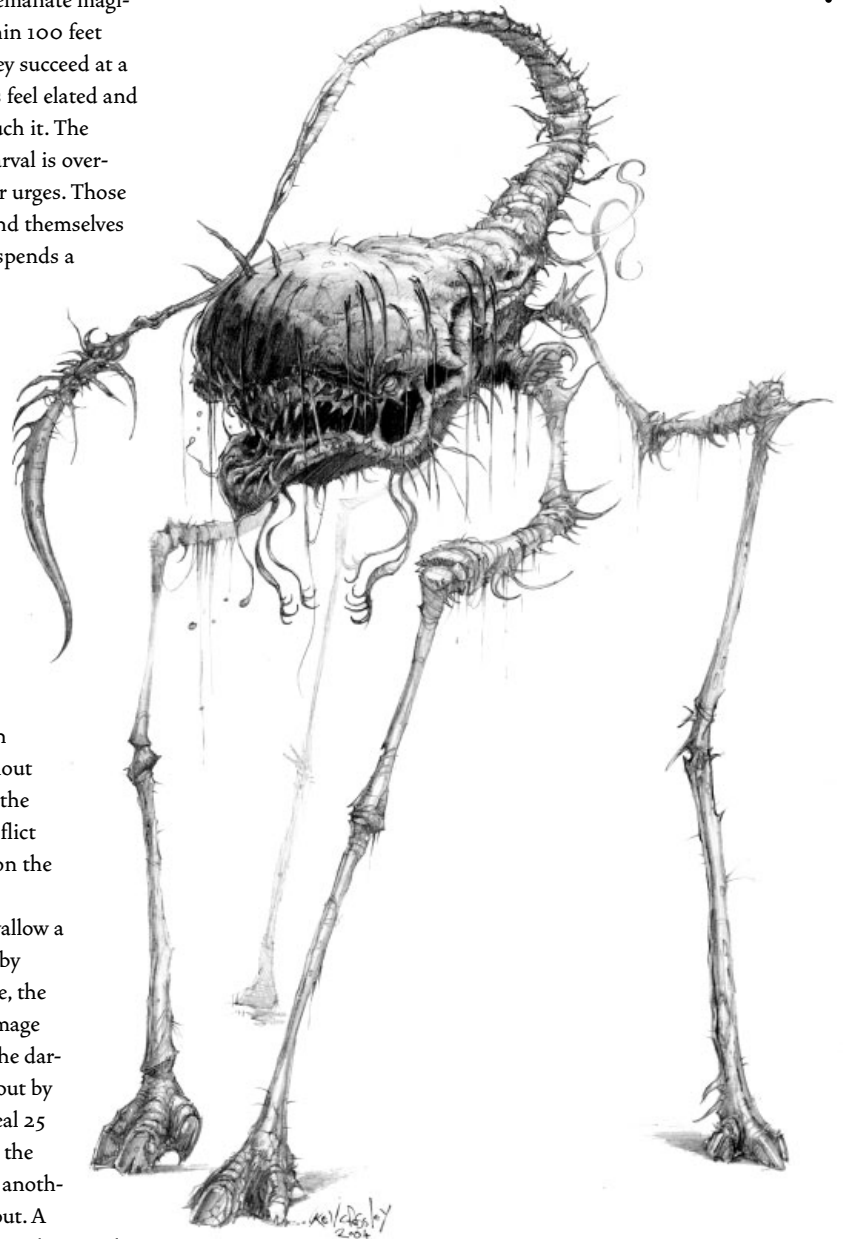
Swallow Whole (Ex): A darval can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of a size smaller than itself by making a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent takes 2d8+12 points of crushing damage plus 8 points of acid damage per round from the darval's gut. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 17). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. A Huge darval's interior can hold one Large, two Medium, eight Small, 32 Tiny, or 128 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 24, initial damage 1d6 Strength, secondary damage 2d6 Strength. The save DC is Constitution based.

Camouflage (Ex): The darval can alter its skin coloration and texture to fit its surroundings, giving it a +20 racial bonus to Hide checks.

DARVAL ENCOUNTER (EL 14)

The PCs, traveling underground or simply exploring a cave, fall into a sinkhole and down a sloping shaft until they find themselves quite deep underground in entirely unknown



territory. This new cave system is the domain of a darval that has lain dormant for months. Awakened by the noise, the creature activates its attraction ability, trying to draw prey to it.

If it manages to lure some (but not all) of the PCs, and the remaining characters pose too much trouble for it to eat its fill, it moves to an area of the cave that contains yet another unstable sinkhole. It slides down into the sinkhole and buries itself 60 feet below. Later, it crawls out into a still deeper cave to wait for the PCs it had attracted previously to come back to it.

DOTHROG

Large Aberration

Hit Dice: 4d8+4 (22 hp), dying/dead -2/-12

Initiative: +0

Speed: 20 feet, swim 30 feet

AC: 15 (-1 size, +6 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+9

Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d6+2)

Full Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d6+2)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/10 feet

(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/10 feet)

Special Attacks: Improved grab, stinging stream, swallow whole

Special Qualities: Agile leaper, low-light vision, prodigious leaper

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills: Jump* +30, Spot* +7

Feats: Affinity With Skill (Jump), Power Leap†, Weapon Focus (bite)

Environment: Temperate marsh

Organization: Solitary, pair, or pod (3-12)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 5-8 HD (Large); 9-16 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: +2

This lizardlike beast has a large, spherical body, two massive hind legs, and a pair of puny forelimbs much like a tyrannosaurus rex's arms. It has slimy, scaly skin and round, bulging eyes. A dothrog maintains a small colony of its young within its body. It drinks tremendous amounts of water and swallows prey whole to feed them. In battle, it can blast a foe with a combination of mucus and a stream of its stinging, tadpolelike young. These creatures are usually little more than a nuisance in swampy areas, though they can cause severe injury when they combine their melee attacks with their acidic mucus.

Dothrogs have a strange life cycle that has drawn the interest of many researchers. They reproduce asexually, with a single dothrog spontaneously producing a swarm of viable young every few years from within its gullet. Dothrogs continually have small clusters of their young within their stomachs, but the vast majority of these tiny creatures never mature into adults. A "pregnant" dothrog swallows prey and digests it to give its spawn sustenance. After a few months, it belches them into the swamp's waters, thereafter requiring them to fend for themselves. These creatures undergo a rapid, explosive period of growth soon after their liberation. Within a few months, they mature into adult dothrogs.

In their tadpole form, dothrogs are easy to capture but difficult to tame. Still, their ferocity makes them a popular

mount for creatures that dwell in swamplands. Their strength and impressive leaping ability can prove useful to an owner, but training a dothrog is a difficult task. The stubborn creatures prove resistant to most training methods, but a trained dothrog is a faithful companion.

COMBAT

Dothrogs are usually skittish and fearful of humanoids, but hunger can drive them to attack almost anything. They prefer to harry an opponent with repeated, quick strikes. A dothrog may leap in to bite an opponent and jump away before its foes can ready a response. Many expeditions into wet areas have been surprised by a dothrog that leaped into their midst, swallowed a guide or pack bearer, and disappeared into a thick grove of trees or similar terrain before the other explorers can counterattack.

* **Skills (Ex):** With their long, powerful legs, dothrogs gain a +20 racial bonus to all Jump checks. Their wide, large eyes give them a +4 racial bonus to all Spot checks.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the dothrog must hit with its bite attack. If it gets a hold, it can attempt to swallow its opponent.

Stinging Stream (Ex): Dothrogs carry their stinging, tadpolelike young within their gullets. If one of these creatures stands in a pool, it can gulp down water and then forcibly eject a combination of acidic mucus and stinging, tiny young dothrogs at an opponent. This attack functions as a ranged touch attack that deals 2d6 points of acid damage with a maximum range of 30 feet and no range increment. If a dothrog has a creature in its gullet when it uses this attack, the swallowed foe flies from its mouth toward the target. The swallowed creature takes 1d6 points of damage and lands prone in the target square. If the attack hits, the target takes an additional 1d6 points of damage from the impact.

Swallow Whole (Ex): A dothrog can try to swallow a Medium or smaller opponent that it has grabbed. It must make a successful grapple check to force an opponent down its gullet. Once inside, the opponent takes 1d8+2 points of damage as digestive fluids and the dothrog's young eat away at it. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 10 points of damage to the dothrog's gizzard (AC 10). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. A dothrog's interior can hold one Medium, two Small, or four Tiny or smaller opponents.

Agile Leaper (Ex): With their strong legs, dothrogs can leap high into the air with a minimum of effort and wasted motion. They never provoke attacks of opportunity due to moving if their movement consists entirely of a jump. For example, if a dothrog jumps through a threatened area, it does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Prodigious Leaper (Ex): A dothrog's massive hind legs allow it to leap through the air with ease. In addition to the racial bonus to Jump checks mentioned above, a dothrog is considered to be making a running long jump even if it does not move before attempting a Jump check.

TRAINED DOTHROGS

Raising, training, and riding a dothrog takes a tremendous amount of skill and patience. These creatures resist most attempts to domesticate them, and adults are impossible to train. Swamp folk may capture dothrog young to raise, but even these creatures rarely prove pliable to instruction. However, a trained dothrog is a valued boon. It can prove to be a versatile and faithful pack animal and fighting beast.

Training a young dothrog takes longer than normal and is a daunting task. It takes one year to properly raise a dothrog, and the Handle Animal check DC is 20 + twice its HD. Thus, only expert trainers commonly attempt to teach these creatures.

A trained dothrog gains a +2 competence bonus to all Will saves and a +1 competence bonus to all attacks against creatures that threaten its master. A key component of training a dothrog involves teaching it to recognize its owner and master as a parent. In the wild, dothrogs never develop emotional attachments to their parents, but with training and care they can build intense, deep feelings for those that they see as their caretakers.

With proper tutelage, dothrogs can develop a surprising mastery of simple fighting techniques. With six months of training and a Handle Animal check (DC 30), a domesticated dothrog can gain the ability to acquire levels in the warrior class. The dothrog receives XP equal to 1/10 of the share a character would gain for an adventure and progresses through that class as normal. It gains feats, improves its Hit Dice, and even acquires skills just like a character.

Swamp folk commonly outfit dothrogs with studded leather barding, riding saddles, and specially designed satchels (price and weight as for an exotic pack saddle) that keep the equipment they carry secure as they move.

DOTHROG ENCOUNTER (EL 5)

While traveling through a swampy area, the characters come across a narrow bridge that connects one low hill to another. The area between the hills is flooded with thick,



murky swamp water. If the characters attempt to cross here, two dothrogs leap from a nearby patch of grass to attack them. A gang of bandits has trained the beasts to grab travelers, swallow them, and bear their captives to the bandit camp. There the unfortunate victims are expelled, tied up, robbed, and held for a steep ransom.

The characters may have to chase the monsters in order to rescue one of their companions. Unbeknownst to them, the bandits lurk nearby to better control their pets. If the PCs travel to the bandits' camp, they discover that it consists of several buildings suspended above an area of deep water and connected by tall platforms. The bandits ride dothrogs through the area and already hold several captives waiting to be ransomed. Until payment is made, the captives are kept within wooden cages half-submerged in the murky water.

DREAD HELMINTH

Small Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 4d10+4 (26 hp), dying/dead -2/-12

Initiative: +3

Speed: 20 feet

AC: 21 (+1 size, +3 Dexterity, +6 natural, +1 dodge), touch 14, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/-1

Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d4-1 + poison)

Full Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d4-1 + poison)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet

(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Breath weapon, poison

Special Qualities: Blindsight 30 feet; air, earth, fire, and water resistance 5

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 7

Skills: Sneak* +7, Spot +2

Feats: Defensive, Iron Will, Weapon Finesse

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary (usually in addition to a host creature)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 5-6 HD (Small); 7-8 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

The dread helminth presents a terrible surprise to a foe. This parasitic worm remains within its host until that creature dies, at which point it comes out, ready to hunt. Thus a character may think she has defeated her opponent, only to have a helminth burst from its corpse and attack her.

The dread helminth procreates by laying eggs in a corpse, which is then eaten by a predator or scavenger. Only one egg survives within a given host, and the larva grows quickly. If the host is Small or smaller, the helminth never grows large enough to be anything but a vicious parasite that slays the host prematurely and then dies itself. If the host is at least Medium, however, the helminth can grow to become a deadly and horrible predator on its own. Within a Medium creature, the dread helminth can grow to full size, although this almost always creates a distended lump in the host's abdomen or back. Within a Large or larger creature, the helminth's presence causes no external change to the host.

When the host dies, the helminth bursts out of the corpse and attacks any and all nearby creatures. A dread helminth free of its host must eat almost continually or die, so outside of a host one of the creatures usually lives a week at most. A few, however, find enough food to continue much longer, and grow to be almost six feet long.

A full-grown dread helminth usually measures about 2 to 3 feet long, depending on the size of its host. Its pale yellow skin glistens with a sticky moisture that coats its body. It has no eyes, and one can distinguish its head from its tail only by its large, hooked mouth.

The dread helminth is more intelligent than one would expect for a parasitic worm. Although it cannot sense what is going on outside its host, it can interpret various physical signals from the host to get a basic idea—it knows when the host is in danger, when it is moving, fighting, eating, sleeping, and so forth. Dread helminths cannot speak or understand language, and they are always Unbound.

The dread helminth is not a native of this world, but instead a parasite brought here within another creature. It has lived here long enough to have adapted to the realm, however, and made itself at home. Sages speculate that such adaptability may be a special ability of the creature, allowing it to propagate throughout any and all environments. Dread helminths are able to live on flesh normally anathema to other creatures, such as the substance of an ooze or meat from a demon's corpse.

A *remove disease* spell cast on the host of a dread helminth slays the parasite if the caster can make a caster power check (DC 10 + the helminth's Hit Dice + its Constitution bonus, DC 15 for an average specimen). There is a 10 percent chance, however, that, rather than slaying the helminth, the spell merely forces it to burst out of the living host (inflicting 6d6 points of damage) and leave it. Of course, it immediately attacks any and all nearby creatures, including even the host.

COMBAT

Inside a host, the dread helminth attaches itself to an inner cavity and feeds off food the host eats or off the host's own flesh, if it must. Its poison is such that it can make the host unaware of its presence by numbing its nerves. While in the host, the helminth suffers no damage or ill effects experienced by its host until the host is dead. Outside of its host, the creature uses its breath weapon on the first creature(s) it sees, and then moves in to attack with its bite, relying on the surprise of its sudden appearance as it emerges. If not attacking from within its host, it attempts to hide, sometimes within corpses, sometimes simply in the mud, to attack prey. Impatient and starving, however, it doesn't wait long before moving to a new, hopefully more fruitful location. It can control the virulence of its venom, changing its numbing bite to one that induces complete paralysis.

Extremely hardy creatures, dread helminths prove resistant to all elements (air, earth, fire, and water resistance 5).



***Skills (Ex):** The dread helminth gains a special +10 racial bonus to Sneak checks for determining whether a creature spots it as it emerges from its dead host.

Breath Weapon (Ex): The dread helminth can spray a 20-foot cone of foul, greenish yellow vapor three times per day. Those within the area suffer 4d6 points of acid damage. A Fortitude saving throw (DC 13) reduces the damage by half. The saving throw DC is Constitution based.

Poison (Ex): The dread helminth's bite injects a numbing poison that simply renders the victim (usually the host) without feeling in a very localized portion of its body. However, with but a thought, the helminth can change the dosage so that the victim must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 13) or face complete paralysis for 10 rounds. The saving throw DC is Constitution based.

DREAD HELMINTH ENCOUNTER (EL 6)

The characters must transport a wagon holding a captive mantichore—magically sedated and in chains—to a nearby

city for a mysterious employer. On the way, they are attacked by another mantichore swooping out of the sky. The beast menaces the PCs, but then—without warning—attacks its helpless mate. It feels it would be better to kill the other mantichore than to let it go into captivity. The mantichore attempts to use a *coup de grace* attack to slay the other. If it succeeds, however, it simply unleashes the dread helminth within it. If still alive, the remaining mantichore flees at that point, leaving the characters to deal with the freed parasite. The attacking mantichore had no idea the dread helminth lay within its mate, and neither, most likely, did the PCs. It should be clear by now that the characters were actually transporting the helminth, not its mantichore host. But why?

If the group investigates, it turns out that their employer is in fact a madman intent on spreading the dread helminths wherever he can. He has a small fortress filled with unwilling and/or unwitting hosts.

ELEMENTAL SCION TEMPLATE

The strength of earth, the ferocity of fire, the speed of wind, and the tenacity of wave—these factors come together to create an elemental scion, a creature of both mortal flesh and otherworldly might. When the force of the elemental spirits manifests itself in the normal world, a creature can use this power to become an elemental scion. This never happens by accident, always by choice. Elemental scions are always intelligent enough to make the choice for themselves, and it changes one forever. The elemental power seething within these scions manifests itself with varied effects. The physical changes to the transformed creature are generally minor. In appearance, the scion looks about the same. Yet the power of the earth bolsters him, fire makes him agile and quick, air allows him to float above the ground, and he can breathe water.

All four elements work together within the creature: not in opposition, but in synthesis. It is only the union within a living, mortal creature that allows this convergence to occur. That spirit—perhaps the fifth element—unites the other four in a way not otherwise possible. In any event, elemental scions are rarer than even runechildren, and most people remain unaware of them. The transformation into an elemental scion does not change one's outlook. Those with a dark heart are still cruel and selfish. More giving creatures retain their benevolent nature.

SAMPLE ELEMENTAL SCION: ORICHOL

(4TH-LEVEL MOJH MAGE BLADE)

Medium Humanoid

Hit Dice: 4d8+4 (26 hp), dying/dead -2/-10

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 feet, fly 30 feet (average)

AC: 18 (+2 Dexterity, +3 natural, +3 armor), touch 12, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+6

Attack: Longsword (athame) +10 melee (1d8+5)

Full Attack: Longsword (athame) +10 melee (1d8+5)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Fireburst, earth blast, athame, spells

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, water breathing, shimmering shield

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +1

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 17

Skills: Balance +2, Forgery +2, Knowledge (runes) +2

Feats: Bonded Item (longsword), Elemental Mage (fire), Weapon Focus (longsword)

Environment: Any

Organization: Unique

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +2

Even after Orichol transformed into a mojh, he—it—was not content. It still craved more power. Specifically, the power Orichol craved was that which would unite it with mystical energies. It wanted to feel them course through its veins. So the mojh sought far and wide, reading well-researched texts and consulting with learned sages. Eventually, it learned of the Temple of the Four Pillars, located in the strange land of Kish. No one knows who built the temple, with its 444 steps leading up to its four grand doors. One thing was sure, though: Just as the texts had said, whosoever shall drink from the four pools surrounding the four pillars in the temple for 444 days straight shall come to liken themselves closer to the fundamental nature of the world and the four key elements that comprise it. Orichol discovered the truth of that personally.

The mojh returned to the Lands of the Diamond Throne with newfound powers—an entirely new nature. Mentally, however, Orichol was still the power-craving mojh it had always been.

Orichol wears a *+1 studded leather jack* and wields a longsword as an athame. It is tall for a mojh, and its elemental nature gives its flesh a rough texture and dark color.

COMBAT

Orichol favors its elemental scion abilities over all else. It enjoys floating over foes and spraying its fire burst down upon them. It is overconfident and prone to foolhardiness, but it isn't stupid. Orichol will run from a fight it cannot win.

Fireburst (Sp): See ability description on next page.

Earth Blast (Sp): See ability description on next page.

Athame (Su): In Orichol's hands, its longsword becomes a +2 weapon. It shares an empathic link with the weapon and knows where it is at all times.

Water Breathing (Su): See ability description on next page.

Shimmering Shield (Sp): Once per day, Orichol can create a shimmering aura around itself that grants the mojh a +2 deflection bonus to Armor Class for 4 rounds.

Spell Slots: 4/3/1

Spells Readied: 0—*bash, detect magic, lesser repair, minor illusion*; 1st—*acrobatics, fireburst, mudball, obscuring mist*; 2nd—*boil*

CREATING AN ELEMENTAL SCION

“Elemental scion” is a template that one can add to any living, corporeal creature with an Intelligence score of at least 3. An elemental scion uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities, except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature's type does not change.

Speed: Elemental scions can fly at half their normal speed, carried aloft by the wind.

AC: Increase the creature's natural armor bonus by +2 due to a stony substance that infuses the flesh.

Special Attacks: An elemental scion retains all the base creature's special attacks and gains the following special abilities (cumulative):



HD	Ability
1–2	Fireburst, water breathing
3–4	Earth blast, improved flight
5–8	Greater elemental resistance
9–10	Fireball, water walking
11–12	Stony skin, wall of wind
13–15	Summon elemental
16+	Elemental type

Earth Blast (Sp): The elemental scion can, three times per day, cause the ground at one creature's feet to explode, inflicting 5d6 points of earth damage and knocking the creature prone if it is size Large or smaller. A successful Reflex save (DC 10 + half the elemental scion's Hit Dice + elemental scion's Charisma bonus) halves the damage and negates the knockdown effect.

Greater Elemental Resistance (Su): The elemental scion enjoys air, earth, fire, and water resistance 20.

Elemental Type (Su): The elemental scion's type can be considered elemental when it is desirable (but not elemental when it is not). For example, if someone casts a spell on a humanoid scion that normally would affect only humanoids, the spell does not affect him. If another mage cast a spell on the same scion that affected elementals, it would not affect him, either.

Fireball (Sp): The elemental scion can, once per day, throw a ball of fire up to 200 feet that explodes in a 20-foot spread, inflicting 10d6 points of damage.

Fireburst (Sp): The elemental scion can, three times per day, spray a 30-foot cone of fire that inflicts 3d6 points of damage. A successful Reflex save (DC 10 + half the elemental scion's Hit Dice + elemental scion's Charisma bonus) halves the damage.

Improved Flight (Su): The elemental scion can fly at his normal ground speed, with average maneuverability.

Stony Skin (Su): The elemental scion's natural armor bonus increases by another +2 bonus.

Summon Elemental (Sp): The elemental scion can summon a Huge elemental of any type once per day, as described in the spell *lesser summon major elemental*.

Wall of Wind (Sp): The elemental scion can, three times per day, create an invisible vertical curtain of wind 2 feet thick and up to 80 feet long and 100 feet high. Tiny and Small flying creatures cannot pass through the barrier. Ranged projectiles smaller than a catapult-hurled boulder are deflected upward and miss. Gases cannot pass through the wall. Other creatures, flying or not, attempting to pass through the wall must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half the elemental scion's Hit Dice + elemental scion's Charisma bonus), or they are repelled and knocked down. The immobile wall lasts for 10 minutes per elemental scion Hit Die. The scion can shape the wall so that it curves horizontally, even to form a cylinder (but not a sphere).

Water Breathing (Su): The elemental scion can breathe water as well as air.

Water Walking (Su): The elemental scion can walk (or even run) on water as if it were solid ground.

Special Qualities: An elemental scion has all the base creature's special qualities and gains the following:

Elemental Resistance (Su): The elemental scion has air, earth, fire, and water resistance 5.

Abilities: Alter from the base creature's as follows: Str +2, Dex +2, Con +2, Int +0, Wis +0, Cha +2.

Challenge Rating: As base creature's +2.

Level Adjustment: As base creature's +2.

ELEMENTAL SCION ENCOUNTER (EL 6)

Orichol arrives in the community where the PCs currently reside. It is looking for one of the sages that helped it find the Temple of the Four Pillars, to demand still more information about the temple's origins. The sage, however, is afraid of the mojh now, with its newfound power, and comes to the characters for help. Orichol was none too gentle in its inquiries before, and now the sage wants none of it. The PCs need to protect the sage and perhaps confront the mojh, learning in the process what an elemental scion is—and about the mysterious Temple of Four Pillars.

FARADIAN

Large Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 9d8+45 (85 hp), dying/dead -6/-21

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 30 (-1 size, +1 Dexterity, +8 natural, +12 armor), touch 10, flat-footed 29

Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+18

Attack: Large dire masterwork greataxe +15 melee (2d8+11)

Full Attack: Large dire masterwork greataxe +15/+10 melee (2d8+11) and bite +15 melee (1d8+2)

Face Space/Reach: 10 feet/10 feet
(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/10 feet)

Special Attacks: Ensorcel weapon, dazzle, telekinesis

Special Qualities: Blindsight 60 feet, immunities, precognitive flashes

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +13

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 12, Con 21, Int 17, Wis 21, Cha 19

Skills: Climb +13, Craft (weaponsmithing) +8, Intimidate +10, Jump +10, Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (history) +9, Listen +10, +10, Wilderness Survival +11

Feats: Ambidexterity, Bloody Strike, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (heavy)^B, Iron Will^B, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe)

Environment: Any land

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: Double standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +4

Living by their own strange code, the faradians are as enigmatic as they are fearsome. Nothing is truly black and white in the Lands of the Diamond Throne, and the faradians exemplify that truism. These towering warriors are as likely to murder a seemingly innocent person as they are to help someone in distress.

The faradians are not what they once were. Long ago they served as allies and friends of the mysterious crystal weavers of days past. As such, they were also close companions of the grynlocs (see page 46). Despite their great strength, the faradians were farmers and herders living in and around the northern reaches of the Elder Mountains.

In those days, the great kingdom of Sennes encompassed much of what was then called Terrakal. Queen Adrilashe decreed that she must have an elite force of bodyguards and troops. She commanded her allies, the Devanians, to bring the best and the brightest of the faradians to her generals, and they complied. The faradians were taught loyalty,

pro prowess, and strategy. They even learned sorcerous tricks from the mages of Sennes, who were at their height at the time. Thanks to their special connection to the akashic memory, the faradians ensured that once they were trained, all other faradians would share their knowledge, as would their future generations. Thus, an elite force of faradian warriors attended the monarch of Sennes and, eventually, Devania. Even as political tides turned and human rulers changed, faradians always served them as faithful warriors. When the dramojh invaded, the faradians held them off longer than anyone would have thought possible. The dramojh hated them for their power, but even more for their steadfastness and loyalty. Using sorcery, the demon-dragons captured a number of faradians and murdered the rest.

For long years, the dramojh tortured their captives but could not break them. Finally, they used magic to give the naturally blind faradians sight—but no ordinary sight. They cursed the faradians with flashes of the future, but only terrible aspects of what would be. They tormented them with the horrors that were, that had been, and that were still to come. No one knows exactly what happened after that, but when the armies of the giants, sibeccai, humans, and others arrived at the dramojh gates bringing freedom, the faradians were still in the dramojh prisons. They would speak of nothing that had happened.

Today, faradians are quite rare. When one sees them, they are usually doing something difficult to understand—they attack individuals seemingly at random, while providing cryptic advice to others. They show up in numbers to help defend a tower against bandit attack, then walk away wordlessly when the same tower is beset by shadow trolls. The truth is, in their ongoing visions of future horrors, they see things that they know can be changed. Their assistance helps others alter or avoid the terrible events still to come. This knowledge sometimes calls for strange—even violent or evil—acts, from a nonfaradian perspective, but they do not care, and they never explain themselves. Thus, today faradians enjoy a sinister and fearsome reputation.

Tall and muscular, these humanoids stand at least 12 feet tall. They wear massive, gleaming armor covered in spikes and movable, shifting plates (usually a definitive harness with armor spikes). They wield huge dire axes and wear helmets that cover the part of their faces where their eyes would be, if they had eyes. The helmet always has an opening for the faradian's mouth, which is large with many pointed teeth. A faradian's hands and feet are large, too, and it has only four fingers on each hand and four toes on each foot. Its flesh is pale white, almost pink, not that most people ever see faradian flesh.

Faradians speak Common as well as their own language, which is closely related to Grynloc, but much simpler. Though few in number, those who remain appear immortal and ageless.

COMBAT

Faradians are straightforward but intelligent combatants. They attempt to infuse their weapons with magic before they enter combat, and then blast with their dazzle ability before closing for melee. They rarely use telekinesis in a fight, saving it for more practical purposes. They fight to the death and show no mercy. In battle, they are savage and do anything to emerge victorious.

Ensorcel Weapon (Sp): A faradian can, once per day, grant its weapon a single +1 or +2 magical weapon quality of its choice for up to 10 rounds. Doing so is a standard action.

Dazzle (Sp): By creating a brilliant flash of multiple lights, a faradian calls up an effect similar to that of a *dazzlesphere* spell three times per day. It is immune to this effect.

Telekinesis (Sp): A faradian can use *lesser telekinesis* at will and *greater telekinesis* three times each day.

Immunities: Faradians are immune to gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, and other attack forms that rely on sight.

Precognitive Flashes (Su): Faradians can see into the future, but they have no control over what they see. What they see is always bad, though not necessarily about them personally. In a given encounter, there is a 25 percent chance that the faradian has seen something ahead of time that pertained to the encounter. In such a case, they gain a +4 insight bonus to attack rolls, saving throws, checks, and Armor Class. They might also (at the DM's discretion) know an opponent's weakness, likely tactics, or some other vital bit of information ahead of time.

FARADIAN CHARACTERS

Faradians are warmains or, more rarely, champions. Faradian champions are always champions of light or freedom.

FARADIAN ENCOUNTER (EL 10)

The PCs are on a mission involving a visit to a woman who lives alone in a tower in a small town. When two faradians suddenly appear, seemingly from nowhere, and prevent them from entering the tower, the characters can ask for explanations all they want, but they won't get one. If they leave and come back later, the faradians do not stop them. If they fight, the faradians fight to the death to keep them from going in.

Inside, they find the woman dead. They discover that she was a powerful witch performing a dangerous experiment on a *dramojh* artifact. The experiment went awry, unleashing an infectious, corruptive power. The witch is dead, but had the PCs been there, during the explosion they would have carried the tainted energy with them, corrupting the entire town (and perhaps worse). As it is, since no one else was present, the corruptive power simply faded.



GHOUL WORM

Large Aberration

Hit Dice: 10d8+50 (95 hp), dying/dead -6/-20

Initiative: +3

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 18 (-1 size, -1 Dexterity, +10 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 18

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+14

Attack: Bite +10 melee (1d8+4)

Full Attack: Bite +10 melee (1d8+4) and slam +5 melee (1d8+2)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/10 feet

(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/10 feet)

Special Attacks: Horror, enhanced speed burst, disease, improved grab, constrict

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, stench, sunlight vulnerability

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +7

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 9, Con 20, Int 7, Wis 11, Cha 9

Skills: Sneak +4, Spot +8

Feats: Bloody Strike, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Night Owl, Skill Focus (Sneak)

Environment: Any land

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 9

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 11–20 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: —

It is common knowledge that ghoulish worms are undead. Gossipy tales told by those “in the know” invariably call the creatures undead, and when a person first sees one, nothing suggests that such information might be incorrect. In both appearance and smell, the creatures appear to be the still-thrashing but rotting corpse of some deceased worm or snake of incredible size, or possibly a naga.

Despite what its appearance would suggest, what common knowledge—even its own name—attests, the ghoulish worm is not undead, nor does it bear any relationship to true ghouls. The only thing it has in common with its namesake is its food preferences (and sometimes its habitat). The ghoulish worm feeds on humanoid and giant corpses, preferably those a week to two weeks old. Sometimes ghoulish worms come to cemeteries to eat recently buried bodies. As such, many areas plagued by these terrible beasts post a watch over their cemeteries to keep the graves from being defiled. A ghoulish worm tears up a whole graveyard when it arrives looking for food. They are the bane of necromancers, who usually attempt to kill them on sight, as do most champions of death, who do not wish to see the dead disturbed. A ghoulish worm does not care if the corpse is animated or not—an undead humanoid or giant not too long out of the

grave provides just as good a meal as one the ghoulish worm digs up itself.

These aberrations live nocturnal lifestyles. They spend the day in caves or holes, hunting at night on the surface. A ghoulish worm will not willingly come into the sunlight. In fact, it squeals and screams if the rays of the sun fall upon any part of its body.

When it isn't foraging through a cemetery, the ghoulish worm stalks and kills its prey, then drags it back to its grisly lair to wait for the corpse to decompose to its liking. Thus, a ghoulish worm's lair is usually filled with rotting corpses waiting to be devoured. Its home also may contain three to four eggs that it nurtures; these eggs take almost a year to hatch. The creatures establish their lairs near roads, towns, or other sources of food. They seem to prefer giant carcasses most of all, but they learn quickly that giants make dangerous prey.

Ghoulish worms are hideous. Their skin has the pale greenish white color of a decaying corpse, and their flesh hangs on them in drooping folds that appear to be rotting off them. Their misshapen, humanlike heads are surrounded by squirming tendrils that help them hold objects (but are not useful in combat, except to make their appearance all the more horrific). The flesh on a ghoulish worm's face is darker than on the rest of its body, and its wide mouth bristles with long, jagged teeth like mispounded nails protruding from the back of a board. Its dark eyes flare with a fiery red-orange when it strikes.

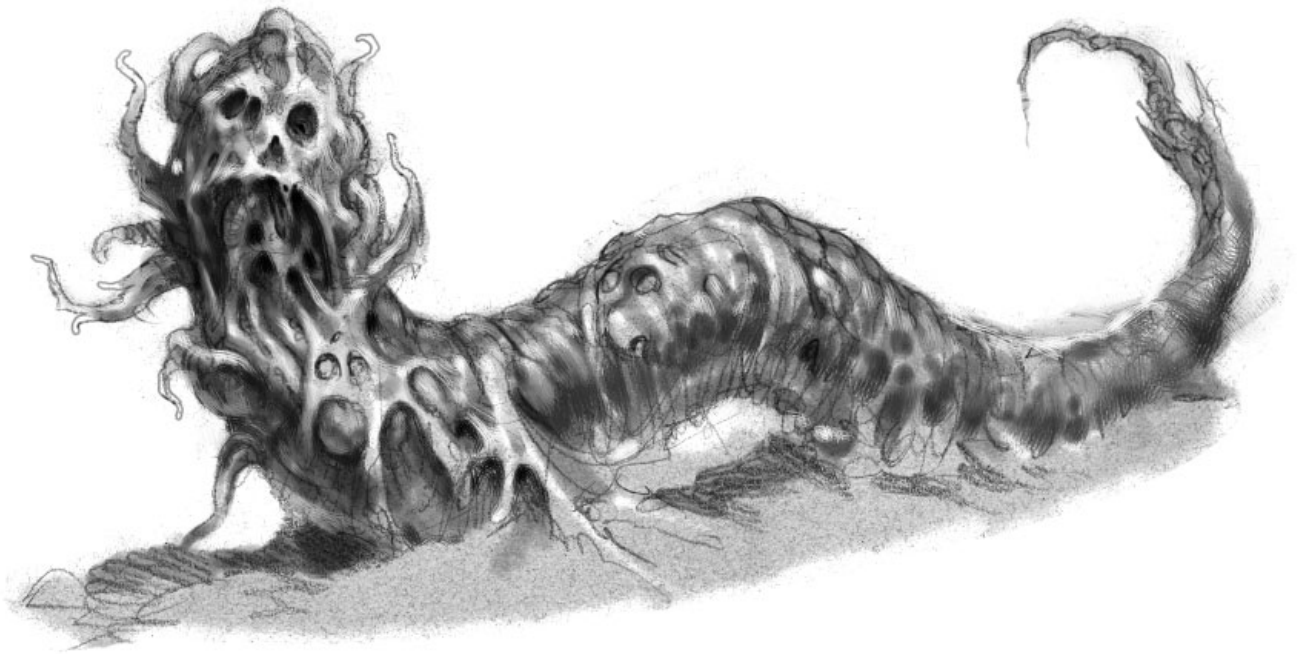
Sages and akashics studying the varied lifeforms of the Lands of the Diamond Throne have determined that ghoulish worms are distantly related to nagas: dramojh-created fusions of humans and serpents into chimerical beings. However, no records show any dramojh influence on ghoulish worms. Thus, learned folk conjecture that the ghoulish worms are an offshoot of the naga—perhaps nagas themselves are in a state of flux.

Ghoulish worms speak a few words of Common. They are always Unbound.

COMBAT

The ghoulish worm's preferred method of attack is to surprise its foes with a sudden strike. It can coil itself up and lunge forward with incredible speed. The creature's sudden appearance can stun foes, making them perfect targets. The bites from its foul mouth carry disease and infection, and it can also slam a foe with its long tail, then coil around to suffocate it with a few squeezes of its horrid body. Once a ghoulish worm kills a single humanoid or giant foe, it attempts to make off with its prize rather than continue to fight.

Horror (Ex): If it can achieve surprise, the sudden appearance of a ghoulish worm is horrifying. Those who see it must succeed at Will saving throws (DC 14) or remain stunned for 1 round. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma based.



Stench (Ex): The ghoulish worm exudes a stench so foul that any creature within 10 feet of it must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) or become nauseated for 1d3 rounds. Nauseated creatures cannot attack, cast spells, concentrate on spells, or do anything else requiring attention. The only action such a character can take is a single move action per turn, plus free actions (but not casting quickened spells). Once the saving throw is made, successful or not, a creature need attempt no further saves against this specific ghoulish worm's stench until a day has passed (unless the creature is constricted; see below). The saving throw DC is Constitution based.

Enhanced Speed Burst (Ex): Similar to the Speed Burst feat, a ghoulish worm can take an additional move action in a single round three times per day. Further, if it uses both of its move actions for the round for actually moving its speed, it can move at three times its speed (180 feet in 1 round) and still take a standard action.

Disease (Ex): The ghoulish worm's bite transmits disease. A foe must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20) or contract a disease called blood rot (see below). The saving throw DC is Constitution based.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a ghoulish worm must hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Constrict (Ex): When a ghoulish worm establishes a hold, it wraps its body around its foe. The ghoulish worm inflicts 1d8+4

points of damage each round as it holds a foe. Worse, a constricted foe must make a new saving throw against the worm's stench, this time with a -4 penalty.

Sunlight Vulnerability (Ex): Ghoulish worms suffer a -2 competence penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks when exposed to direct, natural sunlight.

BLOOD ROT

Infection: Injury

DC: 20

Incubation: One day

Damage: 1d3 Dexterity, 1d3 Strength

Description: Blood rot is an infection that curdles and thickens the victim's blood with dead organic matter. It is extremely deadly, as the thickened blood clogs the victim's heart and arteries until they burst.

GHOUL WORM ENCOUNTER (EL 9)

Friends of the player characters contact them, saying they are worried about a young human boy named Machal. When asked what's wrong with the boy, the friends reply that he's dead—but that's not the problem. There have been graveyard defilements in the area recently, and they don't want Machal's grave disturbed. The locals fear ghouls or necromancers, although some tell of seeing an undead serpent wandering the fields at night. If the PCs keep a vigil in the cemetery, a ghoulish worm attacks. Although the beast came looking for corpses, it will certainly settle for a living humanoid it can kill and drag away.

GRYNLOC

Medium Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 3d8+6 (19 hp), dying/dead -2/-12

Initiative: +1

Speed: 40 feet

AC: 15 (+1 Dexterity, +2 natural, +2 enhancement), touch 11, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+3

Attack: Bite +3 melee (1d4) or staff +3 melee (1d6)

Full Attack: Bite +3 melee (1d4) or staff +3 melee (1d6)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, spells, charm sets

Special Qualities: Magic sight

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +7

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 12

Skills: Alchemy* +12, Concentration +5, Knowledge (magic)* +12, Knowledge (runes)* +12, Spellcraft* +12, Spot +7

Feats: Attune to Magic Item, Create Charm Set^B, Iron Will, Power of the Name

Environment: Any land

Organization: Solitary, pair, band (3–6 and 1 nystra), or clan (7–18 and 1–2 nystra and 1 milnystra)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +2

Grynlocs (also called gryhnlocks or even drynlocs in some older texts) sense magic the way other creatures sense light. In other words, where there is magic, they can see. Fortunately for them, the magic of the land extends almost everywhere.

In ancient times, grynlocs were allies and companions of the mysterious crystal weavers (see Chapter Two of *The Diamond Throne*). A few, it is said, still retain the crystal weaving ability they learned from their long-lost companions. If true, they keep this secret to themselves. Nevertheless, the grynlocs are some of the best links that remain to the time when the crystal weavers roamed the land, and thus they know much about those ancient days.

Most people look at grynlocs as the source for potent magical lore and, truth be told, this assumption is rarely wrong. Still, these creatures usually like to keep to themselves and avoid other peoples' cities except in groups, and then only for short periods. Grynloc caravans are known to cross the land collecting and selling minor magical items and bits of lore. The grynlocs find themselves welcome in most places, although they never remain long enough to truly engender any trust from the locals.

Grynlocs are only vaguely humanoid. Their tall, lanky bodies stand just short of 7 feet. Their oddly angled legs are positioned well for speed. The flesh on a grynloc's body runs from ivory to a dark, creamy brown. They have no hair, and their heads are long and angular. A typical individual weighs about 250 lbs. They cover themselves with magical charms and various fetish items (see "Charm Sets," page 48).

Despite their somewhat fierce appearance and strange manner of dress, grynlocs are gentle, peaceful creatures. They do not eat meat. They dislike fighting and those who make war, but they do what they must to defend themselves, their possessions, and their secrets. Rarely, a certain magic item or morsel of magical knowledge will corrupt a grynloc. Corrupted individuals become more aggressive, selfish, and belligerent. They are cast out from the clan and live their lives stealing magic items, books, and secrets wherever they can find them.

Grynlocs live to be more than 200 years old, and some, enhanced by magic, enjoy far longer life spans. Their young are rare and are very fragile as well—most do not survive to adulthood. This keeps the grynloc population at a flat level.

Chorrim (see Chapter Four of *The Diamond Throne*) hate grynlocs, and the feeling is quite mutual. Grynlocs still do not really know what to make of the faradians (see page 42), once their close allies. Grynlocs revere arcane rune manifests (see page 78) as near demigods and worship Vekik the Runegod in a very formal but secretive way—usually in hidden chapels or ancient stone circles atop lonely hills or in concealed caves. Traditionally, they enjoy the company of faen more than that of the other major races. They like verrik the least, and sibeccai usually seem far too bestial and unpredictable for their tastes.

Grynlocs speak their own extremely complex language (it is similar to Faradian, but not the same). Even though they "see" magic, they hear, feel, smell, and taste normally.

The stats for the above grynloc assume it has a *warding charm set* activated. Grynlocs are never Unbound.

COMBAT

Grynlocs retain a fairly powerful bite—a vestige of a much earlier time when they lived more primitive and savage lives. Many carry staves or daggers as weapons. However, in combat, they prefer to rely on their spell-like abilities and their charm sets. A common tactic is to use *distraction*, then animate their staff or dagger to fight for them while they back away. Most grynlocs would prefer not to fight; they always consider flight a viable option. They see no shame in prudence.

***Skills (Ex):** All grynlocs gain a +4 racial bonus to Alchemy, Knowledge (magic), Knowledge (runes), and Spellcraft.



Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): A grynloc can cast the following spells as a 2nd-level magister 1/day—*analyze*, *animate weapon*, *distraction*, and *read magic*. The save DC against these spells is DC 13 + spell level.

Spells (Sp): In addition to the above spell-like abilities, all grynlocs can ready and cast three simple or complex cantrips each day as a 2nd-level magister. The save DC against these cantrips is DC 13 + spell level.

Charm Sets (Sp): See separate section, page 48.

Magic Sight (Su): Grynlocs see magic, viewing objects and creatures only as the ambient magic of the land reflects off them (in the way that normal creatures see objects only as light reflects off them). They see active spells as brilliant halos and can tell a magic item from a mundane one without a second glance. In almost every way, this functions as blind-sight. This means, then, that a grynloc can see creatures that are invisible—in fact, if they are magically invisible, their glowing magical aura actually makes them easier to see.

Likewise, a creature with a magic item that grants a bonus to Sneak actually suffers the bonus as a penalty to Sneak rolls opposed by a grynloc's Spot check. Grynlocs are never fooled into thinking that illusions are real, and they can even track creatures with magic items or active spells.

Grynlocs can tell a spellcaster from a nonspellcaster and can even gauge a spellcaster's level just by looking. Similarly, they can tell the level of an active (or residual) spell and sense the potency of a magic item. They can determine spell schools by the color and shape of the auras they see.

Grynlocs are blind in a null magic zone and stunned the first round they spend within it (no save). A *dispel magic* spell cast on them stuns them for 1d3 rounds, unless they succeed at a Fortitude save to resist it.

Shape Magic (Su): Grynlocs can create an aura of magical energy around themselves or other objects. The aura lasts a number of days equal to the grynloc's Hit Dice. This ability has two main uses. First, the grynlocs create beautifully shaped, often amazingly elaborate magical raiment for themselves that only members of their race can see. They use these auras to identify themselves to one another. The other use allows them to leave brief symbolic messages for others of their kind to see. While their precision is not such that they can spell out words, they can leave magical symbols of warning or welcome, or convey similar, simplistic meanings for one another.

A *detect magic* spell, a *see invisibility* spell, or similar magic can perceive the auras the grynlocs create. Someone who speaks Grynloc or makes a Knowledge (runes) check (DC 15) can understand them.

GRYNLOC SOCIETY

Grynlocs live in small familial groups called clans. Some clans keep a nomadic lifestyle, traveling across the land in strangely shaped wagons pulled by horses, mules, or oxen. The nomadic clans stop at villages and towns to sell crystal-woven items or minor magical trinkets that they collect in their travels or create themselves. These grynlocs seek knowledge of great spells, artifacts, or power cysts. Sometimes they follow black streams or travel lines in their journeys (see Chapter One of *The Diamond Throne* for more on cysts, black streams, and travel lines). Members of non-nomadic clans usually live as farmers and gatherers. They enjoy an even simpler existence, concerning themselves mainly with safety and maintaining the peace.

All grynloc clans are led by spellcasters called *nystra* in their own tongue. Nystra are usually magisters or runethanes of 1st to 5th level. Nystra who surpass their fellows become *milnystra*: spellcasters of at least 6th level who lead the clan. Nystra and milnystra usually prepare spells

and runes that are defensive in nature, to protect their clan against raiders, magic thieves, and those who would try otherwise to take advantage of the creatures' gentle nature.

Grynloc young are guarded very closely—most nongrynlocs never get to see one at all. They are taught various lores and secrets of magic from a young age; their entire development is steeped in spells, runes, and magic. When they reach maturity (at about age 25), they must go on an individual spirit-quest. During this quest they learn their truename and often have some kind of personal revelation about the nature of magic—the possibility of a previously unknown spell, the location of a magical power cyst, a potential new rune, or the like.

Grynlocs make little distinction toward gender and do not value physical appearance or beauty—at least, not the way other creatures perceive such. They value only magic, both for its raw power and for its delicate applications.

GRYNLOC CHARACTERS

Grynlocs are always spellcasters, usually magisters or runethanes. Very rarely, a militant or corrupted individual will become a mage blade, or a reticent one will become a greenbond (almost always leaving the clan to live alone in the wild). Curiously, grynlocs are never witches.

CHARM SETS

Grynlocs have access to a number of minor magical items, but none more interesting than what they call *charm sets*. These consist of collections of various strange fetish items and charms, gathered together in a precise manner and activated with a minor spell. They produce a variety of effects, only a few of which are described here.

The key to the *charm sets* lies with the items and ingredients that comprise them. Such items include skulls (often small animal skulls), bones, bits of flesh, teeth, small bags of herbs, string soaked in an herbal brew, slivers of precious metal, leaves, stalks of plants, blood, bat wings, animal claws, colored stones, feathers, locks of hair, bark, eggshell, seeds, acorns, nuts, dried mud (often with herbs mixed in), paint, tiny clay figurines, nails or pins, wood splinters, scratched shards of glass, and so on. When the proper charms are assembled in a specific manner and chanted over for an hour (using the Create Charm Set† feat, next page), the *charm set* is ready. It does not activate until a user intentionally casts a cantrip into it (ignoring the cantrip's normal effect), at which point the *charm set* takes on the property it was designed for. The effect lasts for one hour. When the effect ends, the components and charms become useless and cannot be used as part of a *charm set* again. A spell more powerful than a cantrip can activate the *charm*

set, but the user gains no enhanced benefit from doing so. Once created, a *charm set* can be used by the creator or by someone else.

With a caster level of 0, *charm sets* are simple to dispel. Their effects are always treated as 0-level effects (even when the potency of the effect would suggest otherwise).

A few example *charm sets* include the following:

Avoidance: The creator must assemble the following ingredients upon a headband, hat, helmet, or headdress: three clear crystals tied with leather cords and sprinkled with powdered hemlock, a metal strip etched with special symbols, and four claws of a badger. When activated, the *charm set* forces anyone wishing to attack the wearer to make a Will saving throw (DC 11). Those who succeed can attack normally. Those failing the saving throw cannot make successful attack rolls against the wearer and cannot cast offensive spells at her for 10 rounds. Once the saving throw is attempted, successful or not, a creature need make no further saves against this specific *charm set*. *Cost of components:* 230 gp. *Time to create:* 11 hours.

Devilry: The creator must assemble the following ingredients upon a wooden staff: three jagged bits of metal, 16 teeth from monstrous humanoids, a 6-foot leather cord soaked in rhodin sweat (cut into pieces to tie the other components to the staff), and a smattering of human blood. When activated, the *charm set* grants the wielder a +2 bonus to the saving throw DCs of her negative energy spells. *Cost of components:* 450 gp. *Time to create:* nine hours.

Grace: The creator must assemble the following ingredients upon a belt: a rabbit's foot painted red, three teeth from a gazelle, a silver thread 12 inches long, and five leaves from a rosebush. The creator wraps the leaves in a piece of parchment that bears special symbols drawn in ink made from the blood of a cockatrice, then ties off each end of the rolled parchment with pieces of string exactly 4 inches long. When activated, the *charm set* grants the belt's wearer a +4 competence bonus to Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Jump, and Tumble checks. *Cost of components:* 120 gp. *Time to create:* 10 hours.

Might: The creator must assemble the following ingredients upon a bracer or armband: 2 feet of metal wire, an iron circular plate set with a red stone, and a leather pouch made from the flesh of a bull and containing a shard of glass soaked in bear's blood and inscribed with a special symbol. When activated, the *charm set* provides a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength. *Cost of components:* 200 gp. *Time to create:* 16 hours.

Personality: The creator must assemble the following ingredients on an individual's person: two cloth pouches filled with rose petals and powdered rhino horn, a strap of

cloth rubbed with sea salt and bearing three gold circular charms, and a broken dagger hilt. When activated, the *charm set* provides a +2 enhancement bonus to Charisma. *Cost of components:* 200 gp. *Time to create:* 12 hours.

Resistance: The creator must assemble the following ingredients upon a vest, cloak, robe, or shirt: a small iron orb filled with incense, a bit of melted tallow with a pair of nails pushed through in a cross shape, and three coiled rat tails in a pouch made of a folded bit of chainmail and tied with a piece of purple string. When activated, the *charm set* provides a +1 resistance bonus to saving throws. *Cost of components:* 75 gp. *Time to create:* seven hours.

Speed: The creator must assemble the following ingredients upon a pair of boots or on bands meant to be wrapped around a creature's legs: three feathers from a giant eagle (or the wings from a spryte), a silver charm made to look like a horse's head, a 1-inch circle of cloth with the claw of a lizard pinned to it with a bronze pin, and two 2-foot-long pieces of leather cord soaked in urine and vinegar. When activated, the *charm set* provides a +10 bonus to speed. *Cost of components:* 300 gp. *Time to create:* 14 hours.

Striking: The creator must assemble the following ingredients upon a melee weapon: a small animal bone carved with a special symbol and a bag containing three beans, a handful of copper dust, iron filings, and ground terrifin root (found in any humid climate). The bag and bone are affixed tightly to the melee weapon's haft, handle, or pommel. When activated, the *charm set* provides a +2 enhancement bonus to attack and damage rolls. *Cost of components:* 150 gp. *Time to create:* eight hours.

Warding: The creator must assemble the following ingredients upon a shield or on an individual's person: two small animal skulls marked with special symbols, a patch of animal flesh from a paw or claw (or flesh from a humanoid's hand) painted with blue symbols, a muddy paste mixed with ground garlic and festril leaves (found only in the Harrow-deep), and at least 3 feet of cord soaked in water boiled with lizard eggs. The cord is used to affix all of the other bits to the shield or other subject, but it must remain uncut. When activated, the *charm set* provides a +2 enhancement bonus to Armor Class. *Cost of components:* 200 gp. *Time to create:* 10 hours.

NEW FEAT

CREATE CHARM SET†

You can create *charm sets* with the proper ingredients.

Prerequisites: Caster level 1st, Wisdom 13

Benefit: You have the ability and knowledge to assemble the needed components for a *charm set*, as described above.

When creating a *charm set*, you must gather the required ingredients and items first, then spend the listed time putting them together in specific, prescribed ways. The time spent must be uninterrupted and in a comfortable, quiet location, or the effort (and ingredients) is ruined. As always, a spell must activate the *charm set*, but you do not have to be the caster.

GRYNLOC ENCOUNTER (EL 7)

The PCs, on their way to explore an old ruin, encounter a band of five grynlocs and a 2nd-level runethane nystra. The grynlocs are also headed for the ruin; they're after a specific magical item there called the *three spectrum crystal*†. While at the ruin, the grynlocs attempt to avoid the characters, neither helping nor harming them. If the PCs leave them alone, everything goes fairly smoothly—until someone uncovers the *three spectrum crystal*.

If the grynlocs find it, they attempt to make off with it. All the PCs will know is that their mysterious “competitors” exploring the ruin found something and are leaving with it in their possession. If the PCs are greedy, or if they came to the ruin looking for something in particular, they're going to want to investigate. If they are also after the *three spectrum crystal* (or if they're just greedy), they may have a fight on their hands. The grynlocs want nothing but to escape with their treasure.

Should the characters find the item, the grynlocs try to get it, but they won't simply attack them outright. They may try to trade for it, and eventually may resort to thievery if they have to.

NEW MAGIC ITEM

Three Spectrum Crystal†: This clear prism is half the size of a man's fist. When held up to sunlight, it creates three rainbow patterns. Any lock the prism's light falls upon instantly opens, as long as the Open Lock DC is 25 or less.

Faint transmutation; Caster Level 1st; Craft Constant Item, *open lock*; Price 2,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

HATE REAPER

Small Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 3d10+3 (19 hp), dying/dead -2/-12

Initiative: +4

Speed: 20 feet, burrow 10 feet

AC: 18 (+1 size, +4 Dexterity, +3 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/-2

Attack: Bite +3 melee (1d4-1)

Full Attack: Bite +3 melee (1d4-1) and 2 claws -2 melee (1d3-1)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Aura of rage, inspire terror

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, tremorsense 60 feet

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +4

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 16

Skills: Sneak* +12, Spot +3

Feats: Affinity With Skill (Sneak), Compensate for Size, Iron Will

Environment: Warm plains

Organization: Solitary or pack (3-18)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 4-6 HD (Small)

Level Adjustment: +1

This small, rodentlike magical beast manipulates the emotions of humanoids and animals it encounters.

Hate reapers are so named for their magical ability to inspire a murderous rage in other creatures. They reach roughly 3 feet in length. They have coarse hair along their bodies; black, malevolent eyes; and jagged, needlelike teeth. Their handlike paws end in thick, sharp claws that they use to burrow. A hate reaper hides in loose soil, usually in a spot near a well-traveled path or a watering hole. It can amplify a creature's emotions, allowing it to incite fights between normally docile creatures. In the aftermath of the struggle, the hate reaper burrows beneath the fallen foes and feeds on their remains.

These troublesome rodents are usually solitary, though they may gather in small packs to bring an entire area under their influence. No one can guess how many violent arguments, clan feuds, and even wars these creatures have touched off. Most right-minded folk hunt them mercilessly. While hate reapers approach humanoid intelligence, they have a wholly alien outlook. Popular lore holds that reapers feed only on emotions, but gnaw marks left on their victims suggest otherwise.

Hate reapers usually stay in wilderness areas, but sometimes greedy folk use them as weapons. To cause tension between neighboring realms, a diplomat might secretly place a hate reaper near a chamber scheduled to hold a political conference. Corrupt town guards sometimes let captive hate reapers loose in taverns. After the brawl the creature touches off, the guards accept generous bribes to keep the participants out of jail.

COMBAT

Hate reapers avoid physical confrontation with their prey—they rarely take part in the fights they cause. They remain burrowed in the dirt while their victims battle nearby. After the fight, they dig to the surface and enjoy their meal.

Luckily for travelers, a hate reaper must look upon its intended victims to affect their emotions. While it can take cover during a battle, to instigate a fight it must find a convenient hiding spot to observe a path or other location. If cornered, it uses its inspire terror ability to force its foes to flee. Should that tactic fail, it attempts to burrow to safety.

* **Skills (Ex):** The thick, soft pads on a reaper's paws grant it a +4 racial bonus to all Sneak checks to move quietly.

Aura of Rage (Su): A hate reaper can focus its malevolent eyes on a single creature and push it into a bloodthirsty rage. This ability is a mind-affecting effect. The target must make a Will save (DC 13) or enter a bloodthirsty frenzy. The victim attacks the nearest accessible living creature for 2d4 rounds using its physical attacks. The rage prevents a victim from using supernatural, spell-like, or other magical abilities. Doing anything besides drawing a melee weapon and attacking with it is beyond its ability. If prevented from reaching the nearest visible target by a barrier of some sort, the victim screams and rages until the effect ends. In this state, a victim gains a +4 bonus to Strength and Constitution but suffers a -2 penalty to AC.

This ability has a range of 120 feet. The reaper must be able to see its target, though the target does not need to look upon the reaper (as with a gaze attack).

Inspire Terror (Su): By using an effect similar to aura of rage, a hate reaper can emit waves of horror that force its victims into a blind panic. All creatures within 30 feet of the reaper must make Will saves (DC 13) or flee the area for 2d4 rounds. Victims use double move actions to move as far away from the reaper as possible, though they avoid any dangerous environment and never take suicidal actions when moving. If forced into a corner, a victim stops moving but takes no action to attack. This is a mind-affecting effect.

A fleeing victim never attacks or takes other offensive action, but if it is attacked this effect immediately ends. The presence of an immediate, physical threat breaks the magical influence.

Tremorsense (Ex): A hate reaper automatically detects the presence and location of any creature or object that stands on the ground within 60 feet of it.

HATE REAPERS AND ALCHEMY

Alchemists who deal with banned or quasi-legal concoctions value hate reapers for the wide range of substances that can be extracted from them. Sages believe that a reaper's glands and organs absorb and store the emotions they evoke in other creatures, ranging from rage and fear to ecstasy and contentment. Some of these mixtures can prove beneficial. For instance, an ill patient that receives a dose of reaper extract may become energetic and hopeful, its body revived

to fight off the disease. In most cases, these creatures serve as a source of narcotics and other dangerous substances.

A skilled alchemist can extract one or more of the substances described below from the remains of a hate reaper. A reaper can yield one dose of any concoction per Hit Die. For example, the typical 3 Hit Die reaper can be used to make one dose of each of three different substances, three doses of a single concoction, or two doses of one substance and one dose of a different one. Each substance has a specific Alchemy check DC associated with it. Use the rules given for the Craft skill to determine how long it takes an alchemist to craft an item based on its gold piece cost.

Falthra: A favored alchemical tool among slavers, falthra turns a creature into a mindless, easily manipulated pawn by overwhelming it with intense feelings of boredom and depression. By emotionally enervating a creature, falthra leaves him open to suggestions and robs him of the will to resist others. A creature that ingests falthra can resist its effects with a Fortitude save (DC 16). If the save fails, the creature suffers a –6 penalty to all Will saves for 1d6 hours. In addition, the creature's handler can make an Intimidate check opposed by the creature's Will save (including the penalty) to force the creature to obey commands. If the Intimidate check succeeds, the creature must obey any orders that do not place its life in obvious danger. *Alchemy DC 20; Cost 4 gp.*

Karrath: Extracted from a hate reaper in the form of a fine, white powder, karrath induces feelings of contentment and happiness in those who ingest it. Karrath is intensely addictive. Many unfortunates become hooked on it after only a single use. In most civilized lands, karrath is strictly banned, though an active black market ensures that it is available almost everywhere. Anyone using this drug suffers a –4 competence penalty to all attack rolls, checks, and saves for 1d4 hours due to dulled reactions and foggy senses. In addition, anyone who takes the drug must make a Will save (DC 15, ignoring the –4 penalty incurred by taking karrath) or become an addict. This Difficulty Class increases by 1 for each time a user has taken karrath in the past week. Addicts spend all their available money on karrath, with many turning to robbery or going without food and shelter to fund their addiction. *Alchemy DC 20; Cost 5 gp.*

Red Fury: A single dose of this thick, deep red liquid can transform a person into a frothing, enraged whirlwind of destruction. Some warriors drink this stuff before battle to give them enhanced strength and toughness, while blotting out the fear and doubts they may feel. Villainous creatures sometimes force feed it to their minions before pushing them into battle. Any creature that drinks this concoction gains a +2 bonus to Strength and a +4 bonus on all saves against mind-affecting

effects and fear for 2d6 rounds. However, red fury robs a creature of its wits and physical coordination. It suffers a –2 penalty to Dexterity, Intelligence, and Wisdom for 1d3 hours after taking it. *Alchemy DC 25; Cost 50 gp.*

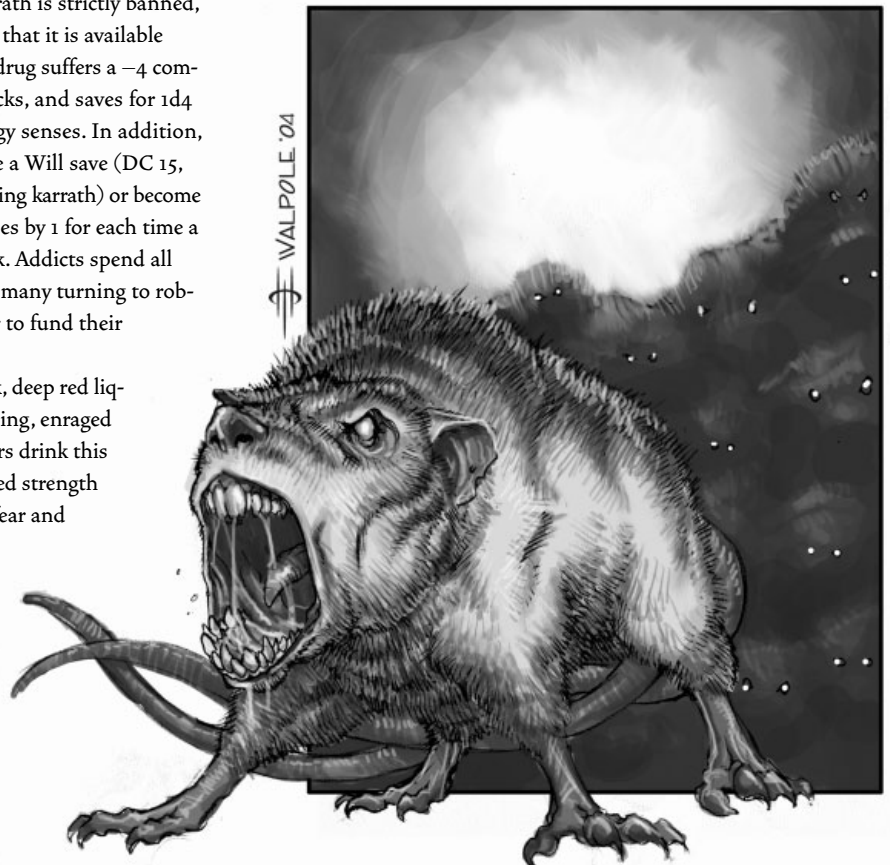
HATE REAPER ENCOUNTER (EL 3)

While traveling, one of the characters' mounts (or perhaps a pack animal) suddenly enters a berserk fury and attacks the nearest person. A hate reaper hiding nearby has learned to target mounts instead of travelers, because such creatures are more susceptible to its powers and because it knows their masters usually leave the corpses of mounts on the road rather than carry them home for burial.

HATE REAPER ENCOUNTER (EL 6)

A greedy magister is using three trained hate reapers to conduct a smear campaign against a small group of mojh akashics who dwell within an ancient library that she wants to claim. The magister positions the creatures along a pathway near the place, from where they incite wild animals to attack travelers. The magister then conceals the bodies, removing evidence that the victims were killed by something other than the mojh from the library.

The folk in the local town, already suspicious of the mojh and not aware of the magister's plan, hire the characters to track down and defeat the residents of the library. Unless the characters realize the lack of direct evidence against the mojh and investigate accordingly, they could unwittingly hand over an important collection of lore to a black-hearted fiend.



HYPNOLOX

Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 8d10+16 (60 hp), dying/dead -3/-14

Initiative: +7

Speed: 40 feet, climb 30 feet

AC: 19 (-1 size, +3 Dexterity, +7 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +8/+15

Attack: Stinger +10 melee (1d8+3 plus poison)

Full Attack: 2 stingers +10 melee (1d8+3 plus poison) and bite +5 melee (1d6+1)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/10 feet

(Face/Reach: 10 feet by 5 feet/10 feet)

Special Attacks: Glaring eyes, hypnosis, poison

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, glittering shell

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +7

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 18

Skills: Intimidate +9, Listen* +10, Sneak* +7, Spot +5

Feats: Ability Focus** (glaring eyes), Combat Reflexes, Defensive, Improved Initiative

Environment: Any subterranean

Organization: Solitary or colony (2–8 plus 3–30 slaves)

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +6

** Denotes a feat from the MM.

This insectoid creature has a long, segmented body and over a dozen legs. Its two large red eyes can cause agonizing hallucinations in creatures that gaze into them, leaving them helpless. A pair of stingers emerges from directly behind its head, mounted on bony, L-shaped limbs that it uses to stab down at its foes. The hypnolox's black carapace reflects light, sometimes dazzling the eyes of those fighting it by torchlight.

Hypnoloxes lurk in dark places beneath the earth. They are intelligent, deadly, and aggressive, with a maniacal bent on capturing and enslaving humanoid creatures. According to hypnolox legends, they once ruled the lands above and cloaked the realm in a halo of darkness. Even akashics can find no memory evidence to support such claims; nevertheless, these creatures become enraged at the merest hint that their supposed former empire never existed.

This reaction hints at a dark secret that casts the hypnoloxes in a sinister light. The few akashics who are aware of these creatures believe that they represent the polar opposite of the collective, akashic memory. According to a clouded, incomplete body of lore, hypnoloxes can literally devour memories. They manifest this effect in the form of their baleful gaze, a magical attack that can scramble a creature's mind and leave it confused. The victims never recognize that they have lost memories, as they tend to be minor. Over time, though, these losses have led to increasing gaps within the akashic memory.

Hypnoloxes relish their role as devourers of the world's shared heritage. Hateful, spiteful, and bitter over their supposed lost glory, they hide within their caves and attack any creatures that draw close. Opponents that seem useful but not overly powerful are captured and forced into servitude. The powerful hypnolox personality can pummel a creature into service through sheer force of will. These "mind slaves" gather treasure, hamper others' efforts to explore the depths of the earth, and spread misery and political instability through the land. Hypnolox slaves may poison granaries, set fire to crops, and incite riots, all with an eye toward toppling civilization.

COMBAT

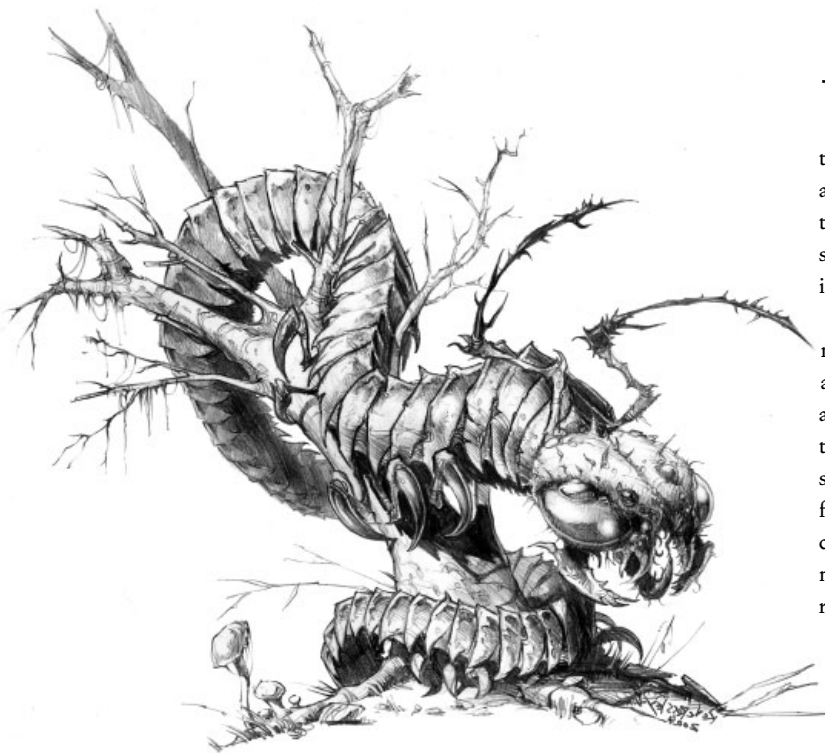
Hypnoloxes relish physical combat against humanoids, because it gives them a chance to prove their superiority. They prefer to attack intruders within tight, constrained passages to affect as many enemies as possible with their gaze attack. They focus on using their poison to render a creature unable to resist their supernatural abilities. Usually, a hypnolox picks out one foe as a potential slave and focuses on destroying the rest. This tactic can backfire if the hypnolox underestimates the strength and ability of its chosen victim.

*** Skills (Ex):** A hypnolox's long, sensitive antennae grant it a +4 racial bonus to all Listen checks. In addition, the hypnolox's dark carapace grants it a +4 racial bonus to Sneak checks made to hide in dark or shadowy areas. As a rule, if a hypnolox gains concealment from darkness, it receives this bonus.

Glaring Eyes (Su): A hypnolox's red eyes pulse and seethe with magical energy. Any creature that gazes into them risks suffering one of a variety of mind-affecting effects. The eyes' hypnotic nature allows them to induce hallucinations, confusion, intense pain, or other trauma. This is a gaze attack with a range of 30 feet and a Will save DC of 20. The save DC is Charisma based. Each time a character fails a save against this ability, roll on the following table to determine the effect.

d20	Effect
1–4	<i>Hallucinations:</i> The victim attacks a randomly determined target within his threatened area.
5–8	<i>Pain:</i> The victim takes 3d6 points of damage.
9–12	<i>Dazed:</i> The victim loses his current action.
13–16	<i>Nausea:</i> The victim takes 1d2 points of temporary Strength damage. This damage disappears at the end of the encounter.
17–20	<i>Mind Sludge:</i> The victim's thought process slows down and becomes scrambled. He takes 1d2 points of temporary Wisdom damage that disappears at the end of the encounter.

Hypnosis (Su): If a victim suffers exposure to a hypnolox's gaze attack for a full hour, the beast can infuse it with an obedient, fearful personality. This effect functions as a heightened version of *greater dominate* as cast by a 20th-level



magister. The victim is allowed a Will save (DC 14) to resist. The save DC is Charisma based. If the victim makes its save after the first hour of exposure, it must succeed at another Will save, with a -1 penalty for each consecutive hour of exposure, to break free of the hypnosis. If a victim remains exposed long enough (failing saves all the while), it can become permanently affected. Hypnoloxes take captives and forcibly expose them to this ability to create pliable, useful slaves.

Poison (Ex): A hypnolox's stingers deliver an insidious poison. While the venom does not sap a creature's vitality, it does leave a victim more vulnerable to mind-influencing effects. Victims describe the effect as a disoriented, sleepy feeling. The poison has a Fortitude save DC of 15. It causes a -2 penalty to Will saves for 10 minutes and has no secondary effect.

Glittering Shell (Ex): With its dark but reflective carapace, a hypnolox can dazzle and confuse creatures in the presence of bright lights. If it is within the illumination radius of a light source, all attacks against it have a 20 percent miss chance. This chance applies only to those who rely on normal sight.

HYPNOLOX HABITS AND PLANS

The foul hypnoloxes see their current status as the fault of the humans, giants, and even the defeated dramojh. While they are aggressive and dangerous monsters, they have become largely forgotten by surface folk, consigned to mentions in fairy tales, legends, and superstitions. This ignorance is the hypnoloxes' greatest asset, because few adventurers think to trace the actions of the creatures' slaves to their source. In many cases, a person controlled by a hypnolox is judged to be mad or under the influence of some unknown spellcaster. Hypnoloxes use this state of affairs to their advantage. While they hate humanoid life and consider

themselves patently superior, they are cunning enough to avoid lingering in one place too long. A hypnolox might capture an explorer, enslave him, send him on a mission to spread havoc on the surface, then flee the area long before investigators can track down the monster.

Despite their conceit about their abilities, hypnoloxes see no tenable method for reconquering the surface world. That attitude does not stop them from researching magical lore in a bid to find some method to regain their former glory. In the deepest regions of the underearth, small colonies gather slaves and develop new spells, weapons, and other methods for sparking a war of conquest. These strange, hidden cities consist of ancient ruins crafted by the hypnoloxes' forerunners. Here the creatures pore over stone tablets and other records in hopes of finding the key to victory. In some places, they have uncovered ancient artifacts but have yet to determine how to use them or identify their true function.

A hypnolox lair is a surreal landscape that reflects the alien minds that created it. The main cave or chamber features a tall, domed roof set with gems and crystals to reflect and enhance light. Here, hypnoloxes scribe accounts of the memories they have stolen, a grim monument to the knowledge forever denied the rest of the world. Tall, jagged spires of luminescent crystals shed a soft, blue light across the area. The rest of the lair consists of tubelike passages crafted out of a thick, resinous substance that hypnoloxes secrete. These passages are designed for creatures that can climb sheer slopes; most of them twist and turn at odd angles or lead directly up or down. These passages' interior surfaces are covered with frescoes and runes that record the settlement's history.

Until the hypnoloxes discover an overpowering weapon, they continue to wage a guerrilla war against surface-dwellers. In many realms, famine, terrible accidents, and the like have their root in a single, scheming hypnolox that evades detection while its slaves carry out its fiendish plans.

HYPNOLOX CHARACTERS

Hypnoloxes usually gain levels in magister or akashic. They use spells to supplement their inherent abilities.

HYPNOLOX ENCOUNTER (EL 8)

While traveling, the characters come across a town celebrating a harvest festival. At the height of the dancing, song, and revelry, a fire breaks out in one of the tents erected to house the celebration. As the fire rages, a gang of brigands attacks the town in the confusion. After extinguishing the fire and fighting off the bandits, the characters discover that a small child was responsible for the blaze. If the PCs investigate, they find that the child sometimes plays near a cave just outside town. By exploring the cave, they can discover that a hypnolox colony has dwelled there for many years, manipulating criminal gangs and innocent commoners to orchestrate a series of attacks and disasters in the region.

KAHRN

	ADULT	LARVA
	Large Magical Beast	Small Magical Beast
Hit Dice:	10d10+50 (105 hp), dying/dead -6/-20	2d10+6 (17 hp), dying/dead -4/-17
Initiative:	+5	+2
Speed:	30 feet	30 feet
AC:	20 (-1 size, +1 Dexterity, +10 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 19	18 (+1 size, +2 Dexterity, +5 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 16
Base Attack/Grapple:	+10/+19	+2/-2
Attack:	Claw +10 melee (1d8+5)	Claw +2 melee (1d4)
Full Attack:	4 claws +10 melee (1d6+5) and bite +8 melee (1d8+3 + poison)	4 claws +2 melee (1d4), bite +0 melee (1d6)
Space/Reach:	10 feet/10 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/10 feet)	5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)
Special Attacks:	Improved grab, rend 2d6+10, spawn, poison	Rend 2d4
Special Qualities:	Low-light vision, fast healing 5	Low-light vision, fast healing 2
Saves:	Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +5	Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 21, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 7, Wis 15, Cha 14	Str 11, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 9
Skills:	Listen +8, Spot +9	Listen +3, Spot +4
Feats:	Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Light Sleeper, Multiattack*, Power Attack	Light Sleeper, Multiattack*
Environment:	Any	Any
Organization:	Solitary	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	7	2
Treasure:	Standard	None
Advancement:	11–15 HD (Large); 16–20 HD (Huge)	3–6 HD (Small); 7–9 HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment:	—	—

*Denotes a feat from the MM.

This eight-limbed creature walks on four legs and uses four arms for battle, which is its sole preoccupation. The kahrn literally feeds on conflict and uses physical strife to reproduce. Kahrns once roamed the Central Plains as a fairly peaceful omnivore, albeit one quite capable of defending itself. Nevertheless, the kahrn herds grew thin, and the species faced extinction, unable to compete with other, more successful types of creatures.

Then came the dramojh. Experimentation by the dragon scions centuries ago transformed the remaining kahrns into very different creatures. While their appearance remained similar, the kahrns became creatures that thrived on combat. Bred to be soldiers, the kahrns were given minds greater than those of simple beasts, plus entirely new reproductive and digestive systems. Now kahrns do not eat flesh or plant life, but subsist on combat. The act of battle—the strife, the danger, the anger, the pain, the challenge—magically nourishes them. To gain sustenance, they must be involved in the combat; their feeding cannot be a passive act.

Moreover, combat fertilizes embryos within the creatures, allowing them to reproduce asexually in the midst of conflict. A bud forms on a kahrn's back, growing quickly with a cracking and snapping noise (the sound of bones and tissue

rapidly expanding). The bud bursts, spraying fluid and blood everywhere, and a kahrn larva spurts out, landing on the ground behind its parent. It's an unsettling display to behold, but it inflicts no real harm on the parent kahrn—its natural rapid healing takes care of it well. A kahrn can reproduce only once every six months.

The creatures love to fight, and they like combat to last a long time. With supernaturally fast regenerative abilities, they enjoy a remarkable capacity to stay in a fight. Sometimes folk in an area frequented by kahrns use the phrase “heals faster than a kahrn” to refer to someone who recovers from an injury or illness quickly. Further, and even stranger, their venom possesses healing qualities that keep their opponents alive and fighting. Kahrns hate it when foes run away or die too quickly. Sometimes they attempt to antagonize creatures that otherwise would not fight them: They strike their foe, give chase, and even make belligerent, bleating, and annoying noises. Kahrns may even observe another creature for a while to discern the best way to anger or provoke it—attacking the young or weak members of a group, damaging or stealing an important item, and so on. They also like to corner foes or trap them in an area from which they cannot easily escape.



Kahrns once roamed in small herds but now are solitary creatures, as they no longer need one another to reproduce. Kahrns are immune to their own healing venom, so they dislike fighting each other.

Adult kahrns stand about 8 feet high and are about 6 feet long. They have broad heads and muscular arms and legs. Their bodies bend in the middle of the torso, with the arms connected to the upper part and the legs to the lower. Coarse yellow-brown hair covers a kahrn's body. Their eyes are large, bulging, and white. Kahrns are usually Unbound.

COMBAT

For obvious reasons, the kahrn seeks out combat. Yet it enters into a fight carefully. It has no interest in fighting an opponent it cannot defeat. In combat, it usually refrains from using its bite. However, if a weak opponent appears to be faltering, the kahrn uses the healing poison in its bite to restore and sustain it, so it can continue to fight. The kahrn will never use its bite on an obviously superior foe.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a kahrn must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can immediately rend.

Rend (Ex): A kahrn that successfully grapples with one claw or hits with two or more claw attacks latches onto the

opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an extra 2d6+10 points of damage.

Spawn (Su): After 4 rounds of continuous combat, the kahrn can, as a full-round action, attempt to reproduce. The spawn forms as a bud on its back, which spurts open the following round, producing a larval kahrn. The creature can use this ability only once every six months.

Poison (Ex): The kahrn's bite carries a poison that actually heals 2d8 hit points of the creature it affects.

Injury, Fortitude save DC 20, no secondary effect. The saving throw DC is Constitution based.

Fast Healing (Ex): A kahrn with this ability rapidly heals damage, allowing it to recover quickly from even the most grievous wounds. Adults enjoy fast healing 5, while larvae gain fast healing 2.

KAHRN LARVAE

Kahrn larvae look like smaller versions of the parents. They feed on combat like adults, and they are born hungry, eager to join

in the battle that gave them life. They are about 4 feet high and 3 feet long. Their hairless bodies are covered in moist grey flesh. After about a year, the larvae mature into adults, but they are forced to fend for themselves immediately.

Their rend attack inflicts only 2d4 points of damage. They have no venom, nor can they create spawn.

KAHRN ENCOUNTER (EL 7)

A champion of freedom enlists the aid of the player characters. It seems that a band of brigands has captured a wild beast and keeps it in a pit. They throw slaves into the pit to fight the monster for sport, and occasionally renowned warriors volunteer to go into the pit to earn a reputation for themselves. The champion wants the PCs to help him defeat the brigands and free the creature. The champion vows to hold off the captors while the characters go into the pit to free the monster.

However, the captive creature is a kahrn. It doesn't want to be freed—it loves its lot and doesn't mind the conditions in the pit, for it gets all the fighting it can handle. It's even managed to spawn a couple of times, its larvae sold off to the highest bidder (presumably to happily engage in combat in other fighting pits). The kahrn fights the PCs, resisting any attempt at "rescue."

LASHER BEAST

Large Aberration

Hit Dice: 6d8+12 (39 hp), dying/dead -3/-15

Initiative: +0

Speed: 40 feet

AC: 18 (-1 size, +9 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 18

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+10

Attack: Lashing tendrils +6 melee (1d6+4 plus poison)

Full Attack: 2 lashing tendrils +6 melee (1d6+4 plus poison) and bite +1 melee (1d8+1)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/10 feet

(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/10 feet)

Special Attacks: Grasping hooks, poison

Special Qualities: Blindsight 60 feet, DR 5/magic (or 5/+1), immunity to poison, light sensitivity

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +6

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 13, Cha 8

Skills: Listen +5, Sneak* +11, Spot +6

Feats: Great Fortitude, Opportunistic Attack†, Weapon Focus (lashing tendrils), Weapon Specialization (lashing tendrils)

Environment: Any subterranean

Organization: Solitary, pair, or pack (3-24)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 7-12 HD (Large); 13-20 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: +4

This monster has dull, grey skin, an eyeless, beaked face, and long arms that end in fleshy tendrils. In battle, it lashes its enemy with these tendrils, exposing the foe to a variety of toxins delivered by means of small hooks within them. A lasher beast can use these hooks to capture its opponents, holding them in place while it continues to pump venom into them.

Lasher beasts dwell in caverns and passages beneath the earth, where they hunt a variety of monsters. They are not normally aggressive toward humanoid explorers, but they experience a strange reaction to light sources. They are eyeless, but their skin is sensitive to light of any sort. They do not take damage from this sensitivity under most circumstances, but the discomfort annoys them and causes them to seek out and extinguish all but the dimmest lights. For this reason, lasher beasts commonly attack adventurers and other surface-dwellers who wander into their territories.

While they are too simple to establish a formal culture or civilization, lasher beasts usually congregate in large caverns where they hunt as packs. They are fiercely territorial among themselves and have been known to wage small wars for control of hunting grounds. During these chaotic melees, lasher beasts sometimes strike out at all creatures they encounter, making them unpredictable and potentially deadly enemies.

The lasher beasts' primary value lies in their ability to synthesize a wide variety of toxins. Their tendrils have a number of glands that produce poison at a prodigious rate when these creatures engage in battle. A creature may suffer from a poison that saps its strength from one blow and then be exposed to one that drains its agility on the next attack. Some animal handlers have learned to control the poisons a captive lasher beast produces by varying its diet. Since these monsters break down food and use it in part to create their venom, feeding them a specific blend of herbs and alchemical mixtures can yield particular types of poison.

COMBAT

In battle, a lasher beast prefers to focus on a single target to slowly overwhelm with its poison. It prefers to attach both sets of its tendrils to a single victim, pumping him full of poison while gnawing on him with bite attacks.

Taking advantage of their natural camouflage, lasher beasts usually lurk near well-traveled pathways in their native environment. They wait for a solitary target to pass by before attacking. They sometimes attack obviously powerful or heavily armed targets in hopes of quickly subduing them with poison.

Explorers must take particular care to avoid attracting lasher beasts with a light source. These monsters attack anyone bearing a torch or similar item in preference to other opponents. Luckily, illusions and other tricks can deflect their attention.

* **Skills (Ex):** A lasher beast's dull grey hide allows it to hide in underground areas with relative ease. It gains a +15 racial bonus to all Sneak checks to hide from sight while in a subterranean environment, for a total skill modifier of +11 after accounting for size.

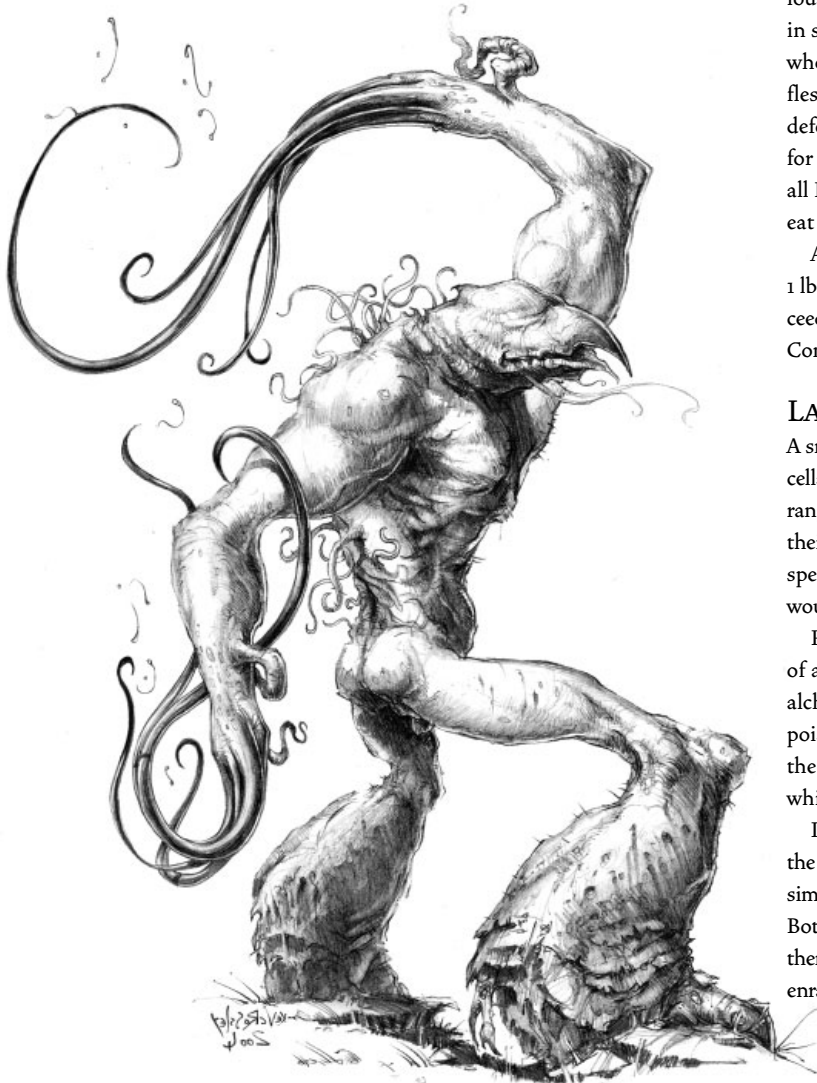
Grasping Hooks (Ex): A lasher beast's tendrils are sown with sharp, vicious hooks that allow it to catch and hold creatures it attacks. If the creature hits an opponent with its tendril attack, it may initiate a grapple as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Should the lasher get a hold, it automatically deals tendril damage and exposes its target to its poison on its action as long as it maintains the hold. The lasher's opponents suffer a -4 competence penalty to all grapple checks to break free because of these hooks. A lasher beast can sink both sets of tendrils into one target or it may take hold of two separate opponents.

Poison (Ex): Unlike other creatures that deliver a poison attack, a lasher beast uses a wide variety of venom. Its poison glands create variable poisonous mixtures that have different effects on targets each round. These poisons always require a Fortitude save (DC 15) to resist; each time a target fails its save, randomly determine the exact nature of the poison by rolling 1d4 and referring to the following table. A lasher beast's poisons are delivered via injury in amounts too small and weak to deal any secondary damage.

d4	Damage
1	1d3 points of temporary Strength damage
2	1d3 points of temporary Dexterity damage
3	1d3 points of temporary Constitution damage
4	1 point of temporary damage to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution

Light Sensitivity (Ex): Lasher beasts find all but the dimmest light distasteful and annoying. They attack creatures that carry light sources in preference to other opponents and even strike at creatures that linger near illumination—their simple minds draw a connection between the disturbance and the creatures they find close to it. If exposed to sunlight or some other intense source of bright light, a lasher beast takes 1d4 points of damage per round until it finds protection from the light. Merchants who bring lasher beasts to the surface usually use thick cloaks and coverings to protect them.

Immunity to Poison (Ex): As a side effect of the variety of toxic materials that flow through their systems, lasher beasts have developed immunity to all poisons. They automatically succeed at any Fortitude save to resist the effect of venom.



LASHER BEAST POISONS

Some enterprising and criminal-minded merchants capture lasher beasts and use them to create poisons they can sell on the black market. If it is fed a carefully designed diet of meats, spices, and chemicals, a lasher beast can create specifically designed poisons for use on weapons or in food and drink. Devising the proper diet to create a poison requires a Knowledge (dangerous beasts) check (DC 25) and one week of experimentation and observation. With a successful check, a character can create an injury or ingested poison that deals 1d2 points of temporary ability score damage as its primary and secondary effects and has a Fortitude save DC of 13. The creator chooses the affected ability when creating the poison. One dose of lasher beast poison costs 25 gp in raw materials to produce, primarily rare and expensive herbs and foods to feed the creature. A single dose costs 50 gp on the open market.

LASHER BEAST ANTIDOTE

Underworld explorers have discovered that a steady diet of lasher beast flesh can help them develop a strong resistance to a variety of poisons. A lasher beast's body is rife with noxious chemicals, but only at its tendrils are they concentrated in strong enough quantities to pose a true risk to anyone who eats them. By ingesting a small amount of lasher beast flesh each day, a humanoid's body slowly builds up improved defenses against poison. A humanoid following this regimen for seven consecutive days gains a +2 circumstance bonus on all Fortitude saves against poison as long as she continues to eat lasher beast flesh on a daily basis.

A one-day dose of lasher beast flesh costs 10 gp and weighs 1 lb. The first time a character ingests this flesh, she must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10) or take 1 point of temporary Constitution damage as her body adjusts to the substance.

LASHER BEAST ENCOUNTER (EL 6)

A small group of alchemists keeps several lasher beasts in a cellar beneath their workshop. These researchers sell the usual range of useful alchemical items, but this activity is a front for their dealings with assassins, thieves, and other outlaws. They specialize in crafting poisons and antidotes, endeavors that would be impossible without their lasher beasts.

Recently, one of the alchemists' customers—the leader of a gang of thieves—has launched a plan to ruin the alchemists after they sold him a batch of improperly crafted poison. He and his minions sneak into the workshop, break the lock on the lasher beasts' pen, and unleash the monsters while the streets near the shop are crowded with people.

If the heroes intervene, first and foremost they must deal with the lasher beasts—but they may also become embroiled in the simmering war between the alchemists and the gang of thieves. Both sides may see the PCs as a threat, with the thieves blaming them for ruining their scheme for revenge and the alchemists enraged that strangers are interfering in their business.

LASTROGOS (SPIRIT DEVOURER)

Medium Aberration

Hit Dice: 9d8 (40 hp), dying/dead -1/-11

Initiative: +5

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 21 (+5 Dexterity, +6 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+7

Attack: Bite +11 melee (1d8+1)

Full Attack: Bite +11 melee (1d8+1) and bite +9 melee (1d4) and 2 claws +9 melee (1d4)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet

(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Paralysis gaze, devour spirits

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, see invisibility,

DR 10/magic (or 10/+1), SR 18

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +9

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 20, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 17, Cha 19

Skills: Knowledge (magic) +4, Listen +13, Sneak +10, Wilderness Survival +8

Feats: Defensive Stance, Mobility, Multiattack*, Track^B, Weapon Finesse

Environment: Any land or underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: Triple standard

Advancement: 10–18 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

**Denotes a feat from the MM.*

Although there are creatures far more powerful than the lastrogos, few are as feared. For even the common folk know that if a lastrogos, or “spirit devourer,” slays you, it eats your soul, destroying it forever. Throughout the Lands of the Diamond Throne, people have many different ideas about what happens to one’s soul when one dies, but just about all would agree that utter destruction by a spirit devourer is a terrible thing. The exceptions, of course, are the Cultists of the Brief Respite, who welcome the reprieve when their time comes, as they believe the soul suffers only torture and pain when not incarnated in the world. In fact, more than one adherent to this bleak belief has sought out a spirit devourer as a final quest, in order to avoid torment in the hereafter.

Even undead spirits have much to fear from the spirit devourer, a creature who cannot only affect incorporeal creatures as easily as corporeal ones, but whose touch renders them immobile and unable to act—the easier to devour them.

Despite its two dangerous-looking mouths, the lastrogos does not eat meat. It literally eats spirits. Created by terrible sorcery in the alchemical pits of the dramojh, the spirit devourers roam the world today still looking for food. The

dramojh bred them to stalk and annihilate their victims, so they could never be brought back. The lastrogos proved effective but difficult to control, so the dramojh did not create many. The creatures appear able to reproduce asexually, laying one to two fertilized eggs every two to three years. These adults are too selfish to care for their young, however, so the little ones must fend for themselves as soon as they hatch.

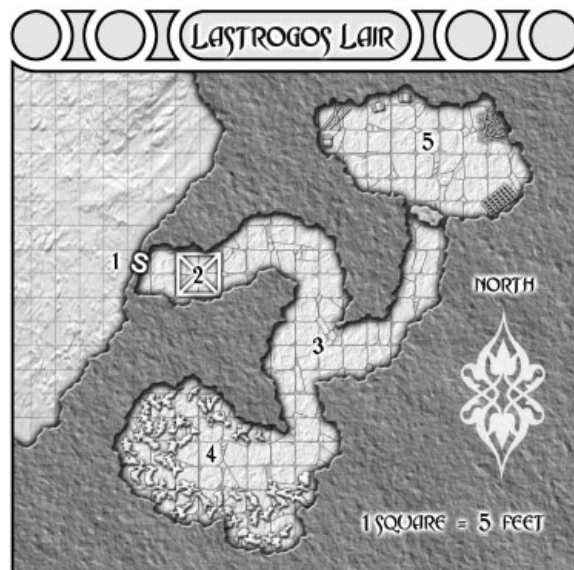
This creature looks, at first glance, like a humanoid with grey and green mottled flesh. However, a closer inspection reveals that what one might take to be hair on the creature’s head is actually many tiny, flagellalike tendrils surrounding a large maw at the very apex of its head. This secondary mouth can open wide enough to reveal that, unlike a human, the lastrogos does not house its brain inside its skull (instead, it lies within the creature’s chest).

COMBAT

A lastrogos can subsist on the spirits of small animals and vermin, but it prefers those of more intelligent creatures, from which it gains more sustenance. It likes to attack from ambush, usually on a well-trod path far from its lair. Its strategy involves using its gaze to paralyze all threats. Should some foes resist its gaze at first, it mounts a defensive fight until all are paralyzed. Then, it can slay and devour spirits without worry for its own safety.

Paralysis Gaze (Su): The creature’s gaze paralyzes foes for 1d6+2 rounds. It has a 40-foot range (Fortitude save, DC 18). The saving throw DC is Charisma based.

Devour Spirits (Su): The lastrogos can strike incorporeal creatures with no miss chance. Its touch immobilizes an



incorporeal creature for 1d6+2 minutes (Will saving throw, DC 18, to negate).

If the spirit devourer slays a corporeal creature, the victim must succeed at a Will save (DC 18) or the lastrogos eats its spirit. Such a victim cannot be revived or raised from the dead, as if a *permanent rest* spell had been cast upon it.

See Invisibility (Su): At all times, the lastrogos can see invisible creatures and objects, including incorporeal creatures and objects.

LASTROGOS LAIR

Lastrogos keep a lair, usually underground or in some other dark, dank place. Typically they guard their lairs with traps, due to their compulsive need to hoard valuables: gems, gold, artwork, weaponry—anything they can get their hands on. Such treasure is a symbol of status among their kind (since they produce nothing, it is, of course, all stolen or collected from dead victims).

1. Secret Door. A successful Search check (DC 24) uncovers the entrance, which is craftily sealed with an innocuous stone slab.

2. Pit Trap. Beyond the entrance lies a covered pit, 10 feet across and 30 feet deep, filled with jagged rocks. Those who fall in suffer 3d6 points of damage from the fall and 2d6 points from the rocks. A Reflex save (DC 20) allows one to avoid it altogether. A Search check (DC 20) reveals the trap, and a Disable Device check (DC 20) disables it.

3. Rockfall Trap. Those who enter this area may snag a tripwire, which brings a precarious load of rocks down upon them. Anyone in the area suffers 4d6 points of damage (Reflex save, DC 20, reduces damage by half). A Search check (DC 22) reveals the trap, and a Disable Device check (DC 28) disables it.

4. Sleeping Chamber. This room, where the lastrogos lives, is filled with slain creatures—still intact but in various states of decay.

5. Hoard. This chamber is sealed with another stone slab, not concealed but very heavy (about 900 lbs.). Here, the lastrogos keeps all of its valuables. The pile amounts to around 10,200 gp worth of treasure, on average.

LASTROGOS ENCOUNTER (EL 7)

The animate, free-willed spirit of a long-dead woman contacts the player characters and pleads for their help. If they will listen, she explains that a number of ghosts and spirits



still tied to the world inhabit a nearby ruined castle. However, in the last few days, a lastrogos has arrived at the castle and made its lair there. This spirit devourer has made short work of a number of the spirits, eating them and destroying them forever. The spirits are nearly powerless against it, she says. Some have simply fled the castle, but others are bound to the place and cannot leave. She herself can only speak with the PCs for a short time before she must return.

The woman's spirit begs them to come and slay or drive off the lastrogos, offering them ancient treasure still hidden in the castle as a reward for their efforts. If the PCs agree, sure enough, they find the spirit devourer within the castle ruins, its lair beneath the structure in the old dungeons.

MUD SLIME

Medium Ooze (Aquatic)

Hit Dice: 5d10+10 (37 hp), dying/dead -3/-15

Initiative: +0

Speed: 20 feet, swim 40 feet

AC: 14 (+4 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+5

Attack: Pseudopod +5 melee (1d8+2)

Full Attack: 3 pseudopods +5 melee (1d8+2)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Envelop, improved grab

Special Qualities: Amphibious, natural camouflage, tremorsense 60 feet, ooze traits

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 11, Con 15, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 4

Skills: Listen* +10, Spot* +10

Feats: —

Environment: Temperate marshes

Organization: Solitary, pair, or clutch (3–12)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 6–10 HD (Medium); 11–18 HD (Large)

A mud slime is an oval-shaped pile of sludge that resembles the muck found at the bottom of a river or stream. It lurks along the edges of ponds and creeks, waiting for a creature to draw near it. When it attacks, it rears up to engulf its target and suffocate it. It also sometimes hides in deep mud or swamp water. In either case, its dark coloration often allows it to catch its opponents by surprise. In a few cases, these creatures serve as watchers and sentinels. Their finely honed senses allow them to detect intruders, even those hidden by magic.

Mud slimes are a common danger in most swamp areas. They lack the ability to distinguish dangerous prey from creatures they can easily overwhelm, prompting them to attack almost anything that draws near. Their aggressive behavior is driven by neither malice nor evil. They need tremendous amounts of food to sustain themselves. Once a mud slime has devoured a large amount of food, it enters a dormant state much like sleep. This state can last up to five days.

Although they are mindless, mud slimes make excellent guardians and lookouts. A mud slime's entire outer membrane is one large sensory organ. The creature can "feel" sound and light by detecting the variations and patterns in sonic and light energy in the environment around it, allowing it to see and hear as a human. It can also sense changes in pressure and the vibrations in the ground and

water, allowing it to instantly pinpoint the location of any creature that draws close. Even invisible or concealed intruders cannot avoid a mud slime's detection. These abilities, combined with the mud slime's voracious appetite, make it a good choice for watching over an isolated or hidden pathway. Few individuals let one loose in an area they expect to use, because a mud slime is difficult to control and unable to recognize allies. Instead, the slimes are left to wander sewers, mine passages, and abandoned tunnels that lead to important locations that have fallen out of use.

COMBAT

A mud slime knows only one combat tactic—it simply lunges at the nearest target and attempts to engulf him. The creature is incapable of realizing that smaller or unarmored targets make easier prey. Although it can move on land (and will do so to chase down a target trying to avoid it), typically a mud slime waits in a pool of water and strikes at the first thing that comes within its reach.

* **Skills (Ex):** Due to their keen senses and the nature of their outer membrane, mud slimes gain a +10 racial bonus to all Listen and Spot checks.

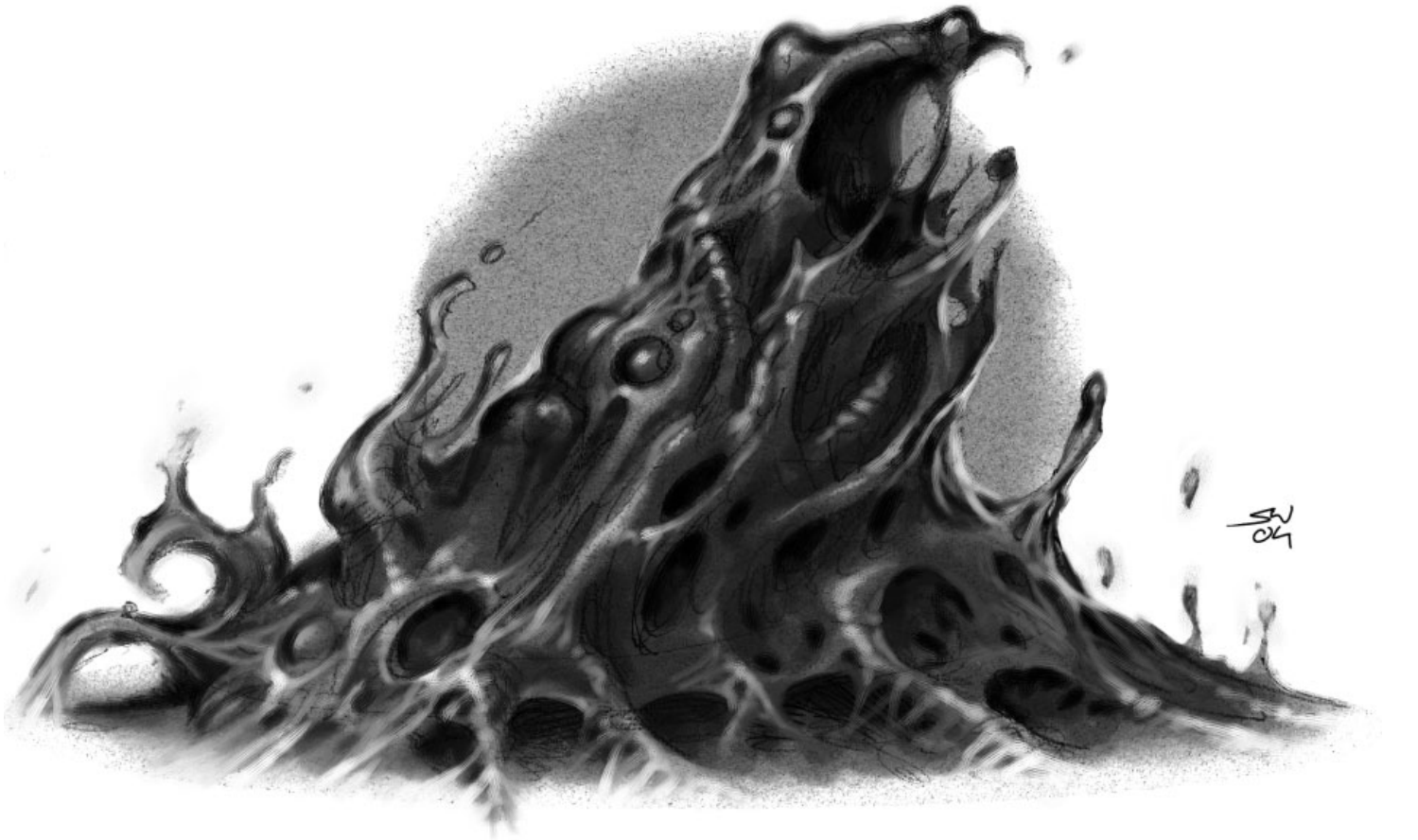
Envelop (Ex): With a successful grapple check, a mud slime can engulf a target of Medium size or smaller. A slime that has engulfed a victim can take no actions except for holding its prey in a death grip as its digestive juices burn him with acid. The victim takes 3d6 points of acid damage each round on the slime's turn. He may attempt to break free with a successful grapple check, but the slime gains a +4 bonus to its check to maintain its grip. A victim's allies can attempt to cut him free. Any attack with a slashing weapon that deals more than 10 points of damage denies the slime its +4 bonus to the grapple check and gives the victim a +4 bonus. The victim's allies may also attempt to pull their friend free with a Strength check (DC 25).

Improved Grab (Ex): If a mud slime hits an opponent with its pseudopod attack, it may initiate a grapple as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Amphibious (Ex): Mud slimes can breathe both water and air, allowing them to both survive underwater and crawl across land.

Natural Camouflage (Ex): A mud slime gains a +12 competence bonus to Sneak checks made to hide while it remains motionless in a watery or muddy area.

Tremorsense (Ex): A mud slime automatically detects the presence and location of any creature or object that stands on the ground or in the water within 60 feet of it.



CAPTURING AND USING A MUD SLIME

Most individuals who want to capture a mud slime start by plying the creature with tremendous amounts of food. A slime that has gorged itself falls into a sleeplike state, after which hunters can easily drag it into a large chest or other container, transport it to a distant location, and set it loose to watch over that location. Since these creatures are nonintelligent, training them to perform specific tasks is impossible; however, their very nature makes them ideal guardians. Once they are deposited in an area, their keen senses and boundless appetites make it difficult for visitors to that area to sneak past them. At the same time, they lack the intellect to accept bribes or turn on their master.

MUD SLIME ENCOUNTER (EL 3)

A crime lord active in the town where the characters are currently staying had been using several mud slimes to watch over a passage that leads from the town's sewers into the basement of his hideout. The criminal had a magic item that enabled him to fly, allowing him to easily avoid his own

guards. Recently his competitors eliminated the crime lord and seized most of his goods. Rather than fight the slimes to get access to his hideout, they knocked holes in the passage near where the guards were located and waited for the slimes to escape into the sewers.

For the last several weeks, the slimes have been enjoying their newfound freedom. They have devoured several beggars who had been living in the sewers and have spawned many young. The disappearances have caught the attention of authorities, who originally suspected slavers or kidnappers were behind them. As the slime population grows, the monsters become more aggressive in seeking meals—a few of them even venture out of the sewers in search of food, which makes the true reason for the disappearances clear. If the characters want to help, they must descend into the sewers to vanquish the slimes before their population grows so great that the townsfolk cannot hope to defeat them.

NAVVER'S CURSE

Large Fey

Hit Dice: 9d6+18 (49 hp), dying/dead -3/-14

Initiative: +4

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 27 (-1 size, +4 Dexterity, +5 natural, +9 armor), touch 13, flat-footed 23

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+11

Attack: Greatsword +7 melee (2d6+4)

Full Attack: Greatsword +7 melee (2d6+4) and short sword +7 melee (1d6+2)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/10 feet

(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/10 feet)

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, curses

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, SR 20, DR 10/magic (or 10/+1)

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +7

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 19

Skills: Climb +14, Concentration +10, Sneak +12, Spot +11

Feats: Ambidexterity, Iron Will, Natural Swordsman, Skill Focus (Sneak), Two-Weapon Fighting

Environment: Temperate or cold woods

Organization: Solitary or pair

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +1

The faerie creatures known as Navver's curse are tall, lithe beings of an awkward grace, clad in dragonscale armor and wielding Devanian weapons. To understand these forest-dwelling creatures, one must first know the story of Navver.

Navver was a loresong faen living in the Harrowdeep who wanted to engage in the metamorphosis unique to his people and transform himself into a spryte. He wandered deep within the dangerous woods that were his home to find a place he thought appropriate. As he tried to create his chrysalis, however, he was attacked by the murderous faen known as darklings (see "Beyond the Diamond Throne" in Chapter One of The Diamond Throne). They destroyed his partially created chrysalis and wounded him grievously, leaving him for dead. When his friends came to check on him days later, he still lay unconscious. However, the psychotic darklings remained nearby and ambushed Navver's friends, slaying them all. When Navver awoke, days later still, he expected to find himself transformed, for a terrible head wound had destroyed his memory of the attack. Instead, he found his chrysalis destroyed and everyone he had ever loved dead all around him.

First Navver thought he had acquired some dreaded curse or disease, like vampirism, and became convinced that he had killed his friends. He wandered the Harrowdeep engulfed in sorrow, con-

templating suicide. Finally, he decided to complete the metamorphosis, hoping the transformation into a spryte would not only cure him of his affliction but would ease his conscience as well. Alas, he found he could no longer create a chrysalis—the ability was lost to him in the trauma he had suffered.

At that point, the young faen lost all hope and faith. When he found a nearby faen village, he thought to give in to the murderous curse that gripped him. He began murdering the faen villagers one by one, whenever he could find one alone. He thought these acts would ease the terrible feelings inside him, convinced as he was that he had become some kind of vampire or cursed killer. This not being the case, of course, his actions only made things much worse. Finally, he left the village he had preyed upon, just as the villagers were readying to mobilize against him.

Deeper in the woods, Navver encountered another band of darklings. As they swarmed around him, his memories came rushing back. He realized it was the darklings who had killed his friends, not he. The horror of what he had done in the village crashed upon him in a wave far worse than the physical attacks of his assailants. He did not struggle or defend himself. He took each blow and each lash as a mark of shame, justice, and as a testament to the cruel whims of fate. As he took his deathblow, Navver spoke a terrible curse, bequeathing his soul to the Harrowdeep if that dark forest would in turn manifest itself as a force of terror that reflected the horrors perpetrated upon him.

Thus, the creatures known as Navver's curse rose from the forest and have been a bane in that region ever since.

Also called "dread slayers," the creatures collectively known as Navver's curse not only wield their weapons with prowess, but also have a number of spell-like abilities enabling them to wreak havoc. They live only to stalk and kill those they find in the forest, particularly faen. And—perhaps due to Navver's quest to become one—they hold a special hatred for sprytes. Navver's curse are malicious creatures of hatred and spite.

A Navver's curse stands 9 feet tall but weighs only 300 lbs. (without armor). Its flesh is pale, its body gaunt. The eyes of a Navver's curse are pits of churning darkness and seething spite. Their armor and weapons—said to be items lost within the Harrowdeep or worn by those who died there and were never recovered—are always ornate and well cared for. These creatures do not reproduce normally; their numbers are finite. When they are finally all slain, the world will be free from the curse.

Navver's curse speak Faen.

COMBAT

A Navver's curse attacks when it is ready, and not before. It almost always knows the surrounding terrain and makes use of it if possible. With its spell-like abilities it sneaks up on unwary victims, then strikes without mercy. Once it enters combat, it does not flee—except to maneuver for a more advantageous position or to lure foes into a trap.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): A Navver's curse can cast the following spells as a 7th-level magister: 3/day—*gusting wind*, *mind stab*, *touch of pain*, *veil of darkness*; 1/day—*bind with plants*, *cloak of darkness*, *scream*, *silent sheath*, *woodland prison*. The save DC against these spells is DC 12 + spell level.

Curses (Su): Once per day, a Navver's curse can attempt a touch attack that carries with it a terrible curse. Those touched should make a Will saving throw (DC 18). If they fail, they begin to lose their will and succumb to lethargy and despair. It starts slowly. Immediately after the curse takes effect, victims simply suffer a –2 morale penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, and checks. After 24 hours, they suffer 1d3 points of temporary Wisdom damage, and suffer a like amount each day. After three days, the cursed victims must make a Will saving throw (DC 18) every six hours or spend the next six hours doing nothing, unwilling to take any action except to defend themselves. After three weeks (assuming the victim has not completely succumbed to the Wisdom damage), victims lose all will to live and fall into catatonia, punctuated by a daily suicide attempt (a victim can stave off the suicidal urge with another Will save, DC 18, but not the catatonia).

Further, when a Navver's curse dies, it inflicts a curse on all within 30 feet. Those within range must make Will saves (DC 18) or earn the enmity of the land itself. For most characters, this curse imposes a –2 circumstance penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, and checks whenever they touch the ground. For greenbonds, however, it means a loss of all supernatural and spell-like class abilities and all spellcasting ability.

Both curses last until removed.

NAVVER'S CURSE CHARACTERS

A few Navver's curse have gained levels in mage blade, using their Devanian greatswords as their athames.

NAVVER'S CURSE ENCOUNTER (EL 5)

The PCs make their way through the Harrowdeep, experiencing all of its dangers and mystery. Those who succeed at appropriate Listen or Spot checks realize they are being followed. A Navver's curse is after them—but they do not know it yet. If they try to find out what's behind them, it flees under *cloak of darkness* and uses *silent sheath* as well. Only when they reach a river gully with rocky walls rising up on either side (known to the curse, but not to the characters), does the creature strike. It seeks to trap them in this gully, for it knows that, unless they wade into the river, the ravine is a dead end. The shore on either side of the river eventually disappears. PCs that enter the river must make Balance checks (DC 18) or be knocked off their feet and carried off by the surprisingly strong current. They must make Swim



checks (DC 20) just to keep their heads above water. Worse yet, the river carries them to a waterfall, where they tumble down 40 feet onto the rocks below (4d6 points of damage). Should the Navver's curse survive the encounter, it follows them down the river in an attempt to finish them off.

NIGHT BEAST

Large Undead

Hit Dice: 14d12 (91 hp), dead 0

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 feet, fly 60 feet (perfect)

AC: 17 (–1 size, +2 Dexterity, +6 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+13

Attack: Claw +9 melee (2d4+2 plus energy drain)

Full Attack: 2 claws +9 melee (2d4+2 plus energy drain) and bite +3 melee (1d6+1 plus energy drain)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/10 feet
(Face/Reach: 10 feet by 10 feet/10 feet)

Special Attacks: Choking darkness, death field, energy drain, spells

Special Qualities: Amorphous, darkvision 60 feet, DR 10/good (or 20/+2), SR 20, sunlight vulnerability, undead traits

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +14

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 14, Con –, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 16

Skills: Balance +20, Intimidate +21, Listen +21, Search +20, Sneak* +20, Tumble +20

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Corrupt Mage, Flyby Attack, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (claws)

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 10

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +4

Beings of pure, liquid shadow, night beasts are said to be intelligent shards of the raw stuff of the Dark. The monster appears as an amorphous cloud of dark material that drifts through the air and sometimes crawls along the ground. In battle, it manifests a leering, skull-like face and two long arms that end in jagged claws that can rend and tear their enemies.

A night beast is called into the world by a power-mad undead creature or an ambitious living creature that seeks to expand its might. By conducting a blasphemous ritual known as the Song of Infinite Dark, an undead creature unleashes its inner soul and binds it with the raw substance of the Dark. With the ritual complete, the creature transforms into a night beast. It retains any class levels it may have had, along with its memories. In its new form, it serves as an avatar of destruction, slaughtering all living things it encounters and leaving a trail of death in its wake. Simple plants turn brown and die at a night beast's merest touch; an entire village can fall to this rampaging monster in the course of a night.

Litorians greatly fear these creatures, for they are a continuing menace on the plains the litorians call home. Many night beasts were once litorians who, after having been exiled

from their tribes for some horrid crime, have returned as night beasts to exact their vengeance. While these monsters are found almost all over the world, nowhere are they as common as on the plains the litorians roam. In this region, night beasts maintain a tradition of approaching obvious outcasts and pariahs with an offer of tremendous power. They supply the secrets of the Song of Infinite Dark to such loners, hoping to corrupt them to the Dark with promises of great power and an opportunity to reap vengeance against their tribes. This act of recruitment is the only known case of a night beast communicating or working with living creatures.

COMBAT

A night beast is a cunning adversary that maximizes the use of its abilities to overcome its enemies. Driven by an unquenchable need to drain the life from all creatures, it is a vicious foe that grants no quarter.

A night beast uses its choking darkness ability against weaker creatures and those that have already suffered serious wounds. While this maneuver leaves the night beast vulnerable to attack, it can quickly overwhelm enemies that are on the verge of defeat. Its death field ability benefits nearby undead, causing many night beasts to collect undead allies as a coterie of servants. The creature considers these followers to be nothing more than disposable minions. It uses them to occupy opponents while it moves into position for an ambush or escapes from a powerful foe.

* **Skills (Ex):** A night beast is virtually impossible to see in areas of shadow or darkness. It gains a +10 racial bonus to all Sneak checks made to hide in areas that are dimly lit or darkened.

Choking Darkness (Ex): A night beast's physical form is akin to liquid night, allowing it to grasp its opponents and drown them within its embrace. A night beast can opt to end its move in the same space as an opponent. If it completely covers its foe, the target takes 8d6 points of damage. A Fortitude save (DC 20) halves this damage. Using this ability counts as a standard action, since the beast must envelop the creatures trapped within it. A creature within this area gains a +2 competence bonus on all attacks against the beast. A creature within a night beast gains full concealment from those outside of it and a 30 percent concealment miss chance against those also caught in it.

Death Field (Su): The area around a night beast is permeated with negative energy. All living creatures within it lose their strength and stamina while undead ones grow stronger. All living creatures within a 30-foot radius of a night beast must make Fortitude saves (DC 20) or suffer a –2 penalty to Strength and Constitution for 1d10 minutes. Once a creature succeeds at a save against this effect, it does not need to check against that specific night beast's death field again for 24 hours. Undead within this area gain a +2



profane bonus to Strength as the night beast's aura fortifies their dark nature.

Energy Drain (Su): If a night beast hits an opponent with a claw attack or a bite attack, that opponent also receives one negative level. The Fortitude save DC to remove any negative levels a night beast inflicts is 20.

Spells: A night beast prepares and casts spell as a 7th-level magister.

Amorphous (Ex): As a free action, a night beast can shape its body so that the creature can pass through openings as small as 1 foot in diameter. However, it cannot use this ability to flatten out its body and thereby increase the space it occupies when using its choking darkness ability.

Sunlight Vulnerability (Ex): Bright light burns a night beast like a devouring flame, blasting the inky darkness of its form into oblivion. A night beast takes 3d6 points of damage per round that it suffers full exposure to sunlight, either from the sun itself or a magical effect that duplicates the strength of the sun's radiance.

NIGHT BEAST CHARACTERS

Many creatures that become night beasts have levels in magister or witch, since the process needed to become one of these monstrosities requires some research into and

knowledge of arcane power. Night beasts gain levels just as they did in life.

NIGHT BEAST ENCOUNTER (EL 10)

The characters hear stories of a haunted, fortified mansion that stands in the woods outside town. Several investigators who sought to explore the place have failed to return. In truth, a night beast lairs within the place and preys on any creatures that visit the mansion. The building has many holes in its roof and walls due to age and neglect. To shield itself from the sun during daylight hours, the beast lurks in the space between the walls. From there, it preys on anyone foolish enough to enter its domain. It raps on the walls and floors to confuse and distract the characters, seeking to split them up in order to attack a lone target.

In addition to the obvious hazard posed by the night beast, the mansion is on the verge of collapse. The floorboards give way in some places, while a few hostile vermin lurk in dark corners. If the characters defeat the night beast, they find the treasures it has gathered, along with an old stash of coins and magic items left by the place's previous owner, buried in the cellar.

OATHSTALKER

Large Outsider

Hit Dice: 20d8+180 (270 hp), dying/dead -10/-28

Initiative: +3

Speed: 50 feet

AC: 32 (-1 size, +3 Dexterity, +20 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 29

Base Attack/Grapple: +20/+34

Attack: Slam +30 melee (1d8+10)

Full Attack: 2 slams +30 melee (1d8+10), gore +25 melee (2d6+5), plus 20/day: Rapid Strike slam +20 melee (1d8+10)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/10 feet

(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/10 feet)

Special Attacks: Drain away speed, forcebeam, spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, immunities, find oathbreaker, fast healing 5, DR 10/chaotic (or 10/+3)

Saves: Fort +21, Ref +15, Will +17

Abilities: Str 30, Dex 16, Con 28, Int 10, Wis 21, Cha 19

Skills: Climb +33, Concentration +18, Jump +34, Listen +24, Sense Motive +28, Sneak +22, Spot +24, Tumble +28, Wilderness Survival +28

Feats: Cleave, First Strike, Improved Intuitive Sense, Intuitive Sense, Power Attack, Power Charge, Rapid Strike^B, Speed Burst, Track^B, Weapon Focus (slam)

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 17

Treasure: None

Advancement: 21–30 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: —

Oathstalkers are otherworldly creatures who come to exact retribution upon those who have broken an oath. They excel at melee combat and command fearsome magical abilities as well, many stemming from the single, dark horn that sprouts from their foreheads. Oathstalkers are shadowy figures, vaguely humanoid in appearance, eyes swirling with green menace.

Random encounters with an oathstalker are virtually unheard of. When someone breaks an oath, there is a small chance that an oathstalker enters the world from whatever strange plane it normally inhabits. While here, its sole preoccupation involves enacting a just reckoning for the oathbreaker's deed. Normally, its justice comes in the form of death. However, it can also involve destroying the oathbreaker's property, slaying family and friends, or undoing some great accomplishment of the offender. It can also mean a combination of all these things. The retribution required is solely up to the discretion of the oathstalker, which bases its decision on the importance of the oath and the position of the offender. A commoner's broken oath is not as serious as that of a ruler.

Likewise, the chance of an oathstalker appearing at the time of a broken oath also depends on circumstances. While this chance does vary based on the importance of the oath and the oathbreaker, it also depends on the importance of the oath to the oathbreaker and to those to whom it was sworn. For example, a high-level oathsworn's broken oath is likely to call forth an oathstalker (since the oath was important to the oathbreaker), as is the broken oath of a giantish steward that results in hundreds of people going hungry (since the oath was important to those to whom it was sworn).

As strange outsiders, oathstalkers do not seem to have a culture understandable to those from this world. They appear to be genderless, and no one has ever seen a young oathstalker—or, for that matter, a noticeably old one. They may be ageless. Some speculate that they are actually brought into existence when they come into this world to mete out justice and that they do not actually “dwell” anywhere.

Oathstalkers speak only rarely and usually only to pronounce sentence (often after the punishment has been exacted). They speak Common as well as their own language. They can also telepathically understand any living creature within 30 feet as well as read its mind. Their voices are deep and resonant. Reasoning or pleading with oathstalkers usually proves fruitless, as they are almost always without mercy. Lying to an oathstalker almost certainly ensures an even more horrible enactment of retribution.

COMBAT

Using its Speed Burst and Rapid Strike feats, plus its great speed and reach, the oathstalker can move up to a foe from 55 feet away and make three slam attacks as well as its gore attack. This is normally how it initiates combat, perhaps after it has used its forcebeam ability.

If a creature has not violated an oath, an oathstalker ignores it if possible. If a creature insists on getting in the oathstalker's way, protecting the oathbreaker or otherwise preventing it from its task, it will use force. However, unless harming the creature is a part of its overall scheme of retribution, it uses only subdual (nonlethal) attacks. It suffers no attack penalty to inflict subdual damage with its slams.

Drain Away Speed (Su): The touch of an oathstalker's horn reduces a foe's speed to 0 for 10 rounds, unless it can make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 24), in which case the foe's speed is reduced by 10 feet for 10 rounds. Multiple touches can result in stacking speed penalties (two touches with successful saves reduce the foe's speed by 20 feet). Since this ability requires only a touch, the oathstalker can choose to make a touch attack rather than a normal attack with its horn. A touch attack inflicts no damage, but it does drain away speed. The saving throw is Charisma based.

Forcebeam (Sp): Three times per day, the oathstalker can fire from its horn a beam of pure force that inflicts 20d6 points of force damage in a line 5 feet wide and 200 feet

long. A Reflex saving throw (DC 24) reduces the damage by half. Creatures of size Huge and smaller that fail their saves are knocked prone. The saving throw is Charisma based.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): An oathstalker can cast the following spells as a 20th-level witch: at will—*creature loresight*, *curse of vengeance*, *lesser resilient sphere*, *locate object*, *object loresight*, *peer through matter*, *steal health*; 1/day—*gaze of terror*, *greater eldritch wall*. The save DC against these spells is DC 15 + spell level.

Immunities (Su): Oathstalkers are immune to all charms and compulsions. They see through all illusions and cannot be affected by any kind of fear effect, poison, petrification, vitrification, paralysis, *slow*, *drain away speed*, or polymorphing. They also cannot be banished or dispelled back to their home plane.

Find Oathbreaker (Sp): At will, the oathstalker knows where its quarry is. Nothing short of a 9th-level spell effect can protect the oathbreaker from this divinatory ability.

Fast Healing (Ex): An oathstalker with this ability rapidly heals damage, allowing it to recover quickly from even the most grievous wounds. It gains fast healing 5.

OATHSTALKER ENCOUNTER (EL 15)

A friend of the player characters, a sibeccai runethane named Jorek the Lost, swore to help a loresong faen magister named Saenul Giftbringer build a tower and protect it with traps and magic. An enemy of Saenul's named Thienos Riverbound convinced Jorek that the tower would be used to house slaves and conduct horrible magical experiments. This was untrue. Still, Jorek believed it. He pretended to use magic to seal Saenul's tower and instead trapped it so that the whole place would come crumbling down when Saenul entered, obviously breaking his agreement. Saenul survived, and struggled long and hard to find and learn the *call oathstalker* spell (see below). He has almost mastered the spell and will cast it as soon as he can. Jorek asks the PCs for help.

Initially, the characters can try to find the truth of the situation and convince Saenul that Jorek was deceived—that while his actions were foolish and rash, they were done with good intentions. If this doesn't work, Saenul casts the spell, and now the PCs must help defend their friend. The Encounter Level of the encounter has been reduced by 2 due to the fact that the oathstalker most likely will use only subdual attacks against the PCs, and the fact that they will have the help of a 14th-level runethane if it comes to a fight.

NEW SPELL

CALL OATHSTALKER

Conjuration (Calling)

Level: 9 (Exotic)

Casting Time: One minute

Range: 30 feet



Effect: One oathstalker

Duration: Instantaneous

You cast this spell when someone you know (and most likely despise) breaks an oath. The spell calls an oathstalker from its own world and brings it here, into your presence. You need not say anything to the conjured creature. If you know of an oathbreaker, the oathstalker knows exactly what has been done, what it needs to do, and where it needs to go to do it. You cannot give the oathstalker commands or suggestions. Most likely, in fact, the oathstalker ignores you and immediately goes about its task.

If you cast this spell but know of no broken oath worthy of the oathstalker (in its own eyes), the conjured creature attacks you for 1d4 rounds, then returns whence it came.

Diminished Effect: The caster must know the oathbreaker's truename (this version of the spell gains the truename descriptor).

Magic Item Creation Modifiers: Constant N/A, single-use ×3, spell-completion ×2

QUALLEG

Large Aberration (Aquatic)

Hit Dice: 8d8+24 (60 hp), dying/dead -4/-17

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 feet, climb 20 feet

AC: 25 (-1 size, +2 Dexterity, +10 natural, +4 deflection), touch 11, flat-footed 19

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+11

Attack: Tentacle +6 melee (1d6+1)

Full Attack: 2 tentacles +6 melee (1d6+1)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/15 feet

(Face/Reach: 10 feet by 5 feet/15 feet)

Special Attacks: Manipulate enveloping liquid, spells

Special Qualities: Enveloping liquid, darkvision 180 feet, enveloping liquid, wall walker, weaknesses, DR 10/magic (or 15/+2), SR 22,

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +8

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 16

Skills: Concentration +14, Knowledge (magic) +15, Listen +13, Spellcraft +13, Spot +13

Feats: Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Eidetic Memory, Expertise, Improved Trip^B

Environment: Any subterranean

Organization: Solitary, pair, or cabal (3-12)

Challenge Rating: 10

Treasure: Double standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +5

This strange creature is suspended within a mobile sphere of thick, gelatinous material that protects it from the elements and allows it to survive. Once, the quallegs possessed a mighty arcane tradition, but their glory has faded. They strive to regain their lost glory, though few of the intelligent creatures they meet can fathom their plans and motivations.

The qualleg is a long, finned, fishlike beast with a single red eye that glows with a malevolent light. As it moves, the liquid that surrounds it keeps pace, allowing the qualleg to remain at its center.

Quallegs are difficult for members of other races to understand and cope with. They are obviously sentient—they speak with each other in strange, keening tones and build settlements beneath the earth—but few can comprehend their motivations, desires, and plans. They appear to select goals at random, with some quallegs pursuing material wealth and others attacking trivial topics with equal vigor. Some quallegs welcome outsiders with open arms, communicating by means of halting Common or even notes scribed on parchment. Others of this race attack any intelligent creatures they encounter. To understand quallegs, one must first

piece together their origin and nature. Only then do their actions begin to make sense.

First and foremost, the qualleg is a creature of magic. The liquid sphere that surrounds each one, and the creature's fishlike body, suggests that quallegs are aquatic in nature. While they are indeed adapted to life beneath the waves, the material that surrounds them is highly infused with magical energy. Quallegs need this energy to sustain them in much the same way that other creatures require oxygen, water, and food.

Quallegs originally dwelled in a realm of pure magical energy. Deep within the earth, they flooded caverns with raw magic, turning them into seething oceans of crackling energy and roaring torrents of power. They swam within this ocean, built cities, and mastered the arcane arts. In time, their methods of sustaining this realm proved unreliable. As one generation gave rise to another, the quallegs' knowledge shrank. In an event they call the great schism, the quallegs splintered into a variety of cabals, each with a divergent view on how best to restore their race's power. The quallegs' realm crumbled and waned, leaving behind isolated settlements of these creatures. Quallegs today can still manipulate magical energy with skill equal to an experienced magister's, but they are mere children compared to their ancestors.

Memory of their race's ancient glory pushes quallegs to restore that greatness. Some of the cabals have formed alliances and worked together in pursuit of short-term goals, while others have retreated far from their ancestral lands to follow their own cryptic plans. For this reason, quallegs appear to follow incomprehensible priorities. Some of them seek out powerful magic items and artifacts, while others believe that their ancestors derived power from runes, or from a strange process involving mundane rocks and water, or even from the life force of other sentient creatures. What remains consistent is that quallegs are fanatical in the pursuit of their goals.

COMBAT

To successfully battle a qualleg, one must first contend with the magical liquid that constantly surrounds the creature. Land-based creatures risk drowning if they remain within the liquid for too long. Quallegs use this fact to their advantage, pressing into opponents and cornering them while using their spells to defend themselves until their opponents drown. Quallegs make good use of their Expertise and Improved Trip feats. Most quallegs prefer to avoid direct physical confrontation; instead, they rely on their spells to overcome their foes and tend to be conservative rather than reckless.

With their long reach, quallegs use attacks of opportunity to trip their opponents, slowing their progress and forcing them to waste precious seconds. When casting spells, quallegs prefer defensive magic that boosts their armor or foils their enemies' attacks rather than spells that deal damage.



They also have an affinity for enchantments and illusions; many quallegs prefer to outsmart or trick opponents rather than use brute force to overcome them.

Enveloping Liquid (Su): A qualleg is constantly surrounded by a powerful field of magic that manifests as a thick, viscous liquid. This material fills the space that a qualleg occupies, providing a variety of benefits to a qualleg and drawbacks to its enemies.

A qualleg gains the following benefits while within its liquid sheath: +4 deflection bonus to AC, immunity to all gas attacks, immunity to drowning, and resistance to acid 20 and fire 20. A qualleg within this material does not need to breathe, eat, or drink. It draws sustenance directly from the magical energy that forms this bubble.

Other creatures have difficulty functioning while within this material. The liquid does not contain oxygen, forcing a creature within it to hold its breath or risk drowning. This material counts as water for purposes of melee and ranged combat. Nonaquatic creatures suffer a –2 penalty to attack rolls, AC, saves, and checks while within a qualleg's liquid environment. Consult Chapter Three: Adventures of the DMG for more information on fighting underwater.

Manipulate Enveloping Liquid (Su): The liquid sheath that encases a qualleg responds to the creature's mental com-

mands. Once per round a qualleg can, as a free action, use this ability to cause one of the effects described below. If the creature spends a move-equivalent action or a standard action, it can use this ability one additional time during the current round. If it spends a full-round action, it gains two additional uses of this ability. Any benefits the qualleg gains from this ability apply until its next action.

1. The qualleg can make the liquid around it denser and better suited to deflecting attacks. The deflection bonus to AC granted by the liquid increases to +6. It can use this ability only once per round.

2. The creature can opt to produce arcane harmonics through this material that disrupt and ruin magical effects. The qualleg gains a +4 enhancement bonus to its spell resistance. It can use this ability only once per round.

3. The liquid can shift, turn, and swirl to disrupt the efforts of creatures within it. Any creatures within the liquid must make Balance checks opposed by the qualleg's attack roll. (Remember to include the –2 penalty to checks for nonaquatic creatures within this liquid environment.) Any creatures that fail this check fall prone. Aquatic creatures and those that can move through water without penalty do not suffer this effect. A qualleg can use this ability more than once during a round. Prone creatures suffer no further ill

effects from it, but those that remain on their feet must make Balance checks against each use.

4. A qualleg can select a single creature to choke and crush within its liquid surroundings. The target takes 6d6 points of damage as the liquid squeezes her, forces its way into her mouth, nose, and eyes, and buffets her within its grasp. A Fortitude save (DC 18) halves this damage. A qualleg affects one target with each use of this ability; it cannot select the same target more than once during the course of its action.

Spells: A qualleg casts spells as a 9th-level magister. All quallegs are born with an inherent ability for magic that helps sustain and nourish their physical forms. Smaller quallegs possess weaker spellcasting abilities. If you decide to decrease a qualleg's base Hit Dice to represent a younger member of the race, lower the creature's spellcasting ability by one level for each Hit Die removed.

Wall Walker (Su): A qualleg's liquid sphere can stick to surfaces at its command, allowing it to move along walls and ceilings with ease. A qualleg can move along vertical surfaces and can move upside-down at its full climb speed. It never needs to make Climb checks to maintain its position, nor does it suffer the standard penalties for climbing in combat.

Weaknesses (Ex): Quallegs rely on their mobile liquid environment to survive. Several spells and effects can disrupt their protective sheaths and indirectly harm them. Their sheaths conduct and empower electrical energy. Any creature within the liquid, including a qualleg, takes 50 percent more damage from electricity attacks on either a failed or a successful save. Spells that manipulate water can harm or immobilize a qualleg. *Water roil*, *boil*, and other spells that function within water work as normal within a qualleg's environment. As a supernatural effect, the qualleg's enveloping liquid might be vulnerable to effects or abilities that counter or cancel magical effects. See the individual spell or ability descriptions for details. The enveloping liquid counts as a 9th-level spell cast by a 20th-level magister with an Intelligence score of 20.

A qualleg's protective liquid always moves to keep its body in the center of its space. Bull rushing a qualleg or using spells to move it affects the liquid along with the qualleg. Spells or abilities that create impenetrable, protective barriers, such as *lesser resilient sphere*, allow a creature to avoid the liquid's effects. If a qualleg somehow loses its protective liquid, it begins to drown as normal unless it can enter another qualleg's sphere. It takes one of these creatures 24 hours to recreate its liquid sheath.

QUALLEG SOCIETY

An encounter with a qualleg cabal poses a tremendous risk to travelers, because these creatures pursue such diverse goals. For every qualleg willing to treat guests with hospitali-

ty, there is another that believes it can restore its ancestors' greatness by collecting human brain fluid.

The majority of qualleg individuals and cabals pursue a specific, highly specialized goal. Many of these goals center on collecting magic items, obtaining a specific component for a ritual or ancient spell, or completing a complex, involved series of tasks. The quallegs believe these efforts are necessary to regain their racial mastery of spellcasting. Once a traveler determines a qualleg's needs, the creature can become relatively easy to deal with. Any effort to cater to a qualleg's desires or aid its goals prompts the creature to make friendly overtures or even an offer of alliance. Unfortunately, many quallegs consider other sentient beings to be little more than simple animals when compared to their race's greatness. They are just as likely to talk to a sibeccai or a giant as they are to hunt them down for material components.

With their ability to scale sheer cave walls and ceilings, quallegs prefer to erect settlements in areas that only they can access. They use magic to create or modify caves and cracks high in cave walls or atop a cavern's roof. In other areas, they erect tall, stone pillars that support wide platforms with elaborate towers standing atop them. From these homes, the quallegs continue their research and work to improve their magical abilities.

Many humanoid spellcasters brave the dangers of the underworld in order to travel to qualleg settlements. With their ancient lore and natural talent for magic, quallegs have much to teach other folk. They usually require such petitioners to complete tasks that help the settlement's goals or further its research. In return, the visitors can gain access to a library that holds lore and spells the surface world has never seen.

QUALLEG OUTCASTS

Not all quallegs pursue the epic goal of restoring their ancient empire. Some have decided that it is best to forge a fresh new destiny for their people, while others prefer to serve their own interests and selfish desires. Known as outcasts, these quallegs are hated and feared by their fellows. They represent the possibility that the great quest to restore the glory of ancient days could fail.

Outcasts adopt a wide variety of tasks and positions. Some take control of a few caverns and set up new domains, complete with enslaved humanoids that serve as guardians, servants, and workers. Others work with spellcasters from the surface, tutoring them in the ways of magic and working to exchange knowledge for the benefit of all. Many outcast quallegs are arrogant, vain, ambitious, and greedy. They toss aside their cultural burden in favor of their own self-interested desires. These renegades work with criminals to amass great fortunes, slay powerful mages from the surface to steal their secrets, and conquer underworld settlements to establish themselves as dictators. Their actions tend to garner more attention than the

undertakings of their more passive kin, causing many surface-dwellers to view all quallegs in a sinister light.

QUALLEG CHARACTERS

Most quallegs gain levels in magister. The spellcasting ability they enjoy from that class stacks with their inherent casting ability, allowing them to master powerful spells in relatively short order. A few quallegs become akashics, with most of these creatures focusing on researching the ancient, forgotten secrets of their ancestors.

QUALLEG ENCOUNTER (EL 11)

While exploring the underworld, the characters come across a qualleg ruin situated in the middle of a vast cavern. The place consists of splintered pillars bearing faint traces of runes too damaged to decipher.

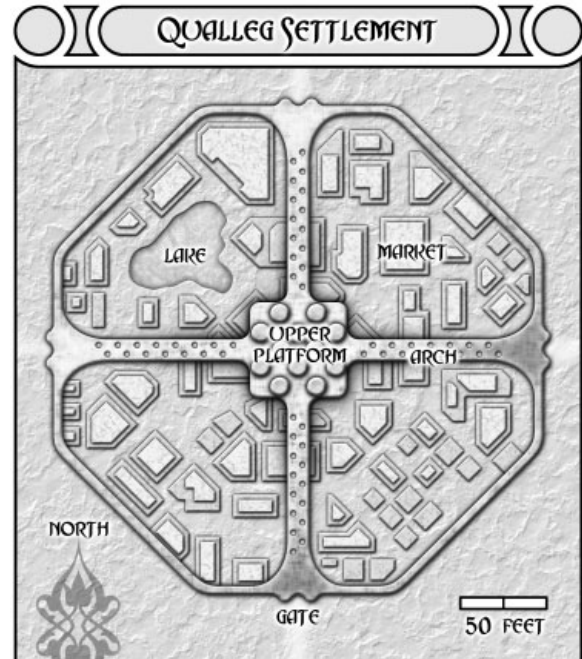
Included in the wreckage is a small storeroom hidden at the base of a crumbling stairway. If the characters investigate, they discover the storeroom has apparently remained undisturbed for centuries. They find an ancient figurine of a qualleg cast in obsidian. A gleaming red gem serves as the idol's eye.

Unfortunately for the PCs, this artifact has a subtle but powerful magical ability. It once served as a nexus for power and stability in the ruins and dates back to the ancient days of the qualleg society's greatness. Many different qualleg factions seek this item, and if the PCs carry it with them, they face a growing threat from assassins, summoned monsters, and other opponents sent by cabals who want the artifact. Other groups dispatch qualleg emissaries to negotiate with the PCs. Some of these groups are motivated by greed, while others are passive or merely seek to investigate the item's true nature.

If the PCs turn the idol over to the wrong faction, they could help to unleash a rampage of destruction and misery. In the right hands, the idol can aid the quallegs' research and establish a lasting bond of friendship between the PCs and a normally alien species. The characters must decipher the quallegs' strange motives and fumbling attempts to communicate with them. Perhaps the sinister groups are better adapted to dealing with other creatures, making them adept at deceiving their victims.

QUALLEG SETTLEMENT

There is no truly typical qualleg settlement; these creatures devise habitations with the same alien motives and principles that make them difficult for humanoid to relate to. The sample fortress described here is located relatively close to the surface, about a three-day journey through the forbidding darkness of the underworld. This settlement, known as Tradepoint, hosts many merchants who are willing to brave the depths to reap tremendous profits in exchanging goods that are relatively common on the surface, such as foodstuffs and wood, for rare ores, gems, and metal tools.



Tradepoint is remarkable not only because of its qualleg masters, but because of its strange design and arrangement. Its outer walls are arranged in an octagonal pattern, with gates set into the walls that face the four cardinal directions. The walls rise 50 feet into the air, with a central platform anchored to the walls by four soaring arches that reach down from the platform to rest just above the gates' upper edge. Quallegs crawl on the underside of these arches, inspecting the goods brought into their city and offering exchanges for the strange goods they collect.

The platform's underside is riddled with holes that the quallegs use to crawl to the upper surface. There, they keep their treasure vaults and personal quarters in broad, hollow, stone spires that have niches carved into their inner sides. The quallegs crawl into these spires and climb along their inner surfaces to access their living chambers. In the event of a disaster, they ascend their spires to the roof of Tradepoint's cavern and flee to safety.

The undercity, the walled area beneath the upper platform, is a gigantic marketplace. In a few areas, frequent visitors have erected stone dwellings of brick and mortar with the quallegs' permission. Many visitors spend as little time here as possible—rumor has it the quallegs descend from their spires to snatch subjects for their magical experiments from the outpost below, but longtime residents dismiss such matters as the product of a fevered imagination. Still, none dare cross the quallegs. Their magic is powerful, and though they rarely take an interest in the outpost aside from bartering, they have been known to make examples of those who would disrupt business here.

ROCK APE

Medium Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 4d10+16 (38 hp), dying/dead -5/-18

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 26 (+1 Dexterity, +15 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 25

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+9

Attack: Slam +9 melee (1d6+5)

Full Attack: 2 slams +9 melee (1d6+5) and bite +4 melee (1d4+2), or stone +5 ranged (1d8+5)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Slow gaze, throw stones

Special Qualities: Spell immunities, darkvision 60 feet

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +1

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 10

Skills: Sneak* +13, Spot +1

Feats: Cleave, Power Attack, Power Charge

Environment: Any land or underground

Organization: Solitary or band (3–8)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 5–8 HD (Medium); 9–16 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: +3

“The rock ape is the epitome of quiet contemplation. Surely these are some of the most thoughtful and secretly ingenious creatures known to exist.” So stated the explorer and archivist Zaron Whelm. Whelm was one of the first people in modern times to encounter the rock ape, a rare creature that haunts only the most secluded areas. He was fascinated with the creatures and exaggerated their attributes. The truth is, although quiet and peaceful (except when threatened or hunting), rock apes have no greater intellect than most beasts. While cunning, they are not ingenious by most standards. Compared to animals, however, they are quite smart, and their societies can become fairly intricate.

Rock apes are hulking brutes that stand almost 7 feet tall, although most of the time they remain hunched over or on all fours, making them seem more like 5 feet tall. They possess massive arms and broad physiques, but their most distinguishing feature is the rocklike flesh which gives them their name. These creatures’ skin serves as a natural armor that protects them from most harm. Few predators prey upon the rock apes for this reason.

One thing Zaron Whelm found particularly interesting about rock apes is their predilection toward hunting other predators. They seem drawn toward preying upon creatures otherwise designed to be the aggressor. Whelm believed that in this way the rock apes were avenging lesser creatures, carrying out some kind of natural justice. This seems unlikely, however—it is far more likely that the practice simply arose

from the rock ape finding a particular niche. Their armored flesh makes it difficult for another predator to harm them, so the hunter becomes the hunted.

Rock apes are found in many locales, but particularly in thick forests, jungles, and swamps. Their dark grey, black, or dark green flesh blends in well in dark, wooded areas. Those found underground are usually exclusively subterranean. Their flesh is light grey or white. When not moving, rock apes appear to be chiseled from stone. They may even be distantly related to gargoyles. Some speculate that a long-ago ancestor was an earth elemental creature or that they are natives of an earth elemental plane who came to this world and prospered. If this latter thought is true, rock apes did not come via the planar gates in Thartholan, because ancient Devanian records mention the beasts, calling them the “stone brutes of the woods.”

Dwelling in small communities, rock apes make only temporary lairs where the young and infirm can rest and the strong can most easily provide protection. Most who encounter a solitary hunting rock ape meet a female, for the males (usually fewer in number) remain behind to protect the lair.

Over time, some rock apes grow moss and lichen over their flesh, which gives them an even rockier appearance. A few develop a special lichen that interacts with their unique flesh and gives them a resistance to magic (SR 18). Such individuals are quite rare, however.

Rock apes are vulnerable to the domineering wishes of a strong master. Sometimes this master is a more intelligent, advanced rock ape (see next page). Other times, this master is a human who has captured some rock apes and trained them to be guards. Other creatures, such as medusas (rock apes are immune to petrification), also enjoy mastering a band of rock apes to use as guards and servants.

These creatures do not speak but can understand a variety of words if trained to do so.

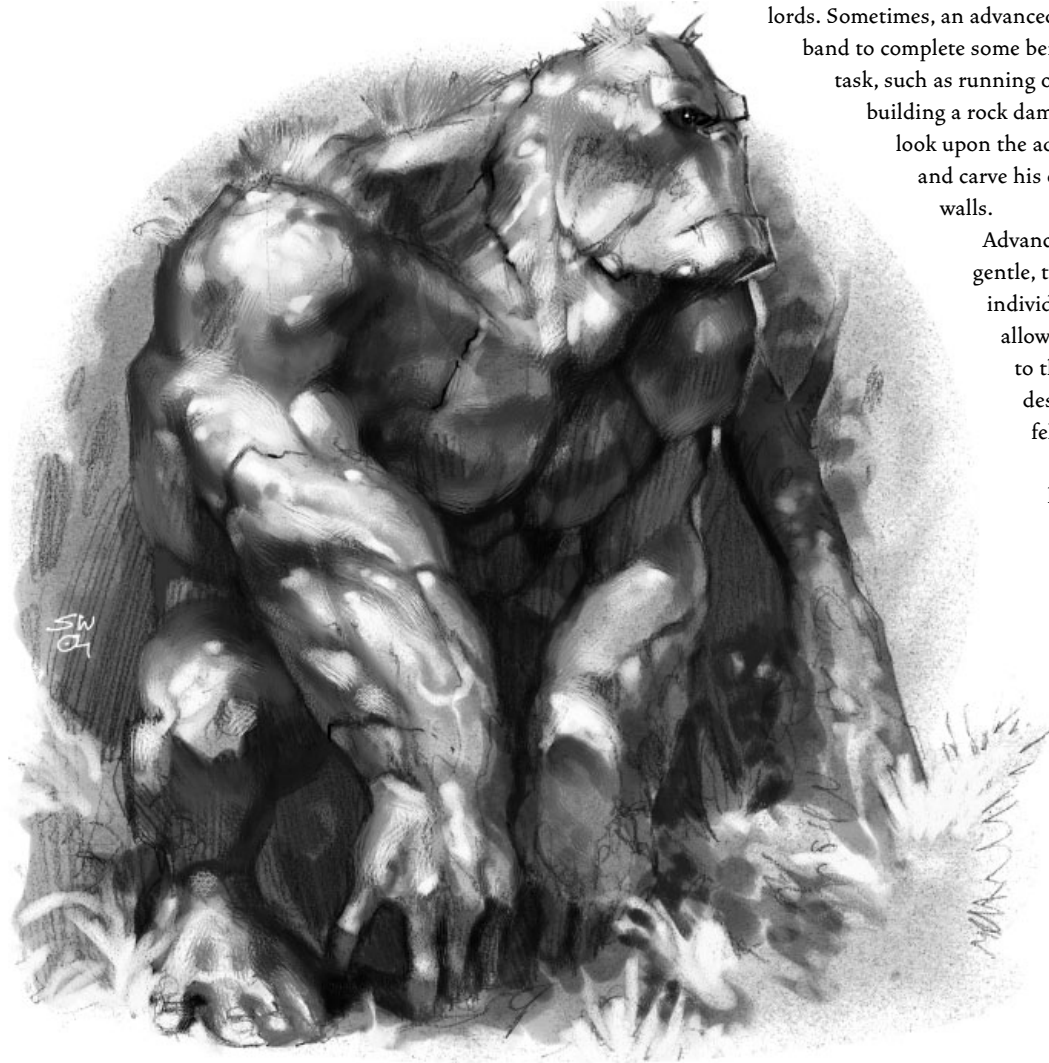
COMBAT

Cunning combatants, rock apes employ all sorts of tricks and strategies when attacking a foe. They set ambushes and sometimes even crude traps, such as luring opponents into quicksand, a tar pit, or a quagmire, driving them up against a cliff, or starting a landslide. They work well in a group and coordinate their actions to flank opponents, aid one another, and cover the retreat of their wounded.

* **Skills (Ex):** Rock apes gain a +6 racial bonus to Sneak checks.

Slow Gaze (Su): 1/day for 1 round, 60-foot range, save DC 12. Victims are affected as described in the slow spell, caster level 5th. The saving throw DC is Charisma based.

Throw Stones (Ex): Accomplished rock throwers, rock apes receive a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls when throwing



lords. Sometimes, an advanced rock ape will lead the band to complete some beneficial but complex task, such as running off the nearby chorrin or building a rock dam. The band of rock apes look upon the advanced leader as a god and carve his or her likeness on cliff walls.

Advanced rock apes are usually gentle, thoughtful, and careful individuals. A few of them allow their superiority to get to them and become violent despots that exploit their fellow rock apes.

Advanced rock apes learn to give other rock apes unique verbal commands, which they are trained to follow.

If given the opportunity, an advanced rock ape can learn to speak a real language, most often Common. Advanced rock apes that adopt classes tend to be warriors or experts, but those trained by members of other races sometimes end up becoming mage blades, witches, or war-mains instead.

rocks. A rock ape can hurl stones weighing 20 to 30 lbs. each (Small objects) up to five 40-foot range increments.

Spell Immunities (Su): Rock apes are immune to *slow*, *drain away speed*, *gaze of petrification*, *vitrication*, and similar movement-prohibiting or -limiting spells, as well as all petrification effects (such as a medusa's gaze).

ADVANCED ROCK APE

Rarely, a rock ape is born with the capacity for much greater than normal intellect. These may choose to learn to use weapons, develop their skills, and even cast spells. Such rock apes have an Intelligence score of 11 (or higher), with the following skills: Sneak +15*, Spot +3, and Wilderness Survival +4. Advanced rock apes either become the leaders of their band or leave their fellows to seek out more intelligent company. Bands led by an intelligent rock ape end up virtually ruling their hunting grounds like

ROCK APE ENCOUNTER (EL 4)

As the player characters travel through the wilderness, they inadvertently head toward a rock ape lair. A hunting female sees them and suspects they are a threat. She attempts to stop them or drive them off by hurling stones at them from a distance. If she can, she'll even attempt to start a rockslide as she waits in ambush. The slide inflicts 8d6 points of damage (Reflex save, DC 15, for half). For more information on landslides, see Chapter Three: Adventures in the DMG. If that doesn't stop them, she attempts a more direct approach and attacks, first using her *slow* gaze. The lair the PCs head toward has many more apes, as well as a number of young.

RUNE ANIMAL TEMPLATE

“The land does not seek defenders only from your kind—intellect and ‘civilization’ are poor ways to measure devotion or worth.”

So spoke Teeshal, the rune eagle. Rune animals are to normal animals what runechildren are to normal people. The same mysterious, seemingly intelligent force that selects runechildren and bestows upon them wondrous abilities (and great responsibilities) also finds representatives from among the animals of the world to work on its behalf as well.

Rune animals gain the ability to speak and reason, but they keep their animal natures. Sometimes even the lowliest of the animal kingdom, the vermin, are chosen to become rune animals. No matter what their original form or mind, however, the rune animal becomes a magical, powerful, and intelligent representative of its kind.

Aside from the obvious differences, the main distinction rune animals have from runechildren is that rune animals become something of a champion for their own kind. Although they still look at things holistically—they do not defend their own kind at the expense of all others—their primary concerns in day-to-day life involve the well-being of animals of their own type. A rune bear looks after all bears, a rune dolphin pays attention to all things concerning dolphins, and a rune spider sees to the well-being of spiders.

Most rune animals avoid people in the same way that normal animals do. Rune animals that are also predators can prove dangerous in the eyes of humanoid races, however. They’re still predators, and their increased power and ability to organize others of their kind makes them willing to take on more dangerous game (humans, faen, giants, and so on) if need be.

Rune animals look like normal members of their kind, except that a mystical rune is visible somewhere on their body, usually their head.

SAMPLE RUNE ANIMAL: RUNE WOLF

Medium Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 2d10+6 (17 hp), dying/dead -4/-17

Initiative: +3

Speed: 50 feet (10 squares)

Armor Class: 16 (+3 Dexterity, +3 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 13

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+4

Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d6+3)

Full Attack: Bite +5 melee (1d6+3)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Trip, command wolves, bolster wolves, spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent, speak with animals, DR 10/magic (or 10/+1)

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +2

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 17, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8

Skills: Knowledge (nature) +2, Listen +4, Sneak +5, Spot +4, Wilderness Survival* +4

Feats: Track^B, Weapon Focus (bite)

Environment: Temperate forests

Organization: Solitary, pair (one rune wolf and one normal wolf), or pack (one rune wolf and 7–16 normal wolves)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None

Advancement: 3 HD (Medium); 4–6 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: +2

Wolves are cunning, persistent pack hunters. A rune wolf almost always leads a pack of normal wolves. Although it cannot command them, even creatures such as dire wolves and winter wolves show a rune wolf respect.

COMBAT

A favorite tactic is to send a few individuals against the foe’s front, while the rest of the pack circles and attacks from the flanks or rear.

* **Skills:** Wolves have a +4 racial bonus on Wilderness Survival checks when tracking by scent.

Trip (Ex): A rune wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+1 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the wolf.

Command Wolves (Su): A rune wolf can command wolves. Trained wolves or wolf companions get a Will saving throw (DC 10) to resist. See ability description on next page.

Bolster Wolves (Su): Wolves within sight of a rune wolf gain a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls and saving throws.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): A rune wolf can cast the following spells as a 3rd-level magister: 1/day—*lesser ability boost*, *predict weather*, *saving grace*, *true strike*. The save DC against these spells is DC 12 + spell level.

Scent (Ex): The rune wolf can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. For upwind foes, the range increases to 60 feet; downwind, it drops to 15 feet.

When detecting a scent, the rune wolf doesn’t determine its exact source, only its presence in range. The rune wolf can take a standard action to note the scent’s direction. Once within 5 feet of the source, it can pinpoint the source. A rune wolf can also follow tracks by smell, making a Wisdom check to find or follow a track.

Speak With Animals (Su): See ability description on the next page.

CREATING A RUNE ANIMAL

“Rune animal” is a template that one can add to any animal or vermin. A rune animal uses all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The base creature’s type changes to magical beast. Size does not change.

Hit Dice: The rune animal’s Hit Die type changes to d10.

AC: Increase the natural armor bonus of the base creature by +1.

Attacks: The rune animal’s attack progression changes to that of a magical beast, +1/HD.

Special Attacks: A rune animal retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains the following special abilities:

Command (Su): A rune animal can command animals of its exact type (black bears command black bears, Medium constrictor snakes command Medium constrictor snakes, etc.). Animals under the magical compulsion of another, those who are animal companions, or those with at least a year’s experience as a trained animal all get a Will saving throw (DC = 10 + half the rune animal’s HD + rune animal’s Charisma modifier) to resist. Otherwise, there is no saving throw. Commanded animals obey anything the rune animal says to the best of their ability. Any appropriate animal that can hear the words of the rune animal can be commanded. This is a free action for the rune animal.

Bolster (Su): A rune animal’s presence bolsters animals of its exact type. Those within sight of a rune animal gain a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls and saving throws.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): A rune animal can cast the following spells as a 3rd-level magister or of a level equal to its total HD, whichever is greater: 1/day—*lesser ability boost*, *predict weather*, *saving grace*, *true strike*. The save DC against these spells is DC 12 + spell level or DC 10 + the creature’s Intelligence bonus + spell level, whichever is greater.

Special Qualities: A rune animal has all the base creature’s special qualities and also gains the following special qualities:

Damage Reduction (Ex): The animal gains DR 10/magic (or 10/+1).

Speak With Animals (Su): The rune animal can comprehend and communicate with all animals. It can ask questions of and receive answers from animals, although they are no more friendly or cooperative than normal.

Abilities: Alter from the base creature’s as follows: Str +2, Dex +2, Con +2, Int +8, Wis +2, Cha +2.

Challenge Rating: As base creature’s +1.

Level Adjustment: Most animals and vermin do not provide level adjustments. In such a case, use +2 for a rune animal. If it does have a level adjustment, use the base creature’s adjustment +1.

RUNE ANIMAL ENCOUNTER (EL 6)

A rune wolf and her six normal wolf followers guard the entrance to a narrow ravine. Down the ravine lies a natural magical area called a power cyst (see “Other Features” in Chapter One of *The Diamond Throne*). Unfortunately, years earlier a darkbond cursed the power cyst so that anyone who entered it would receive a *curse of vengeance*. Worse still, the curse spreads throughout the area, affecting animals and other creatures living nearby. As a side effect, it even withers plant life when triggered. The rune wolf knows of this curse and thus prevents anyone from entering the ravine.

The player characters have learned of the cyst but not the curse and seek to explore the area. The rune wolf, unaccustomed to reasoning with others, simply warns off the PCs when they reach the ravine entrance and threatens them with harm if they do not comply. If the characters ignore the wolf, she and her small pack attack. If the PCs instead attempt to question the rune wolf to find out why she and her brethren stand watch, they might be able to convince her to tell the whole story. If the player characters can manage to dispel or remove the curse, the rune wolf not only allows them free access to the power cyst but also shows them where the darkbond buried some valuable treasure nearby.



RUNE MANIFEST

Runes have a power far beyond their simple ability to convey a concept or serve as a system of writings and markings. They represent magic in an encoded, physical form that runethanes can craft and manipulate to produce a variety of arcane effects.

Some runes have such a strong tie to a basic, fundamental concept of reality that they literally take on a life of their own. The power contained within such a rune grows and develops to encompass the thoughts, emotions, and history behind its concept, giving rise to a being that mirrors the rune's traits—a rune manifest.

A rune manifest embodies a rune and expresses its meaning through its actions. Most rune manifests are simple creatures, glimmers of magical energy that possess the lowest form of sentience. A few manifests, particularly those that embody powerful or well-known runes, are every bit as intelligent as a giant, human, or verrik. (Four examples of intelligent rune manifests are provided later in this section.) These manifests seek to increase their rune's power and stature by spreading its concept across the land. For example, a battle rune manifest seeks to ignite warfare, while a disease rune manifest slips into a settlement and leaves a horrible plague in its wake.

Intelligent rune manifests are liable to be a threat to any settled area; their zeal and narrow-mindedness invariably lead them to clash with other creatures. They rarely stray from what they see as their duty to spread the concept embodied by their rune. Manifests have great difficulty relating to intelligent creatures that are capable of having several priorities or pursuing more than one goal at the same time. From a rune manifest's point of view, all that matters is the propagation of its concept. The creature finds it incomprehensible that others could hold differing views. The single-minded behavior of intelligent rune manifests leads some sages to question whether they are truly sentient. In some cases, it appears that they are merely the physical projection of the elemental motivations and actions that comprise their runes.

While intelligent rune manifests are troublesome at best and deadly at worst, minor rune manifests are useful tools that many spellcasters and commoners call upon for aid. By means of a simple ceremony, anyone can summon and bind a minor rune manifest into service for a short period of time. Minor rune manifests lack the physical form and personality of independent manifests, but they embody simple concepts that make them useful as tools and aids. A healing manifest can cure an injured warrior's wounds, while a speed manifest can help a character cover a long distance more quickly. These creatures exude their

runic concepts, channeling them into the masters that bind them when ordered to do so. Calling and commanding manifests is a relatively uncommon practice, since the rituals used to summon them require expensive material components, but knowledge of these rituals is widespread.

All rune manifests, whether intelligent or minor, lack truenames. As individual parts of a greater concept, they display much less individuality than other intelligent creatures do.

MINOR RUNE MANIFESTS

A minor rune manifest embodies a single, specific concept that is both simple and direct. It lacks true material form, and cannot directly manipulate, or in turn be manipulated by, physical objects and energy. However, it can channel its essence into a creature that binds itself with the rune manifest. Calling and controlling a minor rune manifest requires a ritual with a cost measured in gold pieces to reflect the rare components and materials needed for its completion. Once called, a manifest remains with its summoner for one week or until its master uses the energy of the rune by activating it. At that time, the bond between the creature and the manifest breaks. Unless otherwise indicated in the description of a specific rune manifest, activating a minor rune manifest is a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

Anyone can learn to summon a minor rune manifest by making an Intelligence or Knowledge (runes) check (DC 20). The ceremony needed to call a minor rune manifest requires one hour of work and the proper material components (the cost of these components is given in each manifest's description below). At the climax of the ceremony, the minor rune manifest appears as a burst of energy, then resolves into runic form on the dominant hand of the creature who called it.

A manifest's effects cannot be dispelled by magical means, because they represent a primal, elemental alteration to the creature receiving them. For example, a litorian that activates a strength rune manifest grows slightly larger as her muscles gain definition and size. At any given time, a character can have bound to her a number of minor rune manifests equal to 1 + her Charisma modifier (minimum one).

Amity: These rune manifests are unique in that they always appear in pairs. The ceremony that calls them requires two creatures to work together. When they complete it, the ceremony grants them a bond through the manifests. Once during the next week, either participant may send a telepathic message of no more than 50 words to the other. The recipient hears the words in his mind spoken in the sender's voice. *Cost:* 100 gp.

Beauty: This rune manifest enhances its summoner's physical beauty and appeal. When activated, it provides a +2 enhancement bonus to all Charisma checks and Charisma-based skill checks for one hour. *Cost:* 75 gp.

Calm: This rune manifest grants serenity, clarity, and peace to those who use it. When it is activated, this manifest's user gains a +2 morale bonus to all Will saves and a +5 morale bonus to Concentration checks for one hour. *Cost:* 100 gp.

Death: This dreaded rune manifest is favored by cruel warriors and others who delight in slaying their enemies. A death rune manifest lurks near its master, waiting to snuff the spark of life from any living thing. The first time its master approaches within 10 feet of a creature that is unconscious and has fewer than 0 hit points, it springs into action. Its victim loses 2 hit points per round rather than 1 while dying and has only a 5 percent chance to stabilize. After the manifest latches onto a victim in this manner, the manifest's bond with its master breaks. Note that its master cannot direct the death rune manifest's attack; it merely springs upon the first available victim it encounters. *Cost:* 150 gp.

Defense: This rune manifest wards off attacks and protects its master, granting her a +1 deflection bonus to Armor Class for one hour. *Cost:* 150 gp.

Foresight: This rune manifest grants its master a brief glimpse into the immediate future. It is activated at the start of an encounter (this is not an action; it can take place even if it's not the master's turn). When it is activated it allows its master to ignore the effects of surprise for the current encounter. He may act as normal during the surprise round. *Cost:* 300 gp.

Fury: A fury manifest sets all who draw near its master on edge, as its seething rage is held barely in check. When activated, it confers a +2 bonus to Strength and Constitution at the cost of a -4 penalty to AC for a number of rounds equal to 2 + the master's base Constitution modifier (not including the benefit of this rune manifest's increase to Constitution). In addition, its master cannot use any Intelligence-, Wisdom-, or Charisma-based skills during this effect's duration, nor can he cast spells or use magic items that must be activated. *Cost:* 150 gp.

Hate: A hate manifest instills a seething rage into its master, allowing her to fuel her efforts with raw emotion directed against a specific opponent. When a character activates a hate manifest, she must select a single target in her line of sight. Against this target, she gains a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls and a +2 morale bonus to damage rolls for 10 rounds. *Cost:* 100 gp.

Healing: This rune manifest can channel healing energy to its master to bind minor wounds. When activated, a healing manifest cures 1d8 points of damage. *Cost:* 50 gp.

Health: A health rune manifest strengthens its master against disease, infection, and other threats. When activated, it grants a +2 enhancement bonus to Constitution for one hour. *Cost:* 600 gp.

Knowledge: Valued by sages and magisters, this kind of rune manifest confers a bit of lore upon its master. When activated, a knowledge rune manifest grants 5 ranks in a Knowledge skill that its master does not possess or a +5 competence bonus to a Knowledge skill that its user already has. These benefits last for one hour. *Cost:* 50 gp.

Laughter: Favored by diplomats, arbiters, and others who must enter tense situations, a laughter rune manifest brings relief, joy, and brotherhood to the world. When activated, a laughter rune manifest grants its master a +2 competence bonus to all Charisma-based skill checks for five minutes. In addition, it brings a sense of peace and comfort to the immediate area. Any creature within 50 feet of the rune manifest's master refuses to take any violent actions against him for 1d4 minutes after the laughter manifest is activated. This effect does not apply to creatures in combat or those with a clear, obvious, or driving reason to attack the master. For example, a laughter rune manifest could prevent a group of suspicious litorians from attacking a wandering minstrel, but it would not help him if they recognized him as a thief and trickster who had stolen from their kin. *Cost:* 200 gp.

Luck: Luck rune manifests are perhaps the most popular type of minor rune manifest. This rune manifest grants a +2 bonus to any die roll its master's player is about to make, after which it dissipates. This benefit can also be used after a die roll, but the bonus it provides is reduced to +1. *Cost:* 100 gp.

Speed: A speed rune manifest grants its master a burst of energy in the form of a +10-foot enhancement bonus to speed for one hour when activated. *Cost:* 300 gp.

Strength: A strength rune manifest confers vigor, power, and might to its master. When activated, it grants a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength for one hour. *Cost:* 600 gp.

Valor: Fueled by the deeds of great heroes, a valor rune manifest strengthens its masters' confidence and fills him with a steely resolve. When activated, it confers immunity to all fear-based effects for one hour. *Cost:* 150 gp.

Wisdom: A wisdom rune manifest channels the thoughts and advice of a thousand revered scholars. It taps into the akashic memory, granting temporary insight into pressing matters. This rune manifest can tell its master if a given action will result in prosperity, disaster, or a neutral result. After it answers the question, its bond of service ends. *Cost:* 100 gp.

RUNE MANIFEST, ARCANE

Medium Elemental

Hit Dice: 6d8+6 (33 hp), dying/dead -2/-12

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 23 (+2 Dexterity, +6 natural, +4 deflection, +1 dodge), touch 17, flat-footed 20

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+4

Attack: Staff +3 melee (1d6)

Full Attack: Staff +3 melee (1d6)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Arcane instability, spells

Special Qualities: DR 10/silver (or 15/+1), magic sense, manifest traits, SR 22, telepathy 100 feet

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +8

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 19, Wis 17, Cha 16

Skills: Alchemy +13, Knowledge (magic) +13, Listen +12, Spellcraft +13, Spot +12, Use Magic Device* +22

Feats: Defensive, Defensive Stance, Expertise, Improved Disarm

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary, pair, or cabal (3-8)

Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +6

Beings of pure arcane energy, arcane rune manifests can affect the flow of magic through an area and have the ability to produce a variety of spell effects. They appear as shimmering, golden humanoids clad in metallic robes. Their faces are blank, and they communicate via telepathy. Their robes are usually silver or bronze. The more powerful an arcane manifest, the more valuable the metal used to craft its garb.

Of all the intelligent rune manifests, the arcanes are the most likely to traffic with other creatures. Some verrik communes perform rituals to call these creatures to their halls and invite them to instruct and tutor their students in the art of magic. This summons is by no means a forced binding. The manifest must decide freely to aid the verrik, who consider gaining an arcane manifest ally to be one of the greatest achievements that a college of magic can attain. With a being of pure magic to train their pupils, these communes produce some of the finest casters that the verrik have to offer. Some verrik believe the most powerful spellcasters among them can ascend to become arcane rune manifests, as their souls join as one with the flow of magic.

Like the verrik that court their services, arcane rune manifests are sometimes difficult to comprehend. They claim that

they can see into several dimensions at once, with arcane energy appearing to them as another physical object no different than the wind above them or the earth below them. Thus, their actions can sometimes appear nonsensical or bizarre to mortals. Of all the intelligent rune manifests, arcanes are the most likely to exhibit distinct personalities and motives. Akashics theorize that this is due to their innate connection to a particular type of magic. Those who favor fear-based magic are usually threatening and aggressive, while others that focus on psionic energy are quiet, passive, and perceptive.

Arcane rune manifests usually take on physical form in response to a summons or to investigate some strange magical phenomenon. Litorians consider an arcane rune manifest's appearance to be a harbinger of disaster, since they invariably arrive on the heels of a powerful magical creature or in the days shortly before or after some strange event. Some of the more warlike tribes hunt them down, believing that the arcane manifests are behind such events.

These creatures are usually passive and observant in their fact-finding missions, but sometimes they can be aggressive and direct. While an arcane rune manifest exhibits a sentient personality, on a fundamental level it is a being of magical energy rather than thought and emotion. If it encounters a strange creature or a humanoid with unexplained magical abilities, it may take the unfortunate subject prisoner and dissect him with little concern for his life. While this sort of behavior is an extreme example, it illustrates the arcanes' inability to account for morality and justice in their acts. They usually avoid confrontational actions out of a fear of reprisal or interference in their research, not because they feel any moral compulsion to respect the rights and health of others.

COMBAT

Arcane rune manifests prefer to avoid combat. They journey into the physical world in search of enlightenment and knowledge. If pressed into battle, they use spells that quickly remove a threat without necessarily causing injury. *Lesser resilient sphere* is a particular favorite spell among them, since it can trap an opponent or shield a manifest from attack.

* **Skills (Ex):** Due to their inherent magical nature, arcane rune manifests gain a +10 racial bonus to all Use Magic Device checks. They can sense the ebb and flow of the pattern of magic in enchanted items, allowing them to easily unleash their power.

Arcane Instability (Ex): As beings of pure magic, arcane rune manifests can see into the spectrum of mystical energy. Their physical being and influence extends into dimensions and realities that mortal spellcasters can only dream of accessing. This "arcane sight" and their ability to change the course of magic gives arcane rune manifests the ability to

disrupt the flow of energy through their immediate vicinity. Each time a caster tries to use a spell while within 100 feet of an arcane rune manifest, she must make a caster level check (DC 16), or the spell fizzles in a brief flare of energy. The spell slot is considered used, but the spell has no effect. This effect also applies to any spells with durations longer than Instantaneous that have been cast on a character. The spells' casters must make a caster level check (DC 16) for each such spell, or the spell in question immediately ends.

This ability does not affect most magic items or inherent spell-like or supernatural abilities. It does affect spells cast from scrolls and wands. Use the minimum caster level of the spell that the scroll or wand duplicates to make the check against this ability.

An arcane rune manifest can choose to suppress this ability to prevent affecting spells cast by its allies or to avoid interfering with friendly casting efforts. It makes this choice on a case-by-case basis during a round. The creature must be conscious to use this ability.

Spells (Su): Arcane rune manifests can manipulate and command magic with great skill. Each one has the spellcasting ability of a 7th-level magister. They usually focus on a mixture of spells that allow them to evade attacks while immobilizing their enemies, such as *lesser resilient sphere*, *dimensional door*, *suggestion*, *dispel magic*, *slow*, *distraction*, *fireburst*, and *obscuring mist*.

Magic Sense (Ex): Because arcane rune manifests can see into the spectrum of magic, they gain the equivalent of a *detect magic* effect at all times.

Manifest Traits (Ex): All intelligent rune manifests have immunity to critical hits, sleep effects, poison, paralysis, stunning, and flanking.

Telepathy (Su): An arcane rune manifest can communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 feet that has a language.

ARCANE RUNE MANIFEST CHARACTERS

Arcane rune manifests only take levels in magister. Their spellcasting ability in that class stacks with their innate casting ability. Thus, a 5th-level arcane rune manifest magister has the casting ability of a 12th-level magister.

ARCANE RUNE MANIFEST

ENCOUNTER (EL 5)

Two arcane rune manifests have journeyed to the town where the characters are currently resting between adventures. The creatures seek to uncover evidence of a strange fluctuation in the flow of magic in the area. A once-mighty artifact is buried in a ruined sepulcher located in the ancient,



long-abandoned sewer passages beneath the town. The item's decay has caused the magic it once contained to slowly unravel and disturb the magical landscape of the entire region. While this turbulence is too minor to affect spells, the sensitive manifests are drawn to it.

One of the manifests has adopted the name of Kurzolt. It works in secret, capturing citizens that it believes are connected to the disturbance and using magic to torture them to learn more. The other one, Athric, works peacefully, delving into the sewers to find the artifact and determine its nature. Both wear bronze robes and appear identical to mortal eyes.

Kurzolt slowly builds a small collection of unsavory characters as his servants, with minor spellcasters and thugs eagerly buying into his promise of great wealth to be found within the sepulcher. In truth, he simply needs them to serve as fodder for the pitfalls and monsters that guard the place. The characters must stop Kurzolt, but Athric's presence may confuse them and cause them to waste precious time chasing down the wrong manifest.

RUNE MANIFEST, BATTLE

Medium Elemental

Hit Dice: 12d8+36 (90 hp), dying/dead -4/-16

Initiative: +0

Speed: 20 feet

AC: 22 (+12 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 22

Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+14

Attack: Great maul +15 melee (2d8+9)

Full Attack: Great maul +15/+10 melee (2d8+9)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Animate weapons, battle mastery

Special Qualities: DR 5/-, manifest traits, spirit of battle, SR 20, war skill

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +4, Will +6

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 11

Skills: Climb +15, Spot +12, Swim +15

Feats: Cleave, Improved Cleave, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (maul), Weapon Specialization (maul)

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary, pair, or squad (3-12)

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +4

A battle rune manifest takes the form of a gleaming suit of black plate armor and bears a massive two-handed great maul crafted from rock. These creatures live for battle and seek to spark warfare wherever they go.

A close inspection reveals that a battle rune manifest's armor is an empty shell crafted in one of a variety of styles from a wide range of different historical eras and worlds. A few of its components appear unsuited to a humanoid form, while others are scribed with iconography unrecognizable to even the most learned akashics. The manifest's raw energy gives its form locomotion and thought.

Battle rune manifests crave combat. They care little for the stakes in a given conflict and make no judgments on the moral grounding of one side or the other. To these creatures, combat is a worthy end on its own. The situation that surrounds a battle is merely worthless detail that they can ignore. All that matters is that verrik, humans, sibeccai, and giants fight and die in combat.

During times of crisis or before an epic battle, battle rune manifests may appear to take part in the struggle. They stride into battle and attack both sides with equal vigor. They seek out the most skilled combatants on both sides to challenge them to single combat to the death,

sometimes tipping a conflict in favor of one side or the other by doing so. These creatures cannot be reasoned with, and most commanders consider them an ill omen. When battle rune manifests arrive on a battlefield, they herald a terrible day of death and destruction. Warlike folk may welcome them, but most soldiers consider them a harbinger of a long, hard-fought battle that leaves both sides with terrible casualties.

Battle rune manifests speak in energetic, metallic tones. They know Common and frequently pepper their battles with war cries, challenges, and even compliments on a foe's skill or tactics.

COMBAT

Battle rune manifests always carry the struggle to their enemies. They pick out a promising opponent, usually after observing a melee for a short time, and seek to push their foe's skills and their own to the limit. They never flee from a fight, and only their destruction or an impenetrable barrier can prevent a battle rune manifest from finishing a duel.

Animate Weapons (Su): Swords, axes, and other melee weapons are the tools of warfare. As the physical representation of combat, a battle rune manifest has a special affinity for and power over such items. Once per encounter, as a standard action, a battle rune manifest can cause any weapon it can see to animate and fight on its own. The weapon uses a base attack bonus of +9 and gains any bonuses and benefits it may have due to its masterwork or magical qualities. The weapon gains one attack per round and can fly at a speed of 30 feet with perfect maneuverability. The weapon deals its normal damage, including bonuses or penalties granted by abilities it possesses. It continues to fight for up to 10 minutes, as long as it remains within 100 feet of the manifest that animated it. The weapon's AC is always 10, and it sustains damage according to the standard rules for attacking an object. The weapon can flank creatures as normal, and it attacks the closest opponent. As a move-equivalent action, the battle rune manifest that animated the weapon can mentally command it to select a different target.

A battle rune manifest cannot animate ranged weapons, such as bows and crossbows. Thrown weapons attack as if they were used in melee.

If the battle rune manifest uses this ability against a weapon that a creature holds in its hand, the weapon jerks and shifts in its user's hand, but it remains under her control. She suffers a -4 competence penalty to attacks and damage. If she drops the weapon, it attacks as described here. A weapon animated in this manner does not normally make attacks of opportunity.

The manifest's opponents can attempt to grab an animated weapon. Treat this as a grapple attack. While the animated weapon does not normally gain attacks of opportunity, it does gain them against creatures that try to grab it. It has one attack of opportunity per round as normal. Its Strength counts as equal to the rune manifest's. If the weapon is pinned, the person grabbing it can wield it with a -4 competence penalty to attacks and damage. If he lets go of the weapon, it animates and attacks again, unless this ability's duration has expired.

Battle Mastery (Su): A battle rune manifest has knowledge not only of the practice of warfare but also of its methods and teachings. The manifest can use this knowledge, along with its magical nature, to negate an opponent's training. Once per round as a free action, a battle rune manifest can choose to nullify a single feat that an opponent possesses. The manifest must be able to see its foe. The chosen target must make a Will save (DC 20) or lose the use of the chosen feat until the manifest's next action. The victim also loses access to any feats that have the feat he lost as a prerequisite.

Manifest Traits (Ex): All intelligent rune manifests have immunity to critical hits, sleep effects, poison, paralysis, stunning, and flanking.

Spirit of Battle (Su): A battle rune manifest lives for combat. When fighting opponents, it is in its natural environment. Its affinity for combat amplifies and enhances the natural fighting ability of all creatures that ally with it. These allies gain a +2 morale bonus to attack rolls and saves.

War Skill (Ex): Battle rune manifests count Weapon Specialization as a talent rather than as a ceremonial feat.

BATTLE RUNE MANIFEST

ENCOUNTER (EL 8)

While staying at an inn, the characters spot a litorian mercenary named Raflar who brags loudly about his many victories and his great skill at arms. If any of the PCs are obviously warriors, the litorian taunts them and ridicules their skills. The litorian is spoiling for a fight. Fueled by the drinks he has downed, he is eager to demonstrate to everyone in the place his unparalleled skills.

Luckily for the PCs, the litorian's true talents are not as great as his words would indicate. However, his loud boasts



attract the attention of a battle rune manifest. As the litorian continues to provoke the PCs, the manifest appears in the midst of the taproom. It announces that it is eager to take part in the great duel that is soon to commence and attacks the nearest armed individual.

The characters must act quickly to stop the manifest from slaughtering the folk in the place. If they are observant, they may note that a human magister companion of Raflar summoned the manifest using a scroll. The pair has used this ruse in the past to arrange for the death of their rivals and to pick through their victims' remains.

RUNE MANIFEST, DISEASE

Medium Elemental

Hit Dice: 8d8+32 (68 hp), dying/dead -5/-18

Initiative: +7

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 17 (+3 Dexterity, +4 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+6

Attack: Claw +9 melee (1d6 plus disease)

Full Attack: 2 claws +9 melee (1d6 plus disease)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Aura of sickness, disease touch, plague seed

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, DR 10/silver (or 15/+1), immunity to disease, manifest traits, SR 17

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +6

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 13

Skills: Alchemy +13, Listen +11, Sneak +14, Tumble +14

Feats: Defensive Stance, Improved Initiative, Resistance to Poison, Weapon Finesse

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary, pair, or mob (3-18)

Challenge Rating: 7

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +4

A disease rune manifest is the physical avatar of the arcane force behind the various runes that describe and express the concepts of illness, contagion, and sickness. Disease rune manifests possess keen intellects and a morbid sense of purpose, driven by their nature to spread disease wherever they go. They tend to compose simple but cunning plans to infect entire towns and regions.

A disease rune manifest appears as an elderly, emaciated human (male or female) covered in festering sores. Its hair is matted and oily, with dried patches of slime and blood scattered throughout the tangled mess. Long, jagged claws extend from its fingers. These talons are covered in dried blood, slime, and ichor. Flies buzz around the creature in a thick cloud, crawling over its body, into its mouth, and even across its eyes. These creatures usually wear simple, blood- and gore-stained robes and cloaks.

Like the pathogens they embody, disease rune manifests are silent but effective killers. They prefer to remain out of sight, hiding within warehouses, granaries, and other areas where they can infect food, water, and other goods. Once they are satisfied that they have planted the seeds of an outbreak, they sneak away in the night to find a new target. The telltale signs of the illnesses they spread—black fever and green

plague (both described below)—are the only evidence that distinguishes their infestations from a mundane epidemic.

Disease rune manifests have no goal aside from spreading sickness. While intelligent, they cannot conceive of pursuing other endeavors or even developing independent personalities. In many ways, each disease rune manifest is a single, physical shard of a much greater mind or being. A disease rune manifest can speak Common; its voice is a dull, hollow monotone that hints at its unsavory nature. Some disease rune manifests seem to exhibit personalities, but these creatures have merely learned to mimic humanoid behavior in order to complete their tasks. A disease rune manifest never takes on an individual name; if asked to provide one, the creature becomes confused and angry. In some regions, guards on watch always ask for a traveler's name, because this idiosyncrasy can immediately identify a traveler as a disease rune manifest rather than merely an afflicted human.

COMBAT

Disease rune manifests try to avoid physical combat whenever possible. All they care about is spreading illnesses, not engaging in battle or slaying enemies with their claws. A disease rune manifest may strike at an opponent from the shadows to infect him, but it rarely lingers for an extended melee.

Aura of Sickness (Ex): A cloud of flies surrounds a disease rune manifest, and some of these insects “attack” anyone who closes with the creature. The flies crawl into gaps in an opponent's armor, stinging and biting any exposed flesh they can find. Each round a creature is within 10 feet of a disease rune manifest, it must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or suffer a -4 competence penalty to attack rolls and checks due to the distracting flies.

The flies are part of the form of a disease rune manifest, and when the creature wants to hide, it can command them to remain silent or stop attacking opponents. If a disease rune manifest tries to make a Sneak check while the flies are active, it suffers a -6 circumstance penalty to its checks. A disease rune manifest can activate or deactivate the flies as a free action.

Disease Touch (Ex): A disease rune manifest's claws drip with putrid slime, mucus, and other sickening fluids. Each time the creature strikes a foe, the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 22) or contract green plague, a sickness that causes convulsions, the formation of weeping, green sores on the victim's skin, and severe coughing and congestion. This disease has an incubation period of one minute, and it deals 1d8 points of temporary Dexterity damage and 1d8 points of temporary Constitution damage.

Plague Seed (Ex): The very presence of a disease rune manifest causes an area to become rife with sickness. If the creature remains in one spot for 12 hours, all food within 100 feet of it becomes tainted. Anyone who eats the food becomes exposed to black fever. In addition, any creature that spends more than an hour within 50 feet of a disease rune manifest also becomes exposed. These carriers in turn can infect others. Anyone who touches a carrier or spends more than an hour in an enclosed space with one also becomes exposed. Black fever causes a victim to sweat a thin, black fluid. He develops a severe fever, and small, black blisters appear on his forehead and arms. The Fortitude save DC to resist this disease is 15, its incubation period is 24 hours, and it deals 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage.

Manifest Traits (Ex): All intelligent rune manifests have immunity to critical hits, sleep effects, poison, paralysis, stunning, and flanking.

DISEASE RUNE MANIFEST

ENCOUNTER (EL 7)

A disease rune manifest has infiltrated the wine cellars at an important and prosperous vineyard. Many shipments of expensive wine have been tainted, but the vineyard's owner is unaware of this fact. While traveling along a country road, the characters come across a wagon that has crashed on the side of the road. It bears several wooden kegs of the diseased wine.

If the characters investigate, they find the wagon's driver near death from black fever. (He sampled some of his cargo and contracted the disease.) The characters must find the vineyard, track down the destinations of its shipments, and prevent the wine from making it to market before it touches off a catastrophic plague.

Unfortunately, the vintner is a selfish and petty man. He has an irrational hatred of giants and sibeccai and reacts angrily to any such characters who present him with evidence of the disease, claiming that they are trying to put him out of business. From its hiding place in the wine cellars, the disease manifest attempts to interfere with the characters'



plans, perhaps infecting one of them to convince the vintner that the characters are carrying the disease and that they played some role in spreading it to his goods.

RUNE MANIFEST, TERROR

Medium Elemental

Hit Dice: 6d8 (27 hp), dying/dead -1/-11

Initiative: +6

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 16 (+2 Dexterity, +4 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+4

Attack: Claw +6 melee (1d6)

Full Attack: 2 claws +6 melee (1d6)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Aura of fear, horrifying visage, impart horrific visage, ward of terror

Special Qualities: DR 5/silver (or 5/+1), manifest traits, SR 15

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +8

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 18

Skills: Intimidate +19, Knowledge (runes) +13, Listen +13, Sneak +13

Feats: Elemental Resistance (cold), Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary or pair

Challenge Rating: 5

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +7

Terror rune manifests are clad in grey, tattered, hooded cloaks that drape over their hands and faces. When they reveal anything of their true form, these creatures always take the guise of whatever would terrify a viewer the most. They can warp others' minds and convince them that their friends are horrific monsters, perhaps causing them to attack their allies.

Terror rune manifests are interested only in spreading fear. The more terror that exists in the world, the stronger they become and the more numerous they grow. Thus, they have a vested interest in ensuring that wars grow to encompass as much territory as possible. They use their innate abilities to spark riots, turn friends into foes, and instigate horrific crimes that live on in folktales and spread fear and uncertainty from generation to generation.

Few sane folk willingly traffic with terror rune manifests, but some see them as useful tools to gain greater power and control over others. Fear is a powerful ally for a would-be tyrant, and the manifests are only too happy to aid anyone who wishes to further their aims. These alliances rarely end favorably for the mortals who precipitate them. Terror rune manifests are incapable of feeling friendship or other warm feelings toward anything. Even when dealing with others of their kind, they act solely out of their shared desire to

spread terror and fear rather than out of a sense of brotherhood or unity.

Terror rune manifests sometimes seek out those who could spread terror and make offers of alliance. They never speak, instead offering contracts written on crumbling parchment and scribed in a language that only the one meant to read the contract can understand. It offers the alliance so long as both parties work to ensure their mutual prosperity and growth. The mortal must wage war against his enemies, brutalize his subjects, and spread fear. In return, the manifest fights on its ally's behalf and hunts down his enemies.

New terror manifests are created spontaneously by traumatic incidents that leave an indelible mark on the world. A horrific murder that gives birth to a frightening legend may spawn one of these creatures, as could a terrible slaughter that claims hundreds of lives and spreads news of agony and misery across the continent.

COMBAT

In battle, terror rune manifests rely on their magical abilities to fend off their enemies. They delight in sparking fear within living creatures and seek out combat with an eye toward using their impart horrific visage ability to turn their opponents against each other.

Aura of Fear (Su): Terror rune manifests are continually cloaked in a palpable aura of dread. A living creature that draws close to one breaks out in a cold sweat, trembles uncontrollably, and has difficulty concentrating. Any creature within 60 feet of a terror rune manifest must make a Will save (DC 14) or suffer a -2 morale penalty to attack rolls, checks, and saves. Furthermore, a spellcaster who fails this save must make a Concentration check (DC 10) when casting a spell, or trembling hands and an unsteady voice cause the spell to be ruined.

A character need only save against a particular terror rune manifest's aura of fear once every 24 hours. On a successful save, the character remains unaffected by the aura for 24 hours. On a failed save, the character suffers the aura's drawbacks for 24 hours and then may attempt a new save. This aura of fear is a mind-affecting, fear-based effect.

Horrifying Visage (Su): A terror rune manifest can peer into an opponent's mind in search of the foe's greatest fear. Once it has gained this knowledge, it can use its powers to sculpt its appearance to mimic this primal, horrifying image. Once per round, it can use this ability against an opponent as a standard action. The chosen target must make a Will save (DC 18) to resist the intense terror that overcomes it. On a failed save, the creature enters a state of deep shock that leaves it helpless. Each round on its action, the creature may make another Will save (DC 18) to snap out of this state. On a successful save, a creature suffers a -2 morale

penalty to attack rolls, checks, and saves until the manifest's next action. The victim is so thoroughly shaken that it cannot summon the effort needed to cast a spell without a Concentration check (DC 20). On a failed check, the victim's spell fails. This is a mind-affecting, fear-based effect.

Impart Horrific Visage (Su): A terror rune manifest cannot only adopt the guise of a horrific creature, it can also cloak its opponents in illusions to confuse them and cause dissension within their ranks. Once per minute, a terror rune manifest can use a powerful illusion to create a representation of something feared and hated by its opponents and place it upon one of its foes. The chosen target suffers no direct ill effects from this ability. However, each of her allies must make a Will save (DC 14) or attack her if she is the closest target and no other opponent has damaged the ally since the ally's last action. The target's allies make this save before they take any actions in the current round and continue to make saves each round until they succeed. Once an ally succeeds on this save, it sees through the deception. A creature gains a +2 circumstance bonus to its save for each ally that makes its save and uses a free action to warn the creature of the illusion.

Ward of Terror (Su): A terror rune manifest's innate aura of fear is so powerful that weaker creatures cannot bear to come near it. Any creature with Hit Dice equal to half the manifest's total or less cannot approach or remain within 30 feet of it. This is a mind-affecting, fear-based effect.

Manifest Traits (Ex): All intelligent rune manifests have immunity to critical hits, sleep effects, poison, paralysis, stunning, and flanking.

TERROR RUNE MANIFEST CHARACTERS

To better serve their purpose, some terror rune manifests gain levels in the akashic class. By tapping into the collective memory, they can better learn to spread pain and terror across the land.

TERROR RUNE MANIFEST

ENCOUNTER (EL 5)

An ancient castle near the characters' hometown has long been thought haunted. Strange apparitions appear within its windows by night, and several grisly murders have taken place there. The place is beyond the local ruler's jurisdiction and uninhabited. Anyone who has tried to claim it has invariably met a bad end.

Long ago, a terrible warlord controlled the castle. He delighted in pain and torture. Fed by his paranoia, he condemned many of his servants to terrible deaths at the hands of his head torturer. Over time, the accumulated pain and misery gave rise to a terror rune manifest. The creature now dwells within the castle. For years, it was content to main-



tain the place's fearsome reputation and build it up as a permanent monument to fear.

Recently, a gang of bandits has set up camp in the castle, confident that the authorities would not look for them there. The manifest approached their leader during the night, and the two agreed to an alliance that furthers their mutual aims. As the chieftain unites other smaller bands under his command and the bandits become more organized, the characters may be called upon to investigate the menace.

RUNE REAVER

Large Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 17d8+170 (246 hp), dying/dead -11/-30

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 23 (-1 size, +2 Dexterity, +12 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 21

Base Attack/Grapple: +17/+29

Attack: Huge glaive +26 melee (2d6+12)

Full Attack: Huge glaive +26/+21/+16/+11 melee (2d6+12)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/10 feet, 15 feet with glaive
(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/10 feet, 15 feet with glaive)

Special Attacks: Steal runes

Special Qualities: Immune to runes, SR 22, sense runes

Saves: Fort +15, Ref +12, Will +12

Abilities: Str 27, Dex 15, Con 30, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 17

Skills: Knowledge (runes) +22, Listen +18, Sneak* +16, Spot +18, Wilderness Survival +20

Feats: Cleave, Fast Healer, Light Sleeper, Power Attack, Stomp, Track, Weapon Focus (glaive)

Environment: Any land

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 13

Treasure: None

Advancement: 18–25 HD (Large); 26–34 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: —

For as long as men have learned and inscribed runes, there have been rune reavers. These creatures track and hunt those who use runes (runethanes) and those who bear them (runechildren and rune animals), seeking their destruction. Created by some strange universal law of balance, the rune reavers live for their appointed task of destroying those associated with runes. Legend says that, if they succeed in wiping out all knowledge of magical runes, all rune reavers—as a race—can ascend to some higher state of being. Working toward this eternal reward consumes them.

To this end, they can sense runes from a great distance, they are immune to the effects generated by runes, and they can even absorb runes they encounter as well as gain strength and stamina from them. Rune reavers are very good at what they do.

The rune lords (see Chapter Two of *The Diamond Throne*), in retaliation for all of the murdered runethanes and runechildren, have placed a large bounty (about 5,000 gp) on the head of any rune reaver. But in truth, the greatest enemies of the rune reavers are the shuyarns (see page 88). These two types of creature fight to the death if they encounter one another, and shuyarn specifically watch over favored runethanes or runechildren to prevent rune reavers from carrying out their grisly mission.

Despite their single-minded nature, rune reavers are living creatures. They eat, breathe, and sleep. They mate and produce young, although telling a male from a female is a task only another rune reaver can manage. Because they must always be on the hunt, rune reavers do not settle down. They only meet others of their kind by happenstance, and then socialize only for a short time. Young rune reavers mature very quickly (four to five years). Once they reach adulthood, they are likely to live at least another 90 to 100 years, although successful reavers live even longer if they have absorbed the power of a great many runes (see below).

Rune reavers are careful, contemplative, and serious, rarely prone to unbridled fury or foolhardy behavior. They act with calculation and without mercy, never contemplating morals or ethics beyond the good of wiping out all those associated with runes. Neither logic, well-worded speeches, nor impassioned pleas can sway them from their goal.

A rune reaver is vaguely humanoid in appearance and stands 9 feet tall. Its flesh is smooth and black, covered in glowing red, yellow, and blue runes. While on the hunt, particularly when it nears its quarry, it wears a sinister, unnerving grin.

These hulking brutes usually wield a long pole arm and wear only breeches.

Rune reavers speak Common. They are always Unbound.

COMBAT

When encountering creatures with no magical runes of any kind, a rune reaver ignores them at worst and is mildly, cautiously friendly at best. (For now, rune reavers ignore those simply having some ranks in Knowledge [runes], mostly because it is so hard to determine. Eventually, however, they will have to find a way to hunt down such creatures as well.) If the rune reaver encounters those who have or use runes, however, it attacks immediately and ruthlessly. It fights to the death.

The way that rune reavers really like to carry out their mission, however, involves a little more forethought than simply wandering about hoping to run into runethanes or runechildren. They use their magical abilities to sense the presence of runes, then cautiously track those involved. When a rune reaver has located its quarry, it sets up an ambush to slay its prey quickly and efficiently.

Those without runes who accompany rune-bearers are guilty by association. Although a rune reaver won't go out of its way to track and kill such creatures, it won't hesitate to cut them down if they stand in the way of its mission.

***Skills (Ex):** Rune reavers gain a +5 racial bonus to Sneak checks.

Steal Runes (Su): Should a rune reaver touch a rune created by a runethane or rune lord, the creature absorbs it. Even if it is a touch-trigger rune, it does not trigger the rune. An absorbed rune is gone. Further, the rune reaver

gains a cumulative +10 bonus hit points (they last until used) and a +2 bonus to Strength (lasts for one hour). A stolen rune also adds about a month or so to the natural life span of a rune reaver, so successful hunters sometimes live years longer than their fellows.

If a rune reaver touches the fleshrune of a runechild or rune animal, the effect is far more dramatic (or traumatic). The victim must make a Will saving throw (DC 21) or lose all abilities gained from the rune, which is gone forever. The rune reaver, in this case, gains +10 permanent bonus hit points and a permanent +2 bonus to Strength. A runechild drained in this way can become a runechild again, with the sacrifice of yet another level, as if becoming a runechild for the first time.

Should a rune reaver touch a rune manifest (see pages 76 to 85), the manifest must make a Will saving throw (DC 21) or be disintegrated.

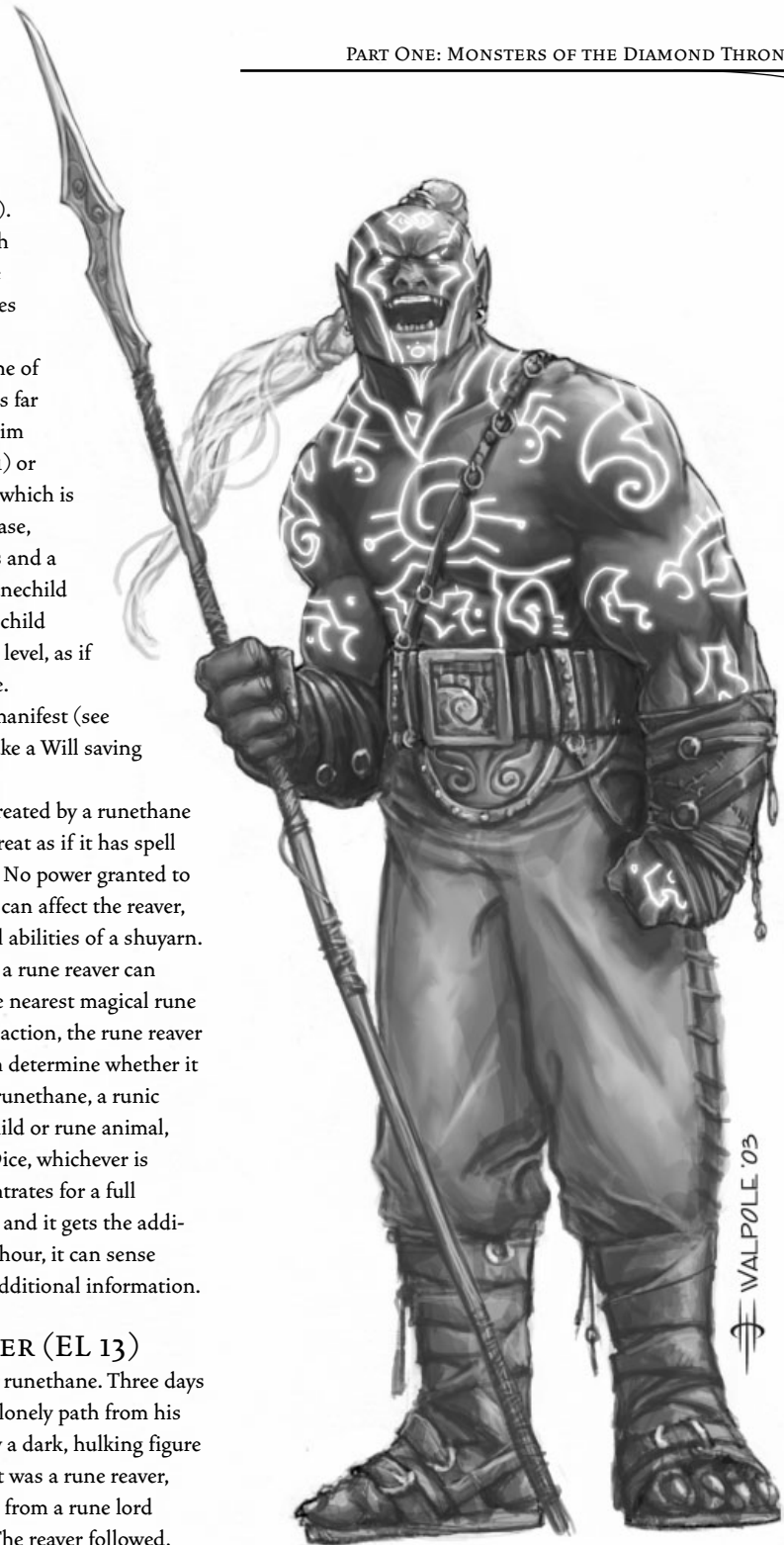
Immune to Runes (Su): No rune created by a runethane or rune lord can affect a rune reaver (treat as if it has spell resistance the rune cannot overcome). No power granted to a runechild or rune animal by its rune can affect the reaver, and neither can the rune-based special abilities of a shuyarn.

Sense Runes (Su): As a free action, a rune reaver can sense the direction and distance of the nearest magical rune within 100 feet. If it uses a full-round action, the rune reaver extends this range to one mile and can determine whether it senses an inscribed rune created by a runethane, a runic magic item, or a fleshrune on a runechild or rune animal, plus sense the rank of power (or Hit Dice, whichever is appropriate). If the rune reaver concentrates for a full minute, the range extends to 10 miles, and it gets the additional information as well. After a full hour, it can sense runes up to 100 miles away, plus the additional information.

RUNE REAVER ENCOUNTER (EL 13)

Tarnel the Cold is a 10th-level sibeccai runethane. Three days ago, he was making his way down the lonely path from his home to the nearby town when he saw a dark, hulking figure waiting for him in ambush. He knew it was a rune reaver, having just read about them in a letter from a rune lord acquaintance. Tarnel ran on to town. The reaver followed, but Tarnel was able to outdistance him.

Although he is not a terribly likable sort, the townsfolk have pledged to help protect Tarnel in his time of need. This is where the PCs show up. It doesn't take much to realize that a creature that makes a fairly powerful runethane run for his life is going to cut a bloody swath through the commoners trying to protect him. Player characters with any



kind of heart should want to help, whether it be to fight off the creature or try to spirit Tarnel away before the rune reaver can get to him. The relentless reaver isn't going to give up easily, however, and the PCs may have a vicious fight on their hands eventually, no matter what they do.

SHUYARN

Medium Outsider

Hit Dice: 18d8+144 (225 hp), dying/dead –9/–27

Initiative: +8

Speed: 40 feet, fly 80 feet (perfect)

AC: 41 (+8 Dexterity, +10 natural, +8 armor, +5 deflection), touch 23, flat-footed 33

Base Attack/Grapple: +18/+25

Attack: +5 flaming runic dire greatsword +31 melee (2d6+19+1d6 fire)

Full Attack: +5 flaming runic dire greatsword +31/+26/+21/+16 melee (2d6+19+1d6 fire) and 2 wing buffets +25 melee (1d6+3 plus sleep)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, aura of confusion, runes, sleep

Special Qualities: DR 15/unholy (or 15/+3), SR 38, rune armor, immunities, darkvision 60 feet, fast healing 5

Saves: Fort +24, Ref +24, Will +24

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 26, Con 27, Int 28, Wis 27, Cha 29

Skills: Alchemy +30, Concentration +29, Diplomacy +30, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (ceremony) +24, Knowledge (cosmology) +30, Knowledge (engineering) +25, Knowledge (geography) +25, Knowledge (magic) +30, Knowledge (nature) +25, Knowledge (religion) +24, Knowledge (runes) +30, Knowledge (science) +25, Listen +29, Search +25, Sense Motive +29, Sneak +29, Spot +29, Tumble +29

Feats: Blessed Mage, Cleave, Craft Constant Item, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Power Attack, Power of the Name, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword)

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 20

Treasure: Triple standard

Advancement: 19–36 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: +6

Shuyarns are so rare that some people believe only one of them exists. Certainly, no one's ever seen more than one at a time. More often than not, people call shuyarns "rune angels," and it's easy to see why. These angelic outsiders embody the essence that allows runes themselves to function. They represent the ordered aspect of the universe that translates precise symbols into exacting effects.

As such, shuyarns only rarely come into the world, and when they do, their business normally involves runes—and thus, usually a runethane, runechild, or rune animal.

Occasionally a shuyarn acts as a "guardian angel" for such an individual. Other times, they come to counter the machinations of a rune reaver (see page 86). Shuyarns, for obvious reasons, hate rune reavers and attack them on sight (and usually vice versa). On other occasions, shuyarn motives are more mysterious. Sometimes they act to preserve a bit of runic lore or to grant a new gift of knowledge to an individual deemed worthy (such as a new rune for a runethane).

Shuyarns are inherently kind and good-natured. They are not traditional angels, however (or, in fact, related to them in anything but appearance). They do not concern themselves with righting wrongs, fighting evil, or performing good deeds the way an actual angel might. Rune angels despise stupidity and ignorance and have no respect for creatures unable to learn, use logic, and wield (or at least understand) magic. Thus, shuyarns sometimes come across as cold or arrogant, depending on who interacts with them.

Most shuyarns appear to be female, although they are actually genderless creatures of magical essence that live on another plane. That same essence ties them to this world as long as runic power remains a force of importance and might.

Standing 8 feet tall, these regal, golden-skinned humanoids bear wings made of entwined, floating runes and sigils. They have long, fiery hair, wear glistening breastplates, and wield scintillating, ornate swords in both hands.

Shuyarns can speak all languages, thanks to their at-will *tongues* ability (without that, they speak only Celestial).

COMBAT

Shuyarns are far more likely to be seen teaching or instructing than fighting. If they do fight, shuyarns like to enter combat prepared for their foe—they hate being caught unawares. Most of the time, if surprised, a rune angel will teleport away, ready some appropriate runes, activate appropriate spell-like abilities, then return. Despite their skill with their magical swords, a favored tactic involves keeping to the air and relying on *psychic blast* and *sorcerous blast* to harm their enemies.

Although they can be kindly and benevolent, once a shuyarn's relationship with another creature reaches the point of violence, they rarely show mercy. Their attacks are swift and deadly.

Runes (Sp): A shuyarn can create any rune except the ultimate rune as if it were an 18th-level runethane with a rune capacity of 36. A typical shuyarn normally has these runes currently inscribed: password-protected, invested *rune of blasting* on weapon (+20d6 points of fire damage with weapon on first strike, DC 28 Reflex save for half), *rune of enrichment* on weapon (add +1 luck bonus to attack and damage listed above), *elemental rune (fire)* on armor (fire resistance 10), *rune of cheating death* on self. This leaves the shuyarn with a rune capacity of 23.

Rune Armor (Su): The shuyarn is protected by armor woven from runes of energy that serves as a *+3 breastplate* with no armor check penalty, spell failure chance, or movement modifications. Further, shuyarns are surrounded by floating runes that deflect attacks and provide a *+5 deflection bonus* to Armor Class and a *+5 resistance bonus* to saving throws. Both these effects are intrinsic to the shuyarn and cannot be used by another.

Aura of Confusion (Su): Whenever shuyarns wish it, the runic symbols that hover around their bodies twirl and spin, creating a magical aura of confusion that extends up to 30 feet around them. Every round that a creature other than the shuyarn is within the aura, the creature must make a Will saving throw (DC 28) or become stunned for 1 round. A stunned creature drops everything held, can't take actions, suffers a *-2 penalty* to Armor Class, and loses his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class (if any). The saving throw is Charisma based.

Sleep (Su): Anyone struck by the gentle blow of a shuyarn's wing must make a Will saving throw (DC 28) or fall into a deep, unawakable slumber for 1d6+1 rounds. After that, the creature sleeps for another 1d6 minutes in a normal slumber from which it can be awakened by a loud noise or shaking. The saving throw is Charisma based.

Immunities (Ex): Shuyarns are immune to compulsions, curses, and fire. They have cold, electricity, and sonic resistance 20.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): A shuyarn can cast the following spells as an 18th-level magister: at will—*bypass ward, charm, detect magic, lesser learn secret, sorcerous blast, suggestion, tongues*; 3/day—*chains of vengeance, greater battle healing, psychic blast, see invisibility, teleport*; 1/day—*duplicate, greater telekinesis, mass devastation, perfect health, portal to another plane, revivification, scrying, telekinetic shield, vitrification*. The save DC against these spells is DC 19 + spell level.

Fast Healing (Ex): A shuyarn with this ability rapidly heals damage, allowing it to quickly recover from even the most grievous wounds. It gains fast healing 5.

SHUYARN ENCOUNTER (EL 20)

The player characters are asked, as a favor—perhaps to pay off an old favor they themselves owe—to escort the aged human runethane Edik Ranoth to a special gathering of the greatest runethanes and rune lords (see Chapter Two of *The Diamond Throne*) in a nearby city. Incredibly old and feeble, Edik requires the help of others even to move. Despite the aid of great magic that has prolonged her life, Edik, at 188 years old, has almost reached her limit. Still, the job should certainly be no great strain on the PCs. Edik is well liked and has no real enemies. The characters, in this sense, are more honor guard than bodyguards.



What no one except a few powerful runethanes realizes is that the meeting is to be in a secret chamber where a shuyarn appears every 100 years to teach a new rune to the worthy. And what even they do not know is that the shuyarn has ruled that Edik is not worthy. (Her mind is going quickly—she is senile and almost always in a state of dementia. The other runethanes invited her only out of respect.)

On the way to the meeting, then, the shuyarn appears and forbids Edik from proceeding. Edik, of course, doesn't understand what's going on. The player characters must deal with the shuyarn, who has no intention of explaining itself to Edik's "servants." The PCs have a few options: convince the shuyarn to elucidate, agree, then come up with something to tell Edik and her family as to why she can't go; convince the shuyarn to explain and then attempt to persuade it to let Edik come anyway; or attempt to use force. The third option, of course, has dire consequences, for if the PCs succeed, the reason for the meeting itself is gone.

SLAUGHTERFIEND

Huge Aberration

Hit Dice: 15d8+105 (172 hp), dying/dead –8/–24

Initiative: +6

Speed: 40 feet

AC: 22 (–2 size, +2 Dexterity, +12 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 20

Base Attack/Grapple: +11/+28

Attack: Slam +20 melee (2d6+9)

Full Attack: Slam +20 melee (2d6+9) and bite +18 melee (1d8+4)

Space/Reach: 15 feet/15 feet

(Face/Reach: 10 feet by 10 feet/15 feet)

Special Attacks: Improved grab, constrict

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, tremorsense 50 feet, spines, water breathing

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +11

Abilities: Str 28, Dex 15, Con 24, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 11

Skills: Listen +11, Spot +11

Feats: Defensive Move, Improved Initiative, Multiattack*, Night Owl, Power Attack, Power Charge, Trample

Environment: Temperate desert or mountains, or temperate aquatic

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 11

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 16–30 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: —

**Denotes a feat from the MM.*

The slaughterfiend is a predator that dwells within rocky wastelands and mountainous regions, like the Southern Wastes or the Elder Mountains. Burkut's Pass in the Elder range is known to be a particularly common hunting ground for them. The creature hunts deer, antelope, sheep, goats, cattle, and even other predators such as bears, wolves, and mountain lions. It is not averse to attacking humanoid targets or even giants for food. Its courage knows no bounds—it even attacks prey found in large numbers. Only the oldest slaughterfiends ever learn fear, and in turn, discretion. In a predator-heavy ecology such as the Lands of the Diamond Throne, where the most vicious creatures can become prey, even slaughterfiends often live short lives.

A slaughterfiend measures at least 25 feet long and weighs 3 tons. Its body is broad and covered in dark blue or purple flesh. It exudes a foul and distinct odor that creatures with the scent ability can detect up to 500 feet away. It is normally a silent creature, but in combat it looses a terrible roar. On its death, it keens a death knell that creatures up to a mile away can hear easily.

A slaughterfiend lair is usually a rock crevice or a small ravine, often close to a source of fresh water (both for itself to use and to prey upon other creatures attempting to use it). Common belief is that the slaughterfiend never needs to sleep. They do, however, build large nests of grass, leaves, and mud for their eggs. A slaughterfiend defends its nest to the death, but once the young are born, it forces them to fend for themselves. Young slaughterfiends dwell in or very near fresh water. Each is 1 to 2 feet long and feeds on fish. They take almost five years to mature and gain their full size.

Some tales speak of a variant type of slaughterfiend that lives in the high desert. This burrowing version of the beast waits in the sand, just below the surface, for prey to come by. When it senses something moving above it, it lunges to the surface, hoping to trap the creature in its spiny grip as it emerges, belly-up. The slaughterfiend then curls around its prey to kill it.

COMBAT

The slaughterfiend has a very specific way of attacking prey. It lunges forward with surprising speed, slamming its body into the smaller creature. The spines on its belly impale and hook the prey, then trap it as the slaughterfiend's muscles move it forward. This bull-rush attack is similar to a dragon's snatch: It moves toward the victim, makes a slam/grab attack, then continues to move with the prey caught in its spines. Eventually, it curls around the creature until the trapped victim dies. It can reach down and bite a constricted foe, but it usually saves its bite attack for creatures of its size or larger or uses it against other opponents while it constricts its prey.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a slaughterfiend must hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can immediately constrict (if the foe is smaller than the slaughterfiend).

Constrict (Ex): The muscles on the slaughterfiend's belly can cause the spines impaling a foe to draw it in and hold it (inflicting more damage as the action forces the spines deeper into the foe's flesh). The slaughterfiend inflicts 2d6+9 points of damage each round as it holds a foe smaller than itself.

Spines (Ex): Any creature attempting to grapple a slaughterfiend automatically suffers 1d6 points of damage each round from its spines.

Tremorsense (Ex): A slaughterfiend automatically detects the presence and location of any creature or object that stands on the ground within 50 feet of it.

Water Breathing (Ex): The slaughterfiend can breathe water and air equally well.

SLAUGHTERFIEND SPINES

Knowledgeable folks prize the largest slaughterfiend spines as weapons. If such a spine is affixed to a shaft, it makes the equivalent of a masterwork spear. Likewise, one can use just the spine tips as arrowheads to make the equivalent of masterwork arrows or bolts. In all cases, the cost (in time and skill) required to make such a weapon is the normal, not the masterwork, cost.

There are enough large, quality spines on a typical slaughterfiend to produce $1d6+4$ such weapons. Thus, each spine is worth about 150 gold pieces.

SLAUGHTERFIEND

ENCOUNTER (EL 11)

The PCs are warned of Grandfather Blue, a slaughterfiend that haunts the mountainous or rocky area they are about to traverse. The locals have named the creature and tell of how it has hunted the region for almost 50 years—longer than most of them remember. All their lives they have heard tales of Grandfather Blue, and all of them agree that no one escapes his clutches.

If the player characters enter the region despite the warnings, sure enough, they encounter a particularly large slaughterfiend. Grandfather Blue hasn't reached old age by being foolish, however. If its chosen prey does not die easily, it retreats before it can suffer significant harm. If the PCs allow it to escape, though, it waits until a more convenient time and strikes again—perhaps after they have faced another foe and are weakened, or perhaps at night while some of them are asleep. If driven off twice, Grandfather Blue leaves the PCs alone and looks for easier prey.



Hidden away in its lair, Grandfather Blue keeps a prized treasure: a shiny gem once carried by a stranger who wandered through this area long ago. The slaughterfiend does not realize it, but the gem is actually a *gem of seeing*. However, the years it has spent in the vicious predator's possession have given it a strange and potentially terrible curse. The now-tainted gem magically compels anyone possessing it to eat twice as much as a normal member of its species (Will save, DC 20, negates for the day). The food must be fresh meat killed by the possessor himself.

SPELLEATER

Medium Aberration

Hit Dice: 4d8 (18 hp), dying/dead -1/-10

Initiative: +6

Speed: 30 feet, climb 20 feet, burrow 10 feet

AC: 14 (+2 Dexterity, +2 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+3

Attack: Claw +3 melee (1d6)

Full Attack: 2 claws +3 melee (1d6)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Drain magic, magical strength, power surge, sap energy

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, null zone

Saves: Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +8

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 16

Skills: Knowledge (magic) +9, Search +9, Spot +8, Use Magic Device +20

Feats: Improved Initiative, Intuitive Sense, Iron Will

Environment: Subterranean

Organization: Solitary, pair, scout party (3–12), outpost (10–100 plus one 2nd-level overseer), colony (40–400 plus 1d10 2nd-level overseers and one 5th-level noble), or city (100–800 plus 2d10 2nd-level overseers, 1d10 5th-level nobles, and one 10th-level king)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +6

Spelleaters absorb and devour raw magical energy. The power behind incantations affects them in a manner similar to a narcotic. They devour spells cast at them and can suck the ambient arcane potential from a caster. They are intelligent and have been known to harvest spellcasters, imprisoning them within their lairs and slowly leeching away their essence. From their rocky lairs, they strike out to capture spellcasters and drag them back to their domains in chains. While some spelleaters master the ability to use magic, most prefer simply to absorb the energy provided by casters of other races.

A spelleater has a long, furred body, large eyes that shimmer and glow with a variety of swirling colors, and needlelike fangs. Its short legs end in claws that allow it to burrow and climb with ease.

Spelleaters can survive on vegetables, fruit, and meat, and for many of them, such low fare forms the bulk of their diets. Usually only the strongest spelleaters, called nobles, regularly feast on magical energy. These nobles either develop casting ability of their own, employ a cache of magic items, or have a captive spellcaster chained to a wall inside their lair. Spelleaters

provide their captives with food and drink to keep them healthy and ruthlessly harvest their magical energy each day.

COMBAT

Spelleaters focus their efforts on spellcasters, bearing down upon them like starving men racing to a feast. Their inherent ability to wield magic items makes them dangerous foes; many of these creatures hoard scrolls, wands, staves, and other items for use against their enemies. While most spelleaters would rather use such items as food, they grudgingly turn them against intruders.

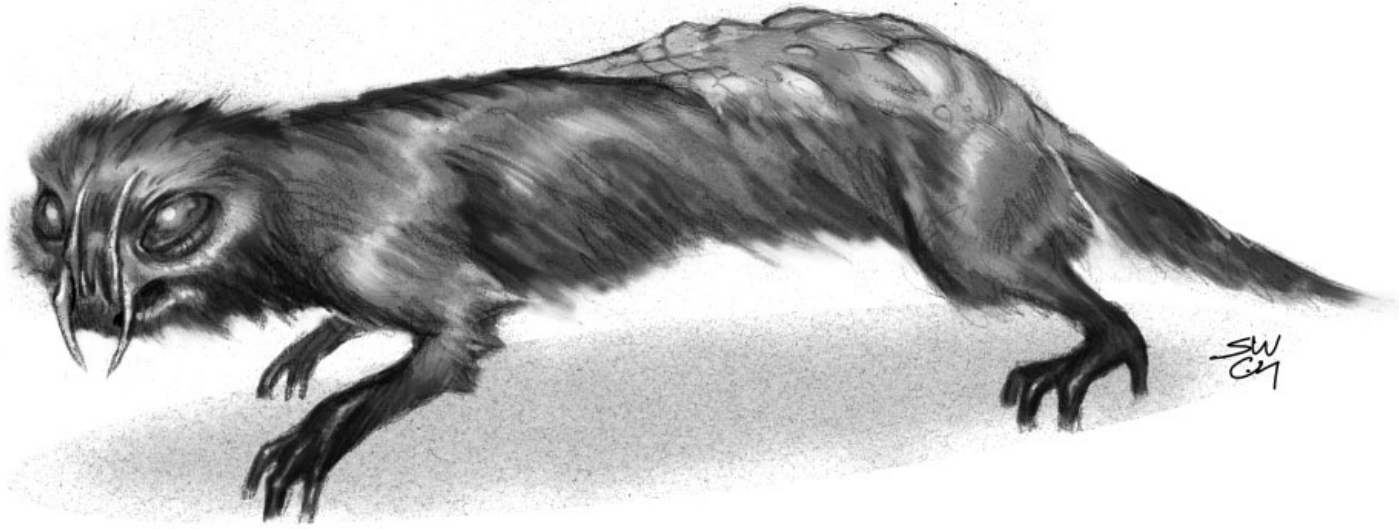
The typical spelleater is smart enough to use basic tactics against opponents. The creatures maximize the use of their magical resources, preferring to use spells and items that split their enemies into smaller groups, especially if they can isolate and carry away a lone caster. If possible, they mask their true nature with crude robes in an effort to trick opponents into using spells against them. Imbued with the narcotic effect of fresh magical energy, they throw themselves into battle with a ferocious rage.

Drain Magic (Su): Spelleaters got their name from their ability to drain the energy from spells cast at or near them. If a spelleater is the target of a spell or if it is within the area of a spell, the caster must make a caster level check (DC 20). Should this check fail, the spell has no effect. The spelleater can choose either to absorb the spell and use its energy to strengthen itself or to store the energy and later unleash it in an attack. The creature must make this decision immediately upon causing a spell to fail.

This ability functions only against spells cast by a character, spell-like abilities that duplicate a spell, or spells cast from wands or scrolls. If someone who is not a spellcaster uses a magic item to create a spell effect, he makes his caster level check using a level of 0.

Magical Strength (Su): If a spelleater opts to absorb a spell, it gains 2 temporary hit points, a +1 bonus to Strength, and a deflection bonus to AC equal to the level of the spell. These effects last for 10 rounds. If a spelleater absorbs multiple spells, these benefits stack.

Power Surge (Su): If a spelleater chooses not to use the energy of a spell to strengthen itself, the creature can expel some or all of that energy in a power surge that deals 1d4 points of force damage per spell level it spends. This is a ranged touch attack with a maximum range of 100 feet. A spelleater's body can retain unabsorbed energy for 10 rounds, after which the energy dissipates harmlessly. If a spelleater dies with unabsorbed energy stored in its body, it explodes in a blast of raw magical power. All creatures within 30 feet of the spelleater's body take 1d4 points of force damage per spell level stored within it. A Reflex save (DC 13) cuts



this damage in half. When a spelleater holds unabsorbed magical energy within itself, its skin shimmers and its body shudders visibly.

Sap Energy (Su): When a spelleater strikes a spellcaster with its claw attack, the caster must make a Will save (DC 17) or lose one of her highest-level spell slots. The spelleater immediately takes on the magical energy of the spell thanks to its drain magic ability, using it either to strengthen itself or to create a power surge.

Null Zone (Su): All spelleaters have an innate ability to unravel the energy that powers a spell. They can use *dispel magic* three times per day as 5th-level magisters.

SPELLEATER SOCIETY

Spelleaters organize themselves into a highly stratified, rigid hierarchy. At the top are those nobles who practice magic, own small caches of items, or have captive spellcasters. These leaders dole out arcane energy to their followers in small doses, winning their loyalty and support by fulfilling their voracious, inherent appetites for raw magical energy. Among the spelleaters, he who controls magic controls society.

These creatures often dig burrows and caves in the earth, usually with an eye toward maximizing their defensive abilities. They make careful plans for their defense, with the lowest-ranking spelleaters expected to rush into battle to delay any attackers. The nobles either stand and fight, if the odds seem in their favor, or, should the invaders possess formidable strength, escape via secret tunnels to safety.

Spelleater society rarely remains stable for extended periods. At times, a small group of underlings may uncover a

magic item or capture a spellcaster. With this important bargaining tool in hand, they can demand a place among the nobles or threaten to lead an uprising against the ruling cabal. Politicking, backstabbing, and elaborate games of power run through spelleater society. Since their overriding goal in life is to devour magical energy, they are easily swayed by charismatic rulers who can offer them their heart's desire.

SPELLEATER CHARACTERS

Spelleaters strive to gain levels in any spellcasting class, with most of them aiming to become mage blades or magisters. However, few of these creatures can ignore their addiction long enough to commit to the training and study needed to enter those classes.

SPELLEATER ENCOUNTER (EL 7)

A small group of spelleaters has discovered a *wand of coma* or a similar item that allows them to put their victims into a deep sleep. In search of a ready source of magical energy, they slip into a large city and hide within the sewers beneath it. By night, they track inexperienced spellcasters, use the wand on them to render them helpless, then drain their magical energy by making repeated claw attacks (but not dealing enough damage to kill the victims). Using the energy gained, they can unleash power surges potent enough to damage buildings.

A player character spellcaster may be targeted by these marauders. Unless the character takes precautions each night, the group of spelleaters descends upon him to feast. In time, they may decide to kidnap the character and carry him back to their lair.

SPINED GRAPPLER

Small Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 1d10 (5 hp), dying/dead -1/-10

Initiative: +6

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 15 (+1 size, +2 Dexterity, +2 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 13

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/-3

Attack: Claw +2 melee (1d4)

Full Attack: 2 claws +2 melee (1d4)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Horde attack

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, evasion, spiny shell

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +0

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 6

Skills: Climb +2, Spot +2

Feats: Improved Grapple^{*}, Improved Initiative^B, Lightning Reflexes^B, Resistance to Poison

Environment: Any subterranean

Organization: Swarm (3–36), colony (10–200), or horde (201–1,000)

Challenge Rating: 1/4

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 2–4 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

^{*}Denotes a feat from the Player's Handbook.

This odd, subterranean predator has a central body protected by a tough, spiny shell. Its long, muscular legs and arms are surprisingly strong for such a small creature, though it is no match for a giant or a trained warrior. In battle, it uses its speed and power to leap upon enemies and grapple them. Spined grapplers typically appear in large numbers, and they have learned to fight as a group in order to defeat larger and stronger opponents.

Spined grapplers are generally regarded as little more than nuisances, but at times they can gather in numbers great enough to pose a threat to those who wander near their territory. In the absence of predators to keep their numbers down, spined grapplers can exhaust a cavern's food supply. Since most creatures cannot stomach their taste, and their hard, spiked shells make them difficult for most beasts to devour, their population often outgrows the caverns where they lurk. When this happens, the spined grapplers migrate from their territory in search of a new home. Typically, they descend deeper into the earth, where more powerful monsters and other threats keep them from overpopulating their new lair.

If the grapplers find a passage to the surface, they can quickly become a daunting threat to those who live nearby. While their flesh is wholly unpalatable, in some areas smiths craft their hard, spiny shells into armor, shields, and other equipment. A colony or horde of these creatures that reaches

the surface has the potential to turn into a looming disaster if inattention, laziness, or other factors render a community unable to cope with the problem before it grows out of control.

COMBAT

Spined grapplers use simple but effective tactics to defeat opponents who are larger and stronger than they are. Their small size and high degree of cooperation allows them to fight in close ranks. They mob around an opponent, with over a dozen grapplers attacking a foe at once. They have learned to use their numbers to their advantage, employing grapple attacks to pull an opponent to the ground and grind him against their sharp spines. What these tactics lack in finesse, they compensate for with sheer, brutal efficiency. Even a heavily armored and trained warmain thinks twice before taking on more than a handful of spined grapplers alone.

Horde Attack (Ex): Spined grapplers excel at using group tactics to overwhelm larger, stronger opponents. When attempting to grapple an opponent, they work together to ruin a target's defenses and drag her down with sheer weight of numbers. Whenever a grappler attacks or attempts a grapple check against a target, it receives a +1 competence bonus to its attack roll or check for each spined grappler that currently grapples the attacker. In addition, spined grapplers can crowd together to attack a single target. Two grapplers can occupy the same 5-foot-by-5 foot space while attacking, moving, or taking any other actions. However, grapplers who share a space in this manner lose their evasion special ability; they are too closely packed together to dodge with their usual speed.

Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows a creature to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a spined grappler takes no damage with a successful saving throw. Grapplers have quick reflexes that allow them to take cover and avoid damage before an attack strikes them.

Spiny Shell (Ex): Spined grapplers get their name from the hard, sharp spines on their shell-like outer covering. Any creature that attempts to grapple one of these monsters automatically takes 1d4 points of damage if it succeeds in getting a hold. Each time a spined grappler succeeds at a grapple check, regardless of the reason for the check or the maneuver it attempts, it deals 1 point of piercing damage to its target.

THE MARCH OF THE HORDE

The sight of a horde of spined grapplers on the march is enough to fill even an experienced soldier with cold dread. When a horde is driven from its lair by overpopulation, the monsters wander until they can find a new area that offers enough space and food to support their now diminished numbers. Predators and the environment take their toll on a horde's



population, slowly wearing it away until the group is small enough to form a viable colony based on the resources at hand.

Once a horde is on the move, little can halt or slow its progress. The grapplers press on through fierce storms and difficult terrain, cutting a swath through any settlements they encounter. Since it is on a constant search for food, a horde will avoid any area that does not promise sustenance; it will not knowingly march through fire, into a barren area, or into a river or large body of water. Some settlements that have been hit by a horde before have learned to use bonfires or controlled flooding by means of dams and irrigation ditches to divert a marching horde away from the boundaries of the town. Killing all the grapplers in a horde is almost always out of the question, unless a settlement includes a powerful spellcaster who can call upon a variety of destructive spells. Even in those cases, spined grapplers exhibit an uncanny ability to avoid such effects.

Changing the path of a horde can make it someone else's problem. Border skirmishes and full-scale wars have been sparked by one group's attempt to send a rampaging horde into its neighbor's territory. Spined grapplers often cause problems that have repercussions far beyond the simple physical threat they present.

ARMOR AND SHIELDS

A spined grapppler's outer shell is tough enough that a smith can forge it into armor if he has enough of the material on hand. Two grapplers provide enough material for a small shield with shield spikes, while four bear enough chitinous material to craft a medium shield with spikes. Eight of these creatures can produce a large shield with spikes. A smith can produce any shield of the given size in this manner. A smith can harvest enough material from eight spined grapplers to produce a suit of hide armor with the armor spikes extra, while 20 of these creatures provide enough material for banded mail with the armor spikes extra. The prices of these armors and shields are the same as for normal armors and shields of the same type, but an artisan with the necessary number of shells can produce armor or a shield in half the time normally required. He can cut this time in half again, but the finished product's maximum Dexterity bonus is reduced by 2 (to a minimum of 0) and its armor bonus is reduced by 1.

SPINED GRAPPLER ENCOUNTER (EL 8)

A horde of grapplers has begun to emerge from a cave entrance in the foothills near a town, catching the townsfolk off guard. The town has a long history of troubles with grapppler hordes and has developed the strategy of sending out hunting expeditions to seek colonies of grapplers and trim their population. According to the town's records, a 20-year gap between hunts is enough to keep the monsters in check without overly taxing the area's resources—but the last grapppler hunt took place only a little over a decade ago, so the townsfolk had no reason to expect an incursion by a horde this soon.

The reason for the grapplers' early exit can be found in the caverns they are escaping from. If the characters investigate these caverns, they discover that a small gang of bandits has intentionally collapsed part of the cave network to force the grapplers out earlier than normal. By cutting off access to the lower regions of the caves, the bandits ensured that the grapplers would march on the nearby town. The thugs hope to pick over the ruins left in the monsters' wake, giving them an easy opportunity to ransack the town.

SPIRIT OF SORROW

Large Undead (Incorporeal)

Hit Dice: 16d12 (104 hp), dying/dead —/0

Initiative: +1

Speed: Fly 60 feet (perfect)

Armor Class: 23 (–1 size, +1 Dexterity, +12 deflection, +1 dodge), touch 23, flat-footed 21

Base Attack/Grapple: +8/—

Attack: Touch +8 melee (1d8 plus paralysis and energy drain)

Full Attack: Touch +8 melee (1d8 plus paralysis and energy drain)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/10 feet

(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/10 feet)

Special Attacks: Energy drain, moan of sorrow, *greater animate the dead*, paralysis

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, incorporeal, SR 25, unnatural aura, sunlight powerlessness, undead traits

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +12

Abilities: Str —, Dex 13, Con —, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 34

Skills: Intimidate +28, Listen +21, Sneak +21, Spot +21

Feats: Defensive, Defensive Move, Defensive Stance, Lightning Reflexes, Night Owl, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (touch)

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary

Treasure: Standard

Challenge Rating: 13

Advancement: 17–24 HD (Large), 25–32 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: —

Very rarely, when a giant dies an ignoble death, or when a giant does a disservice to that which it has sworn to serve as steward and dies before righting its wrong, its despair is so great that the afterlife rejects its spirit. That giant is cursed to roam the world of the living as a spirit of sorrow.

The spirit of sorrow is so inwardly focused, so utterly self-absorbed, that it no longer realizes its existence inflicts pain and suffering upon others. It sees only its own plight and feels only its own monumental sorrows and regrets.

The spirit of sorrow created its lot in life—or rather, afterlife. It's said that only a giant has the capacity for the strong emotion needed to accomplish such a feat, as ignominious as it might be. In any event, only giantish spirits of sorrow have been recorded.

Unlike other types of incorporeal undead, spirits of sorrow do not create spawn. Only specific, heartbreaking circumstances can bring about the creation of a spirit of sorrow.

These undead spirits haunt ruins and desolate areas, almost always in places once frequented by giants. Sometimes, a spirit of sorrow will move into a city or stronghold currently occupied by giants, driving them out or forcing them to take a cer-

tain action. Some types of undead creatures, particularly the more intelligent ones, see the value in having a spirit of sorrow nearby. Not only can it animate more undead, but its moan can affect large numbers of foes while leaving its fellow undead unaffected. These vile creatures will lure a spirit of sorrow into their lair or trick it into going where they wish it to go.

This hulking spectre looks like nothing more than a floating hooded cloak of giantish proportions. It leaves behind a sticky residue wherever it goes, which dries slowly into a grey stain. This substance, called the “tears of loss,” is prized by some as a treasure (see next page).

Spirits of sorrow speak Giantish and sometimes Common. They possess whatever knowledge they had in life, but they would never share that knowledge, and most of what they know only heightens their despair.

COMBAT

The spirit of sorrow avoids melee—it attempts to avoid being struck at all. In melee, it gains an additional +1 dodge bonus to Armor Class (Defensive Stance) and against ranged attacks it gains a +4 dodge bonus to AC if it moves more than 10 feet in a round (Defensive Move). Usually, in a combat situation, the spirit uses animated undead to attack its foes while it moans and stays clear of assailants. After a few rounds, even the hardest of opponents finds it difficult to deal with its undead servants.

Moan of Sorrow (Su): As a standard action, the spirit of sorrow can moan, afflicting all living, intelligent creatures within 50 feet with terrible sadness. Foes who fail a Will saving throw (DC 27) suffer a –2 penalty to attacks, damage rolls, ability checks, skill checks, and saving throws. The penalty stacks with itself, so consecutive rounds of moaning bestow greater and greater penalties. The sorrow lasts for 10 rounds. This is considered a mind-affecting attack, and the saving throw is Charisma based.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a spirit of sorrow's incorporeal touch attacks gain three negative levels. For each such negative level bestowed, the spirit of sorrow gains 5 temporary hit points. Removing a negative level requires a Fortitude save (DC 27). The saving throw is Charisma based.

Paralysis (Su): The touch of the spirit of sorrow, in addition to bestowing negative levels, chills a living victim to the bone with sorrow, paralyzing it. The paralysis lasts for 10 rounds. A Will save (DC 27) negates the effect. This is considered a mind-affecting attack, and the saving throw is Charisma based.

Greater Animate the Dead (Sp): Three times per day, the spirit of sorrow can use this spell to create undead creatures to help protect it.

Incorporeal (Su): An incorporeal creature has no physical body. It can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons or creatures that strike as magic weapons,

and spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities. It is immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Even when hit by spells or magic weapons, it has a 50 percent chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source (except for positive energy, negative energy, force effects such as *forcebeam*).

An incorporeal creature can enter or pass through solid objects, but must remain adjacent to the object's exterior, and so cannot pass entirely through an object whose space is larger than its own. It can sense the presence of creatures or objects within a square adjacent to its current location, but enemies have total concealment (50 percent miss chance) from an incorporeal creature that is inside an object. In order to see farther from the object it is in and attack normally, the incorporeal creature must emerge. An incorporeal creature inside an object has total cover, but when it attacks a creature outside the object it has only half cover, so a creature outside with a readied action could strike at it as it attacks. An incorporeal creature cannot pass through a force effect.

An incorporeal creature's attacks pass through (ignore) natural armor, armor, and shields, although deflection bonuses and force effects (such as *eldritch armor*) work normally against it. Incorporeal creatures cannot grapple or be grappled.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a spirit of sorrow at a distance of 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer than that, and they panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they stay within that range.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex): Spirits of sorrow are powerless in natural sunlight and flee from it. A spirit of sorrow caught in sunlight cannot attack and can take only a single move or attack action in a round.

SPIRIT OF SORROW ENCOUNTER (EL 13)

While investigating a giantish ruin, the player characters find a dried, grey substance covering the floor and even some of the old, abandoned furniture. The ruin, a fortress built during the war with the *dramojh*, is haunted by a spirit of sorrow. The spirit animates the bones of a few giantish generals entombed below the fortress. If the PCs attempt to breach the underground level, the giant skeletons attack. The spirit remains in the background. During the battle, it advances close enough to use its moan of sorrow, but if any foe approaches, it fades incorporeally into a wall or the floor to escape. The spirit continues to harass the characters until they leave or until it is finally defeated.

NEW ALCHEMICAL SUBSTANCE

TEARS OF LOSS

The ectoplasmic residue a spirit of sorrow leaves behind can be gathered by those with skill in alchemy (DC 18). If the tears of loss are collected and sealed within a flask (to pre-



vent them from dying out), no other checks or work is required. Usually, wherever there is a spirit of sorrow, one can find enough residue to fill 1d4 flasks. If a flask's worth of the residue is thrown upon an intelligent living creature, that creature must make a Will saving throw (DC 15) or suffer a -2 penalty to attacks, damage rolls, ability checks, skill checks, and saving throws for 10 rounds. A flask of tears of loss can be thrown as a grenadelike missile. It is considered a mind-affecting attack. If the check to gather the tears of loss fails, the character making the attempt is affected by the tears herself. A flask of tears of loss is worth 35 gp.

SQUAMOUS LIR

Medium Humanoid

Hit Dice: 6d8 (27 hp), dying/dead –1/–11

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 17 (+2 Dexterity, +5 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+4

Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d4) or spikestick +6 melee (1d8)

Full Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d4) or spikestick +6 melee (1d8)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, earth template

Special Qualities: Low-light vision

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +5

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 19

Skills: Concentration +9, Knowledge (history) +7,

Knowledge (magic) +7, Listen +8, Sneak +9, Spellcraft +7

Feats: Blood as Power, Iron Will, Sense the Unseen, Weapon Finesse

Environment: Warm or temperate plains

Organization: Solitary, pair, or band (3–6)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +1

Squamous lir (singular and plural) vie with the slassans (see Chapter Four of *The Diamond Throne*) for the distinction of being the “ultimate legacy” of the dramojh. Unlike the slassans, however, these dramojh creations reject the path set out for them by their cruel masters. Long ago, the squamous lir learned that not all dragons were selfish and vile. They have since sought a better path. For this reason, they are sometimes called the “redeemed,” or even the “redeemed dramojh”—although the latter is wholly inaccurate.

Some say it was the squamous lir that taught humans the rituals for transforming into mojhs. This might be true. Squamous lir call mojhs “vajel darr,” which in Draconic means “little brothers.” In any event, it is easy to see the resemblance. Squamous lir very much resemble mojhs, but are even more inherently magical. Some of their inherent magical abilities are tied loosely to the earth, and the creatures have a close connection with stone and earth.

Today, squamous lir have little contact with humans, mojhs, or other humanoids. Most spend their long life spans seeking out dragons—specifically, nonmalevolent dragons. Many squamous lir have traveled to the Unknown West on this quest, but others seek their distant forebears in a far less straightforward manner. They search dramojh ruins, examine and interrogate creatures created by the dramojh, and study records of dramojh activities. These squamous lir researchers believe that within the activities and creations of

the dramojhs lie some vital secret of the dragons who created them. They call this secret, whatever it is, the Legacy of the Dragons, and they believe it ties in with the land, the runechildren, and more.

Unlike mojhs, these humanoid creatures have genders and bear children through sexual reproduction. (The genderless nature of the mojhs has more to do with their transformation than the necessities of their physiology.) They are long lived, with life spans of up to 500 years. Children, however, are rare, for few squamous lir take the time from their quest for the Legacy of the Dragons to bear and care for young.

Squamous lir look a little like mojhs—scaly-skinned, reptilian humanoids—except that their flesh is a reddish-brown color, and their heads are crested. The crest ranges from a golden yellow to a deep, blood-red.

Squamous lir use spikesticks in combat, although they call the weapon a *jiras* and claim to have developed it on their own.

They speak Common, Draconic, and Terran. A squamous lir is never Unbound, unless it is some aberrant outcast.

COMBAT

Though most carry weapons to protect themselves (and all have a vicious bite), squamous lir prefer to use their spell-like abilities in a fight. While not particularly bloodthirsty, they recognize that sometimes conflict is necessary and would never shrink from defending themselves if threatened. Their magical abilities often have earth-and-stone visual effects. For example, when they cast *magic armor*, the armor takes a stony appearance. When they *levitate*, the spell tears away a small piece of the ground at their feet or summons a small rock, which they float atop. These are just visual effects—the spell-like abilities work just like the spells of the same name.

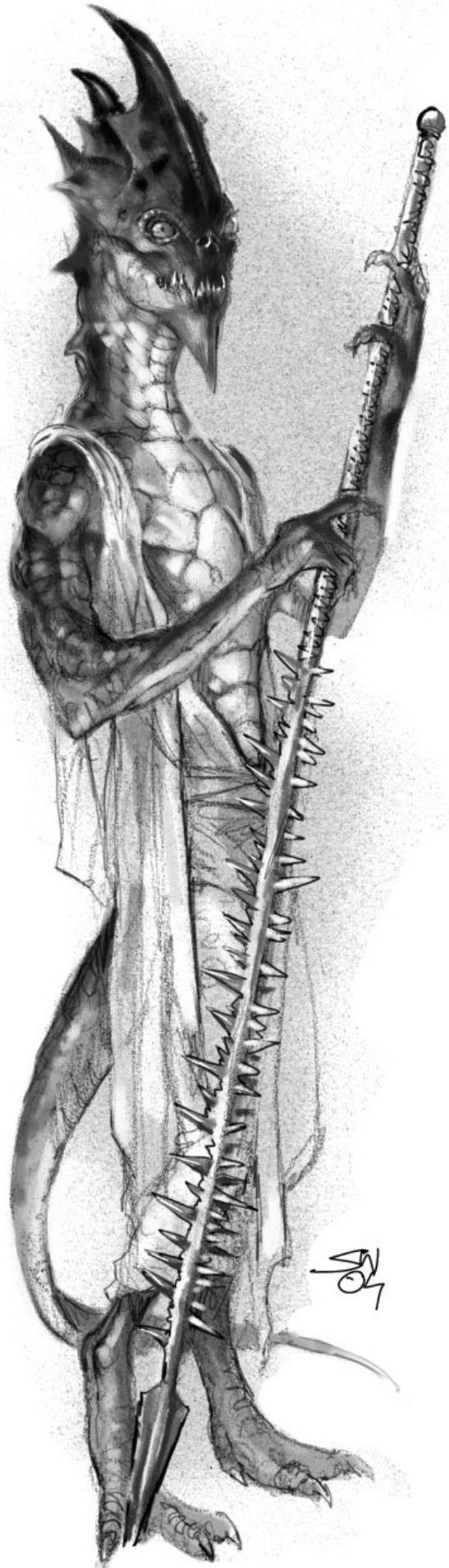
All squamous lir are proficient with spikesticks.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): A squamous lir can cast the following spells as a 5th-level mage blade: 3/day—*earth burst*, *read mind*, *stone blast*, *stone shield*†; 1/day—*dispel magic*, *levitate*, *magic armor*, *magic weapon*, *sorcerous guise*. The save DC against these spells is DC 14 + spell level.

Earth Template (Su): All squamous lir can give their spells and even their spell-like abilities the earth spell template.

SQUAMOUS LIR SOCIETY

Squamous lir live and work in very small groups and often in just pairs. Most focus on their quest for the Legacy of the Dragons and do not travel or communicate with others (even of their own kind) except as part of that quest. They recognize, however, that combat training and learning new spells can be vital to that quest, so many of them gain levels in character classes. While they have no government or hierarchy, squamous lir respect those of their kind with such training more than those without. (Likewise, they respect



members of other races with great skill or knowledge as well, particularly if it can be used in some way to help further their quest.)

Squamous lir quietly revere a mysterious stone elemental deity called the Earth Mother, whom they believe is connected to the ancient dragons. They have no temples or shrines; their worship of her is very personal and private.

SQUAMOUS LIR CHARACTERS

Squamous lir characters most often become mage blades with a slightly variant outlook, as they treat their *jiras* (spikesticks) as their athames. Some squamous lir become magisters or greenbonds, the latter being the rarer case.

NEW SPELL

STONE SHIELD

Abjuration (Earth)

Level: 1 (Exotic)

Casting Time: Standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round/level

You can cast this spell only on the ground, with a source of natural or worked stone nearby. When cast, the nearby rock floats in front of you and protects you from harm, like a shield that thinks on its own. You gain a +4 shield bonus to Armor Class. If the *stone shield* is destroyed, the spell immediately calls forth another, until its duration runs out.

Special: If used with the earth spell template, the shield bonus is +1 greater.

Diminished Effect: The stone provides a +1 shield bonus to Armor Class.

Heightened Effect: Two stone shields appear, granting a total +6 shield bonus to Armor Class.

Magic Item Creation Modifier: Constant N/A

SQUAMOUS LIR ENCOUNTER (EL 5)

Two squamous lir, Terrikolar and Destirichan, believe the player characters have some special knowledge about an obscure bit of dramojh lore. It may seem insignificant to the PCs, or they may not even realize they possess it. It may even be a secret important to another quest of the characters. (The squamous lir also might be mistaken.)

In any event, Terrikolar and Destirichan do not know enough about the PCs to know if they can be trusted, so they are wary of approaching them directly. At first, then, the two attempt to trick the player characters into thinking they are humans (or another race) using *sorcerous guise*, and then, while the disguised squamous lir ask them general questions about their adventures and the dramojh, they use *read mind* to try to get what they are after. If the PCs discover what they are doing, the two attempt to flee.

Should this scheme fail to get them the results they want, they leave, planning to return. Upon their return, their next course of action is to search through the characters' belongings while they sleep, while they are at a bathhouse, or at some other opportune time. If, after all this, the squamous lir still have not gotten what they wanted, they may attack and threaten the PCs, capturing them for interrogation if they seem unwilling to help. If in the first two encounters, the PCs seemed benevolent or at least not overly unfriendly, the squamous lir simply approach and ask for help.

STAJ

Small Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 2d10 (11 hp), dying/dead –1/–10

Initiative: +3

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 17 (+1 size, +3 Dexterity, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +2/–2

Attack: Bite +3 melee (1d4)

Full Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d4) and 1 claw +1 melee (1d3)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet

(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Eye extraction, improved grab

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, low-light vision

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 13

Skills: Listen +5, Sneak +8

Feats: Light Sleeper, Weapon Finesse

Environment: Warm or temperate plains

Organization: Horde (5–16)

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 3–4 HD (Small); 5–6 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

Staj are unique predators in that they often leave their prey alive. Litorians call the staj “eye hunters,” and with good reason. These vicious little creatures eat eyes. They can eat other types of meat, but they prefer eyes. Bred by the dramojh (said to be a failed experiment that escaped), the staj spread like a plague. They breed quickly and mature at a very rapid rate.

Litorians speak of the eye hunters in whispers. Dedicar, an old, honorable hunter of the plains, told this tale to Naervos Starshadow, a faen sage:

We were looking for game in the area we call the Sundowner region. It was a poor year, and the gazelle we sought felt the heat and drought of the summer worse than we. As we scoured the empty plains, we heard a distant sound. It is difficult for me now to describe to you what this sound was like. Perhaps if you imagined everyone you ever loved crying out in complete despair all at once, it would be similar to this sound. We moved forward, cautiously, for we knew not what we would find.

Through the tall grass, we emerged into a camp of our people. This surprised us, for we had seen no sign of fires, even though the evening shadows had grown long. We smelled no cooking meals, and we heard no children laughing. Only the terrible, mournful wail of many voices crying as one.

As we looked around the camp, I gripped my warclub tighter. All around us, we saw wounded litorians, each covered in blood. But we saw no enemy. I grabbed the nearest warrior by the shoulder and saw that his wounds were in his eyes—he had been blinded. “Who did this?”

I got no answer. So I approached the next warrior. She, too, had only empty sockets where her eyes had been. I looked at my brothers and they nodded. All of us had come to the same conclusion.

Eye hunters.

We brought the people together in the center of the camp. Some had wandered into the grass, slashing at foes that were no longer there. They were easy to find, for we followed the trails of blood. We found a number of the staj, killed by warclubs, arrows, tooth, and claw. Still, all 34 people in the camp had been blinded permanently. Everyone.

I knew that eye hunters each take only one eye. That meant, at minimum, there were almost 70 in the horde that had attacked this camp. The victims, once we managed to get them to speak, indicated that they thought there had been many more.

I shuddered at the thought of it, and I could see my brothers did as well. We led the 34 to our own camp, where they could be properly tended. The burden of new mouths to feed in that poor year was difficult to bear, since none of them could hunt. But at least our camp was never attacked by that horde of eye hunters.

I still have nightmares about that day.

Staj are sinewy creatures with a dark green ridge running down their backs. They look a little like black cats with long wirelike hair, but they have no tails, and their heads are longer, bearing furless snouts filled with small teeth. Their eyes are long, narrow, and yellow. They have a single whip-like tendril that rises from the spot where their head meets their spine. This appendage ends in a small clawlike extractor comprised of three opposing, needlelike phalanges, each quite dexterous. The staj uses this strange tendril to extract a victim’s eye.

Staj possess a surprising intellect and, in fact, jabber to each other in their own squeaky, high-pitched language. Because they think of practically nothing but hunting and eating, their language is very crude, short, and specific. They have no words for art, music, or philosophical concepts. Their vocabulary consists of various words for eyes, danger, ambushes, eating, and so forth.

In lean times, staj turn on each other. Many older staj have only one eye because of this tendency.

All eye hunters are Unbound.



COMBAT

Staj leap toward a foe en masse, biting and tearing flesh with their vicious teeth—but this attack is actually only a distraction. The real attack comes from their whiplike tendril, which ends in a small claw. After a successful claw attack, a staj can begin the eye extraction process. Once a staj has an eye, it flees, usually leaving the victim alive.

A staj will not attack an eyeless creature and fights only in self defense against such a foe.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a staj must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can immediately make a claw attack and attempt to extract the foe's eye.

Eye Extraction (Ex): While grappling, a staj that scores a hit with its claw attack has struck the foe in or near an eye. It then uses the claw to attempt to extract the eye. The victim must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 11). Failure indi-

cates that the staj has removed the eye. Obviously, a foe with no eyes is blind. Blinded characters suffer a -2 penalty to Armor Class, lose their Dexterity bonus to Armor Class (if any), move at half speed, and take a -4 penalty on Search checks and on most Strength- and Dexterity-based skill checks. All checks and activities that rely on vision, such as reading and Spot checks, automatically fail. All opponents are considered to have total concealment (50 percent miss chance) relative to the blinded character.

Creatures left with only one eye suffer a -2 competence penalty to Spot and Search checks.

STAJ ENCOUNTER (EL 3)

The player characters make their way through the plains on a journey somewhere. From out of the tall grass, three staj leap at them. The eye hunters choose one foe and concentrate their attacks. If a staj manages to remove an eye, it retreats with its meal. Thus, if two of the staj succeed, the third must choose a new target, attacking all by itself.

TERRIG

Medium Humanoid

Hit Dice: 1d8+3 (8 hp), dying/dead -4/-16

Initiative: +3

Speed: 40 feet

AC: 15 (+3 Dexterity, +2 armor), touch 11, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+2

Attack: Spear +2 melee (1d8+1) or shortbow +4 ranged (1d8 plus poison)

Full Attack: Spear +2 melee (1d8+1) or shortbow +4 ranged (1d8 plus poison)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet

(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attack: Poison

Special Qualities: Low-light vision

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 6

Skills: Knowledge (nature)* +3, Sneak* +4, Wilderness Survival* +4

Feats: Fleet of Foot, Track

Environment: Warm or temperate plains

Organization: Solitary, pair, hunting party (3–6 plus 1 warrior of 2nd to 3rd level), or tribe (11–30 plus 2–7 warriors of 2nd to 3rd level and a totem warrior leader of 4th to 5th level)

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +0

Distant cousins of the litorians that roam the plains of the north, terrig live in the jungles of the south. They are cunning hunters and adept trackers, but they have experienced little contact with the city-dwelling cultures and technologically advanced races, such as humans or giants. For example, the terrig use no metal. They have not developed the wheel or agricultural methods. Mostly this is because they have no need for such things where they live. They are masters of their domain.

Terrig stand, on average, about 6 feet tall. Their shoulders are wide and their bodies muscular and sinewy. They are covered in short, striped fur: golden-yellow and black, brown and black, or orange and black. A few rare tribes have black and dark brown spots on golden-yellow fur. All of these patterns make it much easier for them to hide in dense foliage. Terrig males do not have manes like litorians, but their fur/hair is sometimes longer on their heads than elsewhere. They have feline snouts, sharp teeth, and feline eyes. Most wear only a little clothing, although warriors going into battle wear armor similar to leather jacks, made from tanned skins. They use spears, shortbows, and sometimes stone axes.

On the whole, Terrig are less intelligent than their plains-dwelling brethren. They are hardier and just as fast, however. Their language resembles standard Litorian enough to be considered the same tongue, but there are a number of minor cultural differences and nuances.

The terrig's statistics here are for a typical 1st-level warrior wearing a leather jack.

COMBAT

Terrig normally hunt in small groups, using tactics developed over generations. For example, they might chase or lure prey into a trap or an ambush. Most individual terrig are not exceptionally intelligent, but they have had centuries to perfect their techniques.

* **Skills:** Terrig enjoy a +2 racial bonus on Knowledge (nature), Sneak, and Wilderness Survival checks.

Poison: Some terrig tribes use poisoned arrows for hunting and self-defense. This poison, made from jungle roots, inflicts 1d3 points of Strength damage as both primary and secondary damage, and has a Fortitude save Difficulty Class of 13.

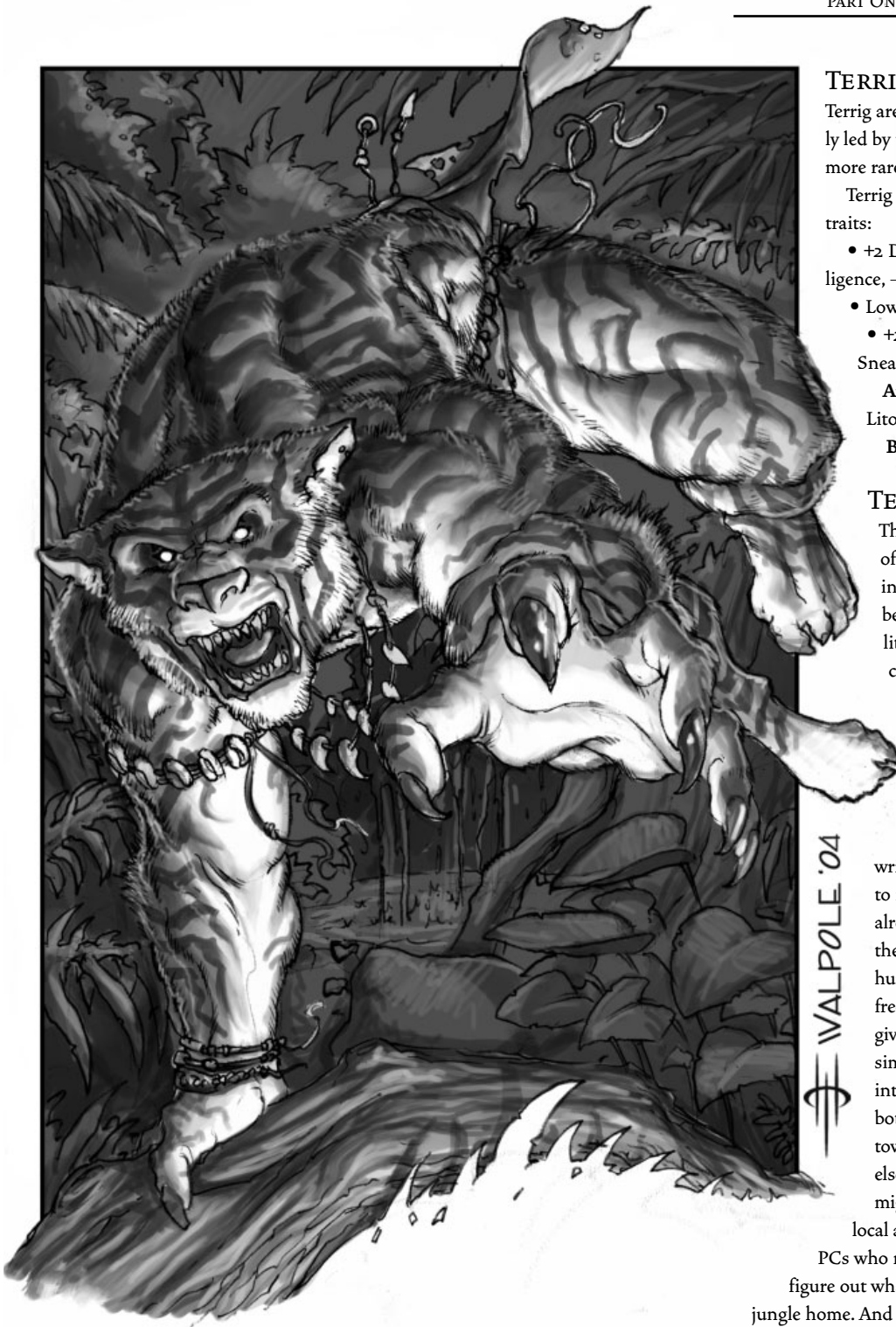
TERRIG SOCIETY

Terrig live in small tribes. When a tribe grows too large, a few families agree to leave, forming their own new tribe. They worry about exhausting their hunting grounds, so they never let their communities grow too large. Terrig tribes sometimes feud over food and water supplies, but mostly they get along with members of their own race.

Terrig are very superstitious. They have little direct experience with magic, but their belief in animism is such that they see spirits in every tree, rock, and fern. This belief leads them to perform small rituals and acts, or refrain from certain activities, all to appease various spirits. These acts consume a great deal of a terrig's day, and remembering each of them (as well as the proper omens that show whether the spirits are pleased) is extremely difficult for them. The superstitious terrig have many ways to appease angered spirits.

Terrig are xenophobic and reclusive. Winning the trust of a terrig is a feat worthy of mention in a history book. These folk do not see litorians as any closer relations to them than humans, faen, or any other creature (litorians feel differently, however). They distrust all outsiders and anything new, whether it be a creature, a mode of dress, an object, or some aspect of magic.

Unlike litorians, terrig have no strong sense of personal honor. For them, survival is the key concept. They will do whatever it takes to survive and to ensure the survival of their family and tribe (in that order). A great individual worth of praise is one who survives to an advanced age with a large family and a prosperous tribe.



Terrig make few gender-based distinctions as to duties, although traditionally females care for the children while they are very young, and a male takes on additional hunting duties. Otherwise, both males and females hunt and perform all needed tasks. Terrig bond for life.

TERRIG CHARACTERS

Terrig are most often warriors. Groups are usually led by totem warriors, unfettered, or—far more rarely—greenbonds.

Terrig characters possess the following racial traits:

- +2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution, –2 Intelligence, –2 Charisma
- Low-light vision
- +2 racial bonus on Knowledge (nature), Sneak, and Wilderness Survival checks

Automatic Languages: Common, Litorian

Bonus Languages: Any

TERRIG ENCOUNTER (EL 4)

The player characters stand in the middle of a small town and watch as a wagon pulls in before of them. In the wagon are a number of strange-looking litorians. These litorians are, in fact, six terrig warriors captured in the jungles of the south and brought to the Lands of the Diamond

Throne as a curiosity. The cruel humans driving the wagon have bound the terrig's hands and feet.

They've stopped in town for supplies.

While the PCs watch, one of the terrig wriggles free of her bonds. She quietly tries to free the others, but their captors are already on their way back to the wagon. If the characters do anything to distract the humans, the terrig can get enough time to free the others. If they do nothing, she gives up trying to help her comrades and simply tries to flee. If the PCs actually intervene, they must deal with the humans, both 3rd-level warriors. Since no one in town has ever seen a terrig before, no one else moves to help them—these creatures might be dangerous, after all. Even the local authorities seem unsure of what to do.

PCs who manage to free all the terrig must then figure out what to do with them, so far from their jungle home. And if they were expecting gratitude or trust from the freed terrig, they can forget it—these creatures are justifiably terrified and angry at anyone not of their race.

If the player characters do nothing, the single terrig escapes. They hear over the next few days of a murder committed by a “strange, striped litorian woman” in town. (She was only defending herself.)

TINGUAL

Medium Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 5d10+5 (27 hp), dying/dead -2/-13

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 17 (+2 Dexterity, +5 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +5/+7

Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d6+2)

Full Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d6+2) and 4 claws +5 melee (1d4+1)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet

(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Heat drain

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, low-light vision, fire suppression

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +2

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 9

Skills: Listen +5, Sneak +8

Feats: Light Sleeper, Multiattack*, Skill Focus (Listen)

Environment: Any warm

Organization: Pack (4–9)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 6–10 HD (Medium); 11–15 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: —

* Denotes a feat from the MM.

Sparkling blue eyes.

Those are the first words that come to mind of most people who've encountered a tingular. The next words are often "cold, very cold."

The tingular is a shaggy mammal with six legs. Its head is broad and its eyes are large, as are its long, pointed ears. It dwells in hot regions, often in the same area as creatures of the fire subtype—hellhounds, red dragons, and the like. However, such creatures hate the tingular, for the tingular eats heat.

The creature can draw any amount of heat within 30 feet of it into its body immediately—this is an unconscious and reflexive action that the tingular does not control. Thus, creatures that come close to the tingular notice a severe drop in temperature, both in the air around them and within their own bodies. (The air around a tingular is about 40 to 50 degrees Fahrenheit at all times.) Fire of any kind, even that generated by magic, is immediately extinguished within this radius. Torches go out. Fire spells fizzle. A witch's fire shield winks out. Further, the tingular can focus its ability to drain heat on a single target each round, just by looking at it.

Tinguals measure 4 feet long and 3 feet high. They run in packs, like wolves, always with a strong, dominant

leader. While they can feed on any heat source, only temperatures over 90 degrees Fahrenheit can really sustain a tingular, and temperatures of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more are best. Thus, living creatures usually provide some of the easiest "meals." During the high summer months, however, the tingular need not hunt at all—it is sustained by the ambient high daytime temperatures. Likewise, a pack of tinguals lucky enough to find the vent of an active volcano or hot spring can feed easily for days. (Of course, even these geothermal heat sources won't last forever when drained at a tingular's insatiable rate. Alternatively, such an area might sustain only a few tinguals at a time.) In any case, if the tinguals have a nonliving source of heat, people will find them quite docile.

Tinguals were created by the dramojh to combat fire-using creatures. Most such creatures attack tinguals on sight, and the tinguals love to fight them, as they provide such high temperatures to feed upon. Some people use tinguals as guardians—bribing them with fire (mages might bribe them with conjured fire elementals). A human mage blade named Kerreckis lives in the southern Elder Mountains within an active volcano. His trained tinguals draw the heat from the surrounding magma to cool it, allowing him to dwell safely within a fortress surrounded by molten rock. By getting the tinguals to move, he can slowly change the shape of his molten manse, expanding or contracting its area, creating entrances or sealing it up tight with hardened magma.

COMBAT

Tinguals drain heat, upon which they subsist; with enough heat, they have no need to kill prey and eat meat. However, since most creatures do not want their heat drained, the tingular has adopted keen combat instincts as well. It can support itself on two legs long enough to make four claw attacks against foes in melee. A tingular initiates combat by draining heat, resorting to melee only if the victim chooses to do so first.

Fire Suppression (Su): Fire within 30 feet of the tingular ceases to exist. Natural fires go out, and magical fire is suppressed. For example, a fiery *sorcerous blast* detonating next to a tingular has no effect, while one centered on a point at the edge of its effect only spreads out in areas not within the tingular's suppression. A fiery *energy blade* spell ceases to exist while a tingular is nearby, but it flares back to life again when it leaves. This effectively makes the tingular and anyone within 30 feet of it immune to fire and heat damage. Even lava cools and hardens in this area, although if the tingular leaves and conditions are right, the stone becomes molten once again. A fire elemental in a tingular's range

must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 13) or be snuffed out (destroyed) instantly. Even those who make successful saves suffer 10d6 points of damage. Likewise, any creature with the fire subtype within the area of the tinguual's suppression suffers 4d6 points of damage (Fortitude save, DC 13, reduces the damage by half). The save DC is Constitution based.

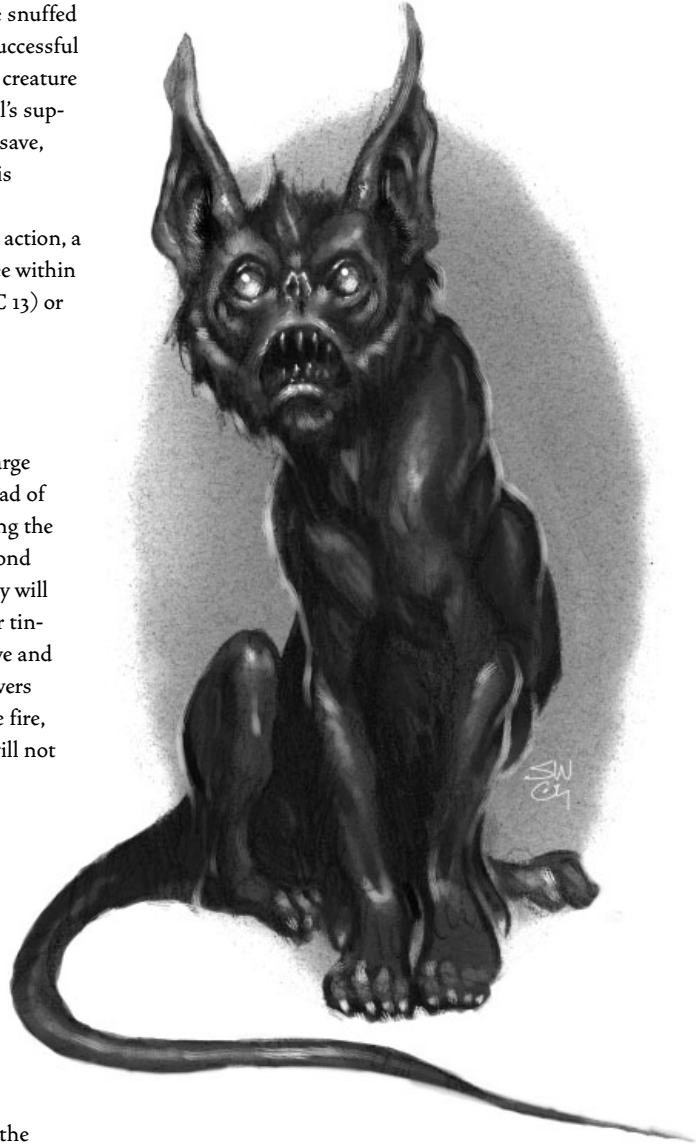
Heat Drain (Su): Once per round as a standard action, a tinguual can drain the heat from one target it can see within 30 feet. The victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 13) or suffer 3d6 points of cold damage. The save DC is Constitution based.

TINGUAL ENCOUNTER (EL 8)

A terrible forest fire rages in the woods outside a large town. The people of the town cannot stop the spread of the fire—their only course of action is to flee, letting the town be engulfed. However, a learned local greenbond has an idea. He offers the PCs a great reward if they will travel into the nearby hills and capture at least four tinguuals. The group must bring the creatures back alive and let them loose in the forest, where their innate powers will extinguish the flames. The tinguuals feed on the fire, so it is to their benefit as well, but of course they will not understand that fact when the characters arrive at their lair to haul them away.

Smart PCs will know what the tinguuals can do going in and won't waste fire spells or similar useless magic in an encounter with them (in fact, they probably won't even ready them at all).

The tinguuals fight tenaciously to keep themselves from capture, but if the player characters succeed and take them to the fire, they greedily "attack" the blaze and consume it. The town is saved. Now there are four tinguuals in the area, though, and travelers into the woods are not safe. The PCs are faced with a decision: Leave the situation as it is, kill the tinguuals, or capture them again and take them back up to the remote hills where they lived before. The first two



choices are the simplest, but neither is particularly ethical.

The town rewards the characters in any event, but respects them far more if they actually finish the job.

TOTEM SPECTRE TEMPLATE

It is a truism, sadly, that anything pure risks corruption. Totem spectres are hateful, murderous reflections of the animals they once represented. Although totem spectres were never living animals, they were the spiritual manifestations of all the qualities the living animals represented. Thus, the corrupted spirits are, for all intents and purposes, undead entities.

Totem spectres come in many varieties—virtually any kind of animal—but the most common forms are bears, wolves, wolverines, snakes, sharks, and hawks. Sometimes a totem spectre manifests itself to a totem warrior or greenbond that can communicate with spirits, posing as a pure totem spirit. In this guise, it tells the mortal lies that run counter to the best interests of both the listener and the land. Cunning and clever, totem spectres never tell obvious lies but mix them with the truth. If caught in a lie, they attack. Their spiritblast power affects only those with animistic ties, but their regular attacks, such as the energy draining touch, are devastating to everyone.

Although the presence of a totem spectre terrifies normal animals, they can (and often do) enslave animals to do their bidding. Totem spectres speak Common.

SAMPLE TOTEM SPECTRE: BEAR

Large Undead (Incorporeal)

Hit Dice: 10d12 (120 hp), dying/dead —/0

Initiative: +4

Speed: Fly 80 feet (good)

Armor Class: 19 (–1 size, +4 Dexterity, +6 deflection), touch 19, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +5/—

Attack: Claw +7 melee (1d8+8)

Full Attack: 2 claws +7 melee touch (1d8+8) and bite +2 melee touch (2d6+4)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/10 feet

(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/10 feet)

Special Attacks: Spiritblast, energy drain, enslave animals, spell-like abilities, undead traits

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, scent, incorporeal, speak with animals, unnatural aura

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +8

Abilities: Str —, Dex 19, Con —, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 12

Skills: Bluff +14, Intimidate +9, Listen +14, Sneak +10, Spot +16, Wilderness Survival +12

Feats: Defensive Move, Night Owl, Speed Burst, Track, Weapon Finesse

Environment: Cold forests

Organization: Solitary

Treasure: None

Challenge Rating: 9

Advancement: 11–14 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: —

These creatures stand nearly 9 feet tall. Only semi-corporeal, the front/upper half of their body appears mostly solid, while the rear/lower half gradually fades into near invisibility. Totem bear spectres are bad-tempered and territorial.

COMBAT

A totem bear spectre attacks mainly by tearing at opponents with its spiritual claws, inflicting terrible damage and draining energy. Using its Speed Burst feat, it starts combat by moving its full speed and making a full attack. It prefers to act at night, when its Night Owl feat makes it more powerful.

Spiritblast (Sp): See ability description on the next page. A Reflex save (DC 16) can reduce this damage by half.

Energy Drain (Su): See ability description on the next page. The Fortitude save to remove a negative level is DC 16.

Enslave Animals (Sp): See ability description on the next page. The Will save to resist is DC 16.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): A totem bear spectre can cast the following spells as a 10th-level witch: 1/day—*enfeebled mind, fireburst, learn truename, stone blast, suggestion, water roil, whisper of madness, wind churn*. The save DC against these spells is DC 10 + the creature's Wisdom bonus + spell level.

Scent (Ex): The totem bear spectre can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. For upwind foes, the range increases to 60 feet; downwind, it drops to 15 feet.

When detecting a scent, the totem bear spectre doesn't determine its exact source, only its presence in range. The spectre can take a standard action to note the scent's direction. Once within 5 feet of the source, it can pinpoint the source. A totem bear spectre also can follow tracks by smell, making a Wisdom check to find or follow a track.

Incorporeal (Su): See ability description on the next page.

Unnatural Aura (Su): See description on the next page.

CREATING A TOTEM SPECTRE

“Totem spectre” is a template that one can add to any animal, although it is usually applied only to typical totem animals. A totem spectre uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to undead. Size does not change.

Hit Dice: The Hit Die type changes to d12; increase the number of Hit Dice by +4. As undead versions of the epitome of their species, all totem spectres have maximum hit points.

Speed: The spectre's means of movement becomes flying, if it isn't already. Speed doubles. Maneuverability is good.

AC: Change the creature's natural armor bonus to a deflection bonus, plus give it an additional deflection bonus to Armor Class based on its Charisma modifier.

Attacks: The creature's attack progression changes to that of an undead creature (+1/2 per Hit Die). All attacks become touch attacks. Damage remains the same. Despite its incorporeality, its damage psychically mimics the damage a living,



physical animal of its kind would inflict. Creatures immune to mind-affecting attacks suffer only 1d6 points of damage per attack, regardless of creature type or size.

Special Attacks: A totem spectre retains all the base creature's special attacks (except those precluded by its incorporeality, such as Improved Grab) and also gains the following:

Enslave Animals (Sp): The totem spectre can use an effect identical to *greater dominate*, except that it affects only animals. The spectre need not know the animal's truename. It can use this ability at will, but can enslave only one animal at a time. The animal can resist with a Will save (DC 10 + half the totem spectre's HD + totem spectre's Charisma modifier).

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a totem spectre's incorporeal touch attack gain two negative levels. The creature can remove a negative level with a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half the totem spectre's HD + its Charisma modifier). For each negative level, the totem spectre gains 5 temporary hit points.

Spiritblast (Sp): The totem spectre can loose a blast of spiritual energy at a single target (only one that can see and communicate with spirits) up to 50 feet away as a standard action once per day. The blast inflicts 10d6 points of damage. A Reflex save (DC = 10 + half the totem spectre's HD + its Charisma modifier) reduces this damage by half. Those failing their save are also permanently struck blind.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): A totem spectre can cast the following spells as a 10th-level witch: 1/day—*enfeebled mind*, *fireburst*, *learn truename*, *stone blast*, *suggestion*, *water roil*, *whisper of madness*, *wind churn*. The save DC against these spells is DC 10 + the creature's Wisdom bonus + spell level.

Special Qualities: A totem spirit has all the base creature's special qualities and also gains the following:

Incorporeal (Su): An incorporeal creature has no physical body. It can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, magic weapons or creatures that strike as magic weapons, and spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural abilities. It is immune to nonmagical attack forms. When hit by spells or magic weapons, it has a 50 percent chance to ignore damage from a corporeal source (except for positive energy, negative energy, force effects such as *forcebeam*).

An incorporeal creature can enter or pass through solid objects but must remain adjacent to the object's exterior, and so cannot pass entirely through an object whose space is larger than its own. It can sense the presence of creatures or objects within a square adjacent to its current location, but enemies have total concealment (50 percent miss chance) from an incorporeal creature that is inside an object. To see farther from the object it is in and attack normally, it must emerge. An incorporeal creature inside an object has total cover, but when it attacks a creature outside the object, it has only half cover, so a creature outside with a readied action could strike at it as it attacks. An incorporeal creature cannot pass through a force effect.

An incorporeal creature's attacks pass through (ignore) natural armor, armor, and shields, although deflection bonuses and force effects (such as *eldritch armor*) work normally against it. Incorporeal creatures cannot grapple or be grappled.

Speak With Animals (Su): The totem spectre can comprehend and communicate with all animals. It can ask questions of and receive answers from animals, although they are no more friendly or cooperative than normal.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a totem spectre at 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked while within that range.

Abilities: Alter from the base creature's as follows: Str —, Dex +6, Con —, Int +10, Wis +4, Cha +6.

Saving Throws: Recalculate saves so Will saves are good.

Skills: The creature gains 2 additional skill points/Hit Die.

Organization: Always solitary.

Challenge Rating: As base creature's +4.

Level Adjustment: As base creature's.

TOTEM SPECTRE ENCOUNTER (EL 11)

Arson fires ravage a small town, and the elders offer a substantial reward for help. It's not hard for the PCs to discover the fires are being set each night by Wold Agorak, a 9th-level human bear totem warrior. When they confront him, he raves that the town presents a danger to the countryside and must be destroyed. If they ask him why he thinks so, he says his totem spirit told him. Wold has been deceived, of course, through use of clever lies and *suggestions*, by a bear totem spectre. If Wold reveals his source, the spectre manifests and attacks, urging Wold to aid it against "these enemies of the land."

URGAN'S MINION

Medium Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 3d8+3 (16 hp), dying/dead -2/-13

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 feet

AC: 17 (+4 natural, +3 hide armor), touch 10, flat-footed 17

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+5

Attack: Greatclub +7 melee (1d10+3)

Full Attack: Greatclub +7 melee (1d10+3)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, environmental adaptability, SR 16

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +5

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills: Jump +5, Spot +3

Feats: Bonded Item (greatclub), Iron Will, Weapon Focus (greatclub)

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary, pair, war party (2–16 plus one 4th-level war leader), or colony (10–100 plus four 4th-level lieutenants and one 8th-level chieftain)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +2

These monsters were crafted by a powerful spellcaster named Urgan to serve as his personal army. Urgan subsequently died at the hands of a rival magister, leaving his creations to fend for themselves in the world. They established several small colonies and, driven by a warped view of the world imposed on them by their creator, began attacking travelers who entered their territory.

Urgan's minions resemble a cross between a fish, a lizard, and a human. They have scaled, green skin, a large, bony frill that runs from the crown of the head to the base of the neck, and long, pointed ears. Their teeth resemble a human's, except for their long, sharp incisors.

Urgan designed his minions to be both capable in combat and resistant to his opponents' magical abilities. He had grand plans for his creations, and in many ways they are a masterpiece of the arcane arts. In actuality, Urgan was deluded and paranoid. Many of the enemies he sought to defend himself against were merely phantoms in his mind, convenient scapegoats on whom he could blame the setbacks in his research. To Urgan, his enemies always lurked in the shadows, ready to ruin his plans.

This attitude was passed down to his minions. Utilizing a version of the lore that the giants used to elevate the sibec-

cai, Urgan sought to create a race of faithful creatures that would defend him to the death and never turn against him. His minions view Urgan as a god. They regard his writings, a collection of crazed rantings peppered with profound insights into magical theory known as *Urgan's Codices*, as their holy book. They painstakingly follow these precepts, and their priests use them to make many important decisions. Needless to say, this attitude leads colonies of Urgan's minions to take aggressive, violent action against anyone perceived as a threat.

COMBAT

In battle, Urgan's minions prefer to use ambushes and other stealthy maneuvers to defeat their enemies. As befits a race founded on paranoia and fear, they constantly worry that their enemies possess some hidden advantage over them. They believe that quick, unexpected strikes are the best method to keep a foe off balance. The minions always fear that an enemy will track them back to their lair and destroy the entire colony. To assuage this worry, they rarely flee from combat. If they are forced to retreat, they use circuitous routes to get home or even spend a few days away from their lairs before returning.

Environmental Adaptability (Ex): Urgan's minions can survive in a wide range of environments, from subterranean caves to beneath the ocean's waves. They have immunity to drowning and all gas attacks. They gain a +4 racial bonus to saves against poison. They need to eat and drink only one-quarter the usual amount for a creature of their size.

Spell Resistance (Su): An Urgan's minion has spell resistance equal to 13 + its Hit Dice.

URGAN'S MINIONS SOCIETY

Urgan's minions base their society and actions solely on the principles set forth in *Urgan's Codices*, which makes them violent, unpredictable, and prone to aggressive actions against nearby settlements. They blame others for the simplest predicament, from a month of poor hunting to an accident that ruins part of their lair. They see all outsiders as potential thieves and murderers. Though they rarely make unprovoked attacks, they shadow anyone who comes close to their settlements. After a few hours of watching an intruder, they can usually concoct some reason to justify an ambush against her.

The priests of Urgan run the minions' society, ruling with an iron fist based on their interpretation of the *Codices*. These creatures have an ingrained sense of trust toward each other and to Urgan, a trait that allows them to function as a society without devolving into absolute paranoia and mistrust. The priests make most decisions as a group, with each



of them casting a vote and the majority carrying any decision. The priests are usually the eldest minions. Those who show skill in battle or intelligence are taught to read by the current priests and then given access to the *Codices*. Each colony's book is regarded as a holy object, and it plays an important role in many of the minions' rituals.

Minions prefer to settle in easily defended areas such as caves and hidden grottos. They share living space, tools, and food much like a military organization. Private space is an unheard-of luxury; even important business is conducted by the priests in full view of the rest of the colony. While the minions usually lack the resources to erect forges, their suits of hide armor and their greatclubs are well-crafted items rather than the crude tools of rabble.

Other races see the minions as a sad result of what can happen when magic is used irresponsibly. The giants feel they have a responsibility to at least attempt to reform these creatures, since their work with the sibeccai was Urgan's inspiration. Sadly, the minions' paranoia is far too deeply embedded in their natures for it to be easily purged. Many sibeccai loathe these creatures; their mere existence makes sibeccai uncomfortable, because they are reminded of their own animal origins. Calling a sibeccai "Urgan's pet" or a similar epithet is a sure way to spark a fight.

URGAN'S MINION CHARACTERS

Owing to their savage culture and warlike attitude, many of Urgan's minions train with weapons and armor. Warmains are relatively rare among them unless they can steal or loot heavy weapons and armor, as the minions lack the tools and technology to produce them. Most are champions of their race. The few spellcasters among them, particularly their priests, are greenbonds and mage blades.

URGAN'S MINIONS ENCOUNTER (EL 4)

The giant magister Ur-Nalgron believes he has finally broken the conditioning that makes Urgan's minions violent and paranoid. He captured a few creatures from a nearby tribe and succeeded in reforming them. He has brought his subjects into town and hopes that, by slowly exposing them to normal civilization, he can integrate them into society.

At the same time, the rest of the minions' tribe is convinced that Nalgron has twisted and corrupted their brethren. Urgan's writings tell of how he defeated a rival by setting the commoners against him. The minions decide to copy that ploy and create evidence that Nalgron's subjects are not truly converted. They slip into town and attack people or otherwise cause trouble, escaping through channels in the sewers and leaving behind hatred and fear toward Nalgron and his work.

Many of the townsfolk assume that the magister's "friends" are behind the attack. The minions of the tribe fear that if Nalgron succeeds, he will return to their camp and "destroy" all of them with his foul plans. Their paranoia makes them unable to see Nalgron's noble intentions. They can only conceive that he wishes to dominate and enslave them.

VALKITH (HARRID HOUND)

Medium Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 4d10+4 (26 hp), dying/dead: -2/-13

Initiative: +1

Speed: 40 feet

AC: 17 (+1 Dexterity, +6 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+6

Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d6+2)

Full Attack: Bite +7 melee (1d6+2) and gore +4 (1d4+1)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Trip

Special Qualities: Energy absorption, phase into earth, see through earth, low-light vision, scent

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +3

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 11

Skills: Sneak +7, Spot +1

Feats: Iron Will, Multiattack*, Weapon Focus (bite)

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary, pair, or pack (3–8)

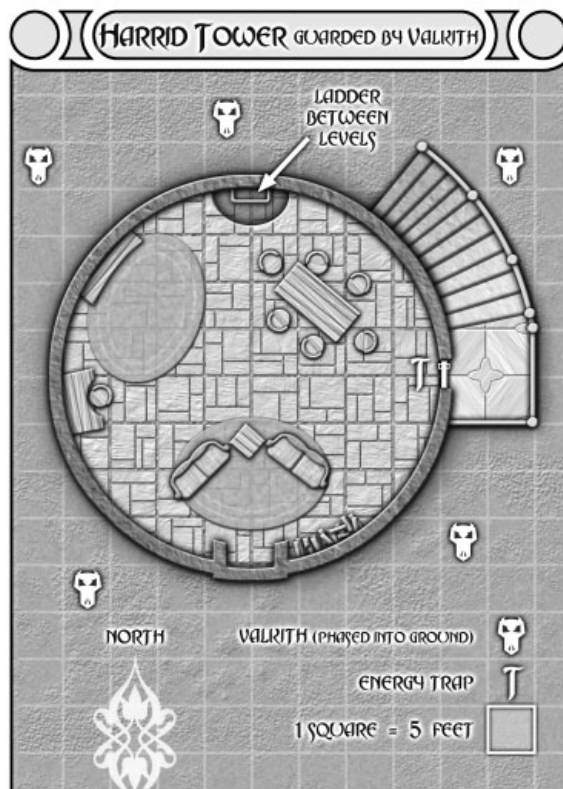
Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 5–8 HD (Medium); 9–12 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: —

* Denotes a feat from the MM.



The twisted and corrupt harrids (see Chapter Four of *The Diamond Throne*) bred the valkith on the distant continent to the south. They use the beasts, sometimes called “harrid hounds,” to help them hunt for slaves. Since the harrids themselves feed upon magical energy, they created the valkith to absorb energy in a similar way. The harrids use their own magic to heal and strengthen their hounds whenever needed.

Further, they gave the valkith the ability to move and see through rock and earth. The hounds use this ability to hide just below the surface and attack a foe when it crosses the ground above it.

With a wide body like that of a dark mastiff, the valkith has a head that looks vaguely reptilian—almost crocodilian—but with horns on either side of it, curving outward. Scales cover the creature’s entire body, and it has a long tail.

Valkith do not speak, but they understand the simple commands of their masters.

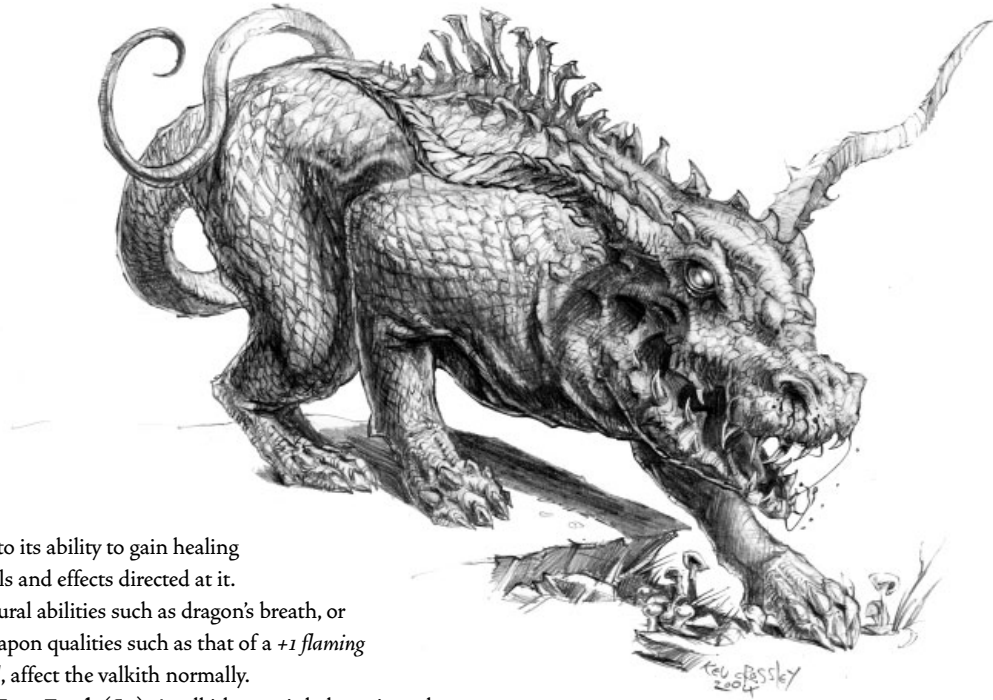
COMBAT

A group of valkith, for the most part, uses tactics similar to those of a wolf or dog pack, making coordinated hit-and-run attacks to bring down a much larger foe. A lone valkith is more likely to use its phase into earth ability to hide in the ground and wait in ambush for prey.

Energy Absorption (Su): Valkith absorb magical energy directed at them. Spells, spell-like abilities, and the spell-like effects of magic items directed at them are drawn harmlessly into their bodies. Even area spells and effects do not affect them, although they do not cancel out the effect for others in the area. Further, the creature feeds on the energy and uses it to heal its wounds. A wounded valkith gains 5 hit points per spell level absorbed. Thus, if a magister casts *cold blast* at a valkith, the hound heals 5 hit points. If the same magister uses a wand to cast *sorcerous blast* with three valkith in the area, each instantly heals 15 hit points. The energy absorption cannot raise a valkith over its normal hit point maximum.

Magical energy can, however, restore a dead valkith to life. If a valkith reaches -13 hit points or is slain in some other way, two spell levels of magical energy will restore it to -12 hit points, no matter how long it’s been dead, as long as at least three-quarters of its body remains intact. Three spell levels will restore it to -12 and then heal it 5 points, bringing it to -7. Four levels will bring a dead valkith to -2, and so on. The only way to permanently destroy a valkith is to completely dismember, burn, or otherwise obliterate its body, using a method other than spells or spell-like abilities.

A valkith within an area of continuous, natural magic, such as a power cyst (see “Magical Effects of the Land” in Chapter One of *The Diamond Throne*), has the fast healing 5 ability in



addition to its ability to gain healing from spells and effects directed at it. Supernatural abilities such as dragon's breath, or magic weapon qualities such as that of a *+1 flaming longsword*, affect the valkith normally.

Phase Into Earth (Su): A valkith can sink down into the ground or enter a boulder or rock wall as if it did not exist. It uses this ability to pass through stone and earth barriers well as to hide. The creature can “swim” through solid rock or earth at its normal speed. If the valkith is to hide within a stone or area of earth, it must be large enough to accommodate the hound in all three dimensions. Minor physical damage to the stone or ground does not harm the valkith, but its partial destruction (to the extent that the hound no longer fits within it) expels the beast and deals it 5d6 points of damage. The stone's or earth's complete destruction (such as with a *disintegration*) expels the valkith and slays it instantly, unless it succeeds at a Fortitude save (DC 18). Any spell with the earth descriptor that changes, reshapes, or damages the earth the valkith is inside expels the creature and deals it 5d6 points of damage.

If a valkith is aware of the attack, weapons made of stone—a hurled boulder, a stone from a sling, or a stone-headed hammer—inflict no damage and pass right through the beast. Likewise, the valkith does not take falling damage if it falls onto stone or earth, and rockslides and cave-ins present no danger if the creature is conscious and aware of the threat.

Scent (Ex): The valkith can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. For upwind foes, the range increases to 60 feet; downwind, it drops to 15 feet. When detecting a scent, the valkith doesn't determine its exact source, only its presence in range. The valkith can take a standard action to note the scent's direction. Once within 5 feet of the source, it can pinpoint the source. A valkith can also follow tracks by smell, making a Wisdom check to find or follow a track.

See Through Earth (Su): A valkith can see through up to 10 feet of earth or stone as if it were not there.

Trip (Ex): A valkith that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+2 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the valkith.

VALKITH ENCOUNTER (EL 9)

A clutch of harrids has taken over a tower as a residence. The player characters learn that these harrids have stolen an important magic item from a wealthy human magister, and she is willing to pay handsomely for its return. If the PCs go to the tower, they find out that five valkith guard the outside—and they most likely find out the hard way.

The valkith maintain their trained positions just under the surface of the ground. (Refer to the map to see the position of each hound.) They attack as soon as anyone passes within 5 feet of their position. If anyone reaches the stairs to the door, they all come out of hiding.

Further, the harrids have placed a magical “trap” on the door. When opened, it releases a burst of magical energy. The energy flashes with a green pulse for a moment but is otherwise harmless. However, it counts as a 6th-level spell effect that spreads out for 100 feet (beyond the edges of the map). The energy heals any valkith up to 30 hit points. Any dead valkith comes back to life with 8 hit points, whereupon it immediately attacks again.

VALLORIAN

Medium Humanoid

Hit Dice: 1d10 (5 hp), dying/dead -1/-10

Initiative: +2

Speed: 20 feet, base 30 feet

AC: 19 (+2 Dexterity, +5 swarm† breastplate, +2 long shield), touch 12, flat-footed 17

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/+1

Attack: Bloodthirster† longsword +5 melee (1d8+2)

Full Attack: Bloodthirster† longsword +5 melee (1d8+2)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Cast *compelling command* 2/day

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, SR 11

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0

Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills: Climb +3, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +3, Swim +4

Feats: Bonded Item (bloodthirster longsword), Weapon Focus (longsword)

Environment: Any subterranean

Organization: Patrol (3–18 plus one 3rd-level leader), war band (6–36 plus two 3rd-level sergeants and one 5th-level commander), or outpost (10–200 plus ten 3rd-level sergeants, five 5th-level overseers, two 8th-level masters, and one 12th-level overlord)

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +1

Vallorians are a degenerate, malicious subrace of humanity. These creatures have small, slender frames, pale skin, snow-white hair, and large, black eyes. Many males and females shave their heads bald, while others style their hair in strange, elaborate patterns. From deep within their subterranean realms, Vallorians plot to invade the surface using their bizarre and deadly living weapons.

In the ancient days, an entire kingdom of humanity disappeared shortly before the rise of the dramojh. A mighty human king named Vallor led his people beneath the earth rather than face possible defeat at the hands of the dramojh. Legends tell that this king and his followers had the power to win the struggle but were too self-centered to consider sacrificing any of their number for the good of all—and thus the Vallorians descended into the depths of the earth. For untold generations they lived within the deepest caves. Inbreeding, magical experimentation, and natural adaptation transformed them into a degenerate race of subterranean creatures. Over the centuries, their legends have changed to include tales that blame the other human factions for turning against them and working with the dramojh to force them beneath the earth. Now, they plot and wait for an opportunity to take what they see as rightfully theirs.

The Vallorians have learned to manipulate living creatures to create a wide variety of items. A Vallorian sword is a specialized creature crafted from an undulating vat of proto-flesh. It has a hard, sharp-edged carapace and can smell blood and lunge at an opponent as its Vallorian master wields it. Vallorians' armor is made of living creatures that cloak them in protective shells and heal them of their wounds.

The Vallorians gained this knowledge by forging a pact with a being of pure malevolence, a dark god known as Harzahk, who gave them the secrets of proto-life and fleshcrafting in return for their obedience. Since that time, the Vallorians have followed the dictates of Harzahk's priests. They offer living sacrifices, preferably intelligent humanoids, to the writhing, tentacled pools of proto-flesh from which they craft their strange weapons and armor. During times of famine, when the fungus crops bear little edible food and the great hordes of underworld herd lizards and beetles dwindle, this sickening mass of pulpy flesh also serves the Vallorians as an emergency food source.

The Vallorian's statistics here reflect a typical 1st-level warrior.

COMBAT

Vallorians are vicious and fanatical in battle, as befits a race that blames humanity for its current plight. When spurred into battle by the Harzahkite priests, they fight to the death and never yield ground. However, they are far from mindless killers. They prefer to sacrifice inexperienced troops and slaves to draw out their enemies' abilities, then respond with ambushes and other tactics that build on the information they have gathered.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): Vallorians can cast *compelling command* twice per day as a 1st-level magister. The save DC against this spell is DC 13.

VALLORIAN SOCIETY

Within their underworld settlements, the Vallorians have built a highly stratified society in which an individual's clan dictates much of his lot in life. The nobles that led the Vallorians into their self-imposed exile founded a society based on inheritance and social position. Each clan has a specific task charged to it, and its members are expected to perform that task to the best of their ability. For example, the Stonehammer clan specializes in masonry and construction, while the Swiftblades are soldiers and war leaders. Only Vallorians who display exceptional skill with magic or weaponry can rise above their clan's station. Such individuals are placed into elite training cadres at a young age. If they develop their talents, they are allowed to take as a surname the name of one of the five royal houses: Tyrgar, Philomon, Ulthar, Grevin, or Cyrthrik. Otherwise, trainees remain without a surname, placing them above the other clans but still below the five royal ones.

The royal clans rule by means of clever politicking and their influence in the religious hierarchy. They have divided

the caverns their race controls into five roughly equal portions and rule as oligarchs, with the patriarchs and matriarchs of each clan serving on a ruling council. Infighting plagues this arrangement, with the lower clans continually putting their support behind different royal clans. Since each of the lower clans controls one industry, the five ruling ones need to maintain at least passable relations with all of them, all while competing among themselves for power.

This balancing act would have long ago collapsed into anarchy without the power of the Harzahkite priests. Each of the ruling houses contributes its most skilled and brightest children to the priesthood, where they are trained in the art of magic while maintaining their familial ties. Thus, the priests' control over the proto-flesh vats keeps the lower houses in line, but those lesser families' numbers and skill in a wide variety of crafts allow them to remain independent. Compared to surface folk, the average Vallorian has a relatively secure, safe, and prosperous life.

Unfortunately for those surface folk, the Vallorians blame them for their banishment. With the Harzahkite priests fanning the flames of hatred, the Vallorians capture explorers and travelers who venture into the earth and cast them into the proto-flesh as sacrifices. Vallorians dream of conquering and enslaving the world above, but their numbers are too few for a direct invasion to have any chance of success. They prefer indirect actions, such as hiring blade trolls (see page 20) and other monsters to raid towns for sacrificial victims and loot. As the Vallorian population continues to grow slowly, the caverns they inhabit will eventually be too small to house and feed them all. In time, Harzahk's divine vision of a Vallorian conquest of the upper realms may come to pass.

VALLORIAN REALMS

The original Vallorian settlements grew up in massive caverns deep within the earth. The settlers survived by cultivating mushrooms and hunting a species of small, subterranean pig known as vraka. These creatures feed on bugs and small insects and have proven relatively easy to breed in captivity. In addition, the Vallorians hunt large beetles and keep small herds of giant crickets and other bugs. Their cities are protected by stone walls, with a cathedral to Harzahk and a pool of proto-flesh positioned in the center of each city. When a settlement needs more room, the Vallorians build downward, with many of their dwellings featuring multiple floors carved from the rock and earth. Wells dug into the rock provide water.

VALLORIAN CHARACTERS

Vallorians tend to become mage blades, magisters, and war-mains. Their priests are spellcasters, usually magisters. A few akashics serve the race as historians and sages.



All of the following traits and abilities apply to Vallorian characters:

+2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence, -2 Charisma: With their slightly smaller, agile frames, Vallorians are quicker than average. With their natural affinity for magic and

engineering, they are smarter than other creatures, but their cold, distant manner makes them difficult to relate to.

Spell Resistance 10 + Character Level: Due to their arcane background and exposure to the strange elements and energies of the underworld's depths, Vallorians are difficult to affect with spells.

Magic Affinity: Vallorians are powerful spellcasters who have an innate ability to master even the most complex spells. They gain a +2 bonus to the ability score that determines their casting ability for the purpose of determining the number of bonus spells they can cast and ready per day and their spells' save DCs. This bonus does not apply to other situations or applications of the same ability score.

Vallorians have an innate connection to the bizarre, living tools they create. They can employ items that have received one of the Vallorian item templates without penalty.

Darkvision 60 Feet: Vallorians can see in utter darkness as well as other creatures see in the light. They can distinguish color and all other visible details.

As Vallorians gain power, their innate connection to magic grows and strengthens. They receive spell-like abilities based on their character level. A Vallorian gains the abilities listed for his current level and all lower ones and casts as a magister with a level equal to his character level. Since these are innate, spell-like abilities, Vallorians never suffer a chance of spell failure based on the armor they wear or shields they carry.

Level	Spell-Like Ability
1st–3rd	<i>Compelling command</i> 2/day
4th–6th	<i>Cloak of darkness</i> 3/day
7th–9th	<i>Invisibility</i> 3/day
10th–12th	<i>Ghost weapon</i> 3/day
13th–15th	<i>Lesser dominate</i> 1/day
16th–19th	<i>Blindsight</i> 3/day
20th	<i>Rock's hand</i> 3/day

Adjusted Level: Due to their inherent powers and abilities, Vallorians add 1 to their character level when determining their Challenge Rating and effective character level.

LIVING WEAPONS AND ARMOR

The strange weapons of the Vallorians represent a fusion between living creatures and carefully designed tools. Living swords and sentient armor form a symbiotic bond with their users, combining abilities to create a potent duo. In the hands of creatures other than Vallorians, these items react violently, lashing out at their would-be users and refusing to obey them.

Vallorians forge their weapons and armor from the simmering vats of proto-flesh that the deity Harzakh enabled them to create deep within the world. Deprived of many of the goods and resources they once relied upon, their powerful mages bent themselves to the task of creating new materials they could harvest within the underworld. This research led

to an unholy pact with their blasphemous god Harzakh, the Wellspring of Life and the Keeper of the Way. At the direction of Harzakh's priests, the Vallorians collected living creatures and wrought terrible changes to them, giving rise to the mass of proto-life that now dominates each cathedral devoted to Harzakh and forms the center of every Vallorian settlement.

Creating weapons, armor, and other tools from this abominable substance is accomplished by Vallorian spellcasters who use their formidable intellects to shape the stuff. This process is by no means easy. A Vallorian may spend days in deep concentration, laboring to produce a living sword that meets the exacting level of quality demanded.

In game terms, these living weapons and armor receive one of the templates described below. These templates grant an item several benefits, at the cost of gold pieces or experience points paid by the person responsible for its creation. They do not otherwise alter a weapon's function. For example, a heavy mace that receives a template still counts as a heavy mace for the purpose of feats such as *Weapon Focus*.

A spellcaster must possess the *Craft Living Arms and Armor* feat (described below) to produce goods that have these templates. Living weapons and armor can receive any standard magical qualities as normal. A living weapon or suit of armor can receive only one of the following templates, and the item does not count as magical unless it is otherwise enchanted. Living items do not count as masterwork items, though they can receive that quality (and its benefits) for the normal price.

Living weapons and armor are designed, trained, and bred to obey only Vallorians. Other creatures cannot utilize them.

NEW FEAT

CRAFT LIVING ARMS AND ARMOR

(ITEM CREATION)

As a Vallorian fleshsmith, you have learned to sculpt chunks of proto-flesh into living weapons through the power of your intellect.

Prerequisites: Vallorian, Intelligence 13, caster level 3rd

Benefit: You can apply Vallorian templates to items you create. Add half the template's given cost to the base price in materials and components needed to produce the item. You can apply these templates to magical or mundane items.

WEAPON TEMPLATES

Bloodthirster: A weapon with this template twists and writhes in its wielder's grasp, moving like a snake that darts to the right and left in search of an opening in its opponent's defenses. A bloodthirster weapon gains sentience based on the strength of its user's intellect. In battle, it moves and bends to evade its foe's defenses and strike at him. Its blade or bludgeon sprouts a pair of beady, malicious eyes and a small, slaving maw that nips at its foe. A bloodthirster weapon

adds its user's Intelligence modifier to its attack rolls and damage rolls in addition to all other modifiers. *Cost:* 500 gp.

Flailing: Flailing weapons are similar to bloodthirster weapons, in that they move independently of their wielder's actions. However, they are simpler, stronger creatures that are more suited to overpowering their enemies. When used to trip or disarm an opponent, a flailing weapon grants a +2 enhancement bonus to attack rolls and Strength or Dexterity checks to complete the maneuver. These weapons have small but powerful tentacles to grip and pull on their opponents or their weapons. *Cost:* 500 gp.

Gnawing: A favored adaptation for arrows, bolts, and sling stones, this trait grants a weapon a small, fanged mouth that bites down on its foe and holds fast. Gnawing weapons latch onto their target when they hit, dealing 1 point of damage per round until they are removed. They deal this damage starting on the round after they strike a target. A standard action removes all gnawing weapons from a single creature. A melee weapon with this trait deals this additional damage only if the Vallorian wielding it lets go of the weapon immediately after a successful attack. *Cost:* 100 gp.

Seeker: Seeker weapons develop finely honed senses that allow them to spot weak points in their opponent's armor and strike at vital areas with relative ease. Weapons with this trait increase their threat range by one. For example, a weapon that threatens a critical hit on a roll of 19–20 increases that range to 18–20 with this template. Apply this template before accounting for any feats or talents that improve a weapon's threat range. A seeker weapon has a single, baleful eye that continually watches its user's foe. *Cost:* 2,000 gp.

Venomous: A favorite of Vallorian assassins and scouts, a venomous weapon has a single long fang that drips a viscous, green poison. On a successful hit, it injects this poison into its target. The poison has a Fortitude save DC of 14 and deals 1d4 points of temporary Strength damage as its initial and secondary effects. *Cost:* 6,000 gp.

Warden: Weapons with this template are creatures with thick, protective plates and dozens of tiny eyes. A warden weapon defends its user from attacks, knocking aside incoming blows and aiding his attempts to parry. It grants the equivalent of the Expertise feat. Users who already possess that feat can double the AC bonus it grants them. *Cost:* 2,000 gp.

ARMOR TEMPLATES

Chameleon: By stretching a thin layer of proto-flesh scales over a suit of armor, a Vallorian fleshsmith can grant it the ability to blend into a wide variety of environments. The scales mirror the color and texture of the environment around them, granting anyone wearing this armor the ability to camouflage her presence. Chameleon armor negates the armor check modifier to all Sneak checks made to hide. In addition, it grants a +4 competence bonus to such skill checks. *Cost:* 2,000 gp.

Mending: Armor with this template includes a number of small, wormlike creatures that crawl over and beneath its plates and joints. The worms are pulpy, slimy creatures that produce fluids that can quickly heal wounds. Three times per day, a character wearing mending armor can heal herself of 1d8 points of damage as a free action. *Cost:* 300 gp.

Swarm: Armor with this template consists of several independent plates that move to arrange themselves based on their user's desire. These "plates" are small, beetlelike creatures with thick, heavy outer shells. These beetles can move to protect their wearer's vital areas, or they can distribute their weight to reduce the protection they offer while improving their user's mobility. The wearer of swarm armor can improve its maximum Dexterity bonus by as much as 4 and reduce its armor check penalty by as much as 4 if she chooses to reduce its armor bonus by the same amount. If the item's armor bonus falls to half its original value or less, the armor counts as light armor until its armor bonus rises back to more than half its original value. Any manipulation of the attributes of swarm armor, whether to reduce its armor bonus or to restore it to a higher value, requires a full-round action. Vallorian scouts favor this armor, since they can maximize their maneuverability when not in battle and then alter the armor to protect them in combat. *Cost:* 500 gp.

SHIELD TEMPLATES

Biting: A biting shield features a toothy, leering maw set below a pair of small, glaring eyes. Once per round, a shield with this template can attack by snapping its jaws at an opponent that has just hit its bearer with a melee attack. The shield attacks only if its bearer instructs it to do so; neither the instruction nor the shield's attack are considered actions (one can take them at any time during a round). The shield has a base attack bonus equal to its bearer's base attack bonus before any modifiers, and it deals 1d6 points of slashing damage on a successful hit. *Cost:* 500 gp.

Grasping: Shields with this template have a number of long, limp tendrils hanging from their outer edges. When used to bash an opponent, a grasping shield can help to grapple the target with these tendrils. It grants its bearer the ability, after a successful shield bash, to make a grapple attempt as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. *Cost:* 4,000 gp.

Searing: This bulky, slimy shield has a single sphincterlike opening at its center. A fleshy, baglike organ hangs from the shield's inner side, opposite the sphincter. Once per day when in battle, the bearer can instruct the shield (as a free action) to draw in a great breath and spew forth the acidic digestive juices stored in that organ. This attack is a standard action that the shield takes during its bearer's turn. The caustic spray deals 2d6 points of acid damage to any creatures within a 15-foot cone. *Cost:* 1,000 gp.

VULDROG

Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 10d10+50 (94 hp), dying/dead -6/-20

Initiative: +2

Speed: 30 feet, fly 80 feet (good)

AC: 19 (-1 size, +2 Dexterity, +8 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 17

Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+18

Attack: Beak +14 melee (2d6+6) or talon +13 melee (1d6+4)

Full Attack: Beak +14 melee (2d6+6) and 2 talons +11 melee (1d6+4)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/10 feet
(Face/Reach: 10 feet by 5 feet/10 feet)

Special Attacks: Improved grab, pinned strike, powerful legs, rend (2d6+6)

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, low-light vision

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +3

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills: Spot* +7, Wilderness Survival +6

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Multiattack**, Power Attack, Power Charge, Weapon Focus (beak), Weapon Specialization (beak)

Environment: Cold mountains

Organization: Solitary, pair, or flock (3-12)

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 11-16 HD (Large); 17-24 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: +4

** Denotes a feat from the MM.

Each of these winged beasts has thick, black feathers, long, clawed legs, a scaled torso, and a vicious beak that ends in a sharp point capable of punching through plate armor. The vuldrog's serpentine neck allows it to impale an enemy on its beak, while its powerful legs can grasp and rend an opponent with ease.

Vuldrogs inhabit mountains and hills, though hunger can sometimes drive them to seek prey in lowland areas. They are predatory and vicious, preferring humanoid prey to simple animals because intelligent creatures provide them with more enjoyable displays of pain and torment. They keep isolated aeries high in the mountains, usually within caves or under sheltered ledges accessible only by air. In these grim domains, they keep prey captive until they grow weary of playing with it. At that point, they finally devour their unfortunate victims.

Because vuldrogs place little value on gold, gems, and other treasures, their lairs contain many valuable items among the remains of their foes. During mating season, these beasts seek to impress potential partners with the piled bones and possessions of their victims.

COMBAT

A vuldrog prefers to swoop upon a victim, grasp him in its powerful talons, and whisk him away to its lair. Against armored opponents or trained warriors, a vuldrog uses its talons to hold a victim in place while attacking him with its vicious beak. Even the strongest warrior may have difficulty escaping a vuldrog's clutches.

Vuldrogs usually target smaller creatures or those that lack any obvious weapons and armor. They generally try to attack from ambush, plummeting from the sky in a blur of scales and feathers to claim their victims.

* **Skills (Ex):** A vuldrog's sharp eyes grant it a +4 racial bonus to all Spot checks.

Improved Grab (Ex): If a vuldrog hits an opponent with one talon attack, it can make a grapple attempt as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If a vuldrog pins a Medium or smaller creature, it can carry its victim off into the air.

Pinned Strike (Ex): When grappling an opponent, a vuldrog can attack with its beak as a standard action. It gains a +4 competence bonus to this attack as it holds its opponent in place. Otherwise, this counts as a standard attack made against a grappled creature.

Powerful Legs (Ex): A vuldrog's legs are so heavily muscled that it gains its full Strength bonus to damage rolls when using its talons as secondary weapons rather than half its Strength bonus.

Rend (Ex): If a vuldrog hits an opponent with both its talon attacks, it rips and tears for an additional 2d6+6 points of damage.

VULDROG SOCIETY

While vuldrogs lack the intelligence to establish a sophisticated civilization, they do gather in a rough approximation of a society. Usually, these creatures keep to themselves, but at times a powerful figure may appear among them to forge several into an organized group. Vuldrogs respect strength, durability, and skill in combat. Among themselves, they fight for the right to take mates and engage in sharp skirmishes for control of choice lairs. A vuldrog that loses any of these struggles has its wings torn off and is thrown from its cliff home by the victors.

Usually these struggles for power remain beyond the notice of civilized realms, but at times they can spill over to concern even the mightiest of lords. Vuldrogs make no distinction between creatures of their race and other creatures. A powerful warrior or spellcaster could conceivably defeat a band of vuldrogs, slay the leaders among them, and establish herself as their ruler. Many ambitious bandit lords and tyrants have used magic items that granted them the ability to fly in order to gain the services of a powerful, aerial fighting force.



VULDROG ENCOUNTER (EL 10)

Large flocks of vuldrogs have swept in on the lowlands, attacking travelers seemingly at random. While the characters go about their business in town or while they are on the road between destinations, four vuldrogs descend upon them and attempt to carry off one of their number.

If the characters defeat the beasts, they discover that similar attacks have occurred throughout the area, with many innocents having been kidnapped. The characters must track the flock to its distant lair, where they discover that a power-mad spellcaster has gained control of the beasts. The magister needs living sacrifices for a terrible ritual that will

unlock the secret of a strange, rune-covered staff she uncovered in an ancient ruin.

VULDROG ENCOUNTER (EL 6)

While traveling through the mountains, the characters come to a narrow path that curves along a rounded cliff face. If they are observant, they can note bones, broken weapons, and other debris at the cliff's base 50 feet below them. This area is a preferred hunting ground for a vuldrog. The beast uses the narrow terrain to fight one traveler at a time, the curves in the path allowing it to attack a lone character as he moves around a corner on the trail.

WIND LORD

Large Giant

Hit Dice: 12d8+48 (102 hp), dying/dead -5/-18

Initiative: +5

Speed: 30 feet, fly 60 feet (good)

AC: 21 (-1 size, +1 Dexterity, +8 natural, +3 studded leather), touch 10, flat-footed 20

Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+19

Attack: Greatclub +19 melee (2d8+18)

Full Attack: Greatclub +19/+14 melee (2d8+18) and 2 talons +14 melee (1d8+5)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/10 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/10 feet)

Special Attacks: Shock wave, sonic blast

Special Qualities: Low-light vision, magical flight, resistance to cold 10 and sonic 10

Saves: Fort +12, Ref +5, Will +6

Abilities: Str 23, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 8

Skills: Listen +8, Spot +9

Feats: Improved Initiative, Modify Combat Style, Power Attack, Power Charge, Weapon Focus (greatclub), Weapon Specialization (greatclub)

Environment: Cold and temperate mountains

Organization: Solitary, pair, raiding party (3–12 plus one 4th-level leader), or flock (4–48 plus one 8th-level baron)

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: +4

A wind lord resembles a warped combination of a bird and a human. It stands 10 feet tall, with ragged, feathered wings that stretch like membranes from its torso and legs to its arms. Its legs end in fierce talons that it uses to tear into opponents. Its wings serve to stabilize and direct it in the air, allowing it to glide upon powerful winds and elemental energies. When angered, a wind lord can send tremendous shock waves toward its enemies by drawing on this power that swirls and capers around it. It can direct powerful gusts of wind that knock its enemies prone or summon the energy of elemental air to produce bursts of sonic energy.

Wind lords are wild, reckless predators that haunt the highest mountain peaks in the world. They view anything that relies on its feet for travel as an inferior creature worthy only of pity and contempt. Their teachings hold that they are the true lords of the air, and other races are fit only for service or exploitation. Their raiding parties are rightly feared for their nocturnal attacks, in which they descend upon a city or town to force captives into great cages they carry with their talons. Other raiders carry off as much food, gold, gems, and other treasures as possible. The unfortunates taken prisoner are forced to toil as slaves high in the wind lords' aerie with

little hope for rescue. Even the bravest rescue parties have trouble coping with the thin air and other perils of the mountain peaks—not to mention the wind lords themselves, who stand ready to cast any intruders down upon the rocks.

COMBAT

In battle, wind lords are careful fighters who prefer to study their opponents. Their ability to fly allows them to wait for the perfect moment to attack. Like vultures, they fly just out of bowshot from potential targets, watching for the slightest sign that their targets are ripe for the picking. While wind lords are brave, if not overconfident, they realize that their speed and maneuverability allow them to dictate when and where a fight takes place.

Shock Wave (Su): A wind lord can generate an intense, magical burst of wind and energy that knocks its opponents prone and may tear an enemy's weapon from his hands. As a full-round action once per hour, the wind lord draws the power of elemental air to its body, focuses it into magical force, and projects it out as a 60-foot cone. Creatures within the cone are blasted by a combination of a powerful gust of wind and a mighty burst of energy. They must make Strength checks with a +4 bonus per size category larger than Medium or a -4 penalty per size category smaller than Medium. A creature receives an additional +4 bonus to this check if it is exceptionally stable or has four or more legs. If the creature receives any bonuses to resist bull rush attacks, it gains them for this Strength check as well.

The shock wave ability has several potential effects depending on the target's Strength check result. If the result is 20 or higher, the target suffers no ill effects. If the result is 10 to 19, he is knocked prone in his current space. If the result is less than 10, the target is knocked prone, and anything he carried in his hands is hurled 1d20 feet away by the force of this attack. Unattended objects are also affected by this shock wave. As a rule of thumb, objects that weigh 20 lbs. or less move 1d100 feet, those between 21 and 100 lbs. move 1d20 feet, and heavier objects remain in place (but might topple over). All objects affected by the shock wave are propelled away from the wind lord, in the direction of the force that emanates from it.

Sonic Blast (Su): By gathering elemental energy to them and unleashing it in a single, devastating burst, wind lords can hammer their opponents with sonic energy. Once per hour, a wind lord can create a blast of sonic power in a 60-foot cone. All creatures within this area take 8d6 points of sonic damage, with a Fortitude save (DC 15) halving this effect. In addition, characters that fail this save are deafened for 1d10 minutes.

Magical Flight (Su): Wind lords can take to the air because of the magical and elemental energy that surrounds them. This effect counts as a 9th-level spell cast by a 20th-level magister.



It operates continually and provides the wind lord with its flying capabilities. If this effect is somehow dispelled, a wind lord can gather a new nimbus of energy to it by resting for four days. At the end of this time, the wind lord can fly once again. Of course, such measures mean little to a wind lord who plummets to the earth due to a skillfully cast *dispel magic*.

WIND LORD SOCIETY

Wind lords gather in groups called flocks, each led by a powerful figure known as a baron. These nobles rule with an iron fist, and their command over their followers is based more on their ability to fight and defeat would-be usurpers than on any claim to royal heritage. To the wind lords, those who are strong must rule. This philosophy is a natural extension of their belief that creatures that cannot fly are inherently weak and unfit. To the wind lords, flight is a vital, necessary component of a creature's worth. Among their own kind, this willingness to categorize creatures as fit or weak, worthy or despicable, extends to everyday life. The strongest wind lords belittle and bully those below them on the social ladder. Competition marks their ranks from highest to lowest, as

each wind lord hopes to gain the respect and leverage needed to improve his place in the flock.

Wind lords that are at the top of this pecking order receive first choice of any treasures claimed in battle, the best bits of food, and the services of personal slaves. Low-ranking wind lords may themselves be forced to endure servitude. Even those that escape this fate endure harsh treatment. Many of these wretches are forced to leave the nest in order to raid the countryside, battling men, wind lords, and other enemies, and otherwise hone their skills in hopes of one day returning to the nest to claim a place at the head of the social order. This tradition forces wind lords to stage regular attacks on civilized regions, since treasure and tales of success in battle rank as the two best methods for getting ahead in a flock.

WIND LORD CHARACTERS

Wind lords commonly take levels in warrior, because many of them are hunters, raiders, and marauders. Their cultural emphasis on personal skill pushes them to develop their fighting ability, though luckily most of the strongest and most skilled wind lords remain high in their aeries, secure in the prestigious rank they have attained. The younger wind lords, those that attack the lowlands, are rarely skilled in anything more than the basics of combat.

A few rare wind lords become greenbonds. These creatures break away from the ruthless, predatory traditions of their people and become the caretakers of the highest mountain reaches. They share a special affinity for birds, and some of these spellcasters construct large havens for migratory flocks.

WIND LORD ENCOUNTER (EL 8)

The characters are awakened from their slumber by a loud, crashing sound on the roof of the inn where they are staying. A renegade wind lord has descended upon the place in the dead of night. It smashes through the roof to grab sleeping victims before they can arm and armor themselves, throwing them into a large sack it carries. The characters must act quickly to foil the monster's plans—it hopes to carry off a few would-be slaves to help establish a new colony it wants to construct in the nearby mountains.

WITCHRAVEN

Small Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 3d10 (16 hp), dying/dead -1/-11

Initiative: +2

Speed: 10 feet, fly 50 feet (average)

AC: 14 (+1 size, +2 Dexterity, +1 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +3/-2

Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d3-1)

Full Attack: Bite +6 melee (1d3-1)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet

(Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Paralysis, curse

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 feet, SR 11, aid witchery

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3

Abilities: Str 8, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 15

Skills: Move Silently +5, Sneak +6, Spot +5

Feats: Defensive Move, Focused Healing, Weapon Finesse

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary or murder (6-13)

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 4 HD (Small); 5-9 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment: —

In a ritual handed down through familial ties, some witches can call upon the services of a witchraven, a creature that is a boon to the witch and a bane to virtually anyone else. The witchraven serves a witch for a year and a day as a companion, assistant, and—if need be—defender. In exchange, the witch provides the witchraven with food, shelter, and safety for the same period.

Most people consider witchravens a bad omen when sighted. They have a sinister reputation, perhaps unfairly so. In the wild, they keep to themselves and feed on rodents and small animals. Witchravens are found mainly in magical areas: around witchery sites, akashic nodes, power cysts, ancient tombs, and so forth.

Aeons ago, witchravens were a powerful and intelligent race of avian creature that dwelled in the Lands of the Diamond Throne. They committed a heinous crime in those long-lost days, however, offending the gods of the Denotholan (see “The Gods and Religions” section in Chapter One of *The Diamond Throne*). Their subsequent curse relegated them to the position of servants to the races that would follow, but only those who could understand them. The verrik’s discovery of witchcraft finally allowed people to communicate with the creatures and work with them. Before that time, they were a menace and a nuisance, but one rarely encountered. Despite

the fact that their destiny revolves around an ancient curse, witchravens do not seem to object to their role. They form sincere bonds with the witches who call them.

Witchravens are indistinguishable from other ravens except for their size—they stand 3 feet tall—and an unnerving aura. Witches can use the Sight to tell a witchraven from a normal but prodigious raven. Some people compare witchravens to the verrik, saying that witchravens are to other birds what verrik are to other humanoid races. Most verrik take that as a compliment. It’s unknown what witchravens think of such a statement.

Witchravens speak Common, although they usually talk only to each other and to witches.

COMBAT

Witchravens tend to fight defensively. They use their paralysis ability against the first foe that meets their gaze, then attempt to fly away. A witchraven only uses its curse ability against a creature that has wronged it.

Paralysis (Su): Once per day, the witchraven can paralyze one foe it can see within 60 feet, unless the creature makes a Will saving throw (DC 13). The paralysis lasts for 1d6+4 rounds. The saving throw DC is Charisma based.

Curse (Su): Once per day, the witchraven can curse one foe it can see within 60 feet, unless the creature makes a Will saving throw (DC 13). The affected creature suffers a -2 penalty on attacks, saves, and checks until the curse is removed. The saving throw DC is Charisma based.

Aid Witchery (Su): Witches within 30 feet of a witchraven can use all witchery powers as if they were two levels higher than their actual level. Further, three times per day, the witchraven can concentrate (requiring a standard action) during the same round as a witch within 30 feet uses a witchery power to grant the power’s saving throw DC (if any) a +2 bonus and double its range and duration (if any).

MASTER WITCHRAVENS

Instead of serving witches, sometimes a witchraven can be a witch itself. These masters often have some distinguishing physical characteristic, such as a red tuft of feathers around their eyes, yellow tips to their wings, and so on. Such witchravens always have at least one level of witch (often wind or ice witch) and an additional racial bonus of +2 to Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. They have maximum hit points on their witchraven Hit Dice, but not on their witch class Hit Dice. Their witchery powers are aided by their own presence, and they gain a further +1 bonus to their witchery powers’ saving throw DCs (if any). In addition, the powers’ range and duration (if any) double for every three normal witchravens within 30 feet. (Normal

witches do not gain these cumulative effects.)

A witchraven always obeys the commands of a master, unless bound to a witch. These rare individuals almost always lead a murder of the birds, operating with their own agendas. They resent witches that call their fellows off to service, so witches in general fear master witchravens greatly. Legends and rumors of master witchravens plucking out the eyes of sleeping witches circulate among witch communities, and some witches know special wards to guard them from master witchravens while they sleep.

Master witchravens cannot be called.

NEW FEAT

CALL WITCHRAVEN (CEREMONIAL)

You and another witch, related to you by blood, perform a ritual that requires one hour to complete.

Prerequisite: Witchery ability, caster level 5th, Charisma 15

Benefit: A witchraven appears and serves you for one year and one day. During that time, it accompanies you wherever you go (unless you tell it otherwise), obeys your commands, aids your witchery powers, and even defends you with its life. It does not act stupidly or give its life wantonly. One year later, you can call upon another witchraven by performing the ritual again (but you need take the feat only once). The second time, the witchraven remains with you forever.

You cannot have more than one witchraven companion at a time.

WITCHRAVEN ENCOUNTER (EL 7)

When clearing a new area of the forest to cultivate, some farmers become plagued by witchravens. They summon the player characters for help in discovering who has sent this blight upon them. (Many of the farmers are already



cursed, as well as wounded, from encounters with the creatures.) Upon investigation, the PCs must deal with six of the creatures.

Soon they realize that—unbeknownst to anyone but the witchravens—the area the farmers are attempting to clear is in fact a power cyst. At the center of this magical area lies the tomb of a powerful ancient witch. The characters must decide whether to drive off the witchravens (and explore the tomb), or convince the farmers to go elsewhere.

ZETETIC

Medium Aberration

Hit Dice: 18d8+90 (171 hp), dying/dead -6/-20

Initiative: +9

Speed: Fly 50 feet (perfect)

AC: 34 (+5 Dexterity, +12 natural, +7 armor), touch 12, flat-footed 22

Base Attack/Grapple: +13/+20

Attack: +2 *scimitar* +23 melee (1d6+11)

Full Attack: 2 +2 *scimitars* +23 melee (1d6+11), 2 claws +20 melee (1d8+7), bite +18 melee (1d8+3), tail +18 melee (1d6+3 plus numbing effect)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet (Face/Reach: 5 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Improved grab, constrict, numbing effect, power of the name

Special Qualities: DR 10/magic (or 10/+2), SR 25, improved evasion, identify truename, darkvision 60 feet

Saves: Fort +11, Ref +13, Will +15

Abilities: Str 25, Dex 21, Con 20, Int 17, Wis 19, Cha 18

Skills: Knowledge (geography)* +20, Knowledge (history)* +25, Knowledge (religion)* +20, Listen +20, Sense Motive +15, Sneak +23, Spot +20, Tumble +23

Feats: Ambidexterity, Defensive Move, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes^B, Multiattack**, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (*scimitar*), Weapon Specialization (*scimitar*)

Environment: Any land

Organization: Solitary or band (3–6)

Challenge Rating: 16

Treasure: Standard

Advancement: 19–36 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment: +2

** Denotes a feat from the MM.

Masters of secrets, the zetetics were once knights in the service of the legendary hero Denothol. They command not only terrible powers due to the new forms they inhabit, but they can discern any creature's truename and use it against it.

When the warrior scribe Denothol entered his twilight years, he spent more time writing of what he had seen and done than adventuring. After all his travels and accomplishments, however, he sought to create an order of men and women that would follow in his footsteps. These were the Knights of the Zetetic. Like Denothol, they trained their minds as well as their bodies. They focused on arts both cerebral and martial.

Denothol's plans, however, came to a terrible end 34 years after his death, when a mage named Garros cast a spell that drew all the Zetetic Knights into a magical vortex, where they were held for 1,001 years. Once freed, the zetetics that emerged were no longer recognizable as human, nor did most of them uphold the ideals of their founder any longer.

Changed in body and spirit, the zetetics now wander the realm, usually alone but sometimes in bands. They search for power and knowledge—specifically, for the knowledge and power to regain their former selves, undo what has been done to them, and even reverse time, if such a thing is possible.

Of course, since they know so much and have their own supernatural link to knowledge (almost certainly related to the akashic memory), sometimes others seek out the zetetics to inquire about some ancient mystery. Zetetics are difficult to find and harder to parley with, but those who succeed often learn lore unavailable anywhere else.

In their new form, zetetics are sexless and ageless. They sleep and eat only a little, although they still breathe. They make no permanent lairs, for they are wanderers, searching for knowledge which may not exist.

More than anything else, zetetics hate undead. This may be because they see themselves, in a way, as being far too similar to undead. It may also be due to some ancient precept of their order they still cling to. In any event, even the most powerful of undead fear the zetetics—the mighty Death-King, Vahr of Verdune, fell to the blades of a band of zetetics 100 years ago.

Zetetics flutter and float in the air, ignoring gravity. Their upper torsos resemble those of black-skinned humanoids, but they possess long, thin (but powerful) tails rather than legs. A zetetic has four arms; two of them end in huge claws, and the other two in slightly smaller claws capable of holding weapons. Their flesh is slick and hairless, their heads long and thin. A zetetic's large mouth holds needlelike teeth. They frequently wear ornate golden jewelry and breastplates and use magical weaponry.

The typical zetetic, as presented here, carries two +2 *scimitars* and wears a +2 *breastplate*.

Zetetics speak Common, Faen, Litorian, and a number of dead languages.

COMBAT

Due to their innate ambidexterity and incredible agility, a zetetic can make attacks with all four arms without penalty, whether it wields weapons or simply utilizes its natural razorlike claws. The creatures also make attacks with their bite and tail, the tail being particularly dangerous due to the numbing effect it has upon living creatures it touches.

Perhaps a zetetic's most dreaded aspect is its ability to instantly ascertain a creature's truename. It uses its special knowledge to invoke the power of the name upon those who dare stand against it.

* **Skills (Ex):** All zetetics gain a +10 racial bonus to the Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (history) and Knowledge (religion) skills.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a zetetic must hit with its tail attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a



free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can begin to constrict as well as make the grappled foe face a cumulative numbing effect (see below). The zetetic can use its tail to grapple and hold foes without being considered grappling itself (it does not lose its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class).

Constrict (Ex): When a zetetic establishes a hold with its tail, it wraps the tail around its foe. The zetetic inflicts 1d8+7 points of damage each round as it holds a foe, as well as automatically inflicting its numbing effect each round.

Numbing Effect (Su): Any living creature not immune to paralysis that is touched by the zetetic's tail feels its muscles relax and lose strength and feeling. The result is a –2 penalty to attack and damage rolls, Strength and Dexterity checks, skill checks based on Strength or Dexterity, and Reflex saves. This numbness lasts for 6 rounds. If the tail strikes a creature more than once, the numbing effect is cumulative. Thus, a character struck twice suffers a –4 penalty, and one struck three times suffers a –6 penalty. Characters grappled by the tail suffer the cumulative penalty each round they remain grabbed.

Improved Evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, a zetetic takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and only half damage if the saving throw fails.

Identify Truename (Su): The zetetic can, as a free action once per round, stare intently at a single target within 25 feet to learn the creature's truename (if it has one). The target must make a Will saving throw (DC 23) to resist the effect. The zetetic can try again multiple times against resisting foes. The foe must be aware of the zetetic in order for this ability to work (a zetetic cannot attempt to identify the truename of a sleeping foe or while in hiding). The saving throw is Charisma based. A zetetic cannot use its identify truename and power of the name abilities in the same round.

Power of the Name (Su): As with the feat of the same name, the zetetic can compel a creature (Will save, DC 23, to resist) to perform actions. (See page 157 for the feat.) Unlike with the feat, the zetetic can perform this task once per round as a free action and can use this ability against the same creature more than once. The saving throw is Charisma based. A zetetic cannot use its identify truename and power of the name abilities in the same round.

ZETETIC ENCOUNTER (EL 16+)

The player characters must find an ancient scroll that holds a special secret. It lies out of the reach of any akashic, in a chamber high in a tower that is magically shielded from the akashic memory—along with the decaying corpse of the sage who wrote the scroll. This individual's memories never joined with all other memories. (The DM can tailor the secret to the needs of the campaign.)

Unbeknownst to the PCs, a zetetic also wants the secrets of the scroll, hoping it contains some knowledge of how it can restore itself. The tower is filled with traps and guardians. The zetetic watches the characters as they enter and attempts to sneak in behind them. If discovered, it fights—with lethal force, for the PCs are its rivals. Smart characters might be able to negotiate with the creature and convince it that they can work together to obtain the scroll.

If the player characters are too powerful for the zetetic and do not offer to work together, it retreats if it can. It goes immediately to a nearby magister and uses power of the name to compel her to help attack the PCs as they exit the tower. It also provides her with any of the characters' true-names that it has learned, to aid her in spells against them.

PART TWO:
CHARACTERS
OF THE
DIAMOND
THRONE

THE HARROWDEEP
LARE RAVISH
VERDUNE
THE BITTER PEARS
THE GR
EASTERN
THE KNOWN WEST
ERDINA
THACHIN
De-SH...
MOUNTAINS
ERDAENOS
Elo-Manasa
THE ENDER MOUNTAINS
MILITHRON
THARTHOLAN
BALATOSH
GAHANIS
JERAD
SORMERE
SOUTHERN WASTES
RHORL
CARACHA
ZALAVAT
WHITE SHOAL ISLAND
NOLL
RAVADAN
WILDLANDS OF RISH
CHTEROT
THE REDWOOD
VATORTH
FALLANOR
SHANA
FOREST OF NARTH
JUNGLES OF NAVERADEL
GULF OF FIRESIGHT
INOOSH
CAPELLOSHA
GENER
UTOS
FREE CITIES OF THE SOUTH
SÜHERLEN
MALLACOSTA

AARACH

If one could get Aarach's version of the tale, he would say that when he was young, the river spoke to him. He would explain that the river awoke something inside of him with its words, and he joined with the river's tribe and abandoned his own. Getting that story would be an impressive feat, however, for Aarach would still sooner kill and eat the questioner than respond. He is still a rhodin. (See Chapter Four: Creatures in *The Diamond Throne*.)

Aarach has lived alone for most of his life, abandoned by his kind due to a strange feeling that they got about him. Expected to die in the desert, he found an isolated stream and was saved. Along the river's banks, he grew—and grew. Years later, he joined with a new band of rhodin as its fearsome skurg leader. The raiding band prospered, not due to his leadership, but due to his might, ferocity, and skill in combat. However, Aarach still felt a strange stirring within him. With no one to teach him of such things, he manifested his witchery power and spellcasting abilities through trial and error. He still has not realized, for example, that his spells frequently fail in battle because he wears armor and carries a shield. Aarach, in fact, does not think of himself as a witch or even as a spellcaster. (Although technically a sea witch, Aarach certainly would never use that term. He's never even seen the sea, having lived in the hot, dry wastes all his life.) In his mind, his powers come from being in the “tribe of the river.” The river no longer speaks to Aarach, but he doesn't care. He looks upon it as a human might look upon a parent, never straying too far from its banks.

A monstrous, hulking brute, Aarach is even more dull-witted than most of his kind. However, he has keen intuition and a way about him that draws other rhodin to his side, even as he repelled them when he was young.

COMBAT

Aarach begins most fights with his liquid fire ability, then charges into melee. His only thought toward tactics is that he prefers to fight opponents weaker than himself, although he has no problem with fighting multiple foes. Like most rhodin, he gives no thought to honor or bravery. He is only interested in survival and success. Thus, he doesn't hesitate to flee if needed.

USING AARACH

Aarach dwells in the Southern Wastes with his band of rhodin. Folk in those parts refer to him as “the skurg witch,” which is quite descriptive—he's the only rhodin/skurg witch anyone has ever heard of. Because they hate and fear him so, they might be inclined to raise funds to put a bounty on his head.

Aarach would never do anything to help someone else unless it was only the indirect result of his benefiting himself.



Therefore, he is not likely usable as an ally of the player characters—he can become an effective opponent for them, however.

Aarach, male rhodin (skurg) War₃/Wtc₃ (sea): CR 9; Large humanoid; HD 6d8+18 + 3d8+9 + 3d6+9; hp 103; Dying/Dead -4/-17; Init +1; Speed 30 feet; AC 21 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural, +5 armor, +4 shield), touch 10, flat-footed 13; Armor Check -7, Spell Failure 45%; Space/Reach 10 feet/10 feet (Face/Reach 5 feet by 5 feet/10 feet); BAB +9; Grapple +15; Attack +15 melee (2d6+6, critical 20/x3, heavy mangler); Full Attack +15/+10 melee (2d6+6, critical 20/x3, heavy mangler) and +12 melee (1d8+2, horns); SA Liquid fire; SQ Darkvision 60 feet, low-light vision, breathe water; Hero Points 0; SV Fort +12, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 21, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 7, Wis 14, Cha 15

Languages: Common, Rhodin

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Heal +4, Intimidate +7, Jump +2, Listen +3, Spot +4, Swim +1; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (heavy), Multiattack, Night Owl, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Swim), Weapon Focus (heavy mangler).

Liquid Fire (Su): Once per day Aarach can spray burning liquid in a 180-degree arc with a 20-foot range, inflicting 2d6 points of acid damage (Reflex save, DC 13, for half damage).

Water Breathing (Su): Once per day, for up to 30 minutes, Aarach can breathe water as well as air.

Possessions: +1 heavy mangler, breastplate, +2 Devanian great shield, witchbag, 3 tindertwigs, 25 gp

Spell Slots: 3/3

Spells Readied: 4/3: 0—*bash, ghost sound, lesser repair, scent bane*; 1st—*acrobatics, resistance, touch of fear*

ABALAN THE WAYWARD SPY

JUSTIN JACOBSON
It is rarer than a dragon's scale that War Marshal Rasham, leader of the chorrim, hand picks a child from one of the training camps to serve in the Black Bolts, an elite branch of the chorrim reconnaissance machine. But Abalan was no ordinary child. Less brawny but more agile than his kin, Abalan's greatest gift was his cunning and guile. Perhaps it was this cleverness that Rasham saw in the boy. It did not hurt that Abalan was the offspring of two respected officers. In just three years, the boy rose through the ranks of the Black Bolts to command their primary squad. Time and again, he proved his worth, finding and exploiting the weaknesses of the chorrim's enemies. Yet, at the heart of it all, Abalan could not ignore the tinge of doubt that lingered in his psyche.

The chorrim (see Chapter Four: Creatures in *The Diamond Throne*) are not "dirty" fighters; they abhor the chaos that such tactics yield. Regimentation, precision, and militaristic order are prized. It is curious how, with but a subtle shift, a tenet can be turned on its head. For Abalan, the indoctrination of these ideals became distorted. What, in most chorrim, is a mere appreciation for exactitude became in him a sense of honor and fair play. To the chorrim way of thinking, such concepts impede victory, so it was only a matter of time before this crisis of character became a matter of military security.

It was a week before Landsmilk in the Common Year 1748. Abalan received orders to scout a string of villages on the eastern shore between the towns of Khorl and Ravadan. His squad carried out this duty with the completeness and skill that had come to be expected of them. He reported to his superior's quarters and relayed the tactical information: The time for an attack was ripe. The men of these towns had made a trip for supplies, and the other townfolk were distracted with plans for the upcoming festivities. Captain Hagatta commended Abalan, informing him that he would recommend a full assault on the very eve of the harvest festival. Something in Abalan snapped, and he barked a protest.

Taken aback by the sudden impudence of the prodigy, Hagatta swung the back of his mailed fist at Abalan's cheek. Abalan dodged the blow easily and threw a counter-punch to the officer's midsection. With that single blow, his life changed forever. Hagatta called for his personal guards, and Abalan beat a hasty escape. He ran first to the towns to warn them of the coming assault. Then he headed into the wilderness to lose himself.

War Marshal Rasham would not suffer such effrontery. He sent the most skilled chorrim assassins to hunt down the traitor. But he had trained Abalan too well—the very skill that had sent him up the ranks now kept him hidden from his trackers. Abalan underwent a disavowal ceremony, forever severing his ties with his race. For a time, he lived a life of seclusion, reflection, and study. But the chorrim's attacks upon the people of the realm did not stop, and he could no longer sit idle. He turned his vast skill to the task of thwart-

ing his own people, swearing an oath to protect the wild lands of the Far South from their unyielding tide.

COMBAT

A natural spy, Abalan prefers not to enter into direct melee combat when possible. When he must, however, his martial upbringing and natural sense of honor come to the fore—he won't attack a foe unawares. Although like most chorrim he is a natural swordsman, he never uses a weapon, but he remains skilled at fighting those who wield swords.

USING ABALAN

Abalan stands a hair under 8 feet tall and weighs a relatively slight 310 lbs. Preferring to work under cover of darkness, he has spent much less time beneath the southern sun than most folk, and the tinge of his skin is greener than that of most chorrim. He rarely speaks, and when he does it is in a whisper of a voice. He dresses in drab, nondescript garb, including a black cloak and tunic, preferring to keep his identity a secret. Abalan does not partake of fortified drink or other indulgences. He finds pleasure in the recovery and reading of ancient books, bird-watching, and the crafting of Suherlennish courtesy masks.

In fulfilling his oath, he has taken a few mercenary jobs and often offers his protection for free. Much of the time, he simply gathers intelligence on chorrim activity and passes the information to others for a response. On several occasions he has worked in defense of the lands with a local chapter of the Order of the Axe—the largest and most powerful knighthood in the realm.

Abalan, male chorrim *Wrmz/Osn9*: CR 14; Large giant; HD 4d8+12 + 2d12+9 + 9d10+27; 121 hp; Dying/Dead -4/-16; Init +4; Speed 50 feet; AC 24 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +4 natural, +5 insight, +2 deflection), AC 25 against foes with swords, touch 20, flat-footed 20; BAB +11/+6/+1; Grapple +19; Attack +15 melee (1d12+6, unarmed); Full Attack +15/+10/+5 melee (1d12+6, unarmed) or +13/+13/+8/+3 (1d12+6, flurry of blows); Space/Reach 10 feet/10 feet (Face/Reach 5 feet by 5 feet/10 feet); SA Unarmed strike, flurry of blows, throw object, objects as weapons, shattering strike; SQ Darkvision 60 feet, natural tactician, well-trained, eschew food, evasion, minor adaptation, refuse fatigue, refuse fear, eschew water, refuse wounds; Hero Points 2; SV Fort +14, Ref +11, Will +11; Str 18, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 17, Cha 9

Languages: Common, Giant

Skills and Feats: Balance +6, Climb +7, Concentration +5, Craft (mask-making) +3, Escape Artist +6, Handle Animal +1, Intuit Direction +4, Jump +6, Knowledge (history) +3, Listen +11, Ride +12, Sneak +14 Spot +14, Tumble +12, Wilderness Survival +7; Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (heavy), Night Owl, Skill Application (Sneak



WALPOLE '04

and Spot), Stomp, Sturdy, Trample, Weapon Specialization (unarmed).

Throw Object (Ex): Abalan can use any object he can lift above his head as a ranged (thrown) weapon he is proficient with. The object must weigh at least 1 lb. to use it as a ranged weapon. He uses his normal attack bonus and unarmed damage, and the weapon has a range increment of 10 feet.

Objects as Weapons (Ex): Abalan can use any object he can lift over his head as a weapon he is proficient with. The object must weigh at least 1 lb. to use it as a weapon. He uses his normal attack bonus and unarmed damage.

Shattering Strike (Ex): Abalan ignores 4 points of damage reduction or object hardness with each blow.

Natural Tactician (Ex): Abalan gains a +1 circumstance bonus to all attack rolls for an entire encounter against any foes that were surprised at the beginning of the encounter.

Well-Trained (Ex): All attempts to intimidate Abalan suffer a +6 circumstance modifier to the check's Difficulty Class.

Eschew Food and Water (Ex): Abalan does not need food or water.

Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows a creature to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Abalan takes no damage with a successful saving throw. His quick reflexes allow him to take cover and avoid damage before an attack strikes him.

Minor Adaptation (Ex): Abalan can ignore ongoing damaging environmental effects of up to 1 point of damage per round.

Refuse Fatigue (Ex): As long as he gets a good night's rest (eight hours), Abalan never feels the effects of fatigue. He could run at his top speed all day and not tire.

Refuse Fear (Ex): Abalan is immune to fear and fear effects.

Refuse Wounds (Ex): Abalan can cure up to 18 hit points each day, spreading this healing out among several uses.

Unarmed Strike: When fighting unarmed, Abalan does not provoke attacks of opportunity from armed opponents he attacks. Using unarmed strikes, he doesn't have the option of making an off-hand attack, as he uses his whole body in every attack (see "flurry of blows," below). If fighting with a one-handed weapon, Abalan can make an unarmed strike as an off-hand attack but suffers the standard penalties for two-weapon fighting.

Usually, his unarmed strikes deal normal damage rather than subdual damage. However, he can choose to deal subdual damage without penalty.

Flurry of Blows: Abalan may make one extra attack in a round at his highest base attack, but this attack and each other attack made that round suffer a –2 penalty apiece. This penalty applies for 1 round, so it affects attacks of opportunity he might make before his next action. He must use the full attack action to strike with a flurry of blows. Do not reduce his damage bonus on the additional attack.

Possessions: *Boots of tracelessness*, *dazzlesphere detonation*, *oil of gird the warrior*, *potion of greater battle healing* (2), *potion of invisibility*, *ring of protection* +2, *spellbane bracers*†, detailed maps of the Far South and journal of chorrin activity in the vicinity, 5,620 gp

NEW MAGIC ITEM

Spellbane Bracers†: Once per day, these black leather bracers permit the wearer to *dispel magic* (the targeted dispel effect), on any target successfully struck by an unarmed attack. The wearer must declare use of this item after it is determined whether the attack roll has succeeded, but before determining damage.

Faint abjuration; Caster Level 5th; Craft Constant Item, *dispel magic*; Price 5,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

ALGAR THE GIFTING MINSTREL

Algar spent his human childhood in a small tribe on the jungle coast of Naveradel, living in near squalor. His mother, a deeply unhappy woman who simply tried to make the best of her life, offered little in the form of parenting. His father, Koman, was a rugged, tough-love type of man who let nothing slide.

Koman provided for his family as a middleman, trading between local terrig hunters and verrik coastal ships. He put Algar to work at a young age. It was not an easy life—exotic forest beasts could turn you to stone with but a glance, the back-breaking lifting and loading never seemed to end, and the condescending stares of the verrik bored through your very soul. Poverty, fear, and hard work filled his days, but Koman gave no ground with his son: Algar was going to be what he wanted him to be. The man's words stung worse than a physical blow. Algar hated his life, and he hated his father for forcing it upon him.

One particularly bad summer, a relentless monsoon thrashed what few possessions they had, including Algar's cherished secret savings. With a hatred that churned his insides, Algar confronted his father at the docks. Angry words led him to grab Koman by the throat, intent on squeezing the life out of the man. In the same moment, the monsoon swelled, causing the docks to crumble beneath their feet. Algar and his father suddenly found themselves scrambling underwater to reach the surface amid the flotsam of the smashed dock. In a desperate moment of self-preservation, Algar placed his foot on Koman's face and kicked, propelling himself up to the surface. The kick caused Koman to swallow water and he vanished from sight.

As Algar dragged himself to shore, he knew his father was dead—he'd seen Koman's lifeless body sucked west into the tumultuous Gulf of Firesight. Plagued with anger and self-loathing, Algar set out west along the gulf once the weather had calmed, following the path his father's body had taken. He hoped that finding the body would put his mind at ease. But by the time he reached the eastern shores of the Wildlands of Kish, he had found no body. A parched mouth, empty gullet, and weakened spirit were his only rewards.

A reptilelike humanoid named Vinathar took him in; later Algar learned it was a mojeh. For weeks, the determined Vinathar worked on Algar. His well-chosen words wove through Algar's mind like a poison through the veins, stroking the boy's pain:

"Shed your nonmojeh skin and humanity's mundane destiny with it. How can you enjoy all of life's fruits with only one century? Learn the secrets of magic that only a mojeh lifetime can show you. Replace mediocrity with power."

Vinathar's promise of a better life consumed his thoughts. Algar decided to forsake his humanity and underwent the transformation to mojeh. The ceremony was held at a large crater lake known as the Rune Sea in the western Wildlands. The swirling runes of the black lake turned almost blue as they danced and sang ever louder, as if cheering the event. The music wrought a terrible chord in Algar's mind, however,

at the exact moment of his metamorphosis. He knew down to the very core of his being that he had made a terrible mistake.

The transformation had not washed his sin clean. It revealed no answers. His life was no more meaningful now than before. Under the scrutiny of Algar's new mojeh intellect, Vinathar's promises were empty. The new mojeh—no longer male, nor any gender at all—fled the Wildlands, wandering aimlessly northeast for weeks, disgusted with itself.

Nightmares plagued Algar's sleep. In one recurring dream, its mind gently touched the collective memory of all living beings. The dream-touch had an almost tangible sensation, like that of melting ice on the back of the neck. Wisdom of the past dripped into the corners of Algar's mind. For the first time, Algar understood that one cannot escape one's self by donning scale in place of skin. Salvation lies within.

From that day forward, Algar decided to live in contrast to its tortured soul, to be the unexpected. Not hide behind cloaks like other mojeh, but display itself in full view. Not dwell in isolation, but become heavily involved in communities. Not follow the path of magic and the intellectual, but that of skill and artistic pursuits.

Today, Algar moves from town to town, bringing joy as a performer to those in despair. The mojeh hopes to prevent its past from becoming another child's future. To that end, Algar swore an oath to fulfill this ongoing task till the end of its days—no small thing for one with a life span of centuries.

Whatever money Algar earns is immediately reinvested locally to buy goods. These Algar gives out during performances in the next town, spreading one community's delicacies to another. Not only does this promote trade, but it has earned the mojeh the title of the "Gifting Minstrel." Children can hardly contain themselves when Algar arrives, wondering what trinkets the visitor has for them. The mojeh's engrossing stories have children gasping and rugged men crying. (In one of Algar's favorite stage acts, a dramatic tale of a blinded hero who must make his way over an acid pit on a decrepit bridge, the mojeh illustrates the words by walking a narrow pole over a vat of hot oil while blindfolded.) So well known are Algar's performances that the mojeh has been invited to Sormere to entertain at Lord Uthelore Katanis' annual gala. Even Neverin, mojeh leader of the capital's akashic guild, has recently invited Algar to De-Shamod for some hidden purpose.

COMBAT

Algar tries to use its amazing diplomatic skill to get out of any situation that could result in violence. When pressed, Algar tries to flee—unless the combat directly involves its oath, in which case the mojeh uses unarmed attacks.

USING ALGAR

Some things have not changed for Algar. Rare is the night it does not awake caked in sweat. It has been thus since the transformation, for the dark deed of the past is not easily undone.

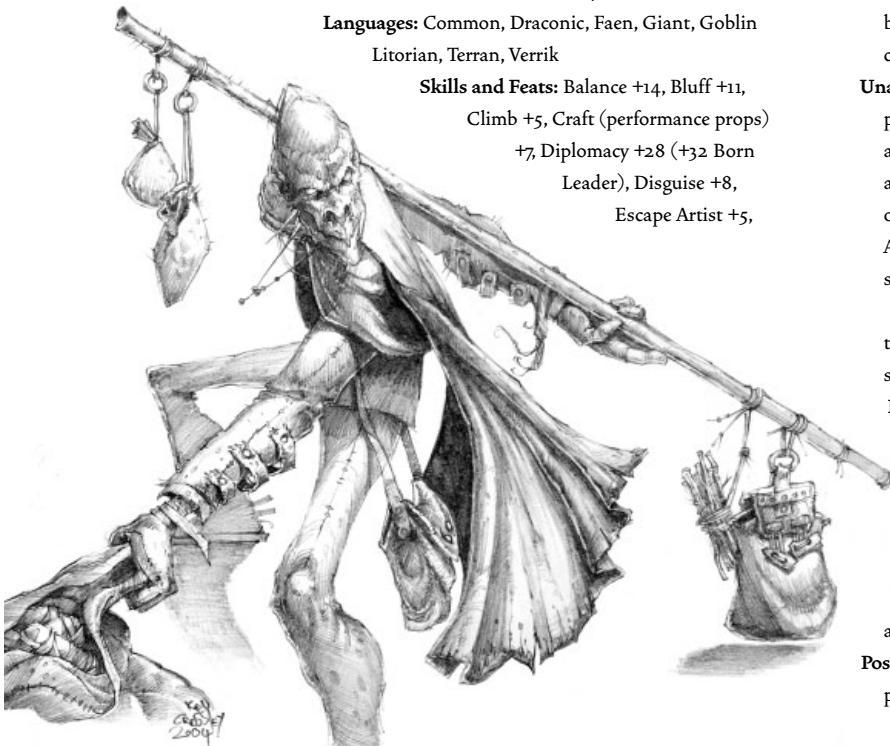
The minstrel introduces itself as Algar, never mentioning its mojh name (Avuderan). When asked about it, the mojh skillfully negotiates the conversation elsewhere. Algar fears that if it says too much, someone might uncover its past—and dreads the effect this might have upon itself. For the dark waters of the Rune Sea still dance and sing in the recesses of its mind, mingling with the terrible monsoon that carried its father's lifeless body out to sea.

Despite its akashic abilities, Algar remains ignorant of those who mean him harm. Vinathar, outcast from its group in the Wildlands for the fiasco surrounding Algar's transformation, hires adventurers to uncover Algar's dark past and publicly discredit the minstrel. Other mojh, hearing that Algar has talked many out of undergoing the metamorphosis, plot its demise. One spellcaster of great power has located and raised Algar's father from the dead, with designs to use the angry spirit for some dark purpose. Beyond this, Algar's fame has drawn the attention of several racist, mojh-hunting humans.

Algar, mojh Aks10/Osn2: CR 12; Medium humanoid; HD 10d6+2d10; 43 hp; Dying/Dead -1/-10; Init +0; Speed 30 feet; AC 12 (+1 oathsworn, +1 natural, touch 11, flat-footed 12); BAB +8/+3; Grapple +8; Attack +8 melee (1d6, critical 20/x2, unarmed attack); Full Attack +8/+3 melee (1d6, critical 20/x2, unarmed attack); SA Flurry of blows, shattering blow; SQ Darkvision 60 feet, delve into collective memory, perfect recall, skill memory, spell-like abilities, eschew food, unarmed strike; Hero Points 2; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +12; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 16

Languages: Common, Draconic, Faen, Giant, Goblin Litorian, Terran, Verrick

Skills and Feats: Balance +14, Bluff +11, Climb +5, Craft (performance props) +7, Diplomacy +28 (+32 Born Leader), Disguise +8, Escape Artist +5,



Gather Information +20, Innuendo +14, Jump +7, Knowledge (merchant trading) +10, Knowledge (sailing and navigation) +10, Perform (dancing) +8, Perform (drama) +20, Perform (singing) +8, Perform (storytelling) +23, Sense Motive +17, Sleight of Hand +7, Speak Language (3), Tumble +7; Born Leader, Skill Application (+2 Diplomacy and +2 Gather Information), Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Perform [storytelling]), Slippery Mind, Title ("The Gifting Minstrel").

Skill Memory (Su): Five times per day, Algar gains a +4 bonus to a single skill check attempt made the next round.

Perfect Recall (Ex): Algar enjoys a +3 bonus to Knowledge skill checks when not using skill memory.

Delve Into Collective Memory (Su): Algar can, 10 times per day, make an ability check with a bonus of +13 to remember some relevant information about notable people, legendary items, or noteworthy places.

Akashic Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): 3/day—*creature loresight, location loresight, object loresight*

Kinesthetic Memory (Su): Algar can easily get around in familiar surroundings with no penalty, even with a single damaged or deprived sense.

Lesser Delve Into Personal Memory (Su): Once per day as a standard action, Algar can mentally probe the memory of one creature within 25 feet to find a truthful one-word answer to a question. A Will save (DC 18) negates the attempt; succeed or fail, the subject remains unaware.

Eschew Food (Ex): Algar does not need to eat.

Shattering Blow (Ex): Algar can take a full-round action to make a powerful strike with the full force of its oath behind it. The unarmed strike ignores 2 points of a creature's damage reduction or object hardness.

Unarmed Strike: When fighting unarmed, Algar does not provoke attacks of opportunity from armed opponents it attacks. It doesn't have the option of making an off-hand attack, as it uses its whole body in every attack (see "flurry of blows," below). If fighting with a one-handed weapon, Algar can make an unarmed strike as an off-hand attack but suffers the standard penalties for two-weapon fighting.

Usually, its unarmed strike deals normal damage rather than subdual damage. However, Algar can choose to deal subdual damage without penalty.

Flurry of Blows: Algar may make one extra attack in a round at its highest base attack, but this attack and each other attack made that round suffer a -2 penalty apiece. This penalty applies for 1 round, so it affects attacks of opportunity it might make before its next action. It must use the full attack action to strike with a flurry of blows. Do not reduce its damage bonus on the additional attack.

Possessions: Performer's garb, several self-crafted performing props (Algar gifts all other possessions to others).

BOVA TEL-BERA

VLADIMIR DZUNDA

If you traveled the caravan routes from Gahanis, you may have encountered her. At first glance, she might not strike you as remarkable from any other caravan guard. Nevertheless, you would remember the distinctive crimson leather armor, the long raven hair woven in complicated plaits, the wiry frame, and the finely crafted greataxe slung over her shoulder. If you sought a further glimpse, her beauty would come upon you swift and sudden, like a hawk on a field mouse. Her features, so soft and tender, would make you ponder why such a woman of 20 summers would choose the life of a caravaner. But when your eyes met her cold, haunted gaze, you would have felt as if a thousand daggers of ice had pierced your heart. Unavoidably, you would turn away.

If you asked about her, you would be directed to a tavern in Gahanis called “The Scarlet Arrow.” Here, you may chance upon Tiber, the innkeeper and the uncle of the woman you saw. The fat, oily man would draw deep from his pipe, his eyes gleaming like his golden earrings, and then recount to you, in a private booth, the tale of Bova Tel-Bera, the wolf warrior, the caravaner’s daughter.

In happier times, Bova grew up with her two brothers Pac and Najo, her mother Iroa, and father Kerris. Her parents were both proud caravan riders, their families descended from the original escaped slaves who founded Gahanis and blazed the first trade routes after the giants’ victory over the dramojh—or so Tiber would tell you. When they were of age, the boys eagerly took up the way of the caravan guard in the family’s merchant house and caravan escort service, while Iroa insisted that the fleet-footed and mischievous Bova be sent to school.

When she was 14, weeks after her naming ceremony, tragedy struck. Iroa was killed in a rhodin ambush two days outside Gahanis. The death left her father a shattered man who turned to drink for solace. Her brothers dealt with the blow in other ways: Pac continued caravanning, while Najo took over the merchant house, only to lose it to gambling debts and grave misfortune. Bova quit school to look after her father and help in the tavern, becoming a quiet, bitter, creature who hardly resembled her former vivacious self.

Four years later, Kerris embarked on a venture with a verrik named Xeridam to recover the family’s lost wealth. They sought to found a new trade route though the Bitter Peaks to Verdune using a trail that Xeridam knew. To look after her father, Bova joined her brothers on the first caravan escort.

Tiber would repack his pipe as he described the party’s three-week journey through twisted, jagged ravines, mist-shrouded passes, and dead-end gorges of the Bitter Peaks. One evening three weeks into the trip, the party decided to camp at a temple with white marble columns and golden gates. The place had appeared just as they skirted the lip of a caldera.

About two hours after sundown that night, the camp was attacked by ghoulish and reptilian creatures in tar-smelling robes. The attackers fell upon the escorts, cutting them down

with black blades dripping with yellow poison. Bova fled, only to be tackled by a pale, rubbery body in robes. In the ensuing struggle, she and her assailant sailed over the cliff into the caldera lake below.

Bova doesn’t remember the impact, or what became of her attacker. She only remembers the cold light of a grey dawn as she awoke on the shore of the opposite side of the lake, bruised and bleeding from a multitude of cuts. The rising plumes of smoke on the eastern ridge told her the fate of the caravan. Desolate, Bova wandered the forest, seeking a way out. After three days and nights, subsisting on wild mushrooms and berries, she heard footsteps behind her, and the sound of her father’s voice. Renewed, she ran toward it, calling out with joy. She had sighted her father’s silhouette between the trees when an arrow flew over her head and struck him straight in his eye—without producing a reaction! Then she noticed his purple, lacerated flesh, gore-soaked clothing, and the sewn-up mouth and eyes of the . . . thing from which her father’s voice issued. It continued urging her to come to him. Bova stood motionless as the figure hefted her father’s familiar greataxe and stumbled toward her.

Bova claimed she must have fainted, for she awoke, startled, in the crude, smoky hut belonging to a wolf totem warrior named Emer. After cleaning and dressing her wounds, he told Bova that a malevolent spirit dwelled in the deep, dark places of these mountains—places such as the temple, a site left over from the dramojh’s blasphemous works. He promised to take her over the mountains back home as soon as she was stronger.

To pass the time as she regained her strength, Emer told her stories of past glories. Perhaps he inspired her, for in the two weeks she spent recuperating, Bova started on her path to becoming a child of the wolf. Though she denies it with an angry silence when questioned, Tiber would tell you that Bova also came to love Emer and would have stayed with him in the mountains if he hadn’t insisted she return to tell her people what had happened.

Five days into the trek toward Gahanis, Tiber would recount, the two were crossing a raging river on a fallen tree trunk when Bova heard Emer cry out. Spinning around, she was horrified to see Emer cleft in twain by the charred but animated remains of a skeleton wielding her father’s unmistakable axe. As the warrior’s lifeless corpse tumbled into the white-water, the skeleton burst into a sickly green fire and hurtled across the trunk toward Bova. Armed only with a knife, she had no choice but to flee the abomination that was once her father. She managed to lose it in a maze of basalt pillars, but spent the next three harrowing days pursued through the wood by her father’s voice pleading her to join him. Finally, she found a narrow lava tube that Emer had described to her. But once in its lightless depths, she again heard the sounds of pursuit—this time it was Emer’s voice! Having no other choice, she waited in ambush for the creature and, after a desperate fight in which he sought to spill her blood with her



father's axe, she managed to grab the weapon and use it to send her former lover to his doom in a pool of magma.

Some miners found her two months later, wandering aimlessly, clutching the axe tight to her chest. A family friend recognized her and sent her immediately to Tiber. When she'd recovered from her ordeal, she told the story Tiber had just related. She remembers nothing after the magma pit, so the hidden way to the Bitter Peaks is lost to her. Since then, she has prepared to return to the Bitter Peaks, raising money via caravanning and learning what she can of the ways of the wolf. Someday she hopes to put her family and lover's spirits to rest, but Tiber thinks it is her soul she is really trying to save.

With that, Tiber would thank you for your generous time and resume his duties, leaving you to ponder the tale.

COMBAT

Bova prefers to use her great speed in combat to feint and confuse her opponents, though her insistence on wielding her father's heavy axe occasionally negates this hit-and-run tactic's usefulness. Though not greatly agile or strong, since her ordeal in the Bitter Peaks her endurance and determination puts others to shame. With her natural brightness and perception, she's rarely caught with her guard down.

USING BOVA

Bova stands at 5 feet, 10 inches and weighs just 120 lbs. She is incredibly beautiful, with statuesque looks and clear blue eyes. However, the fear that more people might die because of her tends to make her act abrasive to others in an effort to keep them at a distance, and gives her something of a haunted air. For this reason, she has not yet received a vision leading her to an animal companion. But she is slowly beginning to realize that she can't continue to live as a lone wolf any longer. An offer of her genuine respect and friendship may find her willing to join forces, but woe to anyone who offers flattery, pity, or charity—such individuals she despises. She also nurtures a deep hatred for rhodin, mojh, and verrik, and does not hesitate to expound upon the worst qualities of any of them. She is well known for her stubbornness. She avoids gambling and alcohol.

Her goals are to return to the Bitter Peaks to avenge her family's and lover's slaughter, and put their souls to rest. Nothing else matters.

Bova Tel-Bera female human Twr4 (wolf): CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d10+8 (31 hp); Dying/Dead -2/-15; Init +5; Speed 50 feet; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +3 armor), touch 11, flat-footed 13; Armor Check 0; BAB +4; Grapple +5; Attack +6 melee (2d6+2, critical 20/x3, great axe), or +5 ranged (1d6+1 critical 20/x3, shortbow); Full Attack +6 melee (2d6+2, critical 20/x3, greataxe), or +5 ranged (1d6+1 critical 20/x3, shortbow); SA Speed of the wolf, cunning of the wolf; Hero Points 0; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 9

Languages: Common, Giant

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Craft (armorsmith) +1, Craft (painting) +1, Craft (weaponsmith) +1, Handle Animal +3, Heal +3, Intuit Direction +8, Jump +4, Knowledge (geography) +3, Knowledge (nature) +3, Listen +6, Ride +4, Sneak +2, Spot +6, Swim +3, Wilderness Survival +8; First Strike, Fleet of Foot, Improved Initiative, Light Sleeper, Track

Speed of the Wolf (Ex): Bova gains +10 feet to her ground speed (already figured in).

Cunning of the Wolf (Ex): Bova enjoys a +2 enhancement bonus to Wisdom (already figured in).

Possessions: +1 greataxe, masterwork mighty composite short bow (+1), 20 arrows, masterwork studded leather jack, adventurer's outfit, water skin, bedroll, whetstone, backpack, 19 gp, 53 sp

BRIESSEC-CUR

ANDY JAMES

The savagery of the Southern Wastes has borne legends of mystic pyramids, cruel slavers, and fearsome beasts. But no myth is as peculiar as that of Briessec-Cur, a sibeccai more likely to be seen in dreams than in flesh.

His name varies with the attitude of the race spotting him. Briessec-Cur translates into both *spirit speaker* (for those sibeccai who believe he exists) and *wind-talk* (a derogatory expression for nonsense—the preferred translation for most sibeccai). The rhodin give him the prosaic name “Goldfur.” Despite their lack of spirituality, the rhodin fear the mere mention of Briessec-Cur as a bad omen. The verrik of Zalavat bordering the Southern Wastes take a more enlightened perspective. Recognizing his ability to travel and speak through dreams, they have named Briessec-Cur “The Dream Walker.”

But even the verrik remain unaware of Briessec-Cur’s past. Part of his mystery is that he seemed to appear in the Southern Wastes overnight. Unknown to anyone, Briessec-Cur is a creature of dreams made solid. Just as the akashics developed a group memory, so too did a small tribe of sibeccai explore dreams with hopes of developing shared dreams for their people. They sought to preserve the history of their race in dreams so future generations could passively gain the wisdom of their elders. The tribe developed a complex ritual for finding a spirit of the dream world to guide them. But as they began the ritual one night and slipped into the dream state, a band of rhodin ambushed their encampment. The slumbering sibeccai were mercilessly slaughtered.

From their blood rose Briessec-Cur. The sibeccai had successfully summoned him into their dreams, but their deaths had the unexpected effect of pulling the dream spirit into the physical world. Briessec-Cur emerged into a world much harsher than the one he knew. The spirits of his home had gone silent; instead, he heard new voices singing new songs. When the rhodin overcame their surprise and attacked him, he entreated the new spirits to aid him. The rhodin were decimated.

COMBAT

Briessec-Cur always casts *greater beastskin* and *plant armor* well before going into battle. He wades into melee with his club, *Nature’s Fury*, using his spells and special abilities only as backup. If outnumbered, he summons a dream hunter (see next page).

USING BRIESSEC-CUR

Briessec-Cur wanders the Southern Wastes searching for a means back to his dream world. The dreaming sibeccai envisioned him as one of their kind, with an above-average physique and unusually rich golden fur. He retained this form when made solid. Although the summoning tribe lies dead, Briessec-Cur feels obligated to fulfill their dying wish: guiding the splintered sibeccai tribes of the Southern Wastes toward unification. While otherwise unconcerned with the

affairs of this world, his limited experience with the rhodin has shaped an intense dislike for them. He is aware of the verrik to the south indirectly, through the dreams of travelers to and from this nation. Although Briessec-Cur would like to know more of their strange mental gifts, he avoids direct contact for fear of how they would react to him.

The sky, the earth, and the shrubs sing to Briessec-Cur with many voices, but one song in particular has caught his ear. Its resonating tones contain great power while warning of grave danger. It is the song of the Hadath, a powerful energy pattern hidden within the fabric of the universe. The essence of the Hadath is bound to every man, plant, and stone of the universe, woven throughout all spirits of this world. Since the Hadath is present everywhere in this world, only a greenbond from another world can recognize it for what it truly is. Briessec-Cur is unfamiliar with the legends of Virdella Tesham, an otherplanar creature who seeks the secret of the Hadath, but the songs warn Briessec-Cur that a great evil searches for it. For now, he resists the temptation to unveil the Hadath and access its power. While Briessec-Cur most likely could use the Hadath to go home, doing so would reveal its hidden form and risk destroying this universe.

Briessec-Cur has levels in somnamancer, a prestige class from Chapter Three of *The Diamond Throne*.

Briessec-Cur, male sibeccai Grn8/Somnamancer6: CR 14;

Medium humanoid; HD 8d8+16 + 8d6+16; hp 86; Dying/Dead –3/–14; Init +2; Speed 30 feet; AC 12 (+2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 14; BAB +8; Grapple +9; Attack +11 melee (1d6+3 +1d6 earth +1d6 water, critical 20/×2, club); Full Attack +11/+6 melee (1d6+3 plus 1d6 earth plus 1d6 water, critical 20/×2, club); SA Nature sense, infuse with life, trackless step, bond with the green, percipience, speak with spirits, induce sleep, subtle steps, dream tracking, dream spy, silent sheath, control dream, summon dream hunter, sense dreamer, steal dreams, spells; Hero Points 2; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +14; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 12

Languages: Common, Giant

Skills and Feats: Concentration +14, Diplomacy +14, Heal +9, Knowledge (magic) +14, Knowledge (nature) +10, Sense Motive +9, Sneak +10, Spellcraft +10, Wilderness Survival +9; Craft Spell-Completion Item, Creator Mage, Elemental Mage (earth), Elemental Mage (water), Power of the Name, Slippery Mind

Nature Sense (Ex): Briessec-Cur can identify plants and animals with perfect accuracy and determine whether water is safe to drink or dangerous.

Infuse With Life (Sp): Three times per day, Briessec-Cur can heal 3d8+8 points of damage.

Nature’s Gift (Su): Once per day, Briessec-Cur can add a +4 divine bonus to any d20 roll he makes in the following round. He can impart this gift to an ally he touches during the following round (the ally must use the bonus in that



round). He can even divide the bonus among up to four allies that he can reach in the round, each getting a portion of the bonus as he decides.

Trackless Step (Ex): As a greenbond, Briessec-Cur leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked.

Bond With the Green (Su): Briessec-Cur has an intuitive sense of the condition of the land.

Percipience (Su): Briessec-Cur can see and hear nature spirits otherwise imperceptible to mortals (unless a spirit wishes to show itself).

Speak With Spirits (Su): Once per day, Briessec-Cur can ask nature spirits a question with a one-word answer. The spirit has an 83 percent chance to know the answer to a question about things beyond its immediate surroundings.

Induce Sleep (Sp): Twice per day, Briessec-Cur can put a creature to sleep with a touch attack. The creature cannot have more than 12 HD, and it gets a Will save (DC 18). The creature sleeps for a minimum of 1d6+4 rounds if left undisturbed, even with loud noises and harsh conditions. In restful conditions, the creature continues sleeping for 3d6+2 more minutes.

Subtle Steps (Sp): Three times per day, Briessec-Cur can cast *subtle steps* upon himself.

Dream Tracking (Sp): Briessec-Cur can use a creature's dreams to find it. The only limitations are that the character must be asleep when he makes the attempt, and the character must fail a Will saving throw (DC 18). If he knows a character's truename, no saving throw is allowed.

Dream Spy (Sp): Briessec-Cur can look into the dreams of any sleeping creature within 5 feet and see what it is dreaming about.

Silent Sheath (Sp): Twice per day Briessec-Cur can cast *silent sheath* upon herself.

Control Dream (Sp): Briessec-Cur can control the dream of any sleeping creature within 5 feet whose dreams he can see with the dream spy ability. This ability is a standard action that can be used at will. If Briessec-Cur induces terrifying images or other disturbing dreams, the creature must make a Will saving throw (DC 18) or suffer 1d4 points of temporary Wisdom damage. Should Briessec-Cur attempt to implant dreams that seem prophetic or "important" in some way, the creature must make the save in order to disbelieve them. Those who fail believe that what they learned in the dream is true or will be true for the following day.

Summon Dream Hunter (Sp): Once per day, Briessec-Cur can summon a dream hunter (see Chapter Four: Creatures in *The Diamond Throne*) that appears within 10 feet of him and obeys his verbal commands for 6 rounds. This is a full-round action.

Sense Dreamer (Su): Even if Briessec-Cur has no special knowledge or connection to a sleeping creature, he can sense it within 50 feet at will, discerning the creature's exact location.

Steal Dreams (Su): After using his dream spy ability on a subject, Briessec-Cur can learn one fact about that subject: name, fondest wish, true love, greatest fear, location of the key to her locked vault, and so on. The information learned must come in the form of an answer no longer than six words. He can even try to learn the subject's truename, but in that case the subject gets a Will saving throw (DC 18) to resist; on a successful save, the subject awakens immediately and knows what he tried to do. Attempting to steal dreams takes one minute. Briessec-Cur can attempt it only once on a given subject in a 24-hour period.

Possessions: *Nature's Fury* (+2 earth and water elemental club), *bag of needful things*, *boots of tracelessness*, *cloak of heat resistance* (grants fire resistance 5), *wand of heightened lesser battle healing* (30 charges), *wand of conjure repast* (30 charges), three days' rations, camping and survival gear, 15 gp

Spell Slots (11th-level caster): 6/6/5/5/3/2/1

Spells Readied (11th-level caster): 10/9/7/6/4/3/2; 0—*bash*, *canny effort*, *detect disease*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *hygiene*, *lesser glowglobe*, *lesser repair*, *saving grace*, *scent bane*; 1st—*animate weapon*, *charm*, *compelling command*, *lesser transfer wounds*, *mudball*, *obscuring mist*, *plant armor*, *safe fall*, *stone blast*; 2nd—*blinding light*, *cloak of darkness*, *darkvision*, *greenspy*, *lesser battle healing*, *muddy ground*, *protective charm*; 3rd—*attack from within*, *carnivorous plant defense*, *lesser creation*, *protection from elements*, *slow*, *whisper of madness*; 4th—*bind with plants*, *gaze of terror*, *ghost weapon*, *neutralize poison*; 5th—*greater summon minor elemental*, *lesser dominate*, *wall of stone*; 6th—*greater beastskin*, *shape element*

CHLORIS THE BLOODY CLAW

BEN SHALOM

The peak of Mount Thoularn was once adorned by five colossal statues of litorian tribe leaders. Their shape was thoughtfully carved into black volcanic rock by giant hands. At the base of the sculptures the words “Remember the five fingers that were once a fist” were masterfully inscribed in silver letters. The statues were built in memorial for three lost litorian tribes, destroyed by the dramojh.

Three centuries ago, while the dramojh concentrated their war efforts against the giants, several tribes, including the proud Smathor (“Red Claws”) and the Purathandor (“Silvery Manes”), turned as one against the tyrants that ruled the land with an iron fist in what was later named The Great Rebellion. And so it came to be that when the first giants entered Lotharandor, they discovered a land that was already free.

It was not a peaceful land, however. The Smathi were unsatisfied with the Purathandi efforts during the rebellion. Rumors turned into accusations that were whispered, then spoken, then shouted: “Where were the Silvery Manes when so few proud tribes stood against the Scaled Ones?”

The smearing of their name and reputation enraged the Purathandi, and The War of the Tribes broke out. As the violence escalated, the Smathi—all but destroyed in The Great Rebellion against the dramojh—were at the brink of extinction. It was the giant governor, Poh-Narsod who ended the war between the tribes and established the Peace Vow.

Years passed, and the Smathi grew in number. Their wounds healed, but their pride seemed forever impaired. Among them grew a new generation that carried the burden of disgrace. They owed their lives to the giants who had saved them from obliteration, and some considered this a fate worse than death. From this generation of victims, Mavuane was born.

It was Mavuane who led many young Smathi to the peak of Mount Thoularn on a rainy day later known as “The Day of the Weeping Blackstone.” She spoke with a clear voice against the patronizing giants who had robbed her tribe of their honor and pride, and she asked her fellows to fight for freedom by her side. Her words found the heart of the young warrior known as Chloris, but her eyes found the eyes of his elder brother, Charon. He refused to accept her vision, however, and left to join the Peace Vow faction.

And so, when the moment of choice arrived, it was the brave young Chloris who smashed the statue of Purathandor’s tribe leader atop the mount, becoming the first to swear allegiance to Mavuane. Her band came roaring down the mountain, charging with fierce and grim determination against the Peace Vow giants. Many hearts became hard and many hands learned war the day the Blackstones wept.

For seven years Chloris fought in the service of Mavuane. Countless times he painted his claws red, countless times he charged against all odds in her name, spreading havoc in his path, confusing the mightiest of foes with his utter lack of hes-

itation. He always thought of himself more as a servant of the revolutionary than a servant of the revolution. He carried Mavuane’s word through the battlefields and turned her from a fanatic preacher into a prime political leader. The Purathandi called him “The Bloody Claw,” and the giants feared him.

Few suspected that Chloris also carried a passion for Mavuane in his heart. He nurtured his romantic dreams secretly, anticipating the right moment to share them with her.

After Chloris slew the giant head of the Peace Vow faction, his own brother, Charon, took his place as their leader. Charon asked for a meeting with Mavuane and, against Chloris’ advice, she accepted.

Charon and Mavuane conferred, but the negotiations were fruitless. Mavuane returned from the meeting burning with anger. She refused to share any details, which troubled Chloris deeply. Mavuane was now more determined than ever before to defeat the Peace Vow faction and execute her vengeful justice upon her enemies. Tired of war, Chloris hoped for a swift victory and a love to flourish in the peace that should follow. But a loathsome betrayal denied him his dream.

At the foot of Mount Thoularn the battle ensued. Chloris was fighting at the side of his beloved Mavuane when his brother, Charon, invoked The Power of the Name and compelled him to sheathe his sword. His eyes refused to believe the sight of Mavuane struck down by the giant governor Poh-Narsod in the heat of Chi-Julud. The warring sides parted, and the battle soothed quickly as Mavuane’s warriors scattered. Chloris took the dying Mavuane in his arms and, with tears in her eyes, she begged him for forgiveness: She was a fool, she said, and her foolishness deprived the Smathi of their hope for freedom and honor. She confessed to Chloris that she was infatuated with his brother. After years of abstinence, she offered herself to him during the negotiations, and his refusal to accept her was the cause for her wrath.

Chloris was enraged. The envious warrior decided to avenge Mavuane’s death by taking Poh-Narsod’s life. He invoked the name of Mavuane, roaring his intentions loud and clear. His brother answered with an oath of his own: that as long as he had fists to serve him, eyes to see, and warm blood flowing through his veins, Poh-Narsod shall not be harmed. Chloris’ last vestige of feeling for his brother was gone.

COMBAT

Chloris charges into melee wearing Mavuane’s splendid armor (this is the source of at least some of the rumors regarding the allegedly vengeful and relentless spirit of Mavuane). He is truly awe-inspiring and seems fearless. He combines his dancing bastard sword, wounding battle claws, and his summoned shield and weapon to create a masterful combination of defense and offense, timed to the second.



USING CHLORIS

At 44 years old, Chloris stands 6 feet, 5 inches tall. He weighs 195 lbs. and has brown eyes. His brownish fur shows a red tint around the paws, and a branding mark symbolizing freedom shows through the fur on his neck.

Today, Chloris is a man with a cause. He must kill governor Poh-Narsod before a year and a day pass or disgrace the memory of Mavuane and lose the cause he had fought for—though he sometimes doubts it was ever there in the first place. When he feels he lacks confidence in the cause, he draws strength from the memory of his beloved Mavuane.

The few who are closest to him can tell that Mavuane's memory constantly torments his waking hours. Fewer still know that sometimes he unknowingly curses her in his sleep.

In a conversation, Chloris seems rather boring—all he ever talks about is killing Poh-Narsod. Even his deputies find his single-minded behavior lately disturbing.

Chloris, male litorian Cmp15 (Freedom, Mavuane): CR 15; Medium humanoid; HD 15d10+45; hp 136; Dying/Dead –3/–17 dead; Init +3; Speed 20 feet; AC 30 (+2 Dex, +13 armor, +1 luck, +3 deflection), touch 16, flat-footed 27; BAB +15/+10/+5; Grapple +19; Attack +20 melee (1d8+7, 19–20/×2, dire greater battle claw); Full Attack +20/+15/+10 melee (1d8+7, 19–20/×2, dire greater battle claw); SA Call upon power, take on the mantle; SQ Low-light vision, freedom's will,

freedom's strength, invoke the name, call shield, heartening cry; Hero Points 0; SV Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +10 (+12 vs. enchantments); Str 18, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 8

Languages: Litorian, Common, and Giant

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Craft (sculpture) +3, Heal +6, Intimidate +7, Jump +8, Knowledge (geography) +3, Knowledge (history) +3, Listen +3, Search +3, Spot +10, Wilderness Survival +10; Bonded Item (Mavuane's armor), Exotic Armor Proficiency, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (agile), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (heavy), Power Attack, Power Charge, Speed Burst

Call Shield (Sp): Once per day for 15 minutes, Chloris can summon a +4 *long shield* that a foe cannot take against his will, although it can be dispelled. The shield negates 50 percent of the critical hits he might suffer.

Call Upon Power (Su): Four times per day, Chloris gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength and Constitution for up to 15 rounds as a free action.

Call Weapon (Sp): Once per day for 15 minutes, Chloris can summon a +4 *defending weapon* that a foe cannot take against his will, although it can be dispelled.

Heartening Cry (Su): Once per day as a free action, Chloris gives a battle cry that rallies and inspires his allies. All allies within 30 feet gain a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls, saving throws, and checks for 10 rounds. Further, all allies within the area under the effects of an unwanted enchantment can make another saving throw against the effect (at the original DC) to throw it off.

Take on the Mantle (Su): Once per day Chloris gains a new form called “The Roaring Thunder.” This form lasts 30 rounds, adds a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength, Constitution, and Charisma, and grants him DR 10/magic (or 10/+1) and SR 26.

Freedom's Will (Su): Chloris enjoys a +2 resistance bonus to spells of the enchantment school.

Freedom's Strength (Su): Chloris enjoys a +1 luck bonus to attack and damage rolls when in a fight to free someone or something from captivity, or against an oppressive force or figure.

Invoke the Name (Su): Chloris gains an additional attack at his highest bonus if he swears to do a task in Mavuane's name.

Possessions: Mavuane's armor (+3 *articulated plate* fitted with +2 *armor spikes*), +1 *dire greater battle claw of wounding*, +2 *dancing dire bastard sword*, *ring of protection +3*, *terrifying battle colors†* (4 doses)

NEW MAGIC ITEM

Terrifying Battle Colors†: After being applied, each dose of this oil activates upon the user's first Intimidate attempt, regardless of its success. The effects are as a heightened *gaze of terror* spell.

Moderate enchantment; Caster Level 15th; Craft Single-Use Item, heightened *gaze of terror*; Price 3,750 gp; Weight —

CRALLA THE DIRGEWIFE

Cralla the sibeccai sings a dirge for every opponent laid low by her swordstaff. A champion of death, Cralla calls herself a champion of life. She claims to have the unique talent of being able to judge who should live and who should die—a gift she maintains no one but she truly understands. She believes it her duty to give her targets a wondrous demise. That the deserving party does not see the need to die is irrelevant. Cralla is the best judge of such things (according to her).

Cralla works as a high-paid assassin, but she requires clear proof that the would-be victim does not deserve to live. This proof is not terribly hard to accomplish, since Cralla believes that most people do not deserve their lives, but it is not a mere formality. She turns down more work than she accepts.

Before she plans and carries out her work, she attempts to learn enough about the target to compose a worthy dirge that she can sing as death approaches. These songs are usually of only mediocre quality, but she thinks they are beautiful. The practice has certainly helped further her reputation.

COMBAT

Although she carries two swordstaves with her at all times, obviously in battle she only uses one. She calls her shield and weapon only if caught unarmed (appearing to be unarmed is part of one of her schemes). Her combat style boasts a great deal of flourish and artistry, and her tactics are rarely straightforward. She likes her victim's end to be slow and elegant, as she would term it. Thus, she often designs elaborate schemes, employing others to help her enact her plots, build her traps, and concoct her poisons. She thinks of herself as a mastermind—her talent is her brilliance, vision, and creativity more than her physical prowess.

USING CRALLA

Although Cralla makes an excellent opponent, she is sure to be an atypical encounter. If contracted to kill a player character, she might hire thugs to maneuver her victim into a theater so she can kill the character herself on stage. Or she could invite the victim to a sumptuous banquet, with each course containing a different drug that—once the meal is finished—all interact within the victim's system as a terrible poison.

On the other hand, Cralla may try to employ the player characters to work with her in one of her complicated designs, assuring them (as she honestly believes) that the victim is an evil person who deserves to die. She pays well, because she demands exorbitant fees herself.

Cralla the Dirgewife, female sibeccai Cmp10 (death): CR 10; Medium humanoid; HD 10d10+40; hp 99; Init +8; Speed 30 feet; AC 14 (+4 armor), touch 10, flat-footed 14; BAB +10/+5, Grapple +12; Attack +12 melee (1d8+4, critical 17–20/×2, +1 swordstaff); Full Attack +11/+6 melee (1d8+3, critical 17–20/×2, +1 swordstaff) and +11 melee (1d8+2,

critical 19–20/×2, +1 swordstaff); SA Death's blessing, death's wrath, call upon the power, call weapon, heartening cry; SQ Low-light vision, immune to spells with negative energy descriptor, call shield; Hero Points 0; SV Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +10; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 18, Int 13, Wis 17, Cha 16

Languages: Common, Giant

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Diplomacy +7, Jump +6, Knowledge (history) +6, Perform (singing) +4, Spot +9; Ambidexterity, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (heavy), Two-Weapon Fighting

Call Shield (Sp): Once a day for 10 minutes, Cralla can summon a +3 *long shield* that a foe cannot take against her will, although it can be dispelled. The shield negates 50 percent of the criticals she might suffer.

Call Upon the Power (Su): Five times per day, Cralla gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength and Constitution for up to 10 rounds as a free action.

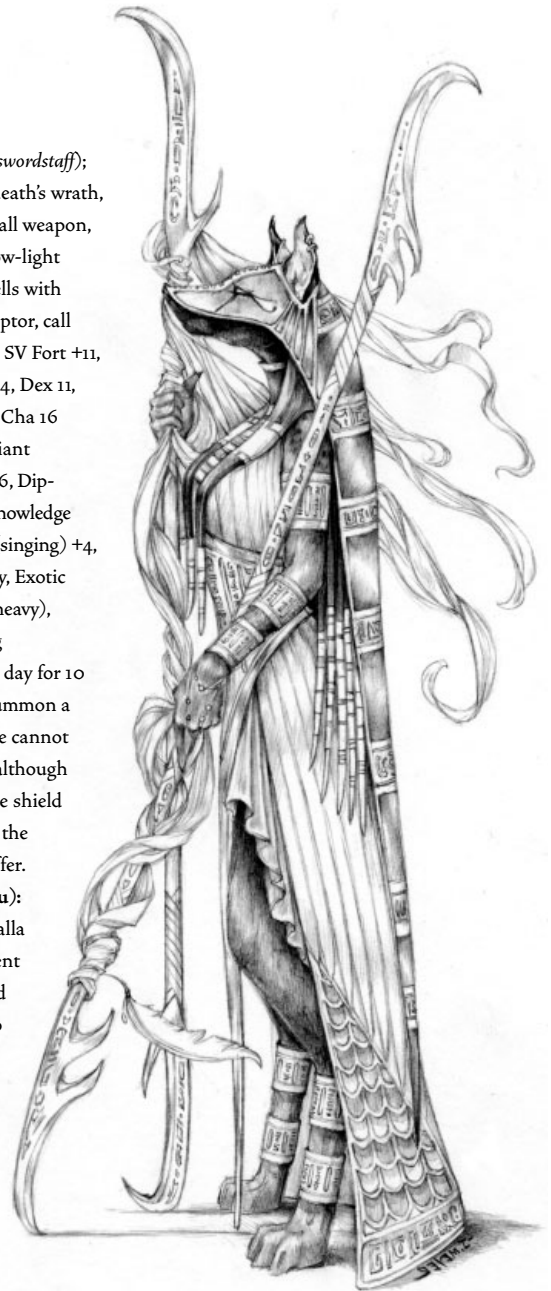
Call Weapon (Sp): Five times a day for 10 minutes, Cralla can summon a +3 *weapon* that a foe cannot take against her will, although it can be dispelled.

Heartening Cry (Su): Once a day as a free action, Cralla can give a battle cry that rallies and inspires her allies. All allies within 30 feet gain a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls, saving throws, and checks for 10 rounds. Further, all allies within the area who are under the effects of an unwanted enchantment can make another saving throw against the effect (at the original DC) to throw it off.

Death's Blessing (Ex): Cralla enjoys a +1 luck bonus to attack rolls against living foes.

Death's Wrath (Sp): Once a day, Cralla can summon forth a blast of negative energy that inflicts 10d8 points of damage to a single living creature within 100 feet. She must make a successful ranged touch attack to inflict damage.

Possessions: +1 *keen*/+1 *swordstaff*, +2 *leather jack*, elegant clothing, silver and ebony necklace (500 gp), *potion of greater battle healing*, silver and ebony rings (3, 50 gp each)



DAELAN BITTERSlice

People say that, for a brief time, Queen Naerath's court flourished. But her reign was not meant to be.

When Naerath established herself as queen of the faen, it flew in the face of all faen tradition since before anyone could remember. The faen were always ruled by a set of twins, alternating in a cycle of loresongs and quicklings. Naerath ignored all of that and proclaimed herself rightful ruler of her people. An extremely charismatic spryte mage blade, Naerath had a number of devoted followers. Hundreds of faen agreed to follow her and, for a few months, her bloodless usurpation looked like it might gather enough momentum to become a political force in the Harrowdeep.

But it ended as suddenly as it began when Naerath was assassinated by a group of traditionalist quicklings. All of her court was likewise murdered or scattered. Only one member of her royal guard survived the attack. His name was Daelan Bitterslice, a quickling unfettered who saw the attack coming in a dream but never warned his queen, because he didn't believe he had seen a portent of the future. He fled when it was clear Naerath was dead, and soon after he entered his chrysalis in order to transform into a spryte.

According to faen tradition, if one enters a chrysalis in despair, he is doomed to a life of misery. That may very well be true in Daelan's case, for his life is ruled by guilt and regret. After his transformation, he left the Harrowdeep and swore never to return. He hates all other faen and never willingly spends any time in their company. Instead, he wanders through the Lands of the Diamond Throne seeking meaning and purpose. Daelan wants to devote his sword to some noble pursuit to redeem the cause—and the queen—he allowed to die.

He has struck up a few friendships here and there but has yet to find a home. Bad luck follows Daelan like a raincloud, and he takes it all quite personally. He has even gained a bit of reputation as “the dour spryte,” in some circles.

COMBAT

Daelan's main strategy in a fight is simply not to get hit. Unless he is fairly certain an opponent isn't skilled enough to hit him, he usually fights defensively, adding another +2 dodge bonus to his Armor Class (and subtracting -4 from his attacks).

USING DAELAN

Daelan is a wanderer whom one might encounter almost anywhere. If the player characters undertake some noble quest, he might be interested in joining them. On the other hand, if they involve themselves in some shady dealings, they might find Daelan opposing their plans. He could work as a guard or even as a spy for a nonfaen whom he was con-



vinced was both noble and influential—someone worthy of aiding. Otherwise, the PCs might encounter him as simply a down-on-his-luck adventurer who might know some important bit of information.

In the areas he frequents, Daelan is known for his distinctive red leather armor.

Daelan Bitterslice, male spryte **Unf3:** CR 3; Tiny fey; HD 3d10-6; hp 15; Init +9; Speed 10 feet, fly 30 feet (average); AC 23 (+2 size, +5 Dex, +3 dodge, +3 armor), touch 20, flat-footed 15; BAB +3, Grapple -5; Attack +11 melee (1d4+1, critical 19-20/x2, tiny rapier) or +10 ranged (1d4, critical 20/x3, sprytebow); Full Attack +11 melee (1d3+1, critical 18-20/x2, tiny rapier) or +10 ranged (1d4, critical 20/x3, sprytebow); SQ Low-light vision, parry; Hero Points 1; SV Fort -1, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 21, Con 6, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 13

Languages: Common, Faen

Skills and Feats: Bluff +8, Craft (leather) +3, Disable Device +2, Knowledge (nobility and courtesy) +4, Listen +7, Open Lock +11, Spellcraft +2, Spot +7, Tumble +9; Defensive, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (agile), Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Parry (Ex): Daelan may add a +1 bonus to his Armor Class against a single melee opponent in a given round.

Possessions: +1 tiny Devanian rapier, masterwork studded leather, sprytebow, 10 arrows, 124 gp

DENASSA THE MIDNIGHT VESPER

MICHAEL PRICE

Not all tales of loyal servitude end with the devotee honored among the masses—sometimes such people are feared, cursed, and reviled. And not just by those who oppose the ones they serve, but by those who gave them power and life . . . and death. Denassa, the Midnight Vesper, is one such creature.

Born a verrik of moderate station but unique intellect, Denassa grew to adulthood within the confines of an akashic guild that many believed to be only rumor—an order that commanded the utmost zealotry to protect a powerful coven of witches. This coven pushed the strains of morality to pursue perfection in its guardian-assassins, who were raised from birth to die for them in the greatest test of fealty. In fact, they hand-selected the most loyal and accomplished of the guild, grooming them to die and be raised again in undeath as members of the Haunt.

The favors the guild granted Denassa's family escape record, perhaps stripped by the beast herself. But what the guild reportedly received in return, the folk of the Diamond Throne lands know all too well. Stories of her infiltrations, thefts, murders, and myriad acts of sabotage pour freely from too many lips for them all to be truly the work of one creature. However, the facts justify enough of them that few doubt the veracity of any claim. The coven uses such stories to drive home fear of the Haunt's power, ordering all members to leave behind Denassa's mark of the purple lily, always reminding those who tell the tales that none are safe.

Yet this is not her story's end. Robbed of her youth and promising life, Denassa has grown tired of serving her masters. Recently, she escaped their control to travel freely and ply her trade as she likes. Skilled in the arts of disguise, infiltration, and educated in all matters, Denassa is uniquely suited to pass among the living, slipping from one place to the next with few ever the wiser.

The coven alone knows of her current rogue status. That its prize possession has fled presents a dire challenge to the order's authority. In response, they have unleashed dozens of new members of the Haunt to bring her back or destroy her. None have succeeded, many have disappeared, and few of them still know the fearlessness they once enjoyed.

Haunted by the abomination of her existence, Denassa seeks some form of solace that is not a final death. In her heart she believes what she has been told most of her life: that her deeds served some greater purpose, which she could not fully understand. And having passed out of the world of the living, life is not her final pursuit—divinity is.

She hopes to ascend, as the verrik of old once did, to a higher state of being by helping her legend to grow through her ever-greater deeds. Her search for such a reward is tireless, all-consuming, and utterly without mercy.

COMBAT

Denassa wields her flaming claws as weapons skillfully in battle. She is also likely to use her disorient and mind stab spell-like abilities during combat.

Denassa is well suited to preserving herself, both in healing and disguise. Her tattooed spell can overcome most injuries in time, while her Disguise skill is unsurpassed.

She still leaves her trademark purple lily at the scene of each of her attacks, to enlarge her already considerable legend.

USING DENASSA

While Denassa currently travels deep in the Central Plains, the whispered myth of the Midnight Vesper is known from Zalavat to the Harrowdeep. Characters who encounter her may have the misfortune of also tangling with the members of the Haunt who pursue her.

If a cause serves her, Denassa will see it completed. Her legend does not allow failure, thus she remains utterly dependable as friend or foe.

Denassa, female (undead) verrik Aks8/Verrik3: CR 12; Medium

undead; HD 11d12; 86 hp; Dying/Dead —/0; Init +2; Speed 30 feet; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural armor), touch 12, flat-footed 12; BAB +8/+3; Grapple +8; Attack +8 melee (1d4+2 and 1d6 fire, critical 20/×2, claw), or +10 ranged (1d8, critical 20/×3, light crossbow); Full Attack +8/+3 melee (1d4+2 +1d6 fire, critical 20/×2, claw), or +10 ranged (1d8 critical 20/×3, light crossbow); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Darkvision 60 feet, undead traits, sensory control, spell-like abilities; Hero Points 0; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +12; Str 10, Dex 14, Con —, Int 20, Wis 17, Cha 14

Languages: Common, Faen, Giant, Goblin, Litorian, and Verrik

Skills and Feats: Appraise +8, Balance +9, Bluff +11, Climb +5, Diplomacy +15, Disable Device +10, Disguise +17, Escape Artist +9, Forgery +10, Jump +5, Knowledge (architecture) +12, Knowledge (ceremony) +12, Knowledge (cosmology) +12, Knowledge (dangerous beasts), Knowledge (engineering) +12, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (magic) +12, Knowledge (nature) +12, Knowledge (nobility and courtesy) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Knowledge (runes) +12, Knowledge (sailing and navigation) +12, Knowledge (science) +12, Listen +5, Open Lock +8, Search +11, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of

Hand +11, Sneak +11, Spot +5, Tumble +11, Use Magic Device +9; Great Fortitude, Hands as Weapons (+2, flaming), Intuitive Sense, Night Owl, Skill Focus (Disguise), Tattooed Spell (*touch of disruption*)

Sensory Control (Su): Denassa can selectively shut down one or more senses.

Innate Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): 1/day—*compelling command, contact, detect magic, disorient, lesser telekinesis, levitate, mind stab, read mind, sense thoughts*; 2/day—*telepathy*; 3/day—*object loresight*

Skill Memory (Su): Four times per day, Denassa gains a +2 bonus to a single skill check attempt made the next round.

Perfect Recall (Ex): Denassa enjoys a +3 bonus to Knowledge skill checks made without using skill memory.

Delve Into Collective Memory (Su): Eight times per day, Denassa can make a +13 check to remember some relevant information about notable people, legendary items, or noteworthy places.

Akashic Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): 3/day—*creature loresight, location loresight, object loresight*

Lesser Delve Into Personal Memory (Su): Once per day as a standard action, Denassa can mentally probe the memory of one creature within 25 feet to find a truthful one-word answer to a question. A Will save (DC 16) negates the attempt; succeed or fail, the subject remains unaware of the attempt.

Minor Battle Memory (Su): Once per day, for 8 rounds, Denassa enjoys a +4 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls, as well as a +4 dodge bonus to Armor Class.

Lesser Battle Memory (Su): Twice per day, for 8 rounds, Denassa enjoys a +3 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls, as well as a +3 dodge bonus to Armor Class.

Kinesthetic Memory (Su): Denassa can easily get around with no penalty when she has a single damaged or deprived sense and is in familiar surroundings.

Possessions: *Amulet of unknown* (usable once per day for 12 hours, caster level 15th); light crossbow and 20 bolts; a

large, fine leather satchel; six scroll cases, 20 pieces of vellum, and pen and ink vial; fine clothes befitting a courtier, including necklace, earrings, and bejeweled coif (250 gp); 75 gp



DOMAGOTH THE DOMINATOR

J.D. BRUCE

In the final years of the great war, while the victorious giants hunted down the dramojh, Talyn son of Molen was taken. Servants of the dramojh stole him from his bed at the age of two—he was one of many children taken this way, to be raised by the dramojh as special weapons against their enemies. The children were instructed in the arts of dominating others, through both magic and more mundane means, and were implanted with magical items that enhanced these powers. Their mission was to turn the enemies of the dramojh against each other and cause chaos in the opposing ranks. While some of them succeeded at times, obviously the effort made no difference in the eventual fate of the dramojh.

Talyn's childhood was not pleasant. Even the allies of the dramojh were treated cruelly and without a spark of kindness. By the time the dramojh were gone, Talyn had long since lost the last bit of humanity within him. He had become an adept magister, extremely skilled in dominating others, and nearly as cruel as his former masters. He was 19 years old.

Talyn spent the next 70 years keeping his magical abilities secret. He knew if the giants discovered him, his life would surely be forfeit. In secret, he used his powers of domination to gather resources for his driving obsession. He wanted to transform himself into a dramojh. He gained enormous wealth and a vast library of magical books and dramojh artifacts.

By the time he was 90, he had despaired of ever reaching his goal. He was dying and had found no magical or mundane means of becoming dramojh. Shortly before his 91st birthday, a hooded figure appeared on his doorstep with word of a newly discovered ceremony that allowed a human to become akin to the dramojh. The creature was brought before Talyn and removed its hood. It was the first mojh Talyn had ever seen.

The mojh, Travathar, offered to sell Talyn the instructions for the technique. The price was steep—more than half of Talyn's considerable wealth. However, no price was too high. With no hesitation, Talyn accepted the offer and began preparations for the ceremony. Within a few months, the human known as Talyn was no more. He had taken a new name in his new form. Domagoth meant *dominator* in the language of the dramojh, so that was the name Talyn chose. Domagoth—now genderless, as are all mojh—soon became feared throughout the Lands of the Diamond Throne.

Eventually, tales of the Dominator became legend, of the kind told to children to make them behave. Domagoth lived on. The mojh continued to build its magical and monetary resources to protect itself from discovery. Memories of the war were still fresh in its mind, and the mojh still worried that groups of giants would hunt him down for the crimes of

Talyn. Domagoth focused all its energy on hiding its identity and location. The mojh scried on veterans of the dramojh war to watch them die, one by one. This behavior continued until finally, one day, it believed itself the only one left. Domagoth could find no other humanoid creature that had been alive during the war.

At this point, Domagoth became less afraid. The mojh remained vigilant against discovery, but it no longer feared being punished for wartime offenses. In time it renewed its attempts to discover a way to transform into a dramojh. The mojh shape had satisfied Domagoth for more than two centuries, but the magister was now starting to feel its age. The creature desired the virtual immortality of the dramojh—wanted it with every fiber of its being. But, in the many years that have passed since then, Domagoth has not found even a hint of such a transformation.

Bitterness filled the mojh. It eventually gained enough power and knowledge to magically reduce the effects of its great age, but its body is ancient and weak. Its mind is keener and more powerful than ever, though. Domagoth spends its waking hours tormenting and dominating prisoners the servants bring to it. The practice gives it small pleasure.

COMBAT

Domagoth avoids direct confrontation at all costs. If accosted, the mojh uses its dominated minions and defensive spells as shields while retreating to one of its many safe houses.

When dominating its victims, it first uses spells to learn as much about a target as possible, including its truename, if possible. Domagoth records this information in a great book that contains the truenames of many powerful living and dead creatures.

The mojh then boosts its spell save Difficulty Class as high as necessary, depending on the dominated creature's strength of will. Domagoth then reduces the creature's resistance and dominates it for as long as possible, sometimes permanently.

USING DOMAGOTH

Domagoth is an ancient and shriveled version of its former self. Hunched and weak, the mojh is frequently troubled by a wracking cough. It still retains some of its mojh height, standing slightly over 6 feet, but is quite thin. Domagoth wears fine robes and jewelry of considerable value. It always wears two magical rings and carries a pair of magical lenses. The mojh also has a magical green gem imbedded in the center of its chest by its dramojh masters. It glows when the mojh uses its spells to dominate other minds.

Domagoth surrounds itself with a constantly changing group of dominated servants. Servants who break free of



domination (by making a successful saving throw, for example) or those whom Domagoth has tired of, are either killed or given to the mojhs' chief lieutenant.

This lieutenant—Fenorial, a twisted 10th-level champion of life—has devoted himself to protecting the oldest living humanoid he has ever heard of and helping to extend that life as much as possible. Not cruel like his master, he hopes to mitigate the evil his master does. Rather than kill the victims he receives, he uses one of his master's artifacts to wipe their recent memory, then returns them to their families.

Domagoth, mojhs Mgr15/Mojh1: CR 16; Medium humanoid; HD 15d6–60 + 1d8–4; hp 16; Dying/Dead 0/–3; Init +0; Speed 30 feet; AC 11 (+0 Dex, +1 natural armor), touch 10, flat-footed 11; BAB +7/+2; Grapple +4; Attack +4 melee (1d6–3, critical 20/x2, staff); Full Attack +4/–1 melee (1d6–3, critical 20/x2, staff); SA Spells; SQ Darkvision 60 feet, *detect magic* at will, distinct voice, mind over matter; Hero Points 0; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +13; Str 5, Dex 11, Con 3, Int 24, Wis 10, Cha 22

Languages: Common, Draconic, Faen, Giant, Litorian, Sibeccai, Verrik

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +26, Balance +2, Concentration +15, Craft (drawing) +10, Decipher Script +17, Diplomacy +15, Disguise +10, Forgery +13, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (ceremony) +8, Knowledge (cosmology) +8, Knowledge (dangerous beasts) +8, Knowledge (engineering) +8, Knowledge (geography) +8, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (magic) +18, Knowledge (nature) +8, Knowledge (nobility and courtesy) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Knowledge (runes) +10, Knowledge (sailing and navigation) +8, Knowledge (science) +8, Spellcraft +27; Brandish Magical Might, Craft Charged Item, Creator Mage, Eldritch Training, Iron Will, Mirror Sight, Modify Spell, Power of the Name, Resistant Spell, Sense the Unseen, Signature Spell (*lesser dominate*), Title (The Dominator)

Familiarity With Magic (Ex): Domagoth gains a +2 competence bonus to all saving throws against spells and spell-like and supernatural abilities (including magic items). Further, it gains a +2 competence bonus to Armor Class against spells requiring attack rolls.

Distinct Voice (Su): Domagoth can be heard by anyone within 100 feet, regardless of surrounding noise, even when whispering, if desired.

Mind Over Matter (Ex): In situations requiring a Strength check, Domagoth can make an Intelligence check instead.

Possessions: *Loresight lenses*, *ring of spellcasting*, *ring of magical might* (6th), *manacles of interrogation*, magister's staff, *imbedded gem of dominate* (constant 1/day item casts heightened *lesser dominate* as a 12th-level caster)

Spell Slots: 8/8/8/7/5/6/4/3/1

Spells Readied: 11/11/10/9/7/6/5/4/2; 0—*canny effort*, *contact*, *detect creature*, *disorient*, *enchanting flavor*, *hygiene*, *lesser telekinesis*, *read magic*, *saving grace*, *sense thoughts*, *touch of nausea*; 1st—*charm*, *creature loresight*, *directed charm*, *distraction*, *lesser compelling question*, *mind stab*, *resistance*, *tears of pain*, *touch of fear*, *touch of pain*, *veil of darkness*; 2nd—*cloak of darkness*, *eldritch web*, *lesser ability boost*, *lesser enhance magical flow*, *magnetism*, *protective charm*, *read mind*, *scream*, *see invisibility*, *silent sheath*; 3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*, *greater compelling question*, *invisibility*, *locate object*, *steal health*, *suggestion*, *tracer*, *unknown*; 4th—*detect scrying*, *dimensional door*, *greater enhance magical flow*, *locate creature*, *modify memory*, *telepathy*, *tongues*; 5th—*defensive field*, *enfeebled mind*, *lesser dominate*, *scrying*, *spell resistance*, *teleport*; 6th—*greater ability boost*, *learn truename*, *protect soul*, *security*, *stimulate*; 7th—*curse of the chaotic mind*, *incorporeal form*, *phase door*, *song of paralysis*; 8th—*greater dominate*, *spell magnet*

KELBEREN

MATTHEW GEORGE

Kelberen's earliest memories are of lying in bed while his father told him stories: tales of mighty heroes, terrible monsters, forgotten gods, and ancient evils that stalked the darkness only to be defeated by the forces of light. His favorites were always the stories featuring his namesake, the Lord Kelberen Liathes, a knight from the empire of Sennes. As Kelberen would fall asleep, his father would remind him that "heroes are made by their actions, not born in their blood."

Although his family's status had dwindled over the centuries to an empty title and a few merchant holdings, they remembered proudly their days of past glory. In fact, everyone seemed to be more proud of an empire that had collapsed under its own weight 1700 years ago than the living, breathing world they experienced every day. Kelberen wanted more than anything to give his family something to be proud of besides the deeds of the distant past, but he never expected to have the chance to do so. His parents knew more about his dreams than he imagined, however.

As the youngest of five children and the second son, Kelberen traditionally would enter either the priesthood or the military. But his parents had him tutored in the magical arts (secretly, so as not to induce talk among the neighbors). Much arcane lore proved to be beyond his grasp, but he took well to the fusion of magic and a warrior's skills. When he had mastered the arts of a mage blade and reached the age of adulthood, his parents gifted him with a sword and released him into the wider world. Kelberen swore he would bring honor to the family name—and write home frequently.

Kelberen's adventures are something of a byword in the region. Many know of the aid he gave to the village of Seldron during the Great Flood. The time he won a riddle duel with a concussed chorrim inspired more than a few ballads. But his time as a wandering hero couldn't last forever, and it was a chance encounter with a caravan in a storm that ended his adventuring career. Kelberen learned that the caravan master followed a mysterious cult that kidnapped children. With the assistance of Desdimne (dess-DIM-ni), a young woman he released from the caravan, he sought out the temple of this cult and sent word to the authorities of its location. To stop a ritual that would cost its kidnapped subject his life, Kelberen had to enter combat with the cultists. He was able to hold them off until reinforcements arrived, but at a high cost: his athame was shattered, his left hand maimed, and he was severely injured.

Kelberen remained unconscious for more than a month. When he awoke, he found himself in the household of a

giantish noble, whose grand-nephew would have been sacrificed without Kelberen's aid. The noble had brought Kelberen to his estate to recover. Desdimne, a keeper of songs and a healer, had watched over him during his coma and continued to do so during his convalescence. During the fourth month of his recovery, she agreed to marry him. When he had returned to full health, Kelberen was offered a position as bodyguard in the giant's household. At first he refused it, thinking his days as a warrior were finished, but he soon learned to compensate for his injury. He now bears a shield, concealing a hidden blade, strapped to his dominant left arm.

Kelberen has served this household for more than 10 years with distinction and honor. Visitors might easily mistake him for a mere ceremonial guard, as he bears few weapons—but most overlook the cutting edge of his shield. His knowledge of courtly behavior permits him to be present at even the most formal of occasions. Desdimne's musical talents are often called for, and she has occasionally served as a vital pair of eyes at state dinners, although Kelberen is loath to put her in harm's way. He and Desdimne have two children: a daughter, Iarel (EYE-ah-rel, seven summers), and a son, Murre (Mur-ay, two).

To date, Kelberen and the guard have stopped two major assassination attempts, seven robberies, and one kidnapping. Although there have been no such incidents in the past year, Kelberen has detected subtle signs that his family was the true target of the kidnapping attempt. This concerns him and his employer greatly, and he is considering sending Iarel and Murre to stay with their grandparents for a time.

COMBAT

Kelberen's first duty is to protect his employer, and he will do so even at the cost of his life. Sometimes the best defense is a good offense, and Kel handles both with grace and speed. He uses his magic to sneak near and stalk intruders, taking them alive if possible. Should physical combat become necessary, he uses his dagger with its *animate weapon* spell to strike from a distance, if he can do so safely; otherwise, he casts *energy blade* (usually with sonic energy) and enters melee. Most adversaries don't realize his shield is also a potent weapon until it's too late—he uses it purely defensively until he sees an opening. Kel's combat style is elegant, almost like the movements of a dance, and he often relies on dodging and ducking to avoid blows. When on duty, he casts a heightened *glamour* on himself to augment his spellcasting ability, then a diminished *lesser ability boost* to aid flexibility.



USING KELBEREN

At the age of 37, Kelberen stands 6 feet, 1 inch tall. His light brown hair is complemented by his pale, gold-brown eyes and beige skin. Tall and slim, he has a slightly aristocratic nose. He usually wears a tunic with the crest of his giantish patron and a light cloak over his chain shirt. For special occasions, like formal dinners or ceremonial guard posts, he owns a decorative uniform.

Kelberen's sonic spells often manifest as the scream of a bird of prey. His *beastskin* spells tend to create a layer of fine, feathery scales and down. He is left-handed.

Kelberen's immediate goals are simple: protect the family of his employer, his wife, and his children. Although he remembers his adventuring days fondly, his brush with death dissuades him from striking out on his own—he has too much to live for. More abstractly, Kelberen now desires to serve his employer honorably and well. Ironically, he finds service to be more fulfilling than the pursuit of glory ever was.

Kelberen, male human Mbl8: CR 8; Medium humanoid;

HD 8d10; hp 42; Dying/Dead $-1/-11$; Init +2; Speed 30 feet; AC 21 (+2 Dex, +6 armor, +3 shield), touch 12, flat-footed 18; Armor Check 0; BAB +6/+1; Grapple +5; Attack +11 melee (1d3+2 plus 1d6 sonic, 17–20/×2, shield blade), or +9 ranged (1d4–1, 19–20/×2, dagger); Full Attack +11/+6 melee (1d3+2 plus 1d6 sonic, 17–20/×2, shield blade) and +5 melee (1d4–1, 19–20/×2, dagger), or +9 ranged (1d4+1, 19–20/×2, dagger); SQ Shimmering shield; Hero Points 1; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 16

Languages: Common, Faen, Giant, Litorian

Skills and Feats: Concentration +10, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (magic) +7, Knowledge (nobility) +5, Search +7, Spellcraft +9, Swim +5; Complex Spell (2nd level), Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Spell-Completion Item, Expertise, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

Shimmering Shield (Sp): Once per day, this aura provides Kelberen with a +4 deflection bonus for 8 rounds.

Possessions: *Raptorwing* (+2 Devanian round shield with a +3 keen sonic shield blade, specially crafted to resemble the outstretched wing of a falcon [athame]); *Featherlight* (+2 Devanian chain shirt); a masterwork dagger with a charm of *animate weapon* embedded in its pommel; bracer with charms: *diminished lesser enhance magical flow*, *lesser enhance magical flow*, *heightened scent tracker*, *heightened canny effort* (3), *heightened scent bane*, *lesser transfer wounds* (3), *heightened saving grace* (3), *see invisibility*, *safe fall* (3), *diminished silent sheath*; a spider-shaped cloak fastener that acts as a charm of *eldritch web*; *wand of icebolt* (21 charges); snowflake obsidian pendant (akashic memory stone) containing his spell notes; plus 36 gp and 100 gp worth of gems

Spell Slots: 5/4/3/2

Spells Readied: 6/5/4/2; 0—*contact*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *ghost sound*, *hygiene*, *sense thoughts*; 1st—*glamour*, *lesser transfer wounds*, *mind stab*, *precise vision*, *resistance*; 2nd—*energy blade*, *lesser ability boost*, *lesser beastskin*, *scream*; 3rd—*protection from elements*, *slow*

MARVALONTAL

In her own language, Marvalontal is an *iladan*, or “one that works magic with a blade.” Her athame is a frosted glass longsword named *Yanial*, which means “splintered speed.” *Yanial*'s glass is a rare material that originates on the alabast home world (see Chapter Four: Creatures of *The Diamond Throne*). It is as strong and light as adamantite.

Marvalontal may be her people's most skilled *iladan*. Soon, in fact, she plans to challenge the current alabast king to a duel. If she wins, she will become her people's new ruler in their pyramid city of Kellest Minos in Thartholan. The road to success for Marvalontal has been a slow and quiet one, at least recently.

When she was young, Marvalontal was wild and unruly by her people's standards. She loved to fight and argue, frequently disobeying both her parents and the more general authorities. It appeared that, while skilled and intelligent, the alabast girl would spend most of her life in prison.

Her attitude changed when she met a woman named Kediril who saw great potential in her. She convinced the young Marvalontal to leave Kellest Minos with her and travel into the alien world around them. As they traveled, Kediril taught her to harness her talents and quick wits and focus them. She instructed her in the ways of patience and careful consideration. And she taught Marvalontal to fear and distrust the world in which they were trapped, but not to hate it the way other alabasts do. All these teachings helped make Marvalontal into the woman she is today.

Marvalontal spent a few years avenging the murder of her teacher at the hands of a warband of chorrin, methodically tracking down each of the creatures. Now that this task is done, she has returned finally to Kellest Minos, quickly earning an impressive reputation among her people.

COMBAT

Supremely skilled at both melee combat and spellcasting, Marvalontal rarely backs down from a fight. Instead, she leaps into a fray with determination and confidence. Using Speed Burst and Rapid Strike, she can run into battle and make four attacks on the second round (using the first round to activate her shimmering shield). She normally casts a diminished *greater ability boost* (which adds +8 to her Dexterity), then a diminished *lesser ability boost* (which adds +2 to her Charisma), and finally a diminished *greater ability boost* again (which adds +8 to her Strength), as well as *spirit of prowess* and heightened *spell resistance* before entering a battle if possible. If it seems she needs it, she casts *gaze of terror* once she's in a fight.

She often attempts to disarm foes wielding powerful magical weapons, risking the attack of opportunity (if the foe can make one) to pick up the dropped weapon herself.

USING MARVALONTAL

Until she succeeds in supplanting the alabast king, Marvalontal is likely to act as an emissary of her people, sent out to deal with others when absolutely necessary. The rather xenophobic alabasts know they do not need worry for her while she is gone (although alabast worry is very low-key by human standards), for she knows the ways of the outside world better than most.



Marvalontal, female alabast Mbl17: CR 17;

Medium humanoid; HD 17d8; hp 71; Init +4; Speed 30 feet; AC 26 (+4 Dex, +8 armor, +4 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 22, AC 27 in melee, AC 28 against foes with swords; Armor Check -1; BAB +12/+7/+2, Grapple +13; Attack +23 melee (1d8+5, critical 19-20/x2, +4 longsword); Full Attack +23/+18/+13 melee (1d8+5, critical 19-20/x2, +3 longsword); SA Slice through wardings; SQ Low-light vision, shimmering shield, familiarity with magic, spell parry; Hero Points 0; SV Fort +7, Ref +11, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 9, Cha 18

Languages: Alabast, Common

Skills and Feats: Concentration +20, Craft (glass) +13, Jump +11, Knowledge (magic) +13, Listen +6, Search +17, Spellcraft +13, Spot +1, Tumble +18; Bonded Item (athame), Defensive Stance, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Modify Combat Style, Natural Swordsman, Rapid Strike, Speed Burst, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Shimmering Shield (Sp): Once per day, this aura provides Marvalontal with a +8 deflection bonus to AC for 17 rounds.

Slice Through Wardings (Su): Marvalontal can, 17 times a day, ignore magic-based protections on a foe with a single attack.

Familiarity With Magic (Su): Marvalontal enjoys a +2 bonus to saves against spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities. Further, she gains a +2 competence bonus to Armor Class against spells requiring attack rolls.

Spell Parry (Su): An attack roll (opposed by caster power check) allows Marvalontal to resist a spell directed at her.

Possessions: *Yanial* (+4 glass longsword in her hands), +4 leather coat, amulet of natural armor +4, major cloak of displacement, scrolls of *greater battle healing* and *greater ability boost*, 98 gp

Spell Slots: 5/5/5/5/3/2/1

Spells Readied: 7/7/7/6/4/3/1: 0—*bash*, *canny effort*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *lesser glowglobe*, *lesser repair*, *scent bane*; 1st—*acrobatics*, *animate weapon*, *compelling command*, *mind stab*, *precise vision*, *resistance*, *touch of pain*; 2nd—*blinding light*, *icebolt*, *lesser ability boost*, *lesser battle healing*, *levitate*, *see invisibility*, *subtle steps*; 3rd—*greater compelling question*, *greater repair*, *hand of battle*, *lesser summon minor elemental*, *protection from elements*, *spirit of prowess*; 4th—*gaze of terror*, *strength to strike*, *telepathy*, *wall of ice*; 5th—*greater battle healing*, *open door*, *spell resistance*; 6th—*greater ability boost*

PAUSHEN PUGWHISTLE

CHRIS SIMS

A sibeccai with a faen name, Paushen has a story that really begins in the late days of the giants' war against the dramojh, around the Common Year 1389, when the settlement that would later evolve into the city of Erdaenos was but a depot on the giantish supply lines. This place, populated by giants and their sibeccai servants, free faen, and humans, provided goods and a rear position where battle-weary troops could refresh themselves before returning to the front lines. The area enjoyed not only a good view of the war front in the Bitter Peaks, but also the cover of an arm of the Harrowdeep.

Unfortunately, dramojh spies uncovered the depot's location and engaged in a brutal, flanking counterattack against it in the winter of the Common Year 1390. The giants of Erdaenos, as the repository was already named (after an obscure faen deity of secrets), died to the last. All other forces were routed, while any who stood to fight were killed. A large group of sibeccai retreated into the Harrowdeep, led there by faen allies. These were Paushen's ancestors.

Paushen was apparently born among the dwindling Harrowdeep sibeccai on the twenty-second day of Flameleaf, Common Year 1719, near the faen settlement of Whistlebark. At the time, many of the remaining sibeccai in the faen homeland were leaving, knowing their kind would not survive without fresh bloodlines with which to mix. Paushen's unknown parents were among these pilgrims. Like many before him, the stagnation of the blood among the Harrowdeep sibeccai showed on Paushen—he was born deformed and tiny. Perhaps for this reason, Paushen's parents rejected him, leaving the infant to succumb in the chill of the harsh, northern autumn.

Loresong faen children playing among the fallen leaves found the infant. One of the kids, a girl name Shaouri, was the daughter of the local and renowned ollamh lorekeeper of Whistlebark—Haem Pugwhistle. Shaouri convinced her father to keep the sibeccai newborn, whom she called Paushen. The name means, quite literally, “puppy,” for “pau” is Faen for hound and “-shen” is a suffix added to anything that is small and cute.

Haem, in his wisdom and power, saw the promise of greatness in the little sibeccai. The stars had been just right when Paushen was delivered to the village. So, the Pugwhistle clan of Whistlebark cared for Paushen, who never grew to dislike his childish name.

As Paushen grew, his adoptive father discovered the youngster's knack for remembering things—even things the pup had not been told. Haem trained the young sibeccai in his art, the craft of the akashic. That is, the old lorekeeper did so when “Puppy” wasn't running about the forest of Whistlebark with Shaouri and her cohorts.

A curiosity to the faen, Paushen was treated as something special and grew to think highly of himself. His supernatural abilities to tap consciousness allowed him to

mine his racial nature without a sibeccai teacher. This served to reinforce his pride, ironically strengthening his feelings of inferiority at the same time—Paushen is not a “true” sibeccai in his own mind. By his naming ceremony, at 20 years of age per faen tradition, Paushen was as sprightly as any loresong faen, as genteel as his station as a lorekeeper's son demanded, a bit self-centered, and only slightly taller than a faen man.

With a great desire to serve his community, Paushen trained as a quick-footed warrior, even helping to put down a group of displaced rhodin raiders from the Bitter Peaks. Such activities garnered him adulation and respect, the praise of his father, and even the half-jest title of “Wolf Knight of Whistlebark.” Yet, the dwarf sibeccai had a growing feeling of sadness—although he was among loved ones, he was alone. Haem advised the youth to leave Whistlebark and seek his destiny, but Paushen could not.

Fate had bigger plans. In the Common Year 1751, a small group of litorian mercenaries, led by the inscrutable warrior Vanian Kaldori, passed near Whistlebark. With them they carried a young human girl who, at age nine, though not a runchild, bore a runic birthmark on her chest. Gurta Ritter, as she was named, had been kidnapped from her uncle's fiefdom of Grunwald, just south of the Harrowdeep. While the forces of Whistlebark did not engage these trespassers, they did watch. When Gurta's older brother, Taodric, and his party caught up to Kaldori and the mercenaries, Paushen impulsively joined the fray with some of his faen companions. The litorians were defeated, Kaldori fled, and Gurta was rescued. Of Taodric's original party, only he survived.

Gurta, it turned out, had the potential to be a powerful mind witch, and Taodric had already focused his innate skill with magic as a mage blade. Why Kaldori and his mercenaries had kidnapped the lass was a mystery, but Paushen felt a strong connection to her. When Gurta and her brother made to leave Whistlebark a few days later, Paushen went with them with his adoptive father's blessing. The sibeccai has been their companion ever since.

Many years later, during a visit to Whistlebark, Paushen and his companions sought out the source of some mysterious disappearances and goblin sightings in the western Harrowdeep. They traced the events to a hidden keep in the treeless hills near the great forest. Aided by Paushen's sister, Shaouri, who was now a greenbond, the group successfully infiltrated the hold.

The party defeated the harrid magister who lived in the place, along with the creature's goblin and undead servants, rescuing a few enslaved faen in process. Shaouri was struck down by the wicked sorcery of the harrid in a final confrontation, dying in Paushen's arms as acid and poison churned in her body.

All was not strife and loss, however. As strange fortune would have it, the explorers also discovered old records that

showed the citadel had been run, at the time of Gurta's kidnapping, by a mysterious organization known as the Synod of Forethought. Gurta was named in some of the documents left in the place after what must have been a hasty exodus, but the Synod's intentions toward the young witch remained unclear.

On the return to Whistlebark, Shaouri's remains were cremated with honor and returned to the land. Devastated by the loss, Haem was never quite able to forgive his adopted son. Paushen never absolved himself of this failure, either, remaining in self-imposed exile from Whistlebark from that time on. The enigmatic Synod of Forethought, and their nameless purpose, became the companions' obsession. For Paushen, it was a method of forgetting the pain.

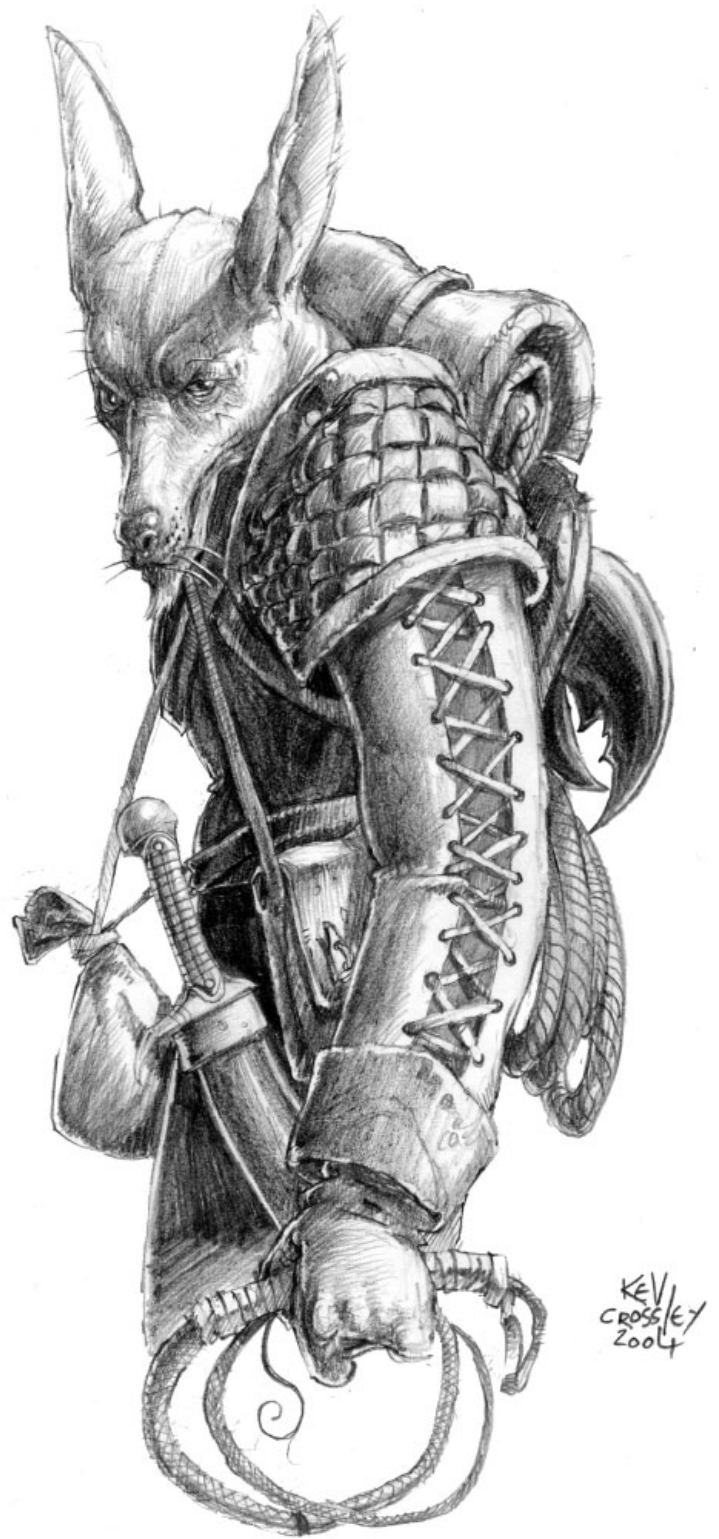
Over the next few years, Paushen and his companions tracked rumors and innuendos of the Synod as far as Ka-Rone. Troubling was the fact that the organization seemed to have few blemishes on its reputation. In fact, it had little reputation at all. Yet, through their search for the group, Paushen and the Ritters uncovered many evils and righted many wrongs.

In Ka-Rone, the three discovered a small slassan cabal conducting vile rituals focused on sibeccai subjects. The three slassans had built a magical device to taint the unfortunates with a festering hatred of giants that would infect the descendants of those changed by the artifact. While Paushen and Taodric were distracted fighting the last of the dramojh-spawned monsters and its poor, mindless slaves, Gurta used the slassan artifact to purify the polluted sibeccai trapped in the underground complex. In so doing, she sapped her own life force. Death came quickly.

A heartbroken pair ascended from the slassan lair with the body of their beloved witch, oblivious to the praise of the freed sibeccai. Paushen and Taodric took Gurta's body to the temple of Niashra, hoping the priests of the goddess of life could revive her. As if he had been watching for just that moment, Vanian Kaldori and a group of capable warriors attacked the temple and stole Gurta's body. One of Kaldori's men, slain in the battle, bore a strange tattoo—the mark of the Synod of Forethought.

COMBAT

After tapping the ferocity of his mother race, Paushen became ruthless in combat. He is unafraid to take any advantage for a quick and favorable outcome on the battlefield, yet he always acts mercifully and honorably toward those who deserve such. While Paushen dislikes killing other intelligent beings, he won't hesitate to do so to protect those in his care.



USING PAUSHEN

At 38 years old—sibeccai middle age—Paushen stands 4 feet, 2 inches tall and weighs 95 lbs. His muzzle is short for a sibeccai, and his head a bit too wide. His brown left eye is smaller than the blue right one, and the tip of his tongue sometimes sticks out of his mouth involuntarily. Covered

with dark grey fur, silvering here and there with age, Paushen's body is stout and broad. His arms are disproportionately long, ending in large hands, and his short legs are slightly bowed. A shade darker than his fur, Paushen's hair is worn long in the style of loresong faen. As an adolescent envious of his faen friends, Paushen managed to cultivate a small tuft of dark hair on his chin, which he proudly calls his "beard." The dwarf sibeccai dresses impeccably whenever possible, favoring simple jewelry.

Paushen has a soft voice, spoken with a lisp due to his overlong tongue. A generous soul, he is childlike in many ways, ever curious and seeking fun, yet trusting and loyal. He is always ready with a joke, a smile, a good story, a bit of rough play, or a patient ear. Dedication to self-exploration defines Paushen's free time, as do the joys of spending hours with loved ones.

Overbold, Paushen gets into trouble with a sharp wit and a desire to prove himself superior to those who insult or threaten him. He sometimes finds himself in over his head, rushing forth while thinking more of quick victory than sound tactics. Pride, impulsiveness, and a slight—if well hidden—inferiority complex are Paushen's biggest flaws.

Because of the passing of his sister and Gurta, Paushen feels such responsibility for his companions that he would rather die than see another one fall. He hates harrids (see Chapter Four of *The Diamond Throne*), imagining that entire race to be like the evil spellcaster who slew his adoptive sibling. When it comes to these avian sorcerers, the sibeccai warrior has no pity.

Paushen not only wants to find his parents, but he also desires a place in sibeccai society. Estrangement from Haem weighs heavily on his mind, though redemption for Shaouri's death seems against all odds. The loss of Gurta, an echo of familial bereavement, offers the promise of some deliverance. Thus, Paushen must find Gurta's body and see that Vanian Kaldori and the Synod of Forethought face whatever justice their actions require. At a loss as to what to do next, and unfamiliar with the workings of Ka-Rone, he and Taodric may well need help. Until he falls, Paushen will remain by Taodric's side, a steadfast brother in arms.

Paushen Pugwhistle, male sibeccai Aks5/Sibeccai 3/Unf6: CR 14;

Medium humanoid; HD 5d6+15 + 3d8+9 + 6d8+18; hp 102; Dying/Dead -4/-17; Init +3; Speed 30 feet; AC 26 (+3 Dex, +8 armor, +2 deflection, +3 dodge), AC 27 vs. one opponent in melee; touch 18, flat-footed 20; Armor Check 0; BAB +12; Grapple +13; Attack +18 melee (1d8+4, critical 17-20/x2, greater battle claw), or +16 ranged (1d2+2, critical 20/x2, shuriken); Full Attack +18/+13/+8 melee

(1d8+4, critical 17-20/x2, greater battle claw) and +19/+14 (1d8+3, critical 17-20/x2, greater battle claw), or +16/+11/+6 ranged (1d2+2, critical 20/x2, shuriken); SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Low-light vision, scent, parry, skill memory, perfect recall, delve into collective memory, DR 1/—; Hero Points 2; SV Fort +10, Ref +13, Will +9; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14

Languages: Common, Faen, Giant

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Bluff +10, Climb +10 (+12 with kit), Diplomacy +10, Jump +10, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (magic) +4, Knowledge (nobility and courtesy) +5, Listen +7, Perform (storytelling) +7, Search +5, Sense Motive +10, Sneak +12, Spot +7, Swim +7, Tumble +13, Use Magic Device +8, Use Rope +5, Wilderness Survival +5; Ambidexterity, Bite, Combat Reflexes, Defensive Move, Expertise, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Mobility, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Whirlwind Attack

Parry (Ex): Paushen may add a +1 bonus to his Armor Class against a single melee opponent in a given round.

Skill Memory (Su): Twice per day Paushen gains a +2 bonus to a single skill check attempt made the next round.

Perfect Recall (Ex): Paushen enjoys a +1 bonus to Knowledge skill checks made without using skill memory.

Delve Into Collective Memory (Su): Five times per day Paushen can make a +13 check to remember some relevant information about notable people, legendary items, or noteworthy places.

Scent (Ex): Paushen can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. For upwind foes, the range increases to 60 feet; downwind, it drops to 15 feet. When detecting a scent, Paushen doesn't determine its exact source, only its presence in range. He can take a standard action to note the scent's direction. Once within 5 feet of the source, he can pinpoint the source. Paushen can also follow tracks by smell, making a Wisdom check to find or follow a track.

Possessions: +4 glamerad adamantine chain shirt, +2 keen crystallized greater battle claws of crippling (set of two), +1 shuriken (10), masterwork whip, ring of protection +2, ring of swimming (improved), cloak of resistance +1, boots of the winterlands, hew's handy haversack [small pouches contain: 350 gp, detonations of disorient (5), smoke bombs (5), flash powder (5 bags), sunrods (5), tindertwigs (15), caltrops (2 bags); large pouch contains: 100-foot silk rope, grappling hook, climber's kit, blanket, tent, pot, mirror, needles (3), wax, case with ink (3) and parchment (40), waterskin, trail rations (3 days), soap, comb and brush, travel outfits (3), courtier's outfits (3)], gold earrings (3, 75 gp), gold neck chain (150 gp)

VEIRID RUNECHASER

“Everything—our magic, our memories and the world that surrounds us—is written in the same language.”

DANIEL LUNDSEY

Although the fantastic wears many faces, there are always those who seek a common thread uniting seemingly unrelated phenomena. Veirid has devoted her life to following in the tracks of one who traveled that path more than a millennium ago. She has always been sensitive to the magic around her, even beyond the abilities of other loresongs, yet her focus seemed somehow slightly removed to a place beyond her current surroundings. It came as no great surprise to her or anyone around her that she could tap into the akashic memory almost like reading a book. But what she found there turned the life of the dreamy young loresong girl upside down.

She believes it was Tialla, the goddess of sudden revelations, who gave her a fleeting glimpse of Kaeleon, a faen rune lord who lived in ancient Thartholan at the time of the dramojh invasion. Kaeleon theorized that the magic of the runethanes was merely a pale reflection of the true potential of runes. Anything named is symbolized by a rune, Kaeleon thought, and knowing the rune gives you power over what it represents. He devoted his life to seeking the runes for such things as the Bitter Peaks (where he might have had a laboratory), the faen race, and time itself. However, his studies came to an abrupt end at the claws of the dramojh.

After this vision, Veirid began to sense the runes everywhere around her. At first, they were too complex for her to fathom, but through hard work and study of the memories of runethanes and rune lords, she has begun to recognize certain simple patterns.

Today, after having spent nearly half of her years hunting for bits of knowledge that might help her dig up more memories of Kaeleon, she looks a bit thin and worn—“a quickling’s build with a loresong’s height,” as the spryte Porua Flowersong expressed it while patching up Veirid after yet another of her quests for obscure lore. Her grey-spotted black hair is drawn back tightly from her slightly sad face. Her eyes either stare at something no one else seems to see or burn with inner fire as she chases her newest lead to Kaeleon’s secrets. She believes he recorded all his results in his seven journals, of which the second, chronicling many of his early journeys both east and west of the Bitter Peaks, is her most prized possession.

Veirid generally travels alone, going where she must and doing what it takes to further her quest—whether that means exploring an ancient ruin or stealing a needed object. Often, she gets what she seeks without anyone realizing she was there. She is used to traveling light and being prepared for anything. Occasionally she works with or hires others, but these relations generally do not last, as she is too focused

on seeking and expanding Kaeleon’s results to have much time for anything else. It’s not that she dislikes people, they are just not as important as rune lore.

COMBAT

Veirid always has a *rune of armor* on her clothing. In a fight, the first thing she tries to use is a *rune of conjuring* on one of her rune plates. She is also likely to drink her *potion of invisibility* and sneak away. If she’s cornered, Veirid pulls out her dagger or her crossbow.

USING VEIRID

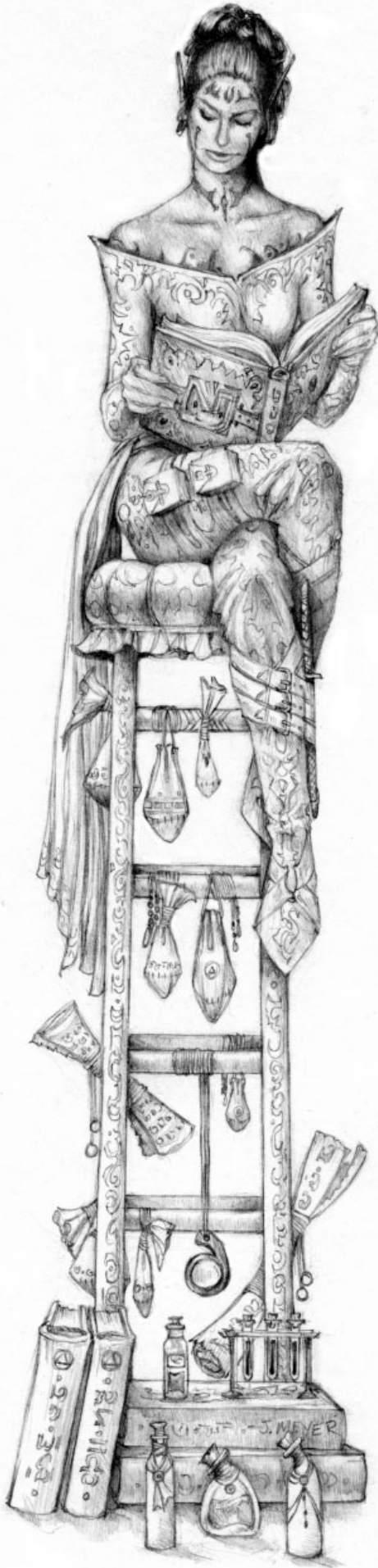
To a low-level party Veirid might act as an employer, sending characters to acquire some item she is too busy to get herself. She also could serve as an expert on runic lore. To a mid-level party, she could be an ally for those seeking something in the ancient ruins that call her. She also could hire the player characters for an expedition into Thartholan to seek Kaeleon’s ancient lab, or she could be an enemy or a foil if a character has something (an item or pence of information) she wants. She could even try to convince the PCs to help her prove her own theories—such theories as the idea that the faen gods are actually a higher form of rune manifest (see page 76), and that the akashic memory is “written” in runes. If the party is high level, she could discover clues to what might be the nearly complete rune of the dramojh race, created by Kaeleon in a vain attempt to protect himself against their attacks. However, a cabal of slassans has monitored her research, hoping to finish the rune and use it to transform themselves into true dramojh.

Veirid Runechaser, female loresong faen Aks4/Rth4: CR 8;

Small humanoid; HD 4d8+8 + 4d8+8; hp 46; Dying/Dead –3/–14; Init +4; Speed 20 feet; AC 19 (+1 size, +4 Dex, +4 armor [*rune of armor*]); touch 15, flat-footed 19; BAB +5; Grapple +0; Attack +11 melee (1d4–1, critical 19–20/×2, dagger) or +12 ranged (1d8, critical 19–20/×2, light crossbow); Full Attack +11 melee (1d4–1, critical 19–20/×2, dagger) or +12 ranged (1d8, critical 19–20/×2, light crossbow); SQ Low-light vision, spell-like abilities, skill memory, perfect recall, delve into collective memory, runes; Hero Points 0; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 9, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 6

Languages: Aquan, Auran, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Faen, Giant, Ignan, Infernal, Litorian, Terran, Undercommon, Verrick, and three ancient languages

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Climb +4, Concentration +7, Decipher Script +14, Disable Device +8, Gather Information +2, Jump +4, Knowledge (cosmology) +5, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (history) +5,



Knowledge (magic) +15, Knowledge (runes) +15, Listen +4, Open Lock +9, Search +6, Sneak +15, Spellcraft +13, Spot +4, Use Magic Device +2; Intuitive Sense, Sensitive, Skill Mastery (Balance, Climb, Concentration, Disable Device, Jump, Open Lock), Weapon Finesse

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): 1/day—*detect magic, ghost sound, lesser glowglobe, lesser learn secret*

Skill Memory (Su): Twice per day Veirid gains a +2 bonus to a single skill check attempt made the next round.

Perfect Recall (Ex): Veirid enjoys a +2 bonus to Knowledge skill checks made without using skill memory.

Delve Into Collective Memory (Su): Four times per day, Veirid can make a +13 check to remember some relevant information about notable people, legendary items, or noteworthy places.

Akashic Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): 3/day—*creature loresight, location loresight, object loresight*

Lesser Delve Into Personal Memory (Su): Once per day as a standard action, Veirid can mentally probe the memory of one creature within 25 feet to find a truthful one-word answer to a question. A Will save (DC 10) negates the effort; succeed or fail, the subject remains unaware of the attempt.

Minor Battle Memory (Su): Once per day for 8 rounds, Veirid enjoys a +4 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls, as well as a +4 dodge bonus to Armor Class.

Lesser Battle Memory (Su): Twice per day for 8 rounds, Veirid enjoys a +3 competence bonus to attack and damage rolls, as well as a +3 dodge bonus to Armor Class.

Kinesthetic Memory (Su): Veirid can easily get around with no penalty when she has a single damaged or deprived sense and is in familiar surroundings.

Runes Available: 4

Runes Known: Lesser—*armor, conjuring, knowledge, sleep, warding*

Erase Rune (Sp): Veirid can always erase her own runes without fail. If the rune was created by another runethane, she can make a caster power check (DC 10 + creator's level) to erase it. An advanced rune adds +4 to the Difficulty Class, a greater rune adds +6, a rune of power adds +8, and the ultimate rune adds +10. She must know a rune's location to erase it. Erasing a rune she created is a standard action; otherwise, it takes a full minute.

Sense Rune (Su): Veirid can use a caster power check (d20 + level + Intelligence modifier) to sense whether an invisible or otherwise hidden rune lies within 10 feet of her (DC 15). It takes a standard action to sense a rune. After a round of sensing, she can tell the direction of the closest unknown rune.

Spell Slots: 4/4/1

Spells Readied: 0—*detect magic, minor illusion, read magic, saving grace*; 1st—*acrobatics, charm, detect secret doors, lesser compelling question*; 2nd—*levitate*

Possessions: Masterwork daggers (2), masterwork light crossbow, masterwork bolts (20), *bag of holding I*, *runeplates* (3, one bearing a rune of conjuring), *potions of lesser battle healing* (3), *potion of invisibility*, *potion of darkvision*, *spellpower elixir*, 400 gp worth of andrecite, masterwork thieves' tools, magnifying glass, *Kaeleon's Journals volume II* (book of runes +3), *Fevrik's Travels in the Lands of the Diamond Throne* (book of geography +2), *The Fall of Thartholan* (book of history +2), sunrods (3), bags of caltrops (4), tindertwigs (6), portion of trollbane powder, smokebombs (4), thunderstones (3), purse with 150 gp worth of small gems

VO-TARRAN

HOLLY GRAY

Vo-Tarran grew up north of Navael, a city of artists. Most of his family worked for the Navael watch, protecting the people of that delightful city. Vo-Tarran traveled that path for a while, using a keen and clever tongue to defuse many hostile situations. He was more used to using his mind than his strength in his duties. But when the young giant went above and beyond the call of duty in rescuing a swordsmith's apprentice from his own folly—taking a grievous wound in the process—his life took an abrupt turn.

Ti-Kerras, the master swordsmith, wanted to thank Vo-Tarran for saving his apprentice. As a token of his appreciation, he offered to train the young giant in the swordsmith's art, if he was willing. Having been a traveling warrior in his youth, Ti-Kerras wanted to nurture the raw potential and clever mind he saw in Vo-Tarran. Since Vo-Tarran was participating in the ceremonies of Shu-Rin, through which giants can attain even greater height and power, Ti-Kerras knew he had the skills to be both an excellent fighter as well as a decent weaponsmith. Vo-Tarran accepted and spent many off-duty hours in the forge and in the yard behind Ti-Kerras' smithy, learning both to make swords and to use them.

The older swordsmith filled the younger giant's head with tales of his travels and adventures, of his righting of wrongs and seeing things that no one ever had. He also revealed that, unlike most of his giant kin, Ti-Kerras practiced a form of fighting that focused on the freedom of movement instead of heavy armor. Intrigued, as Ti-Kerras' style complemented his training as a city watchman, Vo-Tarran was delighted to learn from him. Also, he increasingly began to yearn for the far-off places his teacher spoke of. The idea of being able to span the land, fighting evil wherever he found it, seemed wonderful.

Vo-Tarran had a strong sense of duty to protect others, but he began to wonder if he could better protect them by going to the places where trouble was, rather than staying put. With this thought in mind, he decided to resign from the city watch. Taking with him two swords he had forged and a bit of gold, he set off southward, traveling where he felt the most needed. He would question caravans that showed signs of attack, then set out to find those responsible. He aided towns troubled by rhodin or inshons, fighting alongside people of many different races in order to capture those lawless raiders.

His experiences quickly taught him that using the more rigid structure of fighting he learned as a boy would quickly get him killed. Indeed, he was wounded several times before he began to adapt. Relying heavily on Ti-Kerras' teachings, Vo-Tarran developed an acrobatic style that baffled and confused the outlaws he fought. Few could believe that one as large as he could move so fast and so well.

Vo-Tarran continued to test himself as he traveled, consulting with other giants in the towns he traveled through in order to keep himself on the right track. He underwent the grueling tests of the Ghi-Nammor to continually remind himself of the reasons he was traveling and fighting alone. The youthful exuberance in which he had started on this quest became tempered as he fought, developing into a more focused purpose to help others wherever he can.

COMBAT

In combat, if he is trying to bring a person to justice, Vo-Tarran will forsake his swords and grapple, using his size to bring down the target, then bind the foe with rope. If it comes to killing, he makes full use of his Tumble skill to avoid attacks of opportunity and uses his Speed Burst feat to attack, move, and spring away again. He brings his full attack to bear on whoever seems to be the leader, hoping to use the leader's fall to help Intimidate the others into breaking off their attacks, surrendering, or running. However, generally he tries to use Diplomacy or Intimidate to get lawbreakers to surrender before he attacks.

USING VO-TARRAN

Vo-Tarran is a neatly and fashionably dressed giant of awesome proportions. Tall even for those giants that have gone through the rite of Ghi-Nammor (see "The Giant Paragon" in Chapter Two of *The Diamond Throne*), Vo-Tarran towers over any crowd. He usually dresses fashionably, appearing ready to attend a noble's court or party, even if encountered in the middle of the Southern Wastes or atop the Bitter Peaks. He prefers bold colors of red and blue, with gems of a differing hue. He wears his hair slightly long for a giant, bound back at the nape of his neck with a silver ring. His skin, tanned from a life spent traveling, is striped with the occasional thin white scar. He has a deep blue cloak flung over his clothes.

He carries *Flamekiss* on his left hip, *Storm's Embrace* on his right, and his bow on his back. His backpack is usually neatly packed, but strapped on in such a way as to allow him to drop it in a second, should he need to fight. He generally has a smile on his face whenever he meets someone, as he likes to assume the best of people unless given a reason to believe otherwise. But when roused, his face becomes like a tempest: dark and terrible to behold.

Vo-Tarran is a man of strongly held beliefs. He has a very powerful sense of duty both to his people and to virtually anyone he encounters who has suffered at the hands of lawless people. He considers himself a wandering champion of all those wronged, bringing his combat skills, clever tongue, and considerable physical presence (with the dedication and power that implies) to bear on those who dare break the law within his purview.



However, Vo-Tarran also enjoys life to the fullest. He loves a good joke and a well-told tale, and will gladly sit on the ground outside the stoop of a farmhouse and listen to a farmwife or greybeard spin a yarn. He enjoys good food and drink, and never hesitates to lavish praise upon a talented cook or brewer. Because he sees himself as a man of the law, he knows the importance of keeping an impeccable appearance in order to make a good impression on the local steward. Because few inns can handle someone of his size, he makes do with a large tent and a warm bedroll, often setting up his traveling “home” just outside town. He favors encounters out of doors where he doesn’t have to stoop. Also, as no normal mount can carry his large form, he walks with a free and easy stride, often hiking alongside travelers on horseback that he is protecting as they journey through treacherous lands.

Vo-Tarran, male giant Unf9/Giant3/Giant Paragon5: CR 17;

Huge giant; HD 9d8+18 + 8d10+16; hp 141; Dying/Dead –3/–14; Init +3; Speed 40 feet; AC 22 (–2 size, +3 Dex, +5 armor, +2 deflection, +4 dodge), AC 23 against one opponent, touch 17, flat-footed 15; Space/Reach 15 feet/15 feet (Face/Reach 10 feet by 10 feet/15 feet); BAB +14/+9/+4; Grapple +28; Attack +21 (2d8+10 plus 1d6 fire, 17–20/×2, giant’s sword); Full Attack +21/+16/+11 (2d8+10 plus 1d6 fire, 17–20/×2, giant’s sword) and +21 melee (2d8+7 plus 1d6 electricity, giant’s sword), or +16/+11 ranged (2d6+1, 20/×3, giant’s bow,); SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Parry (including ranged attacks), evasion; Hero Points 3; SV Fort +15, Ref +18, Will +14; Str 23, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 17, Cha 14

Languages: Common, Faen, Giant

Skills and Feats: Balance +17, Craft (weaponsmith) +12, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (ceremony) +13, Knowledge (nobility and courtesy) +12, Sense Motive +11, Tumble +24; Ambidexterity, Chi-Julud, Improved Critical (giant’s sword), Massive Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Fighting, Speed Burst, Stomp, Weapon Focus (giant’s sword), Weapon Specialization (giant’s sword)

Parry (Ex): Vo-Tarran can choose to add his Intelligence modifier (+1) to his Armor Class against a single opponent.

Evasion (Ex): If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Vo-Tarran takes no damage following a successful saving throw.

Possessions: *Beauty Hurts* (+3 glamer damage absorbing leather jack), *Flamekiss* (+2 fire energy giant’s sword), *Storm’s Embrace* (+2 electrical energy giant’s sword), *cloak of resistance* +4, *ring of protection* +2, *stone of good luck*, +1 giant’s bow, arrows (40) in a quiver, backpack, bedroll, sunrods (5), 50-foot silk rope, signet ring, soap (2 lbs.), masterwork dagger with silver blade, waterskin, flint and steel, trail rations for two weeks, courtier’s outfits (2) with 100 gp worth of jewelry, belt pouch, huge tent, *Laws of Dor-Erthenos* (book of Knowledge [nobility and courtesy, specifically laws of various cities and regions] +5), *bowl of health*†, 74 gp, 9 sp

NEW MAGIC ITEM

Bowl of Health†: This small ceramic bowl is a shallow base 5 inches in diameter, decorated with a blue glaze depicting waves. When filled with water and used in a cleansing ritual (to wash the face, rinse out the mouth, clean hair, etc.) it casts *hygiene* on the user. It can be used three times per day in this manner.

Dim transmutation; Caster Level 1st; Craft Constant Item, *hygiene*; Price 600 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Conversion Issues

The main purpose of this appendix is to aid players who have access to the d20 core rules but not Monte Cook's *Arcana Unearthed*. In truth, most of the monsters in this book can be used with almost no conversion. Still, this Appendix covers any details you really need.

In a standard d20 System campaign, players and DMs may want to convert the monsters in Part One to standard races or classes or find substitutes for skills, feats, spells, and items from *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*. You will find some suggested replacements below. It is recommended, however, that the characters in Part Two are run just as they are published here.

RACES

For the most part, it's best to use the races as they are presented, particularly since the statistics are already provided for you. You can simply treat the races of *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed* characters as exotic or rare creatures in your game. If you must convert, here are the suggested replacements:

- Giant:** Dwarf or half-orc (or ogre)
- Litorian:** Elf (or orc)
- Loresong Faen:** Gnome
- Quickling Faen:** Halfling
- Sibeccai:** Dwarf (or gnoll)
- Spryte:** Pixie
- Verrik:** Elf (or dark elf) or human

CLASSES

If need be, you can convert the *Arcana Unearthed* classes to standard d20 classes in this way:

- Akashic:** Rogue (perhaps multiclassed with sorcerer)
- Champion:** Paladin
- Greenbond:** Druid
- Mage Blade:** Bard or cleric
- Magister:** Wizard
- Oathsworn:** Monk
- Runethane:** Sorcerer
- Totem Warrior:** Ranger or barbarian
- Unfettered:** Rogue (perhaps multiclassed with fighter)
- Warmain:** Fighter
- Witch:** Sorcerer

SKILLS

To convert the skills mentioned in this book that come from *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed* rather than the standard d20 System, you can use these substitutions:

- Alchemy:** Craft (alchemy)
- Intuit Direction:** Spot or Search
- Knowledge (Ceremony):** Knowledge (religion)
- Knowledge (Cosmology):** Knowledge (the planes)
- Knowledge (Magic):** Knowledge (arcana)

Knowledge (Runes): Knowledge (arcana)

Sneak: Divide ranks between Hide and Move Silently, as seems appropriate (usually evenly)

Wilderness Survival: Survival

FEATS

Because many of the feats in *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed* were designed to offer options not available in the standard d20 System, the suggested replacements below—while appropriate—do not necessarily perform the same game functions as the original feats. If a feat is not on this list, flip to the “Referenced Feats” section starting on page 154, where the entire feat is presented for you to use.

Affinity With Skill: Skill Focus

Ambidexterity: Two-Weapon Fighting or Improved Two-Weapon Fighting

Blessed Mage: Enlarge Spell

Born Leader: Leadership

Brandish Magical Might: Spell Penetration

Complex Spell: Spell Focus

Corrupt Mage: Heighten Spell

Craft Charged Item: Craft Wand

Craft Constant Item: Craft Wondrous Item

Craft Single-Use Item: Brew Potion

Craft Spell-Completion Item: Scribe Scroll

Creator Mage: Craft Staff

Defensive: Dodge

Defensive Move: Dodge

Defensive Stance: Dodge

Eldritch Training: Magical Aptitude

Elemental Mage: Spell Focus (evocation)

Hands as Weapons: Deflect Arrows

Improved Cleave: Great Cleave

Massive Two-Weapon Fighting: Improved Two-Weapon Fighting

Modify Spell: Any one metamagic feat

Psion: Spell Focus (enchantment)

Resistant Spell: Spell Focus

Sense the Unseen: Blind-Fight

Sensitive: Magical Aptitude

Signature Spell: Iron Will

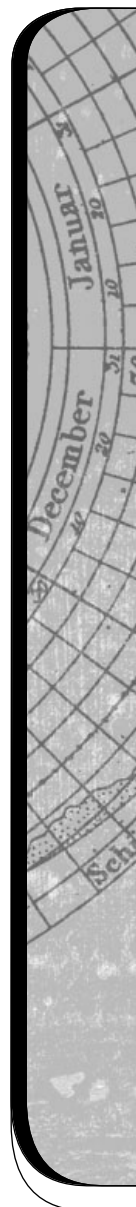
Skill Mastery: Skill Focus

Slippery Mind: Spell Focus

Stunning Blow: Stunning Fist

Sturdy: Toughness

Title: Leadership



EQUIPMENT

Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed includes some equipment not present in the core rules. The items explained briefly below are mentioned in this book.

Dire Weapon Quality: Dire weapons cost 300 gp more than standard and are considered exotic weapons. They inflict +2 damage more than their nondire counterparts.

Devanian Weapon and Armor Quality: Weapons and armor made according to ancient Devanian techniques require special training to use. They weigh half as much as items of a similar type; treat a Devanian weapon of a character's own size as a light weapon for that character. Devanian weapons, armor, and shields are all exotic (weapons being either ranged or melee [agile]).

Other Weapons: Spikestick (use d20 spiked chain); heavy mangler (use dwarven waraxe), battle claws (use kama), and giant's sword (use Large greatsword).

MAGIC

Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed has a somewhat different magic system than the core rules, but that almost never comes up in *Legacy of the Dragons*. The only significant exceptions are the two issues mentioned below:

Runes: Treat all general references to runes as *symbol of . . .* spells and/or *glyphs of warding*. For example, a shuyarn has free use of any *symbol* or *glyph* spells.

Truenames: Almost all creatures have a secret truename. If a foe knows your truename, you suffer a -1 penalty on all saves against her spells. Further, she can use certain effects against you, as described in the Power of the Name feat, below (other effects, both good and bad, are detailed in *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*).

Creatures that do not have truenames are "Unbound." They cannot take ceremonial feats.

SPELLS

As with feats, many of the spells that come from *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed* fulfill a slightly different game function than standard d20 spells. Below are suggested replacements for the spells mentioned in this book. Note that sometimes spells of equivalent overall effect or power are chosen rather than spells that fit the flavor of the originals.

Acrobatics: use *cat's grace*

Analyze: use *identify*

Animate weapon: use *spiritual weapon*

Attack from within: use *fireball*

Bash: use *divine favor*

Bind with plants: use *entangle*

Blinding light: use *blindness/deafness*

Blindsight: use *true seeing*

Boil: use *burning hands*

Bypass ward: use *find traps*

Canny effort: use *guidance*

Carnivorous plant defense: use *speak with plants*

Chains of vengeance: use *hold monster*

Charm: use *charm person*

Cloak of darkness: use *deeper darkness*

Cold blast: use *color spray*

Coma: use *hold monster*

Compelling command: use *command*

Conjure repast: use *hero's feast*

Contact: use *message*

Creature loresight: use *legend lore*

Curse of the chaotic mind: use *insanity*

Curse of vengeance: use *bestow curse*

Dazzlesphere: use *glitterdust*

Defensive field: use *fire shield*

Detect disease: use *detect poison*

Dimensional door: use *dimension door*

Directed charm: use *charm person*

Disintegration: use *disintegrate*

Disorient: use *daze monster*

Distraction: use *daze monster*

Drain away speed: use *hold person*

Duplicate: use *time stop*

Earth burst: use *shatter*

Eldritch armor: use *mage armor*

Eldritch web: use *web*

Enchanting flavor: use *purify food and drink*

Energy blade: use *flame blade*

Enfeebled mind: use *feeblemind*

Fireburst: use *burning hands*

Gaze of petrification: use *flesh to stone*

Gaze of terror: use *fear*

Ghost weapon: use *keen edge*

Glamour: use *disguise self*

Greater ability boost: use *greater heroism*

Greater animate the dead: use *create greater undead*

Greater battle healing: use *cure critical wounds*

Greater beastskin: use *stoneskin*

Greater compelling question: use *suggestion*

Greater dominate: use *dominate monster*

Greater eldritch wall: use *wall of force*

Greater enhance magical flow: use *Ray's mnemonic enhancer*

Greater repair: use *make whole*

Greater summon minor elemental: use *summon monster V*

Greater telekinesis: use *telekinesis*

Greenspy: use *prying eyes*

Gusting wind: use *gust of wind*

Hand of battle: use *inflict serious wounds*

Icebolt: use *Mel's acid arrow*

Incorporeal form: use *gaseous form*

Learn truename: use *legend lore*

Lesser ability boost: use *bear's endurance, bull's strength, cat's grace, eagle's splendor, fox's cunning, or owl's wisdom*

Lesser battle healing: use *cure moderate wounds*

Lesser beastskin: use *barkskin*
Lesser compelling question: use *command*
Lesser creation: use *minor creation*
Lesser dominate: use *dominate person*
Lesser enhance magical flow: use *fox's cunning*
Lesser glowglobe: use *light*
Lesser learn secret: use *identify*
Lesser repair: use *mending*
Lesser resilient sphere: use *Otil's resilient sphere*
Lesser summon major elemental: use *summon monster VII*
Lesser summon minor elemental: use *summon monster III*
Lesser telekinesis: use *mage hand*
Lesser transfer wounds: use *cure light wounds*
Location loresight: use *legend lore*
Magic armor: use *shield of faith*
Magnetism: use *levitate*
Mass devastation: use *meteor swarm*
Mind stab: use *magic missile*
Minor illusion: use *silent image*
Modify memory: use *confusion*
Mudball: use *magic stone*
Muddy ground: use *soften earth and stone*
Object loresight: use *legend lore*
Open door: use *passwall*
Open lock: use *knock*
Peer through matter: use *clairvoyance*
Perfect health: use *heal*
Permanent rest: use *soul bind*
Plant armor: use *barkskin*
Portal to another plane: use *plane shift*
Precise vision: use *detect secret doors*
Predict weather: use *augury*
Protect the soul: use *death ward*
Protection from elements: use *protection from energy*
Protective charm: use *sanctuary*
Psychic blast: use *holy word*
Read mind: use *detect thoughts*
Revivication: use *raise dead*
Rock's hand: use *big grasping hand*
Safe fall: use *feather fall*
Saving grace: use *resistance*
Scent bane: use *ghost sound*
Scent tracker: use *invisibility purge*
Scream: use *shout*
Security: use *Mord's private sanctum*
Sense thoughts: use *message*
Shape element: use *stone shape*
Silent sheath: use *silence*
Song of paralysis: use *mass hold person*
Sorcerous blast: use *fireball*
Sorcerous guise: use *alter self*
Spell magnet: use *spell turning?*
Spirit of prowess: use *divine power*

Steal health: use *vampiric touch*
Stimulate: use *greater heroism*
Stone blast: use *magic missile*
Subtle steps: use *silence*
Tears of pain: use *chill touch*
Telekinetic shield: use *holy aura*
Telepathy: use *Ray's telepathic bond*
Touch of disruption: use *inflict light wounds*
Touch of fear: use *cause fear*
Touch of nausea: use *touch of fatigue*
Touch of pain: use *inflict moderate wounds*
Tracer: use *locate creature*
Unknown: use *nondetection*
Veil of darkness: use *darkness*
Vitrification: use *flesh to stone*
Water roil: use *control water*
Whisper of madness: use *touch of idiocy*
Wind churn: use *gust of wind*
Woodland prison: use *imprisonment*

REFERENCED FEATS

Some of the feats referenced in this book are presented here for your ease of use. Most also appear in *Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed*. Two feats, marked with a dagger (†), are new to this book and can be used for your own monsters and characters. (New feats appearing in Part One relate specifically to one particular monster and so appear with the monster.)

Feats carrying the (Talent) designation can be taken only at 1st level. Ceremonial feats require a daylong ritual, involve the participation of other characters, and carry a cost of 100 gp.

ATTUNE TO MAGIC ITEM (CEREMONIAL)

After a ceremony held with you and at least three other spellcasters in a closed area filled with herbal smoke, you gain the ability to understand the powers of magic items you study.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 13

Benefit: After studying a magic item carefully for one minute, the character makes a caster power check with a Difficulty Class of 11 + the item's caster level. If successful, he learns one random function of a magic item, as well as how to activate it. Instead of taking a minute, he can attempt to attune as a full-round action, but the Difficulty Class increases by +10. A character cannot learn multiple functions with this ability—he must use *object loresight* or *analyze* to do so. Once one has tried to attune with an item, whether successful or not, he cannot try again with the same item. There is no limit to how many items a character can attempt to attune with.

BITE (GENERAL)

Although most civilized creatures have lost the skill to use their sharp teeth in combat, you can use yours as terrible weapons.

Prerequisite: Litorian, mojh, or sibeccai (or other race with powerful jaws and sharp teeth)

Benefit: The character is proficient with using bite attacks in combat and, unless gagged or muzzled, is always considered armed (and the bite is considered a light weapon). The character inflicts damage based on her size, as follows:

Size	Damage
Diminutive or Fine	1d2 + Strength bonus
Tiny	1d3 + Strength bonus
Small	1d4 + Strength bonus
Medium	1d6 + Strength bonus
Large	2d4 + Strength bonus
Huge	2d6 + Strength bonus
Gargantuan	2d8 + Strength bonus
Colossal	2d10 + Strength bonus

When a character takes a feat requiring her to specify a weapon (such as Weapon Focus), she can choose “bite.”

If a character uses a weapon (or unarmed attack) in the same round as the bite attack, both the bite attack and the other attack suffer a –2 penalty. A character fighting with a weapon in each hand (or a double weapon) can make a bite attack, but all attacks suffer a –4 penalty in addition to normal two-weapon fighting penalties the character might incur. The feats Ambidexterity and Two-Weapon Fighting do not modify the penalties associated with the Bite feat.

BLOOD AS POWER (CEREMONIAL)

As the result of a ceremony involving you and at least six other spellcasters, you can use your own blood to power your spells.

Prerequisites: Caster level 1st, Wisdom 17

Benefit: A character with this feat can cut himself as a somatic component added to a spell. After dealing himself 6 points of damage per spell level (3 points for 0 level), he can cast a spell he knows without losing the spell slot. He can use this feat only three times per day.

BLOODY STRIKE (GENERAL)

You know how to inflict wounds that prove particularly troubling to your foes.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +5

Benefit: A character must wield a slashing or piercing weapon to use this feat. As a full attack action, the character can make a single attack roll that inflicts normal damage. If she damages her opponent, he must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + half her level + Wisdom bonus). Should the opponent fail the save, he bleeds profusely, losing 1 hp per round until he receives magical healing of any kind, someone performs a Heal check (DC 15) upon him, or he makes a successful save (the second save attempt requires a full-round action as he staunches or nurses the wound himself).

BONDED ITEM (CEREMONIAL)

A ceremony involving you and a particular item as the central figures ties you magically to the item.

Benefit: Any time a character uses the bonded item in its straightforward function, he gains a +1 luck bonus for the attempt. For example, if it is a weapon, he gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls. If it is armor or a shield, he enjoys a +1 bonus to Armor Class. If it is a lockpick, he gains a +1 bonus to use it.

If the item is lost or destroyed, the character must go through the ceremony again to bond with a new item (but the character need not take the feat again).

CHI-JULUD (CEREMONIAL)

In a ritual involving seven other giants, you learn the ability of the Wardance.

Prerequisite: Must be a giant, Wis 13, Cha 13, truename

Benefit: The character takes a full round of concentration (Concentration check, DC 15) to turn everything peaceful and caring in her into a raw, warlike savagery. After this round, the character loses her Wisdom and Charisma modifiers (if positive), and her scores in both become 10 (if they were higher). Her former Wisdom bonus now adds to her Strength bonus (stacking with any other bonuses), and her former Charisma bonus adds to her Constitution bonus (stacking with any other bonuses). These extra bonuses last as long as the character wishes, but if Chi-Julud persists longer than 10 minutes, she suffers 1 point of temporary Wisdom and Charisma damage. Each full hour of Chi-Julud afterward, she suffers another point of Wisdom and Charisma damage during the first day. After that, if she is somehow still going (through use of magic), every day she suffers 1d4 points of temporary Wisdom and Charisma damage until she reverts back to her normal state of Si-Karan (Caretaker). During the time this feat is in effect, anything that normally would add to her Wisdom bonus adds to Strength instead, and anything that would add to Charisma adds to Constitution instead, even if the bonuses would not normally stack. For example, if someone casts a *lesser ability boost* on the character to give a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength and Wisdom, she instead gains a +4 bonus to Strength. These bonuses do not stack with further enhancement bonuses, such as from a *belt of strength* or a *peript of wisdom*.

COMPENSATE FOR SIZE (GENERAL)

You leap up and around when fighting a larger foe, compensating for your small size.

Prerequisite: Dexterity 13

Benefit: The character leaps about when fighting a creature one size (or more) larger than she is, granting her an additional +1 dodge bonus to Armor Class and a +1 competence bonus to melee attack rolls per size category difference. To use this feat, the character must wear either Light armor or no armor.

EIDETIC MEMORY (TALENT)

You have a near perfect memory.

Prerequisite: Character level 1st only

Benefit: The character gains a +1 bonus to all Knowledge skills and a +4 bonus to Intelligence checks to remember past events. He also proves immune to magical attempts to modify his memory (such as with the spell *modify memory*).

ELEMENTAL RESISTANCE (TALENT)

You are naturally resistant to a particular element and suffer less damage from it.

Prerequisite: Character level 1st only

Benefit: The character has resistance 5 against any element he chooses (air, earth, fire, water) at the time he takes the feat. Each time he suffers damage from that element, he subtracts 5 points of damage from the attack.

FAST HEALER (TALENT)

When you rest, you heal faster than others.

Prerequisite: Character level 1st only

Benefit: The character heals at 1.5 times the normal rate (which is 1 hp per level per day). So an 8th-level character with this feat heals 12 hp per day rather than 8 hp. With the help of a healer making a Heal check, the character would heal 24 hp rather than 16 hp.

FIRST STRIKE (GENERAL)

You are skilled in attacks that take out opponents quickly.

Prerequisite: Dexterity 13

Benefit: When the character strikes a foe who is flat footed at the beginning of combat, the attack inflicts +1d6 points of damage. This damage bonus stacks with sneak attack damage and faces the same limitations as sneak attack (creatures immune to critical hits and sneak attacks are immune to this ability). The character can make ranged attacks using this ability, but only when within 30 feet of the target.

Special: A character can take this feat up to three times. Each time, she adds +1d6 points to the damage inflicted against flat-footed opponents. So, the second time a character takes the feat, she inflicts +2d6 points of damage, and the third time she inflicts +3d6 points of damage.

FLEET OF FOOT (CEREMONIAL)

After a ceremony held with you and at least five others, you become much faster than you look.

Benefit: The character adds +10 feet to his ground speed.

FOCUSED HEALING (CEREMONIAL)

After a ceremony held with you and at least five others, you gain the ability to use your powers of concentration for better healing.

Prerequisite: Wisdom 11

Benefit: Once per day, the character can concentrate for a full minute and heal herself of up to 2 hit points of damage per character level. In order to succeed, the character must make a Concentration check (Constitution check if she has no ranks in Concentration) with a DC equal to 10 + the amount of damage to be healed. Thus, a 5th-level character with this feat can heal up to 10 points of damage (DC 20). If the character only needed to heal 8 hp, she could choose to heal only 8 hp and thus make the DC 18.

INTUITIVE SENSE (CEREMONIAL)

You participate in a ritual requiring you to spend 24 hours alone in a dark, incense-filled room, while at least one other person stands outside chanting. Afterward, you are difficult to surprise.

Benefit: Thanks to the character's uncanny sense of danger, he does not lose his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class when flat footed or attacked by an invisible or unknown opponent. He is always considered "aware" of all incoming attacks for purposes of Dexterity and dodge bonuses to Armor Class.

INTUITIVE SENSE, IMPROVED (CEREMONIAL)

Following a ceremony in which at least five people buffet you with mock attacks while you are blindfolded, your intuition becomes so canny you can deal with two attackers at once, the way someone else might deal with just one.

Prerequisite: Intuitive Sense

Benefit: Thanks to the character's enhanced sense of danger, he cannot be flanked.

LIGHT SLEEPER (TALENT)

You sleep lightly and are ready for action the moment you awake.

Prerequisite: Character level 1st only

Benefit: The character makes Listen checks while asleep as though awake. Further, he can act immediately upon waking.

MIRROR SIGHT (CEREMONIAL)

After a ceremony involving you and at least five other spellcasters, held in a room full of mirrors, you can look through a mirror for a special sort of scrying.

Prerequisites: Spellcaster level 1st, Charisma 19, truename

Benefit: Once per day the character can look into a mirror and see through it to view a reflection in another mirror. She can choose to see one of three types of reflection:

- The current reflection in another mirror she is familiar with.
- The reflection of a person she knows well, assuming that person is near a mirror.
- The reflection of a place she knows well, assuming the location is being reflected in a mirror.

The character receives only visual information through this feat. However, she can choose to transmit information both ways—so a person reflected in the remote mirror can view whatever appears in her mirror. Contact lasts 1d4 rounds, plus a number of rounds equal to the character's Charisma bonus.

For example, Maedi knows that her friend Tu-Methus keeps a mirror in his living room over the mantel. She can look through her own hand-held mirror and see into Tu-Methus' living room. But he is not there. The next day, Maedi can attempt to find him by looking into her mirror. If, at that moment, Tu-Methus is near any mirror at all, she can see him. Otherwise, she sees nothing but her own reflection.

Mirror Sight works with mirrors only; it is not effective when attempting to scry with another reflective surface, such as a still pool or a polished metal shield.

MODIFY COMBAT STYLE (GENERAL)

You can adapt your combat moves to counter a foe's style.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +7

Benefit: The character spends a full round in melee with an opponent, then makes a Spot check (DC = the opponent's attack bonus). If she succeeds, she spots a weakness in the foe's combat style and modifies her own style to take advantage of it. The character gains a +2 competence bonus to attack rolls against the foe for the rest of that combat session.

NATURAL SWORDSMAN (TALENT)

You have a natural affinity for swords of all kinds.

Prerequisite: Character level 1st only

Benefit: The character gains a +1 competence bonus to damage rolls made from attacks with swords (short swords, longswords, greatswords, bastard swords, double-bladed swords, swordstaves, and so on). Further, if a foe attacks him with a sword, the character gains a +1 dodge bonus to AC.

Special: A condition that makes the character lose his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class (if any) also makes him lose dodge bonuses. The character must be aware of the attack to gain this bonus. Also, dodge bonuses stack with each other, unlike most other types of bonuses.

NIGHT OWL (TALENT)

You are more active at night.

Prerequisite: Character level 1st only

Benefit: The character gains a +1 competence bonus to attack rolls, saving throws, and checks made after the sun goes down. (This ability only takes effect above ground, and when the character can verify that it is indeed night.)

OPPORTUNIST (CEREMONIAL)

As the result of a ceremony involving you and at least four others, you excel at taking advantage of your foes' weaknesses.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 15

Benefit: Once per round, a character can make an immediate attack of opportunity against an opponent whom another char-

acter has just damaged with a melee strike. The character gets this attack regardless of whether the foe has taken an action that normally would provoke an attack of opportunity. This attack counts as the character's attack of opportunity for that round. Even a character with the Combat Reflexes feat can't use the Opportunist ability more than once per round, however.

OPPORTUNISTIC ATTACK (GENERAL)†

You have a keen eye for spotting gaps in your opponent's defenses and the reflexes needed to take advantage of them.

Benefit: The character gains one additional attack of opportunity per round.

Normal: A character receives only one attack of opportunity per round.

Special: Even if the character has more than one attack of opportunity, a creature can only provoke one such strike from him per round. He may take this feat more than once, each time gaining an additional attack of opportunity.

POWER CHARGE (GENERAL)

Once you start a charge, you become extremely dangerous.

Prerequisites: Power Attack, Strength 13

Benefit: When using the charge action, the character deals double damage with a melee weapon. Only the weapon's damage is doubled, not the bonuses from Strength, magic or other factors.

POWER LEAP (GENERAL)†

Using your great leaping ability, you crash into your foe and drive him into the ground.

Benefit: As a full-round action, the character may make a Jump check to leap onto an opponent. If she lands in any space occupied by the foe, it counts as charging him, and the character may make an attack with the normal charging benefits and drawbacks. In addition, the character gains a +2 bonus to damage. The opponent must make a Strength check (DC equal to the damage inflicted by the attack) or he falls prone. The character ends her action in a space of her choice that is adjacent to the target.

POWER OF THE NAME (CEREMONIAL)

In a ritual involving at least 10 people and always held within the center of a large library, you gain the ability to use a person's truename against her.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 17

Benefit: If he knows a subject's truename, a character with this feat can force her to carry out some service or to refrain from some action or course of activity, as desired. The subject can make a Will saving throw to resist (DC 10 + half the character's level + Charisma bonus). The subject must be able to understand the character. While he cannot compel a subject to kill herself or perform acts that would result in certain death, the character can compel almost any other activity. The subject must follow the given instructions until the task is

MONSTERS AND CHARACTERS BY CHALLENGE RATING

Monster or Character	CR	Monster or Character	CR	Monster or Character	CR
Spined grappler	1/4	Akashic seeker	5	Bog salamander	10
Staj	1	Blade breaker	5	Cralla* (sibeccai cmp [death])	10
Terrig	1	Corrupted tree	5	Night beast	10
Vallorian	1	Rune manifest, arcane	5	Qualleg	10
Balthrok	2	Rune manifest, terror	5	Slaughterfiend	11
Bone viper	2	Arachtar	6	Algar* (mojh aks/osn)	12
Grynloc	2	Briar beast	6	Arboreal corrupter	12
Kahrn (larva)	2	Elemental scion (mojh)	6	Denassa* (undead verrik aks)	12
Rune animal (wolf)	2	Navver's curse	6	Rune reaver	13
Urgan's minion	2	Vuldrog	6	Spirit of sorrow	13
Witchraven	2	Blade troll	7	Abalan* (chorrim wrm/osn)	14
Balthrok (elder)	3	Kahrn (adult)	7	Briessec-Cur* (sibeccai grn/somn)	14
Daelan Bitterslice* (spryte unf)	3	Rune manifest, disease	7	Darval	14
Dothrog	3	Faradian	8	Paushen Pugwhistle*	
Dread helminth	3	Hypnolox	8	(sibeccai aks/unf)	14
Hate reaper	3	Kelberen* (human mbl)	8	Chloris* (litorian cmp [freedom])	15
Mud slime	3	Lastrogos	8	Crested serpent	15
Spelleater	3	Rune manifest, battle	8	Domagoth* (mojh mgr)	16
Squamous lir	3	Veirid Runechaser*		Zetetic	16
Valkith	3	(loresong faen aks/rth)	8	Marvalontal* (alabast mbl)	17
Bova Tel-Bera* (human twr [wolf])	4	Wind lord	8	Oathstalker	17
Chlortheke	4	Aarach*		Vo-Tarran* (giant unf/paragon)	17
Lasher beast	4	(rhodin skurg war/wtc [sea])	9	Arathad	18
Rock ape	4	Ghoul worm	9	Shuyarn	20
Tingual	4	Totem spectre (bear)	9		

* Indicates an NPC in Part Two of this book

completed, no matter how long it takes. If the instructions involve some open-ended task that the subject cannot complete through her own actions, the subject remains compelled for a maximum of one day per the character's level. Note that a clever subject can subvert some instructions.

If something prevents the subject from obeying the instructions for a whole day, she takes 3d6 points of damage each day she does not attempt to follow them. Additionally, each day she must succeed at a Fortitude saving throw. A failure means she becomes sickened. A sickened subject moves at half her normal speed and suffers a -4 penalty on both Strength and Dexterity. She heals damage at one-tenth her normal rate and cannot benefit from any magical healing effects. Starting on the second day, a sickened creature must succeed at a Fortitude save each day or become crippled. Once crippled, the subject is effectively disabled (as if she had 0 hit points) and can't choose to take strenuous actions. These effects remain until the day after the subject attempts to resume the task.

This magical effect can be dispelled, and it ends if the character with the feat dies. A character can use this feat over a given subject only once, whether she makes the initial Will save or not. It is a full-round action to invoke the Power of the Name.

RAPID STRIKE (GENERAL)

You can make an extra, blindingly fast melee strike.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 15, Weapon Focus, proficiency with weapon, base attack bonus +3

Benefit: The character selects a weapon that she's proficient with and wields with the Weapon Focus feat. Once per day per level, as part of a full attack action, she can use this weapon to make an additional attack, with a base attack bonus of half her highest normal base attack bonus. Even if she wields more than one weapon, however, no more than one rapid strike is possible in a round.

Special: A character may take this feat multiple times, each time selecting a different weapon.

RESISTANCE TO MAGIC (TALENT)

You have an innate resistance to magic.

Prerequisite: Character level 1st only

Benefit: The character gains a +1 saving throw bonus to all saves against spells, spell-like abilities, supernatural abilities, magic items, and so on.

RESISTANCE TO POISON (TALENT)

You have an innate resistance to toxins.

Prerequisite: Character level 1st only

Benefit: The character gains a +4 saving throw bonus to all saves against poisons, including magical poisons.

SPEED BURST (GENERAL)

You can move very fast in short bursts.

Benefit: Once per day per two character levels, the character can take an extra move action in a single round.

STOMP (GENERAL)

Using your great size and mass, you make the ground shudder.

Prerequisites: Size Large, Strength 19

Benefits: The character can stamp her foot or slam her fist on the ground (as a standard action), causing it to shake. All creatures smaller than the character within 10 feet must make a Balance check (DC 10 + stomping character's Strength modifier) or fall prone.

TATTOOED SPELL (CEREMONIAL)

In a ritual featuring just you and the artist/caster (or just you if you are the artist/caster), you receive a tattoo with magical abilities. The artist/caster involved in the ritual must be able to cast the spell to be tattooed and must have at least one rank in Craft (tattoos).

Prerequisite: Truename

Benefit: One simple spell, whose level is no more than half the character's (and never more than 4th level), is

infused within a tattoo etched into the character's flesh. (A 1st-level character can have a tattoo of a 0-level spell.) The character can cast that spell once per day, using half her character level as the caster level. No somatic or verbal components are needed. (See illustration on the next page.)

Diminished versions of spells are treated as one level lower, and heightened spells are treated as one level higher for purposes of tattooed spells.

Special: Spellcasters with this feat can gain a tattoo of any spell they can cast (no level limit), even ones that are not simple. A character can take this feat multiple times, choosing a different spell each time, although she cannot have more than four tattooed spells on her body at any given time. A character can remove a tattooed spell any time she wishes, but *dispel magic* does not remove the tattoo unless she wishes it. To replace a tattooed spell requires the character and caster/artist to perform the ritual again, but she need not take the feat again.

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